Inclusion of Deaf Students in Saudi Primary Schools

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Abstract

The thesis is methodologically located within a critical qualitative research framework. It begins by identifying a consistent pattern in the education of Deaf[1] students at Saudi primary schools. The policy relevant to Deaf education in Saudi is analysed using Critical Discourse Analysis in Education (Diem, Young, Welton, Mansfield, & Lee, 2014). The goal is to investigate the extent to which this policy contributes to educational inclusion. Subsequently, the status of Deaf students in the national education system is investigated with possible factors underpinning this situation examined. Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (Willig, 2013) has been employed to analyse data collected from three important stakeholder groups: policymakers, Deaf adults and primary school teachers with experience teaching in isolated classrooms for Deaf students. Inclusive Education Theory (Slee, 2011, 2018) and, to a lesser extent, Critical Disability Theory (Goodley, 2016; Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2016) have been employed to assist with conceptualisation and analysis.

This is the first study in the Saudi context that distinguishes between 'special' and 'inclusive' education provision. Unlike other related Saudi studies, this one identifies self-contained classrooms as a form of 'special' education that isolates Deaf students. Conversely, an 'inclusive' approach to education deliberately includes Deaf students in general classrooms while providing required additional strategies and services. The study clarifies and theorizes the current education system that effectively creates barriers for Deaf students. It is hoped that the findings of this study contribute to the reconceptualisation and transformation of education provision for Deaf students in Saudi Arabia.
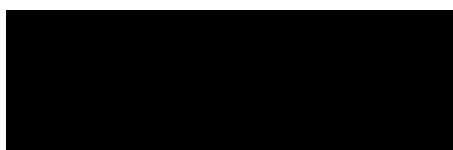
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[1] The capital D in the 'Deaf' word refers to Deaf students as a minority group with their own culture based around sign language and their own rights. I based in this point on Shakespeare (2018).

Student Declaration

Doctor of Philosophy Declaration

"I, Abdullah Hadi M Madhesh, declare that the PhD thesis entitled Inclusion of Deaf Students in Saudi Primary Schools is no more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work".

Signature

Date

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Acknowledgement

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A Glossary of Terms

Ableism: 'points to the practices and dominant attitudes in society that devalue and limit the potential of people with disabilities' (Hadley, 2013, p. 378).

Deaf students: refers to students who have hearing impairments that prevents them from using spoken language and makes them dependent on other communication tolls such as sign Language, lipreading and speech. In this terminology I will use the capital D in the whole study to refer to Deaf students as a minority group with their own culture based around sign language and their own rights (after Shakespeare, 2018). In addition, I will capitalize the "D" in the adjective 'Deaf', following Shakespeare's recommendation.

Disablism: is discriminatory practice or any form of marginalization exclusion and oppression that result from believing people with disabilities are less worthy of concern and position than able-bodied people (Thomas, 2007).

Epistemology: is the study of knowledge or being (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

General classroom: is the classroom where students without disabilities study. I do not use 'regular classroom' in light of Slee's (2011) argument that suggests the existence of 'regular school' indicates the obligation to create 'irregular schools' for 'irregular' students. I use instead general or ordinary.

Inclusion/inclusive education: involves a process of systemic reform embodying changes and modifications in content, teaching methods, approaches, structures and strategies in education to overcome barriers, with a vision to provide all students of the relevant age range with an equitable and participatory learning experience and a learning environment that best corresponds to their requirements and preferences (The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016, p. 4).

Isolated classroom: refers to a separate unit inside a general school where students with disabilities are excluded during the school day. This classroom is widely called a "self-contained classroom".

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): refers to the concept that "every student with a disability is to be educated in the least restrictive environment and one that is consistent with his or her educational needs, as close to home as possible, and, as feasibly as possible, with students who do not have disabilities" (Kauffman, Hallahan, Pullen, & Badar, 2018, p. 11).

Ontology: is the view of being or understanding of existence (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

People/Students with disabilities: refers to all individuals or students who have been disabled as a result of constructed barriers in surrounding environments, cultures, societies or thoughts and beliefs.

Separated schools: this term refers to isolating students with disabilities in schools where there are no other students who have the same disability. These schools are known in Saudi and other contexts as "special schools" or "residential institutions".

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1 Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

To begin this study, some general contextual information is provided to explain inclusive education at the transnational level and, more specifically, inclusive education within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The history of that nation and its education system is briefly outlined in order to contextualize the study. Next, how the Saudi government supports those with disabilities is outlined, including the provision of education for students with hearing impairments. The research problem, aims and research questions are then detailed. Following this, the overall structure of the thesis is outlined.

The right to inclusive education is advocated by several international statements, conventions, agreements, and forms of legislation, including The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994), the Dakar Framework (Peters, 2007), Millennium Development Goals (Sachs & McArthur, 2005), and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006 (UNCRPD) (Rieser, 2012). Inclusive education refers to the situation where students with disabilities receive their education alongside students without disabilities in the same classrooms. Unfortunately, many students still face different forms of exclusion and marginalization, even in countries that are signatories to international agreements that commit them to provide inclusive education in their nation's educational systems. Indeed, despite the agreements and signatories, exclusionary practices are rooted in the depths of education systems globally and entrenched in the social and educational practices of many countries (Slee, 2018).

One of these countries is Saudi Arabia. In spite of the government's signed acceptance of international agreements, students with hearing impairments remain excluded from general classrooms at primary level and all other levels of schooling. These students are offered only two forms of isolated educational placements; namely separate schools for the Deaf or self-contained classrooms for the Deaf that are located inside general primary schools. Officials and regulations of the Saudi educational system (reflected in Regulations of special education Programs and Institutes (RSEPI) in Saudi Arabia) state that students with hearing impairments

should receive their education in 'inclusive' placements by accommodating them in self-contained classrooms for Deaf-only students (Ministry of Education, 2001; 2016). The aim of this study is to investigate the extent to which this policy contributes to educational inclusion for Deaf students in Saudi primary schools and how well Deaf students are served by this school system.

A small number of studies have investigated inclusion of students with hearing impairments in Saudi Arabia, and, in general, they take one of two directions. The first is that self-contained classrooms are regarded as placements that represent inclusive education services (Alothman, 2014; Shaira, 2013). The second direction taken investigate attitudes toward inclusive education, employing quantitative methods, where participants responses were directed by predesigned questionnaires (Aseery, 2016; Hanafi, 2008). These two trends in the existing scholarly literature will be examined in more detail in Chapter Two.

I took Roger Slee's exhortation for rigorous and useful research seriously (2011) and resolved to undertake a study that would contribute something new and that went beyond description. As a result, the problem addressed in this study has demanded closer and deeper investigation of Inclusive Education.

To begin, however, the context for this study is described in order to outline the educational situation for the Deaf in Saudi Arabia.

1.2   Context of this study

1.2.1   Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a large country founded in 1932 by King Abdul-Aziz Bin Saud. It is located in the Middle East and covers approximately 2,150,000 square kilometers of the Arabian Peninsula. There are 13 provinces, 150 cities and more than 2000 villages in Saudi Arabia. The population in Saudi Arabia reached 32,552,336 people in 2017 (The General Authority for Statistics, 2017).

The system of government in Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy where the King is the Prime Minister and has all power for appointing and discharging all ministers and high-positioned administrators in the government.

The formal religion in Saudi Arabia is Islam (Salafism)[2] and the land of Kingdom is sacred for all Muslims around the world, as it houses the two most holy places for Muslims – Mecca and Medina. The Kingdom is dominated by a conservative Arabic culture although in recent times the globalization and the continued study abroad of Saudis, via government scholarships, have impacted on Saudi society. Indeed, many sectors of society are completely reliant on government approval and funding, including the educational system.

Since petroleum was discovered on 3 March 1938, the whole country was transformed, and this discovery became a turning point in the modern history of the Kingdom. The economy in Saudi Arabia heavily depends on oil as the kingdom is the world's largest oil producer and exporter. However, the government continues to try to reduce this dependency using many plans, including the *2030 vision[3]*.

1.2.2   Education in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's education system was established at an early stage after the unification of all parts of Saudi lands when King AbdulAziz founded the Directorate General of Education in 1925. At this stage a very small number of Saudi people enrolled in formal education. The number of people able to participate increased with the passage of time up to the time when the Ministry of Knowledge was founded in 1953. The first Minister was the Prince Fahad (the fifth King of Saudi Arabia). This Ministry was renamed to the Ministry of Education in 2003. The establishment of this ministry was a turning point in the history of education in Saudi Arabia. From this point in time, the number of students increased and reached more than six million, while 25,000 schools had been established by 2016 (Ministry of Education, 2017).

In the Saudi context, boys and girls study separately because of cultural and religious factors, and all sections are managed by staff of the same gender. However, regardless of gender, the

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[2] Salafism is an Islamic movement within Sunni Islam that returns to the original text from the Quran and the Hadith. The followers of this movement follow the practices of forefathers (Al-Salf-Alsalah) from first three generations since the Prophet Muhammad's time (Meijer, 2017).

[3] The Saudi 2030 Vision is a government vision that stands on aims such as reducing dependence on oil production income and to diversifying other sources of income and maintaining government support and subsidies.

management of education is led by one senior manager and regulated by the same rules. Educators of both genders have equivalent salaries and system expenditure. Education in Saudi Arabia is supervised by the government under the authority of the Ministry of Education. Additionally, the government largely funds the education system with the budget increasing from $7 billion in 2005 to more than $53 billion in 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2017).

Education in Saudi Arabia is compulsory from the ages of six to 18 and encompasses three sectors of primary (from the age of 6 to 12), secondary (from the age of 12 to 15) and high schools (from the age of 15 to 18). The school day comprises between six and eight 45-minute classes from Sundays to Thursdays[4]. Students are also provided with many options to complete their studies at national or international universities or technical institutions. Saudi Arabia has more than 32 government and privately funded universities. Furthermore, the Saudi government established a scholarship program in 2005 that allows students from both genders to study overseas in more than 24 countries.

In the next section disability in Saudi society will be discussed to orient the reader to the context for this study.

1.2.3 Disability in Saudi Arabia

Estimates of the number of people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia vary widely from 3.3% (Bindawas & Vennu, 2018) to between 8% and 15% (Altamimi, Lee, Sayed-Ahmed, & Kassem, 2015). People with disabilities in Saudi Arabia constitute different categories, such as Deaf students, students with learning difficulties, students with Autism spectrum disorder, students with visual impairment and so forth[5]. They receive multiple and varied services from different governmental organisations under the supervision of the Ministries of Social Affairs,

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[4] Friday is the religious day.

[5] In Saudi Arabia, context of this study, gifted child is not categorized with students with disabilities.

Health, Labor & Social Development and Education. The government provides many forms of support for people with disabilities. For instance, the government pays a monthly living allowance for all people with disability amounting to about $500 per month. It also offers free or discounted transportation and free home nursing for critical cases.

Additionally, the Saudi government provides free assistive devices and equipment for all people with disabilities. For example, free hearing aids are provided for people with hearing impairments. Other free services for people with physical impairments include free rehabilitation services, free medical attention and supportive devices or equipment as well as modified cars. Although the support from the government for those individuals and their families is generous, it has been argued that it has the propensity to lead to dependency. A dated medical model of disability (Oliver & Barnes, 2010; Shakespeare, 2006), where disability is seen as a pathological condition, appears to dominate those services.

As with other cultures and countries, in Saudi Arabia, societal assumptions toward disability are also influenced by religious, cultural and educational factors. Despite Islamic teachings that emphasize respect and equity and that prohibit discrimination against individuals with disability, individuals and families do experience marginalization, as a result of fear and shame related to a disabled member of the family (Al-Jadid, 2013). Further, exclusionary practices are widespread resulting from perceptions of disability being somehow contagious (Tefera, Schippers, van Engen, & van der Klink, 2018).

This discussion will be extended further in Chapter Two where the literature is reviewed. I now move to discuss education and disability in Saudi Arabia from historical and practice standpoints.

1.2.4 Education and disability in Saudi Arabia

Although the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia was founded in 1953, the first educational opportunities for people with disabilities began in 1958 with the teaching of some visually impaired students in 'Scientific Institutes' (Al-Jadid, 2013). This situation remained in place for some time with families providing the extensive care and education for individuals with disabilities until 1962 when the Department of Special Learning in the Ministry of Education was established (Altamimi et al., 2015). At that time, provision of education services began for

people with blindness and intellectual disabilities. In 1964, special institutions were stablished for Deaf[6] students in so-called "Hope Institutions" where Deaf students studied in 'separated' schools for the entire school day (Ministry of Education, 2016). Some students with a disability were moved from these separated schools to isolated classrooms located inside general schools.

In 1991, the General Directorate of special education in Saudi Arabia called this process "partial integration". However, in 1996 this administration extended the process to include the majority of students with disabilities in separated schools and moved them to isolated classrooms and referred to this as "inclusive education" (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 2016). This practice continues and students with disabilities, including Deaf students, obtain their education in either a separated school or an isolated classroom. Both of these models of educational provision have more in common with 'special' education than with 'inclusive' education.

The Regulations of Special Education Programs and Institutes (RSEPI) in Saudi Arabia (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 2001; 2016) confirm that all workers who work directly and indirectly with students with disabilities should be paid an additional 20% to 30% more than those who work with students without disabilities. Teachers of students with disabilities, therefore, earn 30% more than general classroom teachers. In addition, practitioners and administrators who work in special education departments are also paid 20% more than colleagues focused on general classrooms and education. These regulations also enshrine the hours of work for special education teachers must not be more than 18 hours per week.

1.2.5   Deaf Education in Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia, more than 5000 Deaf students are enrolled in its education system (Ministry of Education, 2016). The majority of those students are study in isolated classrooms that called

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[6] Capital D refers to Deaf people as a minority group with their own culture based around sign language and their own rights (Shakespeare, 2018).

"Alamel Programs" with the remaining students enrolled at separated schools (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 2001, 2016). The Arabic Sign Language[7] is the main and only tool of communication inside both placements. The Regulations of Special Education Programs and Institutes (RSEPI) in Saudi Arabia (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 2001; 2016) organise the whole education system for these students and all related services.

1.3   Research aims and questions

This study aimed to investigate how Deaf students at Saudi primary schools experience their education. It also sought to disentangle the apparent contradiction between the discourses of the Saudi education system and school level practice. The following research questions provided guidance for this research:

1. How is inclusive education policy enacted in Saudi primary schools?
2. How well are Deaf students served by this school system, and why?

Inclusive education theory (Slee, 2011, 2018) has been extensively employed in this study. To a lesser extent, major concepts from critical disability theory (Goodley, 2016; Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2016) have been examined. Furthermore, Critical Policy Analysis in Education (Diem et al., 2014) has been used for policy analysis and Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) (Willig, 2013) has been employed to read and analyse the collected data.

1.4   Thesis structure

This thesis has been constructed into six major chapters. This first chapter includes an introduction to the study, the context for the research as well as key issues related to Saudi Arabian education.

The second chapter critically reviews earlier research and examines concepts and theory that relate to this study. Previous publications have been systematically located and critically

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[7] There is no one agreed Arabic Sign Language in Arabic region. However, Saudi education system use the standard Arabic Dictionary of Sign Language as main resource for teaching Deaf students.

discussed.

The third chapter outlines the methodological choices and decisions made in the planning, implementation and analytical phases of the study. The philosophical underpinnings and methods are discussed and justified.

The fourth chapter outlines the two main analytical phases namely the Critical Policy Analysis in Education (CPAE) (Diem et al., 2017) and the Foucauldian Discourse Analysis framework (Willig, 2013).

The fifth chapter discusses the findings from this study in light of the current literature about inclusion of Deaf students. In addition, it relates these findings to key studies from the literature review to provide further theorization and understanding of main outcomes.

The final chapter articulates the main conclusions from this study. Furthermore, it offers some insight into how the situation for Deaf students in the Saudi context could be improved, by proposing future research.

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2. Understandings of disability

3. Disability Studies

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2

2 Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter critically discusses previous studies and relevant publications on inclusive education in general, inclusion for Deaf students internationally and inclusion of Deaf students in the Saudi context to situate this study within a broader scholarly context. This critique includes a focus on studies that accept segregated educational placements as inclusive schooling.

This chapter begins by discussing traditional models of understanding and perceptions about disability. International studies about inclusive education are then considered. This is followed by research about inclusion within the Saudi context. Following that, the discussion examines inclusive education in general and then inclusion of Deaf students in particular. The chapter concludes by summarizing the main findings and limitations of previous work, in order to provide a clear contextual framework for this study.

2.2 Understandings of disability

This section begins with a discussion of how disability is understood and perceived. How disability is conceptualized directly affects attitudes and expectations, policy, human rights, advocacy, resourcing and the provision of educational services. Disability is complicated and, simultaneously, interesting, and it is an important societal concern (Shakespeare, 2018).

In this section, prevalent understandings of disability and surrounding issues are critiqued to provide a context for this study. The literature review draws upon Critical Disability Studies and Inclusive Education to critically examine current literature. To begin, I argue that the differing perspectives presented by scholars represented in the literature are affected by researchers' ontological[8] stance towards disability. The researcher's stance differs widely

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[8] Ontology is the view of being or individual understanding about existence (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

according to their disciplinary worldview and theoretical leanings.

Ontological conceptions of disability help to negotiate a shift between traditional and contemporary perceptions of disability. These conceptions of disability are well established in the literature (Devlieger, Brown, Miranda-Galarza, & Strickfaden, 2016). The prevailing models include Cultural/Religious, Medical, Social and Individual models. Each of these models implies differing purposes and agendas. These have often resulted in negative labelling and stereotyping, with associated research perpetuating relatively unsophisticated understandings of disability (Smart & Smart, 2006).

A significant task and concern for many organisations (such as social groups, schools, universities, medical centres and medical societies) is to develop shared understandings and interpretations of disability. These are important for individuals with disability, their teachers, families, peers, siblings, activists, professionals and researchers in disability studies and education fields. The intention here is not to discuss all models of disability, but to raise the significance of these ways of thinking.

Consequently, the next sections focus on the Moral/Religious traditional model and the outdated Medical and Social Models because they are predominant in the literature and continue to be referred to in scholarly publications. All three models are dominant in the Saudi context and assist in conceptualising the difference between inclusive education and special education.

2.2.1 Cultural/Religious Model

For decades now, a strong correlation has appeared to exist between cultural and religious values and beliefs and perceptions of disability (Gardou, 2018). The Cultural/Religious Model is one of the oldest ways of thinking about disability and it still manifests in different cultures. This model has long history (Smart, 2009) that accounts for a traditional interpretation of disability. Firstly, disability is seen as a punishment from God for the disabled child's parents, as a consequence of their sins (Devlieger, 2005; Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 2016). Another traditional interpretation views the disability as result of "evil spirits" (Gray, Midgley, & Webb, 2012). These ideas existed in traditional Arabic cultures along with many other cultures. More educated societies reject these ideas, but these views are still held by some (Turmusani, 2018).

In contrast, another religious view sees disability as gift from God for some people (Landsman, 2008) and this encourages people to help disabled people from a religious perspective. This is the dominant viewpoint in Saudi society where this study is located. Most Saudi people tend to provide help and services for people with disabilities (Alshahrani, 2014) and believe that these actions bring them closer to Allah. Many charities provide care services to people with disabilities as a result of embracing this concept. Despite the good intentions implicit here, the concept of rights for people with disabilities is affected. Indeed, it is a radical model (Sajid, 2009) that actually causes people with disabilities to be deprived of their basic human rights. The overall effect of this Cultural/Religious model may ensure that people with disabilities are dependent on charitable services instead of being included in deferent community organisations and becoming independent individuals (Turmusani, 2018).

Another aspect of this cultural dimension is that some parents conceal their disabled children and isolate them from social life because of their fear that shame may affect the reputation of whole family (Bryan, 2010; Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 2016). Although this viewpoint was noticeable in Saudi society in the late 20th century (Al-Gain & Al-Abdulwahab, 2002), it has changed dramatically in recent times as a result of educational improvements. However, this practice of hiding children with disabilities is still reported to occur to some extent (Njelesani et al., 2018; Turmusani, 2018).

To broaden this discussion, in the next section another important model, the medical model, is outlined because of its significance to understanding disability. Although limited in scope, the medical model is alive and well in Saudi Arabia.

2.2.2 Medical model

The medical model, or an individual model as called by some scholars (Oliver, 2009; Sullivan, 2011), emerged from the medical profession at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century (Sullivan, 2011). This model explains disability as a problem of pathology within the individual person (Carson, 2009; Dirth & Branscombe, 2017); a problem that requires intervention and treatment. Disability is viewed from a perspective of technical superiority and focuses on medical solutions for the problem of disability (Devlieger, 2005; Dirth & Branscombe, 2017). This model also considers disability as an individual responsibility

(Kiesler, 1999). In the medical model people with disability are viewed as individuals who have diseases or conditions that must be treated (Sibanda, 2015). As a result of this, this model requires activation of intervention programs that have medical features such as rehabilitation programs (Dirth & Branscombe, 2017).

The medical model has been soundly criticized within disability studies and inclusive education literature. The arguments vary but include the propensity to divide and fragment communities and enhance disagreement and competition between different categories of disability (Smart & Smart, 2006). Furthermore, the medical model provides justification for isolation and classification procedures for people with disabilities although it is well intentioned (Michigan Disability Rights Coalition, 2014). Moreover, this model accommodates prejudice about disabled people (Sibanda, 2015) and this does not engender positive attitudes towards them. Professionals have lower expectations of people with disabilities as a result of applying this model (Smart & Smart, 2006). It has been argued that this model restricts the possibility of people living with disabilities to lead successful and self-reliant lives (Smeltzer, 2007).

As a result, people with disabilities are perceived to be needy, weak, incapable and dependent (Sullivan, 2011). Finally, and most importantly, the medical model disregards the shortcomings of cultural constructions in social environments (Sibanda, 2015). This is outlined for example, by Sullivan (2011) who argues that a major flaw in the medical model is the abrogation of moral and ethical responsibility that society should assume towards people with disabilities. Furthermore, responsibility is unreasonably located within individuals with disabilities who, under this model of thinking, are required to adapt themselves to fit into their societies.

2.2.2.1 The medical model and the Deaf community

With specific regard to people with hearing impairments, there are some who advocate the medical model of disability. For instance, deafness is sometimes conceptualized as a deficit that requires medical intervention by technologies to solve the problems or reduce its affects (Sibanda, 2015). Some Deaf people interviewed by Skelton and Valentine (2003) perceived their deafness as a deficit that causes a disability that requires medical treatment such as cochlear implants. In the same study, other interviewees reported that they viewed themselves as a minority group with an exclusive communication tool (sign language) inside their society

(Skelton & Valentine, 2003).

Another form of intervention, associated with the medical model, is auditory–verbal therapy, which is conducted by a therapist with expertise in auditory deficiencies. This kind of treatment is an intervention tool that aims to enhance and support residual hearing to improve speech skills (Eriks-Brophy, Durieux-Smith, Olds, & Fitzpatrick, 2006). This process can be considered an example of the medical model of treatment for Deaf children, that aims to shift them from disability into what might be considered more normal functioning.

It is important to clarify here that I have no disagreement with the importance of early intervention. Assisting individuals with hearing impairments to be included in their schools, social organisations and life in general is important. However, I argue that concentrating only on medical treatments to 'cure' these people tends to ignore the barriers and social constructions that can prevent societal acceptance. It seems that these two positions are incompatible with each other, however, they could work together to improve ultimate outcomes for Deaf people. For instance, the medical intervention, such as cochlear implants, could enhance the chance of including Deaf students in general classrooms.

2.2.2.2   The medical model and Saudi Arabia

The medical model, and its fellow traveler, special education provision, are woven very tightly into the Saudi context at all levels. It is dominant in Saudi Arabia - in education, the media, social services, governmental supports, policy and society in general. This model strongly influences the provision of education as it constitutes a fundamental basis for "special education" where children with similar impairments are grouped together. These educational contexts employ the same purpose as the medical model as they concentrate on the child's impairment and build education around their 'problem'. Indeed, the ontological stance of special education views disability as a problem in genetic makeup or the mind of the student that requires attention via provision of "special" services in isolated placements (Slee, 2018). In this way, the ontological viewpoint of special education starkly depicts the medical model.

In contrast, another widely used model forwarded a radically different view of disability and education is the social model, and this will be discussed in the next section.

2.2.3   Social model

The social model emerged as a result of arguments inside the Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) in 1976 between intellectuals and politicians (Oliver, 2017; Shakespeare, 2006). This model interprets disability as a problem that comes from the surrounding environments around the person where the individual with disability is not the problem. Indeed, this model shifts consideration away from the impairment of the person to focus instead on the disabling social environments (Crow, 2007). Oliver (2013) asserts that society is the cause of disabling people with impairments and characterises the social model in the following way:

> *[The social model]* does not deny the problem of disability but locates it squarely within society. It is not individual limitations, of whatever kind, which are the cause of the problem but society's failure to provide appropriate services and adequately ensure the needs of disabled people are fully taken into account in its social organisation (p. 32).

The appearance of this model was a watershed moment for people with disabilities. That this model "has revolutionised, and continues to revolutionise, the world of disability is not to overstate the case" (Gallagher, Connor, & Ferri, 2014, p. 1120). The social model has the potential to enhance self-image among people with disabilities and see the individual with a disability as a valued member who has a right to participate fully in society (Sullivan, 2011). It also has the potential to contribute to the collective organisation and unification of people with disabilities into groups to advocate for their human rights. The social model has resulted in unparalleled success in changing the discourses of disability (Oliver, 2017).

In addition, the social model has the potential to improve the opportunities for interdependence between members of the community including individuals with disabilities (Devlieger, 2005) and, further, it encourages relations between people and institutions in society (Barnes, 2000). Furthermore, this model provides political-ethical dimensions to disability studies which result in increasing participation and inclusion for people with a disability into their societies (Gleeson, 2002). Furthermore, it holds societies as responsible for the barriers and obstacles that people with disabilities face (Carson, 2009). This model promotes identifying and

challenging the common barriers and challenges that face those with disabilities. It also helps disability support organisations to influence societal perceptions through its use of the media, and helps to change views towards people with disabilities from needy to active individuals (Oliver, 2013). Moreover, employment of the social model encourages policymakers to provide political actions to prevent the exclusion of people with disabilities (Barnes & Mercer, 2004).

Saudi systems do not fully employ the social model as a result of the recurring domination of the medical model. The social model is largely absent or ignored in schools, policy and most academic studies, apart from a significant few Saudi-focused studies (Alamri, 2014; Alanazi, 2012; Alothman, 2014; Alshahrani, 2014).

2.2.3.1 The social model and the Deaf community

In reference to Deaf people, the Social Model calls for the right to self- definition (Oliver, 1990, 1993) and identity pride for Deaf people. Additionally, the communication problems facing Deaf people appeared in the Social Model where Oliver (1996) refers to these problems in terms of the inability of society to communicate with Deaf people rather than an inability on the part of the Deaf themselves. This model considers society to be one main reason for the exclusion of Deaf people largely because of disabling environments, structured barriers and negative attitudes (Skelton & Valentine, 2003).

2.2.3.2 Criticism of the social model

On the other hand, the social model has been criticized because of its disregard for diseases or injuries that may play a major role in a disabled person's life (Smeltzer, 2007). In addition, Anastasiou & Kauffman claim that this model downplays the importance of the biological and psychological aspects of disability (2013). Oliver (2013) also argues that,

> The social model fails to take account of difference and presents disabled people
> as one unitary group, whereas in reality our race, gender, sexuality and age mean
> that our needs and lives are much more complex than that" (p. 1025).

However, Oliver (2013) also argues that the social model of disability is merely a tool that potentially improves the lives of people with disabilities by increasing their visibility, leading

in some degree to overcoming social barriers and challenges.

In conclusion, there is much to be learnt from Anastasiou and Kauffman (2013) who argue that "people [with disabilities] will benefit most by recognising both the biological and the social dimensions of disabilities" (p. 441). There is also a place for the medical model for individuals with disabilities as some may need medical interventions (Shakespeare, 2006). What is, evident however, is the need for more and improved interventions to take place in the surroundings and environments of people with disabilities (Siebers, 2013). There is a need for increased awareness among schools, families, peers and the community, as well as policies regarding and including people with disabilities. In other words, dealing with disability is the responsibility of the whole community, to can create a suitable environment for full interaction and inclusion (Jeanes et al., 2018). All models of disability have influenced disability and impact research and theory as well as the development of policy and practice.

2.3 Disability studies

Disability Studies is an area of study that examines disability and its effects from varying perspectives including cultural, social, academic and political. Within Disability Studies scholarship, disability is not medicalised (Oliver, 2009). Instead the academic community views disability as a cultural, political, educational or social phenomenon (Goodley, 2016). Consequently, this ontological stance opens the door to studying the circumstances around disability and the impact on individuals living with different types of disabilities.

Studying disability brings with it some concern about how the able-bodied built careers and gain authority in this field without either reference to or analysis of the consequences for individuals with disabilities (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2016). Additionally, researching disability is an academic activity sometimes conducted by non-disabled individuals often on behalf of those perceived to be powerless disabled people (Slee, 2011). In the same vein, Oliver (2009, p. 9) argued:

> When I began to read some of the things that able-bodied academics, researchers
> and professionals had written about disability, I was staggered at how little it
> related to my own experience of disability or indeed, of most other disabled

people I had come to know. Over the next few years it gradually began to dawn on me that if disabled people left it to others to write about disability, we would inevitably end up with inaccurate and distorted accounts of our experiences and inappropriate service provision and professional practices based upon these inaccuracies and distortions.

However, it can also be argued that studying disability is important for both those with disabilities and those with able-bodies to jointly investigate. This allows for and encourages critically re-thinking and reconsidering many established ideas that have long been regarded as fact (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2016). Furthermore, disability study owes a debt to many non-disabled scholars, activists and advocates who participated in exposing practices of injustice, oppression, exclusion and marginalization against people with disabilities (Goodley, 2013). At the same time, it is increasingly significant that the participation of people with disabilities in disability study is crucial. Indeed, "we might choose to shed the expert cloak of competence and invite the powerless and frequently over-researched minorities to speak authoritatively about their experience" (Slee, 2011, pp. 82-83).

Disability Studies do not constitute one discipline; rather, it is interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary (Goodley, 2016). Therefore, it "seeks to expand the ways that society defines, conceptualizes and understands the meaning of disability" (Baglieri, 2017, p. 5). Indeed, Disability Studies possesses the strong potential to assist individuals with disabilities as well as their communities via enhancing their contributions and interactions in neighbourhoods and social organisations such as schools and workplaces and, more broadly, in all aspects of life.

The rise of Disability Studies in Social Sciences and the Humanities in the 1990s was contemporaneous with the appearance of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990 (Davis, 2016). In addition, Disability Studies was influenced by many movements such as the social model of disability in UK (Oliver, 1990) the Minority Model and the Cultural Model of disability in North America. Additional underpinnings came from Feminism, Queer and Critical Race Studies (Goodley, 2016). Disability Studies provide a very useful basis for understanding the theory and practices of inclusive education (Baglieri, 2017). Indeed, Disability Studies includes different orientations as it is related to many different disciplines (Goodley, Hughes, & Davis, 2012).

This discussion now turns to Critical Disability Studies (CDS), a discipline that developed from Disability Studies.

2.4   Critical disability studies

Critical Disability Studies (CDS) is a field of scholarship that investigates disability and its related issues by challenging many entrenched presuppositions about both disability and ability (Goodley, 2016; Smith, Perrier, & Martin, 2016). CDS emerged in the last decade as a reaction against societal practices that exclude people with disabilities and view them in inappropriate ways. These exclusionary practices are consequences of established concepts about idealism, normalism and citizenship (Goodley, 2016; Goodley, Lawthom, Liddiard, & Cole, 2017). CDS endeavours to disclose how normative standards in social life contribute to the marginalization and isolation of "abnormal bodies" (Baglieri, 2017). CDS first appeared as a field to critically re-evaluate the previous works of Disability Studies, and then became the preferred approach for scholars of disability (Davis, 2016).

CDS was influenced by black minority and feminist studies to politicise and advocate for people with disabilities in their struggles for full equality (Goodley, 2016). Indeed, the emergence of Critical Disability Studies has resulted in a shift in thinking and theorising disability to produce new conceptual understandings that challenge prejudice (Goodley, Lawthom, Liddiard, & Cole, 2017; Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2016; Shildrick, 2013). CDS opens new doors to understanding the ability and disability as well (Smith, Perrier, & Martin, 2016).

Critical Disability Studies considers the ontological basis and meaning of being human in the light of societal underpinnings about disability. Thus, new philosophical and theoretical notions have emerged in this field of scholarship. However, only some of these notions will be discussed in this study, such as "normalism", "disablism" and "ableism".

2.4.1   Disablism

The concept of disablism refers to entrenched preconceptions that view individuals with disabilities as having less value and significance than others (Thomas, 2007). In a similar vein, Campbell (2009) defines disablism as "a set of assumptions (conscious or unconscious) and

practices that promote the differential or unequal treatment of people because of actual or presumed disabilities" (p. 4). The entrenchment of these preconceptions is evident in many discourses within such aspects of culture and society as policy, religion, educational systems, media and arts. Embracing the concept of disablism leads to discriminatory, oppressive and arbitrary behaviours against disabled people (Thomas, 2007). For example, excluding students with disabilities into special educational placements (separated schools or isolated classrooms) is a clear indication of the prevalence of this concept among the regulators and practitioners in the educational system. These exclusionary practices reflect how educational systems abject and demean disabled persons (Slee, 2018).

Being a disabled person means holding an isolated place in all aspects of society, most notably in the educational system and in policy and it is here that we witness discourses linking disability to marginalization and exclusion (Liddiard & Goodley, 2016). Indeed, the problem is not in disability itself, the problem in our disablist views towards the disabilities and their people. To understand the significance of disability and the concept of disablism, it is helpful to also investigate the conception of ableism (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2016).

2.4.2 Ableism

The term ableism in Critical Disability Studies indicates discrimination and prejudice that favours normative abilities of the body and mind (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2016). In other words, it refers to discriminatory, oppressive or abusive behaviours against individuals with disabilities and those behaviours arising from an appreciation of the ability of able-bodied individuals (Brittain & Beacom, 2018). In a similar vein, Campbell (2001, p. 44) defines ableism as:

> A network of beliefs, processes and practices that produces a particular kind of self and body (the corporeal standard) that is projected as the perfect, species-typical and *therefore* essential and fully human. Disability then is cast as a diminished state of being human.

Ableism is premised on two main concepts, namely normativity and humanism (Vehmas & Watson, 2016). It is concerned with the extent to which an individual meets normative standards (idealism) or how they are perceived to be a full and complete human being. The

concept of ableism is "associated with the broader cultural logics of autonomy, self-sufficiency and independence" (Goodley, Liddiard, & Runswick-Cole, 2018, p. 209). Thus, ableism becomes an inherent notion in many social systems that privilege able bodies who can live, perform, improve and consume as independent entities (Liddiard & Goodley, 2016).

Campbell (2014) argues that "ableism is deeply seeded at the level of knowledge about personhood and liveability" (p. 80). Ableism contributes to discourses and imagery of attractiveness, idealism and physical perfection, but it makes a destructive contribution in such contexts as that of Critical Disability Studies and leads to often unattainable and hence dangerous ideals of human physical and psychological perfection. However, all cultures and societies embrace ideals about humanity, and this entrenched thinking feeds perspectives, thoughts and theoretical understanding and thus might, consciously, unconsciously or subconsciously, result in excluding, marginalizing or even hiding community members who fail in meeting these idealism standards (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2016).

I argue that we live in an ableist epoch where many things might appear constructed for competitiveness, creating a world where humans are told they can never live without competition or idealism. Now more than ever, impacted by social media, idealized constructions of youth, wellness and beauty are universally revered. In the discussion chapter, I develop this argument in relation to the education system in Saudi Arabia.

Constructing social institutions and systems, policies, laws and cultural perspectives that cater primarily to one normative standard about what it means to be human is highly problematic. Idealism and perfection are important factors that contribute to the isolation and exclusion of people with disabilities from these entities (Goodley, Liddiard, & Runswick-Cole, 2018). Indeed, the existence of disability constitutes a significant challenge to ableist ideologies. Conversely, disability has a disruptive potential to trouble entrenched preconceptions about idealism, humanism, logic and normativity (Goodley et al., 2017; Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2016).

This study investigates how the concepts of disablism and ableism manifest themselves. In the forthcoming analysis chapter, I discuss this further in relation to participant interviews. Deaf students in Saudi Arabia seem to be suspended between disablist stakeholders and ableist

systems and I will discuss this tension in more detail analysis chapter.

Campbell (2009) argues that "it is necessary to shift the gaze of contemporary scholarship away from the spotlight on disability to a more nuanced exploration of epistemologies and ontologies of ableism" (p. 3). Indeed, Critical Disability Studies, to a lesser extent, is used as a theoretical basis for this study as it sits comfortably beside theories of inclusive education.

2.5   Inclusive education

The general idea and agenda of the social model of disability is the mainstay for conceptualising inclusive education. Both assert that it is in the social structures and surrounding environments where the main causes of disabling people with impairments are constituted, and both maintain the actual reform starts by concentrating on these aspects rather than on disability itself (Oliver & Barnes, 2010). The history of inclusive education includes various international efforts in different situations all of which consider diversity in their social and cultural contexts (Armstrong & Barton, 2007; Harber, 2017).

Many nations have developed and continue to develop inclusive education policy and practice. As a result, international statements, conventions, agreements, and forms of legislation have also been drafted, including The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education the Dakar Framework (Harber, 2017; Peters, 2007), and the 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) (Rieser, 2012).

These international and national efforts are considered to be a reflection of the importance of inclusive education for humanity in general, and particularly for people with disabilities. The following sections will discuss some aspects of inclusive education, including conceptualisations and historical perspectives, terminology and the educational placement of students with disabilities.

2.5.1   Conceptions of inclusive education

Conceptions of inclusive education are many and varied, and much contention surrounds this term (Slee, 2011). Some scholars in this field argue that the main reason for these debates is the absence of a uniform definition from related international organisations (Loreman, Forlin,

Chambers, Sharma, & Deppeler, 2014). Others argue that difficulty with inclusive education is a result of confusion due to use of different terms such as integration, mainstreaming or inclusion (Dyson & Millward, 2000; Jahnukainen, 2015).

Furthermore, disagreement and preference for one term over another, overlap and confusion is evident in related laws, policy, regulations and practices (Thomas, Walker, & Webb, 2006). Another reason for these difficulties is the diversity of meaning of the term 'inclusion' from one country to another (Jahnukainen, 2015). Further, usage of these terms differs according to differences in conceptualisation in fields and within subjects (Hyde, Ohna, & Hjulstadt, 2005). Finally, another cause for difficulty is conflict among scholars about the effectiveness and impact of implementing 'inclusion' to all people with different disabilities throughout all countries and across all cultures.

As a result of these, inclusive education has various definitions and interpretations (Loreman, 2007). At the UNESCO conference in Salamanca in 1994, more than 300 participants representing 92 countries and more than 25 international organisations agreed on the statement that constitutes the foundations of 'inclusion':

> Inclusion is a process of solving and reacting to the various needs of all students, whereby the society as a whole focus more on the processes of teaching and learning, on the different cultures and communities, so that people feel less excluded from the education system and society in general. The process itself involves the changes and medications of the content, the approach, the structure and the strategy, with a common vision that encompasses all children of the same age with the only belief that the regular education system is responsible for the education of children (Ardijana et al., 2014, p. 14).

The Return to Salamanca conference in 2009 provided an additional definition of 'inclusion':

> Inclusive education [is] a process where mainstream schools and early year's settings are transformed so that all children/students are supported to meet their academic and social potential, and which involves removing barriers in environment, communication, curriculum, teaching, socialization and assessment at all levels (Forlin, 2013, p. 20).

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Moreover, some scholars view inclusive education in a broader way. For instance, Loreman and Deppeler (2002) conceptualise inclusive education as the right for a student with a disability to find the same education services provided to students without disabilities. Ainscow, Booth, and Dyson (2006) confirm three overlapping ways to define inclusive education that are:

> Reducing barriers to learning and participation for all students; as increasing the capacity of schools to respond to the diversity of students in their local communities in ways that treat them all as of equal value; and the putting of inclusive values into action in education and society (p. 297).

This understanding of inclusive education comes from a more comprehensive viewpoint as it considers such factors as: barriers, all students, local society, schools and equity. However, it does not explicitly mention the role of policy in inclusion. In a more extended discussion of this topic, Loreman (2009, p. 43) identifies some characteristics of inclusive education:

- All children attend their neighbourhood school.
- Schools and districts have a 'zero-rejection' policy when it comes to registering and teaching children in their region. Beyond that, all children are welcomed and valued.
- All children learn in regular, heterogeneous classrooms with same age peers.
- All children follow substantively similar programs of study, with curriculum that can be adapted and modified if needed. Modes of instruction are varied and responsive to the needs of all.
- All children contribute to regular school and classroom learning activities and events.
- All children are supported to make friends and be socially successful with their peers.
- Adequate resources and staff training are provided within the school and district to support inclusion' (Loreman, 2009, p. 43).

However, while this addresses many important aspects of inclusive education, it reduces the concept solely to these characteristics without considering other significant factors and how

inclusion is understood and implemented in areas such as policy, culture and media.

Indeed, many definitions and interpretations of inclusive education have been reviewed in previous literature (Bailey, Booth, & Ainscow, 1998; Barton & Peter, 1998; Farrell, 2004; Forest & Pearpoint, 1992; Forlin, Chambers, Loreman, Deppeler, & Sharma, 2013; Smith, Polloway, Patton & Dowdy, 2014; Potts, 1997; Thomas, 1997). The previous discussion above, about the concept of inclusive education, highlights some important points that are briefly outlined here.

Firstly, some of the previous interpretations of inclusive education can be viewed as being reductionist. For example, Slee (2011) argues that some scholars reduce inclusive education to a narrow concept that merely accommodates students with disabilities in general schools without appropriate changes or reconfiguration. In comparison, other interpretations address such aspects as advocating the right to educational access, the acceptance of diversity, increasing opportunities for participation, and decreasing barriers and exclusionism (Booth, 2017; Dovigo, 2017a; Ferri & Ashby, 2017).

In Saudi Arabia, no clear understanding of inclusive education exists. And this is largely because of the language used in policy and scholarship in that context. For example, the term 'integration' tends to be used instead of 'inclusion' in many studies (Examples include: Alothman, 2014; Hanafi, 2008; Shaira, 2013). Moreover, scholars in the Saudi context tend to reduce the concept of 'inclusion' to mean relocating some students from special schools or classrooms into general classrooms, referring to this process as 'full' integration. These points are taken up again shortly in Section 2.6 below.

2.5.2 A historical perspective

It is worth briefly visiting the historical stages of 'inclusive' education at this point because, as Barton (1996) argues, "the benefits of historical understanding are one of the essential preconditions of an effective struggle for change" (p. 9). Many people with disabilities have been largely ignored from the 1880s through to the 1960s. When any attention was paid to them, it was focused on segregated settings. Groups of people with disabilities experienced some integration in the 1980s, with the first signs of inclusion occurring in the early 1990s (Osgood, 2005; Rodriguez & Garro-Gil, 2015). Indeed, the debate about emergence of the

concept of inclusive education concept is iterative. Slee (2011) contends there was no actual starting point for inclusive education. He points to several factors that contributed to its appearance and growth including questions being raised within special education and medical and psychological practice. Critical and social theory and Disability Studies also contributed to clarifying the concept.

However, agreement is found in many scholarly publications that 1994, the year of the Salamanca Declaration, was the year of inclusive education's strong debut (Slee, 2007). The Salamanca Declaration (UNESCO, 1994) was considered a strong beginning for inclusive education internationally and the concept was introduced into many different countries at that time. Duke (2009) reported that 92 governments and 25 international organisations signed the Salamanca Declaration, confirming the right of all students to be educated in ordinary classrooms.

Subsequent efforts to enhance inclusive education followed. For instance, the Education For All (EFA) Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2000) confirmed many goals such as sharing and exchanging efforts and experiences to enhance educational opportunities for all students. Inclusive education was promoted and focused on the need to prepare the school rather than preparing students to fit into schools. The main goal was to achieve education for all by 2015.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006) affirmed many similar goals, such as standing against any kind of discrimination and encouraging countries to offer legislation that enhances equitable opportunities for people with disabilities in all sectors of life. This meant that a commitment to raising awareness among their people about disability and the rights of people with disabilities became required. Further, an expectation was established to protect people with disabilities, by offering equity and justice and protection from physical and psychological violence.

Another important milestone, related to enhancing inclusive education, was the *Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education* (UNESCO, 2009). This document helped to introduce the concept of inclusive education into different countries and provided assistance to countries aiming to enhance inclusive education in their educational systems. It also promoted the importance of enacting national legislation to develop inclusive education. In addition, the

World Education Forum 2015 (UNESCO, 2015) established a range of common goals by outlining five aims: Right to Education, Equity in Education, Inclusive Education, Quality Education and Lifelong Learning. This resulted in the nomination of the theme for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2015 (UN Enable, 2015) as *Inclusion matters: access and empowerment for people of all abilities*.

In Saudi Arabia, although attention on education for people with disabilities began in 1960 (Al-Mousa, 2010), the concept of "integration" was first used by the Ministry of Education in 1996 (Alothman, 2014), rather than the international term of "inclusive education". Before this date, little had occurred in that context. According to Al-Mousa (2010) the first experience of 'integration' in Saudi was in the city of Hofuf in 1984. The second reported instance was in 1986, when the kindergarten at King Saud University opened its doors for children with disabilities.

In terms of students with hearing impairments in Saudi Arabia, some were moved from separate Deaf schools to isolated self-contained classrooms. Deaf students in self-contained classrooms were not permitted to study in ordinary classrooms.

2.6   Integration or inclusion?

Scholarship on the inclusion or exclusion of people with disabilities, reveals overlaps and conflations in the use of terminology such as 'mainstream', 'integration' and 'inclusion' (Loreman et al., 2014; Thomas et al., 2006). In some studies, these terms have been used interchangeably as synonyms (Hassanein, 2015; Thomas et al., 2006), and in others they have been used with different meanings (Alothman, 2014). According to Ardijana et al. (2014), the terms 'integration' and 'inclusion' are often considered to be synonymous, yet they are quite different in reality. Loreman (1999) attempts to justify the conflation of 'integration' and 'inclusion' by describing them as having similar objectives with the ultimate goal of reducing the isolation of students with disabilities.

Although Ashman and Elkins (2002) defined 'integration' as the attendance of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment such as general classroom or isolated (self-contained) classrooms inside general schools, Garner (2009) divided integration into three

types. These are: *locational integration* (where students with disabilities are educated in isolated classrooms at mainstreamed schools); *social integration* (where students with disabilities participate with other students in social activities at schools); and *functional integration* (where students with disabilities study inside general classrooms with their peers using same curriculum). It can be seen that 'functional integration' seems to have the same intention as 'inclusion'. Furthermore, Norwich and Kelly (2005) confirmed that the term 'integration' had been replaced by 'inclusion'. This statement shows the overlap of these two terms in many studies and articles using them synonymously.

Other studies have clearly distinguished between what is meant by 'integration' and 'inclusion'. Dash (2006) for example, asserted that 'integration' comes from outside the school and relies on the abilities of students with disabilities adapting to enable their integration inside the school. In contrast, 'inclusion' puts the onus on the school to adjust itself to be prepared to include students with disabilities (Loreman, 1999). Additionally, the concept of 'integration' considers the school a partner in the process of assimilation while responsibility belongs to the student with a disability (Frederickson, 2009). However, the notion of 'inclusion' views the school as part of the process of accommodation. This means it has the responsibility for adapting the curriculum, teaching methods, services and all matters needing to be prepared to include students with disabilities (Frederickson, 2009; Loreman, 1999). Another essential point is that 'integration' does not mean the restructuring of school environments to accommodate students with disabilities (Thomas, 1997). On the contrary, 'inclusion' implies restructuring these environments to accommodate the needs of all students regardless of their diversity (Ainscow, 1991; Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000; Hegarty, Pocklington & Lucas, 1981; Loreman, 1999).

In the Saudi context, the term 'integration' has been commonly used as a term to refer to moving students with disabilities from special to general schools regardless of the actual situations in these placements. Indeed, the term 'inclusion' is used interchangeably with 'integration' because both concepts translate to the same word in the Arabic language. In general, among Arabic scholars, the term "*Aldamj*" is preferred, although several scholars, myself included, call for the use of "*Altaleem Alshameel*" to distinguish inclusive education from integration and to give this concept a clearer interpretation and, hence, a stronger strong

basis.

According to Alkhateeb, Hadidi, and Alkhateeb (2016) the definition of inclusive education is unclear and inconsistent across Arab countries. Moreover, there is insufficient clarity about the concept of 'inclusion' in Saudi contexts and some studies use the term 'inclusion', perhaps to sound up to date with current understandings in disability studies, although their studies had been conducted in isolated environments. One excellent example of this is, "Saudi Educators' Attitudes towards Deaf and Hard of Hearing inclusive education in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia" (Alshahrani, 2014) which will be critically examined in section 2.6.

Oliver's (2017) elaboration of the "terminological confusion" in some disability studies has been instructive. He argues that,

> This terminological confusion is not just a matter of agreeing to use the same words in the same way. It is also about understanding and appeared when a policy analyst attempted to relate her own experience to policy issues in the area of disability (p. 29).

This means that conflation of these terms has had a domino effect on all related services and their provision for people with disabilities.

In the next section, I draw upon inclusive education to critique some traditional understandings of special education and to situate inclusive education as an appropriate option for students with hearing impairments in Saudi's educational system.

2.7   How are inclusive education and special education different?

The availability of special education marked a turning point in the lives of people with disabilities. This contributed to supporting individuals to move from their previous situations characterized by marginalization, oppression, humiliation and segregation. Special education enabled them to study in separate schools (institutions) or in isolated, so-called 'self-contained' classrooms. In this section, I question generally accepted understandings, practices and issues related to Special Education.

Special education emerged from the ontology of the medical model that considers disability as

existing within individuals (Slee, 2011). It maintains these people need to be labelled and referred to suitable services in special education sittings. As a result of this view of Special Education, every individual will surely have some label or classification. Furthermore, the practices of special education to label and classify enhance problematic and simplistic binary oppositions (abled and enabled; normal and abnormal) (Ashby, 2010). Connor and Gabel (2013) argued that any educational system based on social educational services contributes to the division of people into two groups 'disabled' and 'non-disabled'.

Another foundational concept underpinning special education is that each person should be treated as a separate case. Special education builds an individual plan for the child with a disability that focuses on the problems to be overcome, or the pathology to be cured. The first criticism of medical model is that concentrating on weaknesses promotes low self-esteem in general (Fennell, 2016) but has worse consequences for individuals with disability (Shakespeare, 2006b). Secondly, using a strategy that focuses on the shortcomings of people with disabilities necessarily increases the culture of low expectation among those people who surround the disabled individual (Kelly & Byrne, 2018). This affects people with disabilities and may drive them not to look for opportunities (Magasi et al., 2015). Thirdly, this strategy is used to justify the provision of a reduced, lesser curriculum for students with disabilities. This is a curriculum that does not sufficiently improve the skills required for them to be qualified and valued members of societies (McCloskey, 2011).

Moreover, special education comprises a group of educational programs and support services that been offered to students with disabilities in separate and isolated environments. This effectively serves to support isolation of individuals with disabilities. And it is justified with the argument that every child with a disability requires extensive effort and additional time. However, these practices lead to discrimination against basic rights for disabled persons. In this process they are denied access to equitable services and opportunities, within inclusive environments, that support interaction with others (Dovigo, 2017b).

Providing education for disabled students in separate classrooms or schools is likely to also significantly reduce the chance of effective attainment, because such learning is based on interaction between the student and such socio-cultural resources as teachers, peers, school staff and wider society (Shogren et al., 2015). Thus, students with disability may graduate from

such settings with weak social skills as well as insufficient academic outcomes.

In Saudi Arabia, special education dominates conception and practice for both educating students with disabilities and teacher education at university programs across the country (Almousa, 2010). For example, the title of 'Special Education' is applied to the department within the Ministry of Education and many Saudi universities also have special education departments (Ministry of Education, 2016). Most notably, Saudi education policy refers to special education Regulations. Inclusive education is hardly mentioned in Saudi contexts, except for rare studies that perfunctorily apply this terminology to appear current. Similarly, within governmental discourses the term inclusive education is sometimes used with a possible aim of satisfying international organisations.

While some have claimed that special education plays a significant role in educating people with disabilities (Gerber, 2011; Ledford & Gast, 2018), extensive developments have occurred using inclusive educational approaches (Slee, 2011; 2018). This indicates additional strength for the argument that an Inclusive approach, rather than a special educational approach that best serves the individual and the wider community. This is linked to the argument outlined earlier about the limitations of the medical model of disability, compared with the social model.

In the following paragraphs, this argument is developed to focus on Deaf students in Saudi schools. Special education has been widely accused of excluding people with disabilities from ordinary schools. The large body of international literature adds weight to the argument that it is time to move from isolationism to inclusivity (Ainscow, 1991; Ainscow & César, 2006; Armstrong, 2016; Barnes, 2014; Booth, 2017; Ferri & Ashby, 2017; Florian, Rouse, & Black-Hawkins, 2016; Forlin, Chambers, Loreman, Deppeler, & Sharma, 2013; Loreman, 2007; Sands, Kozleski, & French, 2000; Slee, 2011, 2012). Resistance to this change and rejection of international arguments may be motivated by a range of factors, including vested interests, political agendas or fear of failure.

However, Slee (2011) describes how special education had itself been established via heroic efforts and progressive claims from families, doctors and educators. These efforts, too, had initially faced harsh conditions of resistance and refusal. When families, doctors and educators saw how students with disabilities progressed in special education programs, those who had

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been in opposition became proponents (Slee, 2011). In the same vein, inclusive education is currently facing criticism and resistance from different directions in Saudi Arabia, and this was reported by some participants in this study, but inclusive education has proven itself in many different studies and international educational systems (Armstrong, 2016; Black-Hawkins, Florian, & Rouse, 2007; Ferri & Ashby, 2017; Forlin, Chambers, Loreman, Deppeler, & Sharma, 2013; Sands, Kozleski, & French, 2000; Slee, 2011, 2012). Some of these positive aspects of inclusive education will be discussed next.

The philosophy of inclusive education begins with fundamental human rights concepts such as: education for all, equity and social justice, right to access and right to social membership (Forlin, 2012; Titchkosky, 2011). Furthermore, it can be seen as a reaction of the isolating nature of some entities that surround people with disabilities. Additionally, inclusive education movement could be seen as a response to some notions that many people hold about life and human rights issues including disability. These notions are influenced by many different internal and external factors. For instance, Slee (2011) observes that representations of disability in art, literature, various media tools and other materials contribute to the creation of a stereotype about disability and people with disabilities as deformed or distorted.

These images of distortion transfer to daily life and experience and "become the ubiquitous subconscious etchings of the common sense" (p. 49). In this regard, Goodley and Runswick-Cole (2016) argue that demanding the achievement of the principles of inclusive education contributes to deconstructing fixed intellectual images and ideas engraved in human minds about idealism and normalism. In the coming sections, these concepts will be further discussed.

Next, I discuss the notion of 'education for all'. The prevalence of this term continues to indicate how education can be a right for some, a privilege for others and an impossible dream for others, particularly those in particular poor countries and in the lower echelons of some societies. If this is true for many non-disabled children, the situation becomes worse for children with disabilities - not only in poor countries but also in wealthy ones. Wills, Morton, McLean, Stephenson and Slee (2014) argue that children with disabilities are often deprived of equitable opportunities in education and appropriate services. Although special education services theoretically enhance the concept of 'education for all', advocacy for some students with disabilities is still required to provide equitable educational provision in inclusive

environments. Inclusive education, and not special education or 'education for all' is the equitable and inclusive way to achieve actual education for all (Ainscow et al., 2006; Forlin, 2013). This in interpreted to mean there is a guarantee to provide quality education for all children in line with the principle of equitable opportunity (Forlin, 2013; Kim & Lindeberg, 2012). Indeed, the discipline of Disability Studies in Education (DSE) supports inclusion for all students and plays an important role in promoting 'education for all'. This succeeds in shifting the emphasis away from the functional defects of disability to the reconsideration of school structures and reconfiguration of barriers to education for children with disabilities (Collins & Ferri, 2016).

Another principle fundamental to inclusive education is that of equity and social justice (Forlin, 2012). That there is a need for advocacy, in order to obtain equity and social justice, is an indication of the extent of oppression, exclusion and marginalization faced by people with disabilities in many communities (Slee, 2011). As a response to these arbitrary practices, many equality movements have emerged to call for equity and social justice (Oliver, 2017).

The issue of equity has been a major impetus for the development of inclusive education (Forlin, 2012) and many countries have adopted this concept in response to pressure from national social justice and equity movements (Forlin, Sharma, Loreman, & Sprunt, 2015). The social model of disability plays a significant role in enhancing ideas and claims that lie behind some equity movements (Oliver, 2013). It is worth mentioning that equity requires that rights and suitable services are obtained for individuals, and this is a long way from the notion of "normalization" (Keifer-Boyd, Bastos, Richardson, & Wexler, 2018).

Slee (2011) argues that people with disabilities become targets for charity groups and other medical and social organisations who direct them to achieve "normalization". However, the principles of inclusive education stand in opposition to the concept of normalization. Inclusive education calls for celebration of diversity because, as Goodley and Runswick-Cole (2016) argue, disability has the radical ability to trouble such concepts as 'normalization' and 'rationality' which are present when humanism is mentioned, and policy is legislated.

Thus, in *The Irregular School: Exclusion, Schooling and Inclusive Education,* Slee (2011) calls for inclusive education to begin by the establishment of goals and articulation of aspirations.

This, he argues, should be supported by the illustration of unequal relations inside various social organisations that prevent inclusion. Ultimately, disclosing determinants of inequality is the beginning of the journey to achieve equity, equity and social justice for all.

Furthermore, the right to access is an important pillar of Inclusive Education theory. It establishes the fundamental idea that accessing all required services is a human right not a privilege. Thus, laws are crucial in ensuring the right of access for people with disabilities to educational and social services, on an equal standing with non-disabled individuals (Whitburn, 2015). Slee (2011) argues that depriving people with disabilities of the right of access to different services is based on flawed policy, which can be overcome by legislation. And this is required to prevent exclusionary practices.

Indeed, individuals with disabilities face systematic deprivation and isolation from accessing available provision in many organisations (Oliver, 2017). One of these is neighbourhood schools where a range of barriers block students with disabilities from their right to access these schools. Slee (2011) asserts that such schools become increasingly rigorous in their enrolment procedures to improve their reputation and position themselves among other schools on academic league tables.

Additionally, White (2014, p. 246) suggests some factors that negatively affect access opportunities for children with disabilities:

> The economic interests of governments are increasingly served by education, rather than social and welfare priorities such as inclusion of students with additional educational requirements. Second, and importantly, the cost of education for governments has been considerably reduced, which means that expensive support services for schools have been trimmed to a minimum and access to these services is further limited and monitored by stringent funding processes. Third, the standard- and competency-focused curriculum has meant that education has become less flexible and less able to accommodate students who do not progress at standard rates.

Finally, the right to social membership constitutes another of the significant pillars of inclusive education. When people with disabilities seek to be valued members in communities and

activists of inclusive education call for this right, we can see clear evidence of the nature of exclusionary societies. Thus, some people with invisible disabilities are forced to hide them to get the opportunity to be an acceptable member of society (Whitburn, 2015). Indeed, the existence of disability provokes questions about deep assumptions about human ideals that may result in marginalizing and excluding some parts of the community, especially those who fail to meet these ideals (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2016).

Changing social systems also contribute to excluding and isolating people with disabilities. Neoliberalist ideology, for instance, constitutes a significant threat for people with disabilities to become valued members of society because the fundamental underpinnings of neoliberalism are idealism and competition (Slee, 2011). Some communities perceive individuals with disabilities as "population surplus" (Bauman, 2013, p. 37). This failure clearly appears in the social phenomenon Slee (2011) termed "collective indifference" (p. 16).

The contrast between inclusive education and special education is reflected in placement of students in three main types of setting: special schools (separated institutions), isolated classrooms (self-contained classrooms within local schools) and inclusive general classrooms. These placements, along with the education and inclusion of Deaf students, will be discussed in the next sections.

2.8   Inclusive education and students with disabilities

Supporting students with disabilities is central to the work of inclusive education. However, debates and arguments about concepts and definitions involved in inclusive education may shift focus away from these students and what inclusion means to them. Mowat (2015) argues that some students may experience inclusive practices while some individuals or organisations constitute these practices as exclusionary. Likewise, transformative practices and policy that are, at times, enacted in some mainstream classrooms, do not necessarily lead to inclusive education (Slee, 2000).

As a result, it is necessary that practice focuses on students with disabilities and what inclusive practices mean to them, thereby understanding these students in the first stance when enacting and implementing inclusive education. In this context, Warnock (2005)

positions inclusive education as a need to focus on the child and his/her sense of belonging to the surrounding community—including schools. Not belonging to a classroom environment constitutes a risk of exclusion (Riley, 2017) and this risk increases in cases involving disability. On the contrary, some studies show that perceiving a sense of belonging and connectedness within a classroom environment is related to positive outcomes in psychological, behavioural, academic and social levels (Bond et al. 2007; Goodenow 1993; McGraw et al. 2008). Thus, increasing the opportunities that enhance a sense of belonging and connectedness with surrounding communities enhances the success of inclusive practices for students with disabilities (Prince & Hadwin, 2013). The overall aim here is to focus on the child's needs to improve inclusive practices and what inclusion means to the child.

2.9   Inclusion policy

Researchers, policy-makers and other stakeholders use policy terminology in different ways and with varying meanings. What I mean by 'policy' in an educative context is that all regulations and rules that are constructed and enacted via governments to direct and control institutional practices in an education system. Policies and forms of legislation are not merely textual units. Rather, they contain within them influence, that is often vested, and consequences, that are often unforeseen. As Ball (2012, p. 1) argues, "policies cannot be divorced from interests, from conflict, from domination or from justice". Thus, policy and laws play significant role in the different sectors of Saudi Arabia including that of education, where they are crucial. Education systems are constructed, controlled, governed and funded by policy. As a result, policy in education is a fundamental component, especially in our current era.

In this section, policy and inclusion will be examined to provide insight into the importance and impact of regulation to enhance or obstruct inclusion.

Many related international entities have given a great deal of attention to the role of policy and its importance in inclusion. They describe the many policy regulations that legitimize inclusive education as a basis of educational systems in all countries, including but not limited to, those signatories to the Salamanca Declaration (UNESCO, 1994); Education For All (EFA) Framework for Action, Dakar (UNESCO, 2000); Article 24 in Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006); the Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in

Education (UNESCO, 2009) and the World Education Forum 2015 (UNESCO, 2015). I will not revisit these here as they are discussed fully in 2.5.2, 'A historical perspective'. However, some policy-related issues remain in focus here.

Although many countries signed the conventions and articles related to inclusive education, visible outcomes of these commitments on educational jurisdictions in some states are negligible. In Italy, for example,

> Despite a progressive legal framework, however, numerous shortfalls have slowly emerged in the Italian school system. Recently, several complaints have been brought to court by parents of pupils with disabilities seeking to enforce the right to education, to combat alleged discrimination of disabled pupils at school, and ultimately to challenge the lack of implementation or the incorrect implementation of the legislation in place (Ferri, 2017, p. 1).

To exemplify further, The Committee Report of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) pointed out in 2013, a significant concern about the situations of students with disabilities in Australia. The concern was because many of these students continue to be placed in special schools, or isolated classrooms inside ordinary schools. These exclusionary practices were recorded as taking place in Australia, and elsewhere, although the formal commitment had been made to provide equitable access to education for these students, given Australia is one of the signatory states on Article 24 (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2013). Similarly, in the United Kingdom, the report of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in UK (2016) showed how students with disabilities continue to be isolated in special schools or separated classrooms. These examples demonstrate how frequently these practices occur, and that this can be seen in many countries, in spite of agreements they have signed.

Slee (2018) describes the commitments of the signatory countries as "empty language" where the "Monitoring Committees for the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in their reviews of the progress of signatory countries, attest to a reluctance even to minimum compliance expectations" (pp. 3-4). In this regard, Ball (2017) argues that the rhetoric and textual constructions of policies do not always translate into

practise, but they may be interpreted in different ways or mediated, inflected and resisted to meet particular interests or hidden agendas.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is also signatory country to Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and has established regulations to implement inclusive education and the rights of persons with disability. However, this study raises questions about the extent of this commitment. The overall aim here is to focus on critically analysing Saudi Arabian policy, in order to investigate the extent to which this policy contributes to the inclusion or exclusion of students with deafness.

2.10 Deaf students and their education

The education system targeting Deaf[9] students and some related issues will now be discussed to provide a sense of students experience in education.

2.10.1 Deaf Education

Educating students with hearing impairments is generally a controversial topic, particularly regarding educational placement and communicative methods of instruction. Marschark and Leigh (2016) argue that "the history of Deaf education reveals a constant competition between perspectives and wide differences of opinion about the nature of best practice" (p. 508). Indeed, there are intense debates about the best educational approach, including whether inclusive or special schooling has greater merit. The debates include determination about the best way for students to communicate, whether by sign language, spoken language, lip reading or all of them at once (Marc Marschark, Shaver, Nagle, & Newman, 2015). I will now turn to discussing communication methods and then educational placement.

Indeed, a major concern for those with a hearing impairment is the difficulty of communication with others. This strongly affects many aspects of an individual's life, with the greatest challenge being language acquisition and then language capacity. Some communicative

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[9] The capital D in the 'Deaf' word refers to Deaf students as a minority group with their own culture based around sign language and their own rights. I based in this point on Shakespeare (2018).

methods and strategies have been suggested to overcome the limited language acquisition and capacity such as sign language (the bilingual-bicultural strategy), spoken language (oralism) and total communication (Heward et al., 2018). Indeed, there is ongoing debate among interested people and scholars within Deaf education about the most effective approaches to teaching communication and the most appropriate tools to support this.

These different approaches are briefly discussed below in order to outline their importance in the education of Deaf students.

Firstly, sign language is the main communication tool for the majority of people with deafness. It is "the primary language for the majority of Deaf adults, the one used in their everyday lives" (Lane & Grosjean, 2016, p. 2). Indeed, it is considered a fundamental part in Deaf culture and an important aspect of identity (Napier & Leeson, 2016). In education, sign language is used in the bilingual-bicultural approach as the main language for Deaf students for use in education. Sign language is a primary communicative method employed to deliver curriculum via using different movements and shapes of hands and some facial and emotional expressions (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2018; Heward et al., 2018).

Secondly, spoken language (oralism) is a communicative tool where Deaf students are trained to read lips and to use spoken language to communicate with others. This tool appeared as a result of decisions made at a conference in Milan in 1880 to force all Deaf people including students to use spoken language (Rodda & Grove, 2013). This extremist movement tended to punish any Deaf people who were caught using sign language by tying their hands behind their backs (Van Cleve, 1999). This was especially so in European countries and in some schools in north America. The proponents of sign language claim that this era affected Deaf education for about a century as Deaf people were forced to use only oralism and were prohibited from using sign language.

The third communicative strategy in Deaf education is total communication. In this approach, the Deaf person employs all communication means including sign language, natural gestures, body language, listening and lipreading (Hands & Voices, 2014). Although using multiple approaches as a communication method for Deaf people has a long history, the term 'Total Communication' first appeared in the late 1960s and early 1970s when Holcomb outlined this

concept at the 13th International Congress of the Education of the Deaf (1970) held in Stockholm (Moores, 2011). Indeed, some scholars consider this approach a philosophy rather than a methodology of communication (Hands & Voices, 2014). Furthermore, there is a high level of confusion between the terms 'Total Communication' (CT) and 'Simultaneous Communication' (SimCom or SC) that resulted in their being used interchangeably (Power & Leigh, 2011), when they are actually quite different. Total Communication is "much more flexible than SimCom in that it allows for speaking only, signing only, or speaking and signing at the same time, depending on the communication needs of the learner" (Mayer, 2016, p. 34).

Despite the debate about the most appropriate communication method to be employed, a significant related aspect relates to how the selected method can and should be used and how it reflects the principles of inclusive education. What is the most effective approach for Deaf students is not a straightforward concern? Another important and related issue in Deaf education, that generates similar levels of debate, is the question of educational placement for Deaf students. Which contexts are the best? Deaf separate schools, self-contained classrooms or general classrooms? To address this question, these potential sites of learning are now considered.

2.10.2 Special (separate) schools, isolated classrooms or inclusive general classrooms?

The debates about the most appropriate educational placement for students with disabilities in general, and Deaf students in particular, have continued to be held over time. In 1968, questions about the best educational setting for students with disabilities was raised by Dunn (1968). This issue re-appeared in the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) in 1975. Questions about the best educational placement was again raised in the 1980s but led to more controversy (Zigmond, 2003). The debate about appropriate placement for Deaf students remains very much alive and very much contested. This argument prevails around the world, even in the United States where more than 85 % of Deaf students are included in general schools (self-contained and inclusive classrooms) (Marschark, Shaver, Nagle & Newman, 2015). Internationally, debate continues about appropriate educational placement for these students. The impact of educational setting and effect of learning context for students with hearing impairments is significant.

Moreover, there is an argument about what factors should be taken in account when determining appropriate educational placements for Deaf students. For instance, some scholars confirm that Deaf students' individual abilities, characteristics and needs play a significant role in terms of selecting the suitable placements (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Hehir, 2005; Pflaster, 1980; Shaver et al., 2013). In contrast, others argue that this educational setting should be selected based on the hearing abilities and hearing thresholds of Deaf students (Antia, Jones, Reed, & Kreimeyer, 2009). Another group claims that determining educational placements for Deaf students is the right of parents and that they must be included in all considerations about where their child should be educated (Izzo, 1999). Another school of thought argues that the individual assessment and the individualized education plan (IEP) are fundamental features in regards of defining an appropriate educational placement for Deaf student (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Hocutt, 1996).

In contrast, some scholars confirm that the law and associated legislation strongly influences the determination of educational placements for Deaf students. Many of these forms of legislation enhance the concept of 'Least Restrictive Environment' (LRE) (Blecker & Boakes, 2010; Eriks-Brophy & Whittingham, 2013; Foster & Cue, 2009). This concept is based on the right of students with a disability to receive the most appropriate educational placement that best meets the individual student's needs (Underwood, 2018). This concept is problematic because it allows for the choice of all placements regardless of their exclusionary potential or inclusiveness (Clark, Dyson, & Millward, 2018). LRE confirms that the choosing of placements for student with a disability must be from the Continuum of Alternative Placements (CAP)[10]. And I raise concern about who decides on the 'most appropriate' placement and on what basis are these decisions determined?

This discussion about how best to educate Deaf students is extended next by examination of the different types of setting.

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[10] Continuum of Alternative Placements (CAP) are "placements ranging from separate special schools, hospital schools, and home instruction to special classes, resource rooms, inclusion in regular classes with supplementary services, and all other placement options must be made available to every student with a disability" (Kauffman et al., 2018, p. 11).

2.10.2.1 Separate "special" schools

Separated "special" schools are placements where Deaf students study the whole day in isolation from other non-disabled students. In these placements, all students must have significant hearing impairments and all teachers are specialists in special education, with particular staff providing specialised services. This option represents the exclusion and isolation of Deaf students most clearly, as they are completely isolated from society (Clark et al., 2018). Nevertheless, some individuals continue to support and advocate this option (Kauffman, Felder, Ahrbeck, Badar, & Schneiders, 2018; Kauffman, Ward, & Badar, 2015) and their key arguments are outlined below.

2.10.2.1.1 Support of separated schools

A number of scholars argue that the isolated school is more flexible in curriculum adaptation and class time, where these students are allowed to learn different skills through different methods at flexible times (Lomas, Andrews, and Shaw, 2017; Kauffman, Felder, Ahrbeck, Badar, & Schneiders, 2018; Zigmond, 2003). The general response to refute these claims is that the flexibility of curriculum is a significant factor for successful inclusion (Budiarti & Sugito, 2018; Thomas, Walker, & Webb, 2006). While inclusive education still faces difficulties in achieving this flexibility, a major argument is forwarded is that the solution lies not in isolating those students in "special" schools, but in developing strategies that enhance more flexibility in inclusive classrooms instead (Westwood, 2018).

Lomas, Andrews, and Shaw (2017) claim that these schools have many students with hearing impairments and that this setting helps to divide them into groups according to such factors as age, level of ability and language. This claim tends to be refuted by inclusive education scholars who argue that students with hearing impairments do not constitute a heterogeneous group (Ayantoye & Luckner, 2016; Crowe, 2018; Leigh & Crowe, 2015; Parasnis, 1998) . According to Marschark and Leigh (2016) some arguments and solutions about many issues in Deaf education are not based on evidence. They criticise the small studies conducted with small groups of students in a particular environments but do acknowledge that these studies recognise the enormous diversity among students with hearing impairments.

Another perspective is that these separate schools promote social communication where students can meet peers who have the same impairment and thus can communicate and interact with each other easily (Bernstein & Martin, 1992; Lomas et al., 2017). This argument is particularly applied to those with hearing impairments, and assumes, somewhat problematically, that people in the community with the same disability will benefit by being grouped together. Extending this logic implies that schools should be established for individuals with the same impairment for the sake of social interaction. This argument fails to consider what becomes of those students when they leave these separate schools to live in external societies. Indeed, these schools embody one particular significant barrier - a distinct lack of social communication and interaction for individuals with hearing impairments except for people with the same impairment. Once these students leave their impairment-focused school, they may not have the capacity to communicate with anyone else in society. Those students spend the majority of their time studying in these special schools that are akin to an isolated world. In that context they only interact with students who have the same disability or with teachers who hold special education qualifications. It is difficult to provide a logical defence for this argument.

Moreover, some proponents of these isolated placements claim that these schools provide special education services that include many supportive services beside educational provision (Kauffman, Felder, Ahrbeck, Badar, & Schneiders, 2018). These services have the capacity to result in improving the skills of those students at these placements more than other options (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994). However, the crucial question is whether such supportive services require the isolation of those students?

Furthermore, some argue that peers acceptance for disabled student is more likely in separated schools than other placements (Wolters, Knoors, Cillessen, & Verhoeven, 2011). While this may be the case, it does not necessarily follow that we should therefore isolate those students into 'special' impairment-focused schools. Nor does it necessarily follow that the student with a hearing impairment won't find social acceptance in a local general school.

The question remains about the future role in society these students can hold after leaving such schools. Indeed, inclusive schools can overcome this problem by employing inclusion from early ages and this can assist non-disabled students to become familiar with the existence of

Deaf students among them (Nutbrown, Clough, & Atherton, 2013).

2.10.2.1.2 Critique of separated schools

Isolating Deaf students into separated schools appears to have negative consequences for individual students and for society as well. Many studies that confirm that Deaf students at special schools are more likely to have language difficulties and lesser language skills than the language abilities of Deaf students at general schools (Eriks-Brophy & Whittingham, 2013; Shaver et al., 2013; Powers, 1999). Other studies argue that academic achievement for Deaf students in these schools is lower than Deaf students' achievement in inclusive placements (Allen & Osborn, 1984; Kluwin, 1993; Marschark et al., 2015; Powers, 1999). Some studies have demonstrated that Deaf students studying at separate schools were more isolated and had fewer social skills than students who are studying in general classrooms with hearing peers (Blecker & Boakes, 2010; Eriks-Brophy & Whittingham, 2013; Hadjikakou, Petridou, & Stylianou, 2008; Savich, 2008; Shaver et al., 2013).

Ultimately, separate schools as an educational placement for Deaf students was a sole option for many parents for a long time because of one of the two main reasons. The first is that the needs of these students and their parents for educational services (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987) are met because other educational alternatives are absent. The second is the absence of awareness of some parents about the benefits of general educational settings such as inclusive classrooms. However, today there is no need for such educational settings and the focus has moved to supporting the most beneficial placement for Deaf students, which research has shown is in inclusive general classrooms (Heward, 2013; Hyde, Nikolaraizi, Powell, & Stinson, 2016). The benefits of this will be discussed in section 2.9.2.3.

2.10.2.2 Self-contained (isolated) classrooms

The second option of placing Deaf students is in the so-called 'self-contained' classroom. In this placement, Deaf students study in isolated classrooms inside general schools during the school day and only meet with hearing students in food breaks or sports classes. Some stakeholders and studies consider this to be inclusive or integrated placement (Alothman, 2014;

Alshahrani, 2014; Shaira, 2013). However, the argument is developed here that this option should be called the 'isolated classroom' because it represents exclusionary practice. It is a form of special education provision that is geographically located within general school grounds (Ainscow & César, 2006). Indeed, this form of educational placement falls under the medical model perspective where it focuses on students' impairment and how educational services need to fix this defect to meet the aims of normalisation (Armstrong, 2016a).

The proponents of this approach claim that this option is the most suitable placement for Deaf students as they are more likely to find adequate and intensive times for learning in self-contained classrooms (Zigmond, 2003). Scholars argue that the limited number of students in these classrooms allows Deaf students to obtain individual attention from teachers (Hocutt, 1996). While this may be accurate to some extent, it does not necessarily follow that Deaf students can only receive individual attention in such isolated classrooms. Finding adequate time for each student is not enough to provide good educational services. Providing quality education requires many factors including having adequate time, providing an appropriate placement and offering a flexible curriculum (Budiarti & Sugito, 2018; Thomas, Walker, & Webb, 2006).

Those advocating this option claim that it provides more supportive services to Deaf students from specialists and professionals in many ways (Fisher & Meyer, 2002; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994). Others have refuted this by arguing that the provision of supportive services need not be restricted to isolated placement, and successful inclusive provision necessarily includes such services (Nutbrown et al., 2013).

Interestingly, a small number of studies that present negative findings about the inclusion of Deaf students are flawed because they were conducted in isolated classrooms that were wrongly assumed to be inclusive education see (Hanafi, 2008; Shaira, 2013; Stinson & Antia, 1999). This placement is far removed from the notion of inclusive education and exists in opposition to its fundamental tenets.

Additionally, isolated placement affects individual Deaf students in many different ways. For example, Deaf students allocated to these classrooms spend very little time with their hearing peers during sports classes or food breaks which renders them isolated and not legitimate

members of the school community (Stinson & Antia, 1999). Indeed, Deaf students are excluded from the school community for most of the school day with a token hour allocated here and there of general classes. Consequently, this type of educational placement reduces any sense of belonging among Deaf students to the community of the school or classroom (Ellis et al., 1998; Pesonen et al., 2016; L. Williams & Downing, 1998). The main reason for Deaf students' paucity of interaction in isolated placements is that they are not familiar with their hearing peers since they spend so little time with them during the school day.

Additionally, many studies have emphasized the damning point that academic achievement for Deaf students in these isolated classrooms is less than that of their Deaf peers in inclusive classrooms (general classrooms) (Allen & Osborn, 1984; Antia et al., 2009; Marschark et al., 2015). Similarly, other studies confirm that independence and social skills for Deaf students in isolated classrooms are less developed than those of Deaf students enrolled in general (inclusive) classrooms (Fisher & Meyer, 2002).

Special schools and isolated classrooms appear to have a negative effect on Deaf students in many ways (Lynch, 2017). This includes a negative impact on language and cognitive abilities, and a limited knowledge and awareness of the surrounding world (Marschark & Knoors, 2012; Marschark et al., 2015). In addition, these isolated placements are reported to provide a limited curriculum for Deaf students which contributes to low educational outcomes and attainment (Lynch, 2017).

Over time, greater understanding of these negative consequences of these educational placements has contributed to the appearance of legislation that advocates increasing the inclusion of these students with hearing peers and reducing their isolation (Thuneberg et al., 2013). Also, the failure of isolated placements such as residential schools and self-contained classrooms require urgency in enhancing the inclusion for all students with disabilities in general classrooms (Sands, Kozleski, & French, 2000). Indeed, inclusion of Deaf students in general classrooms is the most successful model in Deaf education for many reasons, and this will be discussed further in the next section.

2.10.2.3 Inclusive general classrooms

The idea of the inclusive classroom[11] involves a placement where Deaf students can learn beside hearing students without being isolated. In this type of classroom, learning opportunities are enhanced and barriers reduced, ensuring Deaf learners maximise their potential. It involves transformative strategies that ensure equitable access for Deaf students and hearing students (Armstrong, 2016a). Indeed, this type of educational placement is perceived to be the right of Deaf students, rather than being merely an option (Anastasiou, Kauffman, & Di Nuovo, 2015). Inclusion of Deaf students in general classrooms has proved successful in many developed and developing countries, although implementation faces challenges and in some contexts is less than promising (Hyde, Nikolaraizi, Powell, & Stinson, 2016). For example, in the United States more than 54% of Deaf students study in general classrooms with hearing peers (Heward, 2013). However, this means about 46% of Deaf students remain excluded in isolated options.

Despite policy at the international and national levels and widespread advocacy that calls for inclusion, many Deaf students in many different nations, still face exclusionary practices (Slee, 2011; 2018). And one of these countries, where this study is focused, is Saudi Arabia where all Deaf students are educated in isolated and separate schools and classrooms. This will be addressed in more detail shortly.

Inclusive classrooms as educational placements have many social, cultural, and academic advantages according to many studies (Angelides & Aravi, 2006; Doherty, 2012; Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014; Freire, 2007; Power & Hyde, 2002).

Beyond academic benefit, Deaf students show substantial improvement as a result of inclusion in general classrooms (Marschark et al., 2015). Social interaction and communication skills improve as a result of inclusion. Deaf students in inclusive general classrooms are reported to have better social–emotional skills than Deaf students in isolated placements (van Gent, Goedhart, Knoors, Westenberg, & Treffers, 2012). The inclusion of Deaf students in general

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[11] I called "mainstream classrooms" as "Inclusive general classrooms' in my thesis.

classrooms, then, contributes to improving their skills in communication, interaction, socialization and adapting to external life. Many studies confirm that Deaf students who are included in inclusive classrooms have better skills in these activities than other who are excluding in isolated placements (Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014).

Furthermore, in transition from primary school level to the next stage, Deaf students who were studying in general classrooms recorded better performance in communication and social skills than others who were separated (Wolters et al., 2011). Moreover, by reaching secondary school level, the majority of Deaf students prefer to be enrolled in general classrooms (van Gent et al., 2012). This indicates the success of this placement in meeting their needs.

Deaf students need to learn many skills such as problem-solving, social communication and interaction skills that enhance their engaging with community. Current literature shows that the best environment to learn those skills is inside inclusive classrooms with hearing peers where these placements help them to build these skills and prepare themselves to cope and become familiar with external social life. Today's Deaf students are tomorrow's citizens and they need strong skills and qualifications to be ready for independent life (Marschark & Leigh, 2016). This is important and although including these students into inclusive general classrooms requires strategy and effort, it is more successful than other options.

Indeed, holding a belief and conviction about inclusive classrooms as being the best and most efficient placement for Deaf students is the first and most important step in facilitating the inclusion of these students. Another factor that plays a crucial role in establishing inclusive classrooms is the development and enactment of legislation. Also required is the promotion of policy to establish general classrooms as a common placement for Deaf students (Avramidis & Norwich, 2016; Mitchell, 2014). Equally, spending the time and effort to critically examine effective pedagogical strategies and techniques might promote and develop inclusive education practices.

I now turn to discuss some key issues involved in facilitating the inclusion of Deaf students into general classrooms. To begin with, collective cooperation is required. Attaining successful inclusive classrooms entails multiple collaborations between many related parties such as schools, policymakers, society members, teachers and scholars (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010).

Joint action and involvement of every stakeholder is necessary for creating a successful transformation to inclusive classrooms, and to respecting every member in this team and their involvement (Armstrong, 2016b).

Another important factor for successfully including Deaf students in general classrooms is early intervention, which has various definitions and different strategies. For the purposes of this discussion, intervention services is taken to mean the many strategies and techniques to enhance inclusive education and facilitate all related entities to this concept. This refers to techniques for enhancing learning and establishing successful methods of communication for children and their families. This includes such as sign language and using assistive technology whey they are young, which is seen as crucial (Segers & Verhoeven, 2015).

Recognising that spoken language and sign language are inclusive communication methods that work together and support each other is also important (Giezen, Baker, & Escudero, 2013). This intervention needs to centre on families while children are in the early stages of development (Sass-Lehrer & Young, 2016) to help understanding about the strengths of inclusive education and comprehension about the rights of children with all available options. Beginning intervention with very young Deaf children offers a clear sense of what is on offer and what is possible. This is not only for families, but also for key stakeholders such as education systems, school communities, the wider community and the media. By informing all about the significance of early intervention, the possibility of building strong and successful inclusive classrooms for Deaf students is enhanced.

Other factors also play significant roles in promoting and enhancing Deaf student inclusion in general classrooms. For example, building a flexible curriculum that is based on learners rather than teachers (Armstrong, 2016a) is important. Furthermore, using peer teaching to complement other teaching methods offers the potential to construct a more interdependent and inclusive environment between students inside the classroom (Murawski & Scott, 2017). These are not the only requirements, of course, but they are major ones that require consideration.

In the next section, discussion about different placements continues, I consider how Deaf students in Saudi Arabia are currently educated. This provides the main context for this study.

2.10.3 Exclusion of Deaf students in Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabian contexts, all Deaf students are excluded into two forms of placement, namely special schools, the so-called "Alamal institutions", and self-contained classrooms also known as "Alamal programs". *Alamal* in Arabic language means *hope.* According to the Ministry of Education (2016) about 90% of Deaf students are studying in isolated "self-contained" classrooms and about 10% of them are s at special schools for Deaf students. Indeed, there are no Deaf students currently attending any general classroom in all of Saudi Arabia (Ministry of Education, 2016). Next, the policy that constructed this situation is examined.

2.10.4 Policy related to educating students with disabilities in Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabian contexts, laws and regulations organise educational services for all students including those who have disabilities. For example, *The General Education Policy of Saudi Arabia 1995* states that free and proper education is a right for all students in Saudi Arabia, including students with disabilities (Ministry of Education, 2017). The Regulations of Special Education Programs and Institutes (RSEPI) in Saudi Arabia was issued in 2001 as a result of a collaboration between the special education department in the Ministry of Education and a group of professors from the Department of special education at King Saud University.

This policy was updated in 2016 by the Ministry of Education but this updating only divided the document into separate, colourful PDF files, but no change was made to essential content. This policy document emphasizes the right of students with disabilities to obtain a free and appropriate education (Special Education Department in Ministry of Education, 2016). It confirms that students with disability should be placed in the least restrictive environment (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 2016). Unfortunately, this law been used to move Deaf students from separated schools to isolated classrooms, legitimating their isolation in such placements in the process. Additionally, the Saudi Arabian government signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Protocol including Article 24 that calls to ensure inclusive education at all levels of education (Almousa, 2010). Despite this, Deaf students still face systemic isolation. That this appears to be a misinterpretation of international policy or even an intentional interpretation constitutes part of the problem of this study. In the coming section, I turn to a comprehensive review of studies about the inclusion of Deaf

students in the Saudi Arabian context.

2.10.5 Studies about the inclusion of Deaf students in Saudi Arabian context

In searching Saudi Arabian studies conducted about the inclusion of Deaf students in Saudi Arabian context, only five (Alothman, 2014; Alshahrani, 2014; Aseery, 2016; Hanafi, 2008; Shaira, 2013) were found. However, after closely reading and examining these studies, I conclude that they are problematic. Most reflect the same troubling issues. The first concern I raise is that only attitudes towards inclusion are researched, stimulating two questions: *So, what? And why?*

The second issue is that some studies (Alothman, 2014; Alshahrani, 2014; Aseery, 2016; Hanafi, 2008; Shaira, 2013) conflated isolated classrooms (so-called 'self-contained classrooms') and inclusive general classrooms. These studies actually considered isolated classrooms as an inclusive education option. This conflation strongly distorts the concept of inclusive education as one that resists any form of isolation including in these classrooms. Slee (2011, p. 49) argues that:

> Much of the 'attitudes towards inclusive education' research is itself problematic and plays a part in compounding exclusion. How so? Researchers arm themselves with survey instruments to map, scope and describe these obstructive attitudes and their holders.... Most of this work is of questionable value and much of it is very predictable in design, execution and findings.

These studies position the disabled person as a problem and an object of participants' attitudes - as disability is viewed from a pathological stance (Shakespeare, 2013; 2015). Furthermore, Slee (2011) refers to some studies in the 'neo-special education' sector, where special educational perspectives are reproduced, but the term inclusive education is misapplied. I will now briefly discuss all five Saudi Arabian studies:

2.10.5.1 Hanafi (2008)

The first study under consideration was conducted by Hanafi (2008). This study is entitled *Requirements of Inclusion of Deaf students from viewpoints of people who work with Deaf*

students. The sample of this study includes 211 people who were working with Deaf students such as school principals, teachers of Deaf students, educational supervisors and self-contained classrooms' supervisors. They responded to a survey created by the researcher. However, the survey questions are leading and inconsistent, with the first question asked participants about the best educational placement while the second enquired about the requirements of including Deaf students in general classrooms. Question 3 inquired into the benefits of including those students in general classrooms. As a result, a contradiction appears in findings of this study. The majority of participants (66.8%) chose isolated classroom (self-contained classrooms) as the best educational placement for Deaf students. This is the current practice in Saudi Arabia. Some survey respondents mentioned that the inclusion of Deaf students in general classrooms has many benefits for students and their families.

While the first finding for this study indicated the preference for isolated classrooms, my argument here is that all other questions (related to including Deaf students in general classrooms) therefore become meaningless. Responses to the question about inclusion in general classrooms have little value considering the preference for isolated classrooms was established by the first question. Unfortunately, this study has positioned isolated classrooms as synonymous with inclusive education which does not fit with the overall aims of inclusion. This situation clearly reflects what Slee (2011) calls 'neo-special education'.

2.10.5.2 Shaira (2013)

The concept of 'neo-special education' also appears in a journal article entitled Effects of Inclusion on Language Development in Hearing-Impaired Students in Jeddah Schools: Perspectives of Teachers and Parents by Shaira (2013). The study used a descriptive-comparative research approach to compare separated Deaf "special" schools and isolated classrooms (that have been known as self-contained classrooms). It employed a created scale named the Language Development Estimation List (LDEL) to gather the data from 41 teachers of Deaf students, who work in isolated classrooms, and 113 parents of Deaf students.

The findings of this study showed that teachers' assessments revealed higher receptive language scores and total scores for students located in isolated classrooms than those who were studying at separated Deaf "special" schools. But, the assessments of parents showed no

difference. However, the study incorporated inclusion in its title, even though it was conducted in isolated classrooms, which were referred to as 'Alamal programs'.

2.10.5.3 Alothman (2014)

Another study that followed the same problematic approach is a thesis by Alothman (2014) entitled Inclusive education for Deaf students in Saudi Arabia: perceptions of school principals, teachers and parents. Three data collection methods were employed: interviews, observations and documentary data. The interviews were conducted with 24 parents of Deaf students, five school principals, and 32 teachers who work at schools that include Deaf students in the city of Riyadh. In addition, the observations were undertaken and documentary material were examined from the city of Riyadh.

The findings of the thesis confirmed that there is a lack of knowledge and understanding among school principals and parents of Deaf students about inclusion, which resulted in negative attitudes towards including these students in isolated classrooms "self-contained classrooms". However, there were positive attitudes from the teachers towards this inclusion as a result of their adequate knowledge about the inclusion. This situation results in a luck of support from school principals to include these students and absence of effect from parents in the educational process for their children. Indeed, as with Shaira (2013) study, this one was conducted in isolated placements and aimed to uncover attitudes and perceptions about including Deaf students in such isolated classrooms.

2.10.5.4 Alshahrani (2014)

Alshahrani (2014) conducted a doctoral study about the attitudes of educators who work with Deaf students in the city of Jeddah, using quantitative and qualitative data. Survey responses were received from 120 teachers and administrators who had direct contact with Deaf students. And semi-structured interviews were conducted with five teachers and six school administrators. The results of the study found that there are positive attitudes towards locating hard of hearing students but not Deaf students in isolated classrooms (so called inclusive classrooms in this study). In addition, it concluded that, the separated schools "that so-called Al-Amal Institute for the Deaf" were considered the best educational placement for Deaf students.

Although the study mentioned including Deaf students in general classrooms, this option is not yet available in the Saudi Arabia education system. Nevertheless, the study investigated attitudes of educators and existing barriers to including Deaf students in isolated classrooms (self-contained classrooms). It also conflated special education and inclusive education.

2.10.5.5 Aseery (2016)

The first Saudi study purportedly about including Deaf students in general classrooms is *Teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of Deaf and hard of hearing students in regular education classrooms in Saudi Arabia* (Aseery, 2016). However, this study considers isolated classrooms as inclusive placements and the researcher created the terms "full inclusion" and "partial inclusion". Additionally, this study merely used a survey to investigate the attitudes of 88 teachers to the inclusion of Deaf students, erroneously generalising its findings to pertain to Saudi's 2315 teachers of Deaf students. It also sought the opinion of 106 general teachers via survey and assessed this as representative of the general teachers in the Saudi Arabian education system. However, there are more than the half million employed teachers, according to official Ministry of Education figures published in 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2017). The overgeneralization of the sample response to all Saudi general teachers is therefore highly questionable and casts doubt on the veracity of that study.

Dare, Nowicki, and Felimban (2017) argue that few researchers have examined the lived reality of inclusion in Saudi Arabian schools. As I have outlined in this thesis, all Deaf students in Saudi Arabia are excluded into isolated classrooms or separate schools within this education system. Consequently, no studies have yet critically examined the inclusion of Deaf students in general classrooms in the Saudi Arabian context. And hence this demonstrates the significant of this current research.

2.11   Conclusion

The focus of this chapter has been to provide a critical discussion of the research, policy, conceptualisation and theories that relate to this current study. To summarise the chapter, the understandings of disability and how they relate to ontological stances were investigated. Next, the scholarly field of Disability Studies was examined, leading to a concentration on Critical

Disability Studies (CDS), particularly the main conceptions of disablism and ableism. The review then moved to examine what is meant by inclusive education and how this has been interpreted. Finally, how Deaf education relates to inclusion was considered. This was followed by my investigation into the literature about Deaf education and inclusion in the Saudi Arabian context.

In the next chapter, the methodological choices and decisions made in the planning, implementation and analytical phases of this study are presented and justified.

1. Introduction

2. Who Am I in this study?

3. Searching for an Appropriate Pathway

4. Methodological Orientations

5. Theoretical Framework

6. Integration or Inclusion?

7. Study Design

8. Methods of Data Analysis

9. Conclusion

3

3   Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1   Introduction

The challenge of selecting an appropriate way in which to conduct an investigation is a significant early step in any research project. Complex decisions need to be made and many different factors need to be taken into account. It was important for me to try to meet Roger Slee's (2011) challenge to improve research in the field of Inclusive Education. He observed that "A better line of research may invite questions about how schools erect barriers…" for children of various backgrounds (p. 82). I saw this as important and did not want to just describe inclusive education practice in Saudi Arabia. I resolved to look behind practice into policy and so consulted the policymakers who work as senior bureaucrats. I sought perspectives from Deaf adults who experienced the Saudi education system, so I could learn about its strengths and shortcomings. I was determined to examine how barriers had been erected.

The purpose of this chapter is to clearly outline the methodological choices and decisions made in the planning, implementation and analytical phases of this study. Some philosophical underpinnings and assumptions of qualitative methods in educational research are also discussed. The chapter begins by presenting my experience and one student's story that influenced this research. After that, an explanation of my motivations, stance, research design and paradigm are provided. Then, the use of Inclusive Education theory (Slee, 2011, 2018) and Critical Disability theory (Goodley, 2016; Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2016) as the theoretical framework in the study is signalled. The chapter proceeds with an explanation of the participant selection processes and data collection methods, including discussion about the use of semi-structured interviews and the complexity of interviewing. Finally, the procedures involved in the analysis of data is addressed towards the end of the chapter.

3.2   Who Am I in this study?

> I don't want to live in the kind of world where we don't look out for each other.
> Not just the people that are close to us, but anybody who needs a helping hand.
> I can't change the way anybody else thinks, or what they choose to do, but I can

do my bit. *–Charles de Lint, cited in Digh and Mailhot (2014, p. 5)*

Human personality and character are influenced by many factors including family circumstance, experience, life events and education. It follows, then, that these things impact how researchers undertake their studies. In the paragraphs below, my interest in and motivation for the study is outlined by drawing on my own education and experience as a teacher.

3.2.1 The teacher

This impetus for this study came from the seven years I spent teaching Deaf students studying in isolated 'self-contained classrooms' at a general primary school in Saudi Arabia. The experiences of teacher-researchers play a significant role in shaping and constructing their ontology[12] and epistemology[13], and it influences and underpins their research. My ontological and epistemological stance, and how it has influenced the purpose, design and analysis of this study will be outlined in this section.

Research is described as a combination of the researcher's experience and logic, and this is considered an appropriate approach for investigating any phenomenon (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013). My experience has provided me with a clear picture of the hardship faced by students with hearing impairments. Indeed, every morning during those years I went to school, holding in my right hand a cup of coffee and in my left hand a few books. My brain was bursting with questions: I wondered about these children, their education and their futures. In my heart, I hoped that the miserable situation I witnessed could one day be changed. I have many tragic stories of those students from that time and have chosen to present only one of them here.

3.2.2 Hamed's story

In the first few weeks of 2007, a new student, called Hamed,[14] enrolled in grade four. He had

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[12] Ontology is the view of being or individual understanding about existence (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

[13] Epistemology is the study of knowledge or being (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

[14] Hamed is a pseudonym.

deafness and some other physical impairments and was short in stature and suffered pain as he walked; but he was smart, bright and had many questions as well as dreams and hopes. In his school, there were six separate classrooms for Deaf students. Hamed's classroom was on the ground floor and this helped him to move around the school easily. When I visited his class in the first week of school, I welcomed him and introduced myself to him and to another two classmates. Then I asked every boy to draw a picture about what he would like to become in the future. After a while, I asked each student to stand, stick his picture on the blackboard and explain his dream. One of them wanted to be a doctor and another dreamed to be a teacher, but Hamed wished to be a policeman. When I asked him "why a policeman?", he said, "I want to imprison all the students who were laughing and mocking me in my previous school". I had wondered why he had moved from his previous school.

Two burning questions came into my mind. First, 'Is his new school going to be any different to his previous school and will he be bullied as before?' The second question was: 'How will the education system help him to achieve his dreams?'

I found the answer to my first question after only three weeks. The school principal decided to rearrange all classrooms inside the school and move all the Deaf classrooms to the third floor– without any consideration for Hamed. Along with other teachers, I lobbied for retreat from this decision, but all of our attempts were rejected. Hamed's suffering began at that time, because he found it difficult to ascend and descend the stairs. It was impossible for him to carry his school bag. He was forced to leave his bag downstairs in the hope that a teacher sensitive to his need for assistance would carry it for him.

Every day Hamed arrived fifteen minutes late to class. He was verbally bullied by other students who thought he moved strangely, as he climbed the stairs with great difficulty. This situation lasted for two weeks. There were still many days where Hamed was forced to study on the third floor while his bag was on the ground floor. Hamed suffered greatly, but the principal was still not convinced.

After two weeks, Hamed began to be absent, until eventually he dropped out of school. After a while, Hamed's father received a letter from the school asking him to come and explain why Hamed no longer came to school. The father came, and when he was asked about the reason

behind Hamed's absence, he responded, "Hamed is the same with or without the school. He prefers to stay at home because, like his previous school, this school is a nightmare".

My first question had been answered. This was one student and one school, but I wondered about all the other students and all the other schools. What about the education system for students with hearing impairments, and other challenging conditions throughout Saudi Arabia?

I resolved to take responsibility and to do something about these issues and to do something for these students. I started a Masters-level degree in Deaf education to improve my knowledge about the international research for students with disabilities. At that time, I read and studied many different aspects of this field including early identification of disability, the early intervention, Deaf education and inclusive education. In addition, my exploration took me to the social aspects and theorization of disability such as critical disability studies and the social model of disability. These conceptualizations have been investigated and discussed in the previous chapter.

Even though my ontological perspective was affected by the reading I had undertaken and my motivation to undertake a suitable MA program, what was the most engaging for me was the significant body of work that had been undertaken in the area of inclusive education (Barton & Armstrong, 2007; Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, Vaughan, & Shaw, 2002b; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Foley & Ferri, 2012; Slee, 2012). These scholars strongly influenced my ontology because I had understood that special education was the only and best option to provide unique educational services to students with disabilities. However, after reading and studying these works, I embraced the counter perspective that asserted that those students have the right to be educated in inclusive and mainstream school settings.

As a result of my Masters-level study, I was inspired by theories and ideas that had been published in Disability Studies and inclusive education. Shakespeare (2006a) and Michael Oliver (1996b), for instance, argued that disability studies should focus on societies and surrounding environments and the extent to which they include or exclude students with disabilities, rather than emphasizing the weaknesses of those students. Slee (2012) argued that the exclusion of students and the practice of discrimination based on disabilities were a violation of their dignity and a denial of their rights to access equitable opportunities in

education. Moreover, Goodley (2011) illustrated how children with disabilities and their families in the United Kingdom have successfully fought for equitable, accessible and inclusive environments.

As a result of my extensive reading, I questioned specifically how the current education system operates for students with hearing impairments in Saudi Arabia. Indeed, the experience of Masters-level study influenced my ontological views towards the social, political, cultural and educational concepts that related to Disabilities Studies. It also gave me the ambition to contribute to the reform of the Deaf education system in Saudi Arabia.

After finishing the degree, I transferred my work from teaching at the primary school to take up a position lecturing at a local university in order to find more opportunities to contribute to improving the educational situation for these students. Indeed, it soon became clear to me that in order to have influence in Saudi Arabia, I would need to hold a PhD. Only then would my voice be heard, and my arguments would have a chance of being accepted.

Even though working at the university and returning to full-time study would affect many aspects of my life, undertaking the PhD has proved to be a valuable opportunity. I have been able to fully explore my keen interest and it has allowed me to raise my voice with confidence and I intend to contribute to educational reform upon completion.

I travelled to the USA and to Australia to begin the journey of my PhD, which required me to study the English language, a fundamental requirement for completing a PhD in the West. All of these stages shaped my ontological and epistemological stance and, therefore, who I have become as a researcher, and how this study has been shaped. This ontological and epistemological stance will be outlined shortly after discussing additional factors that motivated this study.

The most compelling motivation for this study was to influence educational policy- and decision-makers in the Saudi Arabian government. I am focused on the liberation and educational empowerment of students with hearing impairments. School placements at present for Deaf students are either separated 'special' schools or isolated 'self-contained' classrooms inside general schools. This exclusionary practice has been in operation for many decades and when I was teaching Deaf students in isolated classrooms, I observed that this system set the

bar low and resulted in weak academic skills and poor opportunities and access to further study and jobs for Deaf students. Therefore, a key argument of this study is to question educational practices that been applied to these students, impacting their opportunities to learn in general classrooms with their hearing peers.

The second motivation for this study is my desire to gain perspectives from the lived experience of those who have been students in this system for the hearing-impaired. These people are rarely consulted, and I am committed to being respectful and asking those who are most affected by educational policy, structures and practice. Teachers and policymakers working in this area also have valuable perspectives and I wanted to hear directly from them. I expected that these perspectives would provide something new and valuable as I sought to trouble, question and theorize throughout the development of this study.

Another important motivation for undertaking this study is the responsibility I carry for advocacy and claiming the human rights for Deaf students in Saudi Arabia. I am committed to working for those students to be heard and included.

Compatible with the principle of 'equity' is the related concept of Human Rights which is enshrined in international legislation. In addition, an extensive list of internationally agreed statements, conventions and legislation exist, which call for the provision of equitable opportunities for students with disabilities in many aspects of life, particularly in education (see especially The UNESCO Salamanca Statement 1994; The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006). It is also worth mentioning here that the motivation for study does not result from any personal or family interest, but has been undertaken for reasons of altruism, where one behaves with the aim of providing benefit for others (Cornwell, Franks, & Higgins, 2017; Piliavin & Charng, 1990).

This study, then, is not merely descriptive or aiming solely to interpret how the education system works for students with hearing impairments in Saudi Arabia. More than that, this study is, as Denzin (2017, p. 9) argues, an "ethically responsible activist research" project that has been guided by the following research questions:

1. How is inclusive education policy enacted in Saudi primary schools?
2. How well are Deaf students served by this school system, and why?

While this study tends to critique the Saudi Arabian education system and identifies barriers to inclusion, it is, nevertheless, positively orientated in that its purpose is to support improvement to this system. The study aims to identify practices and policies that contribute to the exclusion of this particular group of students and the life-long implications of being set apart from their hearing peers. Moreover, the study aims to empower those students and to advance the Saudi Arabian education system.

Therefore, this study uses contemporary qualitative approaches (Wellington, 2015). Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA; Willig, 2013) has been employed to read and analyse the collected data and the Critical Policy Analysis in Education (CPAE) (Diem et al., 2017) to analyse related policy. In the next section, my justification for these methodological decisions will be outlined.

3.3   Searching for an appropriate pathway

3.3.1   Introduction

Searching for an appropriate way to conduct a study is always a substantial early step. Complex decisions need to be made and many different factors need to be taken into account. In the paragraphs below, the methodological choices and decisions made in the planning, implementation and analytical phases of this study are outlined. However, before introducing specific aspects of this discussion, this investigation can be described as a qualitative study methodologically located within a critical research framework.

3.3.2   Why this approach?

The purpose of this study is to investigate elements that influence the current education system for students with hearing impairments and the barriers to including them in general classrooms in Saudi Arabia. The most appropriate methodological approach to address the research questions is qualitative inquiry in that it allows the examination of people, cultures and practices and has the potential to provide a deep understanding of the surrounding issues of research topic (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Hussein, 2015; Patton, 2015; Yin, 2015).

Moreover, this study aims to provide opportunities to respectfully listen to participants about their lived experiences within the education system under investigation. Qualitative inquiry

allows for a deep interpretation about participant experiences and perspectives by allowing the researcher to collect "first-person accounts of experience" from interviewees (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 34).

A key point in the design of this study was the intention to meet participants in their own environments. I wanted to sit with them, develop rapport so that they would consider my questions and share their points of view. In planning for the fieldwork aspect of this study, I felt passionately about the importance of spending adequate time talking with the participants. My aim was to respectfully gather useful data from these integral participants.

3.4   Why the critical paradigm?

> We have many different forms of qualitative inquiry today. We have multiple criteria for evaluating our work. It is a new day for my generation. We have drawn our line in the sand, and we may redraw it. But we stand firmly behind the belief that critical qualitative inquiry inspired by the sociological imagination can make the world a better place (Denzin, 2016, p. 24).

It is significant to clarify that this study will stand under the umbrella of the critical paradigm. Historically, this paradigm is a product of works of some critical theorists that established the Frankfurt school in the 1960s. Asghar (2013) comments that critical theory is related to such theorists as Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse who represented systematic efforts to recruit traditional empirical research methods to examine propositions originating from the philosophy of the Marxist tradition. The general concept and goal of this paradigm is to reveal and expose all practices of oppression, marginalization, enslavement, segregation, exclusion, inequality and discrimination in order to resist them (Asghar, 2013). Horkheimer (1982), one of the founders of the Frankfurt school, argued that critical theory "seeks human emancipation to liberate human being from the circumstances that enslave them" (p. 244).

Within this critical paradigm the researcher has an essential role in knowledge production via critique and interpretation of the status quo of any phenomenon (Couch, Cole, Chase, & Clark, 2016; Scholes et al., 2016). As one of the purposes of this study is to investigate how inequality operates systematically within the Saudi educational system, the critical paradigm is an

appropriate choice for this study.

It is worth mentioning at this point that by predetermining the methodology, paradigm and data analysis method of this study, I followed the "purposeful reading" strategy (Tovani, 2016) which helps to connect each aspect of the study. During my reading about the critical paradigm, I encountered some difficulty with the term 'critical', which is widely and generally used in many other disciplines, fields and contexts such as economics (Hunt, 2015), policy studies (Fischer, Torgerson, Durnová, & Orsini, 2015) and media studies (Harper & Garland, 2015). In the social and educational research sphere, several approaches claim the term 'critical', including critical ethnography, critical geography, critical sociology, critical discourse analysis (CDA) and critical thinking. The wide use of the term 'critical' increases this difficulty especially in my searching and reading of different databases, articles and studies.

To justify my study fitting within the critical paradigm, I assert that exclusion of students with disability from general classrooms is a form of oppression. As a result, the critical paradigm is an appropriate approach that helps to investigate oppressed practices (Felluga, 2015). It helps to frame my challenge to the status quo in Saudi Arabian education because it allows the exposure of all practices and beliefs that cause oppression, exclusion, marginalization or any form of injustice (Asghar, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Müller-Doohm & Outhwaite, 2015; Oakley, 2015). Moreover, drawing on the conceptualisations of Taylor and Medina (2013), studies located within the critical paradigm are expected to interpret, critique and analyse all forms of practice that result in unfair policies or ideology. Indeed, I have taken a "passionate participant" and a "transformative intellectual" role in this study (Cannella, Pérez, & Pasque, 2016; Crotty, 2012; Denzin, 2017) to uncover some ideologies and assumptions that contribute to excluding practices for these students and provide potential suggestions for stakeholders and policymakers to resolve these occurrences.

It is hoped that this study may also contribute to change so that Saudi Deaf students may be emancipated from exclusionary educational practices. I have been up-front about my motivation and justify it here by locating my work within the critical paradigm. I am motivated to contribute to producing critical knowledge that supports these students to exit from their current untenable situation. Critical researchers seek to provide a critical body of work that helps marginalized groups to emancipate from the status quo and oppressive or unequal

treatment of some groups within communities (Cannella et al., 2016; Wodak & Meyer, 2015). As Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argue, "in critical inquiry the goal is to critique and challenge, to transform and empower" (p. 10). Critical researchers desire a change and seek transformations that shake the status quo's apparent unfair practices, working towards greater equity (Carspecken, 2008; Denzin, 2017).

Importantly, this study does not merely interpret and critique the current situation for Deaf education in Saudi Arabia. It aims to move beyond being a descriptive study to investigate and deconstruct related discourses and responses by using theoretical perspectives. This study has been influenced by two theories in particular, namely Inclusive Education Theory (Slee, 2011, 2018) and Critical Disability Theory (CDT) (Goodley, 2016; Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2016). These have assisted the questioning and troubling the Deaf education discourse in the Saudi Arabian context.

These theories and their effects will be discussed after related philosophical and methodological underpinnings are introduced. Together, these all serve to justify the methodological choices made in the development of this study.

3.5   Philosophical and methodological orientations

In this section philosophical influences that are related to qualitative research and affect the whole study are discussed. Firstly, I will discuss the ontological and epistemological stances that are related to this research. Then, I will address key theoretical positions that influence this study. Mayan (2016) argues that it is necessary to think about ontology, epistemology and the theoretical perspective to create an appropriate pathway to conduct a study. Further, contemporary qualitative research has progressed beyond just description of procedures and techniques (St. Pierre, 2017), to more theorization and justification. As a result, my engagement with theory is appropriate for qualitative inquiry undertaken in 2018.

3.5.1   Ontological and epistemological stances

3.5.1.1   Introduction

Ontology can be defined as the view of person towards any existence and epistemology is the study of this existence. Creswell and Poth (2017) argue that ontology is the view of being and

epistemology is the study of knowledge. The recent ontological turn as St. Pierre (2017) explains, means that ontology is now preferably considered inseparable to epistemology and methodology. This has the effect of influencing the researcher to explore the ontological assumptions in different research methodologies in order to determine the best approach for conducting scholarly work.

By including this discussion of ontological thinking into this section of the Methodology Chapter, depth is added to my argument because I am considering many factors around the approaches chosen for fieldwork. As a reader, you may notice that this study is influenced by different positions and concepts that might be considered contradictory, which is, of course, true. I have turned to various theoretical and philosophical approaches and teased out the most important aspects to look at the problem of this study from different angles. As Soini et al. (2011) argue, "divergent and even contradictory positions are brought into conversation with one another in order to deepen our understanding of the phenomena studied and to open new paths for exploration" (p.11). Ontology and epistemology and their effects in terms of situating the framework of this study are discussed next in more detail.

3.5.1.2 Ontology

Ontology is a fundamental factor that directs our understanding and viewpoints towards any living extant phenomenon. The importance of this concept was clearly identified by Corcoran (2017, p. 27) when he argued that "our ontological assumptions are fundamental to how we come to understand ourselves, others and the world we share". This explanation helps researchers to start building their theoretical frameworks and to inform their thinking to develop research questions in advance.

Indeed, there are an immense number of ontological theories, such as ontological realism, ontological relativism, critical realism, historical realism, humanist poststructuralist, and post-humanist and constructivist ontologies. I will not discuss all of these but confine my discussion to a briefly consideration of poststructuralist ontology, as it has influenced this study. Following that, I will outline how the research questions are situated by my own ontological view in this study.

3.5.1.3 Poststructuralist ontology

Poststructuralist ontology refutes and resists humanist subjectivity (St. Pierre, 2016) and corresponds with Foucault's (1982) observation that "we have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries" (p. 785). Thus, poststructuralist ontology decentres the subject of the human and confirms that there are other symbolic, relational and social aspects that influence any phenomenon with or without human consciousness (Howarth, 2013; St. Pierre, 2015). Furthermore, poststructuralist ontology tends to trouble, problematize and deconstruct the subject of the human to present new and different conceptualisations regarding existence (Lather, 2017; St. Pierre, 2015, 2016).

This ontological approach resists Descartes's philosophical proposition of the "Cogito"[15]. Descartes believes that the subject "I" is a condition for the action to "think" (St. Pierre, 2015). Therefore, knowledge is always related back to the individual subject who thinks. The problem with this is that this mode of emphasizing the subject does not consider the context, the presuppositions of thinking such as logic (binary, linear, etc.), language and the socio-political environment of this subject.

Deleuze (1994), a philosopher writing at the end of the 21st century, claims that the mere tendency of the individual to use the term "I" is an error of the way that we think about our lived experiences. He argues that the way we think about our experiences is representational. In other words, we use words that represent a mass of experience when words can never really capture our experiences in general; they just point towards something that can never fully represent it, and we forget that this whole process of language points to something bigger than words (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988). For example, when we use "tree" as word to name the tree, this word does not present whole meanings and functions of the tree and this linguistic term can never catch the total experience that is related to a tree's existence. So, the word "I" is

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[15] *Cogito ergo sum* is a philosophical statement from Descartes that translates in English "I think, therefore I am" (Schaefer & Northoff, 2017).

pointing to something bigger than a static singular subject. The "I" for Deleuze is not some essential notion, but it is a process of complex relationships that are constantly changing.

Furthermore, a poststructuralist ontology re-considers the power of language and its use. St. Pierre (2016) explains that in poststructuralism, language and the human subject are a mix of words and objects that are not separate from each other. This means that human subjectivity does not exist in isolation and there are a number of different material factors such as non-human animals and environmental conditions that influence this ontological approach.

3.5.1.4   How poststructuralist ontology influences this study

Poststructuralist ontology influences this research in three ways. Firstly, it takes into consideration the importance of other aspects that contribute to the problems of this study such as the physical materiality of Deaf students in school environment; policy that controls and organises the Deaf education system, and discourses used by stakeholders.

Secondly, this study takes onto account the idea of deconstruction of human subjectivity that been examined in the field of Critical Disability Studies (CDS). Key scholars, Goodley and Runswick-Cole (2016) argue that CDS encourages us to re-think some modern ideals about humans. Further, CDS helps us challenge preconceived understandings, perspectives and theoretical frames that may cause and contribute to exclusion or hiding some community members who fail to meet those ideals. For instance, CDS encourages us to re-think some entrenched concepts about idealism, normalism and citizenship that may cause an isolation for individuals who cannot meet such norms (Goodley, 2016; Goodley, Lawthom, Liddiard, & Cole, 2017).

Thirdly, this research is consistent with poststructuralist ontology regarding the importance and effectiveness of using language to include or to exclude. Hence, this study aims to expose the language that contributes to exclusion. As Feely (2016, p. 1) argues:

> Poststructuralism allows us to challenge language that divides human beings
> into 'normal' and 'impaired' people. It suggests that we could use more
> inclusive language and treat people in more inclusive ways.

Another significant factor to outline is the epistemological position, and this will be discussed next in some detail because of its importance in this research.

3.5.2 Epistemology

Epistemology is a philosophical term that refers to how the researcher knows and reflects upon the relationship between the knower and the known (Cohen et al., 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2017; Maxwell, 2011; Olson, 2016). Furthermore, Wellington (2015) defines this concept as the way we acquire knowledge. Simply, epistemology is your way of knowing.

This approach is a powerful way to discuss, understand and view knowledge to present a new concept (Harasim, 2017). Indeed, an epistemological stance allows the researcher to see the knowledge from different angles, not what is true "for all time and in all situations" (Wellington, 2015). Denzin and Lincoln (2018) comment that "epistemology speaks to assumptions about knowledge. Epistemology is significant in research because research deals with knowledge production" (p. 218).

An epistemological stance shapes the interaction between the investigator and investigated, people and objects, and helps to situate the researcher during the study's processes (Creswell & Poth, 2017; O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015). Although there are many epistemological approaches, subjectivist and poststructuralist ontologies are discussed here in order to situate the epistemological stance of this study.

3.5.2.1 Subjectivist epistemology

The debate about epistemology and its notions between various schools and scholars appears in the scholarly literature to divide into two main camps. On the one hand, the strong relation between ontology and epistemological stances is emphasised. The second major argument relates to the dissimilarity of ontological understandings. To begin with, one of the main epistemological stances is subjectivist epistemology where a single "truth" that is independent or external from the knower is not believed (Simmons & Watson, 2014). This approach views the researcher as an integral part of knowledge and this knowledge completely relies on the researcher's interpretations, definitions and perceptions (Couch et al., 2016; Scholes et al., 2016).

In a more extreme way, this concept confirms that knowledge is theory; a constructed opinion or a "matter of taste", and it claims that an absolute fact is a myth (Moshman, 2015).

This research centres on poststructuralist epistemology to view the phenomenon from multiple perspectives and understand how different factors are interconnected. My view enables a sophisticated investigation of the research problem. However, this study is partially influenced by subjectivist epistemology position to understand each participant's personal story and how that is inextricably linked to the overall study's argument. Even though subjectivist epistemology is not connected to poststructuralist ontology, I use my own subjectivist viewpoint as another lens in my poststructuralist approach. Additionally, as a qualitative inquirer, I play a significant and fundamental role in the processes of this study and my relationships with participants are important in my consideration of new and different interpretations. This will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter in (3.7.2.3) where the complexity of interviewing is outlined.

3.5.2.2 Poststructuralist epistemology

Poststructuralist epistemology deals with phenomena from different angles that considers things to be messy, interrelated, non-linear and connected (St. Pierre, 2017). This epistemological stance aims to disquiet, disturb and deconstruct any phenomenon to produce a new and different knowledge (Lather, 2017; St. Pierre, 2016). Indeed, this epistemological view requires the inquirer to take a critical attitude towards understandings that were previously taken for granted (Witkin, 2011).

As I increasingly began to investigate my problem from different angles, I used different theoretical perspectives to investigate the problematic issues in this study. For instance, I examined the materiality (the physical experience) of students with hearing impairments. The analysis of policy is helpful to determine to what extent this policy contributes to exclusion or inclusion. The Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (Willig, 2013) has been employed to investigate the discourses of three groups of stakeholders. Moreover, Inclusive Education theory (Slee, 2011, 2018) and Critical Disability theory (Goodley, 2016; Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2016) provide deeper understanding and interpretation. More details about these processes are outlined in next section.

3.6   Theoretical framework

> [T]he value of theory lies in its power to get in the way: to offend and interrupt. We need theory to block the reproduction of the bleeding obvious, and thereby, hopefully, open new possibilities for thinking and doing (MacLure, 2010, p. 277).

Theory in this study is highly valued as a lens to read the data and to understand the related issues and concepts to provide new and different scholarly research. It is clear that theory is very significant especially in conducting qualitative research as MacLure (2010) argues that "doing research without theory is just running around like a headless chicken" (p. 279). Theory has been described by Brooker, Selden, and Widdowson (2017) as "a contemplative scrutiny and the rational or speculative understanding of phenomena, a mode of thinking and argument we might most readily associate with philosophy" (p. 2).

Theory in this study is a philosophical means that opens new doors of thinking to help me think about things I might not thought about before. St. Pierre, in an interview about post-qualitative methodology with Guttorm, Hohti, and Paakkari (2015), comments that researchers need to read a lot about theory to have different ways of thinking, because people in general think with theory whether they realize that or not. Explicating theory makes qualitative study more transparent and it increases the rigor of research (Anfara & Mertz, 2015).

Unlike many studies that are either purely empirical or theoretical, this study assembles these two aspects. Firstly, I will use empirical methods to analyse related policy and collected data. Secondly, this study utilizes and Inclusive Education theory, extensively, and Critical Disability theory (CDT), briefly, to read the collected data and to theorize and think about related issues. In addition, it concurs with the critical paradigm and poststructuralist ontological stance that consider that any phenomenon is influenced by many heterogeneous elements including social constructions that influence and interact with each other. Furthermore, CDT relates to the critical paradigm because both of them set out to critique practices that result from and contribute to exclusion or oppression (Asghar, 2013; Goodley et al., 2017). The theories I use in this study are discussed below.

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3.6.1 Inclusive Education theory (Slee, 2011, 2018)

Inclusive Education theory (Slee, 2011, 2018) influences this study in many ways as the main theoretical lens. It assisted in identifying the problem, aims and research questions and is employed in the analysis of policy and interview data. In this regard:

> Theory impacts the identification of the research topic or problem, it impacts the way the researcher thinks about the problem, and it impacts the questions that she/he asks about the issue. Indeed, every attempt to make sense of the world around us begins with our notions, conceptualizations, and theories about it (Young & Diem, 2017, p. 4).

Inclusive Education theory (Slee, 2011, 2018) was built on such fundamental concepts as everyone having a right to proper and adequate educational services in general classrooms at their nearest local school. In addition, it is a movement that resists any types of inequality that may produce exclusive practices among communities. Inclusive Education is a way of thinking (Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, Vaughan, & Shaw, 2002a).

Slee (2011) confirms that "inclusive education commences with the recognition of the unequitable social relations that produce exclusion" (p. 39). Thus, the concept of 'inclusive education' is wider than limiting it to specified practical practices or few synthetic policies. It is a life philosophy that stands against any form of oppression, exclusion, marginalization; in short, against any kind of inequality and discrimination. Inclusive education turns the focus from functional defects located in bodies or brains of individuals to one viewing people with disabilities as a minority that been marginalized by the structures of social and political practices (Collins & Ferri, 2016; Danforth, 2016). Indeed, the Theory of inclusive education in this study points to fundamental concepts:

1. Inclusive education is a philosophy of life.
2. It is a way of thinking (Booth et al., 2002b; Nutbrown, Clough, & Atherton, 2013).
3. It is a movement that resists any forms of discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion.
4. It is "a process of strengthening the capacity of an individual" (UNESCO,

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2009, p. 8).

5. Its basis is that of 'education for all' (Forlin, 2013; Gerber, 2012).

6. Its ideology is that "everyone can participate in learning and teaching; that the culture and organisation of learning environments complement democratic citizenship" (Whitburn & Plows, 2017, p. 3).

As a result, this study employs Inclusive Education theory to investigate why students with deafness in Saudi Arabia are excluded from general classrooms. This theory has been used to address the problem of this study and to theorise issues that appeared during interviewing three groups of stakeholders.

Furthermore, I will re-use two main concepts in this theory, namely the confusion between Inclusive and special education and the reproduction of special education as form of inclusion. This will be used to re-read the data to extend the interpretation of collected discourses. Moreover, to a lesser extent, I will use Critical Disability theory (CDT) to theorise emerging issues and to guide the re-reading of this data to provide different interpretations from different perspectives. In the next section, my discussion about this theory is developed.

3.6.2 Critical Disability theory

Although Inclusive Education theory is employed as the major theoretical framework in this thesis, to a lesser extent Critical Disability theory (CDT) (Goodley, 2016; Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2016) has informed this study. As a result, this theory is briefly discussed in this section. CDT critiques traditional and contemporary practices and assumptions that contribute to the oppression, marginalization and exclusion of people with disabilities. This theory resulted from different social movements' advocacy for human rights and equity (Goodley, 2016; Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2016). This includes aspects of critical theory, critical race theory and feminist theory (Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2016).

It is appropriate to begin with the work of Vehmas and Watson (2014, p. 649):

> Matters of distribution and relations between people are inescapable in making
> a just society, and exactly the kinds of issues any truly critical theory of
> disability must seriously engage with if it wants to make a real difference in the

real world.

The employment of CDT in my research allows further theorisation and understanding about issues related to disability. It provides a way of challenging the ideas of ableism and 'needing to be the ideal citizen' to meet the requirements of life. CDT challenges such thoughts to enhance the equity and quality in all aspects of life for people with disabilities (Gillies, 2014). It improves research by taking it beyond description to analysis.

In this study, CDT is employed to assist with my critique of the discourses of stakeholders in the Deaf education system within the Saudi Arabian context. This theory served as a lens through which participant comments, concepts and ideas that emerged from the data could be examined. Thus, two major concepts from CDT have been employed to analyse participants' discourses. The first one is disablism which is explained as a discriminatory practice or any forms of marginalization, exclusion and oppression resulting from believing people with disabilities are less worthy of concern and position than able-bodied people (Thomas, 2007).

The data of this study is, in fact, analysed to determined how this concept appears explicitly or implicitly in policy and participant discourses. The second concept is ableism's domination. Ableism "points to the practices and dominant attitudes in society that devalue and limit the potential of people with disabilities" (Hadley, 2013, p. 378). The disablism and ableism concepts have already been discussed in my literature review chapter, so they will not be re-examined further here. Having outlined the major theoretical underpinnings of the study, I now turn to its overall design.

3.7 Ethics

Before starting the fieldwork of this study, I completed an ethics application that meets the principles outlined in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) and requirements of the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee (VUHREC) (No. HRE16-174). Approval was obtained from this committee on 22/07/2016. Indeed, I adhere strictly all approved procedures to ensure physical and psychological integrity for all participants and for my research as well.

3.8 Study design

This section sets out the fieldwork, the method of data collection and methods of data analysis. It discusses the significance of undertaking the fieldwork and issues involved in data collection. I conclude this section by briefly highlighting the methods used to analyse the collected data.

3.8.1 Fieldwork

Undertaking fieldwork in qualitative studies is an important part of the interconnected processes of research. The researcher's connections and interactions with the real world is a significant benefit when undertaking fieldwork. Accessing this world requires preparation and consideration about what should be taken onto account and researchers need to plan what they will do. Entering the field requires building comfortable and respectful relationships and the researcher needs to be adaptive and flexible because different circumstances will arise that have not been anticipated during the preparation phase (Yin, 2015). Such processes employed in this study will be described in more detail after I discuss some recent debates about the status of voice and data in qualitative studies.

The significance of voice and, therefore, data in qualitative inquiry has been discussed according to diverse ontological and epistemological stances. Voice in qualitative research has been identified as a controversial issue in recent times. Viewpoints about the place of voice differ according to researchers' theoretical understanding, ontologies and purposes. In conventional and traditional qualitative inquiry, voice is considered a unique resource projecting the truth of consciousness and experience of human subjects (Mazzei & Jackson, 2016). This viewpoint comes from humanistic ontology that considers humanity as the centre of truth (Braidotti, 2013; Zembylas, 2017) and voice as the main tool that delivers this truth. A direct result of holding this viewpoint is that an inquiry will be dependent, partially, on what participants say in interviews. Researchers using this approach value and hallow the authentic voices of their participants as a foundation of knowledge (St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014).

In contrast, some refuse to continue using voice as the main resource for knowledge production in qualitative research. For example, St. Pierre (2009) argues that "voices could no longer reliably secure the truth" (p. 222). This newer thinking has appeared as a result of post-

humanist and poststructuralist ontologies that deconstruct the human subject and voice and consider other entities as influences for knowledge production (Lather, 2017; St. Pierre, 2016; Wolfe, 2010). This stance does not privilege the voice of subject because other non-human entities such as theoretical consideration, political and social factors are taken into account (Mazzei, 2013). Indeed, the voice is not considered as separate from individual experience but rather as one unit among a combination of things that are related to each other (Mazzei & Jackson, 2016).

In this study, I have conceptualized the place of voice in two ways. Firstly, I value the voices of my participants as an important data source that will contribute to providing new and different knowledge. Indeed, adults, former students who are Deaf, provided important data significant perspectives in this study. In this regards, White and Drew (2011) comment that "over the last 30 years there has been a proliferation of research emphasising lived experience, story and voice, particularly in relation to people in disadvantaged or vulnerable groups" (p. 4). Indeed, such studies are significant for allowing voices of these groups to be heard. One of my objectives in this study was to provide an opportunity for adults with hearing impairments in Saudi Arabia to speak about their experiences and thoughts regarding their schooling.

Simultaneously, this study highly values other aspects of contemporary research, such as theory, researcher experience, political and social elements, along with the discourses of participants. As Mazzei and Jackson (2016) argue, in post-qualitative educational studies, voice is an inseparable practice shaped in a material-discursive form intertwined with other units. I concur with St. Pierre (2009, p. 221) in this regard:

> I suggest we put voice in its place as one data source among many from which
> we produce evidence to warrant our claims and focus for a time on other data
> we use to think about our projects that we've been ignoring for decades.

3.8.2 Data collection method

3.8.2.1 Interviews

There are a number of different elements involved in deciding the most appropriate method of data collection to address the research questions. Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, and Ormston (2013)

identify four key factors that need to be considered by the researcher when choosing suitable data collection methods: (1) research questions, (2) the context of study, (3) the capacity of time and (4) the structure of the study. To these, I add the need for contemporary and credible qualitative research to consider the researcher's ontological, epistemological and theoretical stances, as discussed earlier.

Despite the range of possible collection data methods, the individual interview has been used as the main tool to gain perspectives from participants in this study. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) observe that interviewing, as a collection data method, does not require justification owing to its spread and familiarity. However, I briefly outline reasons for choosing the individual interview as the main method for this study.

Firstly, interviewing was chosen as the major data collection method because it provides knowledge beyond the researcher's existing assumptions about the researched phenomenon (Josselson, 2013). As Brennen (2017, pp. 27-28) observes:

> Because people speak from a variety of different backgrounds and
> perspectives, interviewing is a valuable method that may be used to gather a
> large amount of useful, interesting, relevant or important information. Some of
> the information accessed through interviews helps to broaden our knowledge
> base while other information may also help us to understand alternative points
> of view.

As one of the main objectives of this study was to provide participants an opportunity to speak about their education experiences, undertaking interviews was the most appropriate tool to employ. Interviews have the potential to empower participants to speak freely and provide valuable and authentic accounts of experience. Listening to individuals who have first-hand experience and considerable expertise is the fundamental advantage of an interview (Brennen, 2017). Interviews provide access to participant perspectives that would not otherwise be gained. Interviews also provide insight into how participants create meaning about their experiences and their positions in different social environments (Silverman, 2016). Indeed, the interview process provides the researcher with rich and truthful perspectives about the researched phenomenon.

3.8.2.2 Semi-structured interviews

While several different types of interview were available, this study does not employ unstructured nor structured interviews. Instead semi-structured interviews were chosen. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) argue that "even though neither completely structured nor completely unstructured interviews are possible, it may still be worthwhile to distinguish between more or less structure" (p. 579). The justifications of this choice of semi-structured interviews is outlined below.

Firstly, unstructured interviews limit the role of the researcher from discussant to listener who may wish to ask questions or more clarification (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Secondly, the researcher in the more structured interview predetermines the exact and fixed questions that may overly direct participant responses, leading to it being unlikely that different or new understandings or interpretations are contributed. With structured interviews, the researcher may easily lose the opportunity to gain significant knowledge. The reason for this is that structured interviews do not allow for the kind of dialogue that contributes to knowledge production, inherent in human discussion (Brinkmann, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Consequently, this study employs semi-structured interviews to more effectively make use of the interview opportunity.

Semi-structured interviews enable researchers to ensure coherence between interrelated notions during the interview (Corbin, Strauss, & Strauss, 2014). This kind of interview provides greater flexibility for both the researcher and the participants. It allows space for the researcher to ask follow-up questions, add in some questions or ask for more clarification. Simultaneously, it provides participants with more freedom to present comments, concepts, ideas or questions (Brennen, 2017; Corbin et al., 2014). Indeed, conducting such interviews is neither easy nor difficult, but is complex. Some of the issues related to this form of interviewing will be discussed in the following section.

3.8.2.3 Complexity of interviewing

> Interviewing is a complex task that requires careful preparation (Olson, 2016, p. 23).

In general, conducting interviews is a difficult and complex task that needs careful preparation, starting with approaching the appropriate participants to collect useful data that will help answer the research questions. Considering the multiple dimensions around research issues and the participants contributes to the success of the project Mayan (2016). Interviewing is a skilled endeavour, and some argue that the researcher needs training in conducting interviews before beginning (Olson, 2016). I had some experience with interviews during my postgraduate study and these help me to apply this tool appropriately. Yin (2015) counsels new interviewers to "be respectful but not condescending, friendly but not ingratiating, and attentive to others but not pandering to them" (p. 126).

More importantly, the relationships between the interviewer and their interviewees play an important role in the success of interviews. It is the responsibility of the interviewer to build and lead these relationships to achieve efficient interviews. One of the most significant things to consider in terms of this relationship is the exercise of power between the researcher (interviewer) and the participants (interviewees). This power should be shared during interviews with sometimes the interviewer being the speaker and, at other times, the listener, but certainly the interviewees should be encouraged to speak and to ask questions. As Anyan (2013, p. 4) comments, power is central in the interview process:

> The interview situation is characterized by different forms and degrees of power. This power shifts back and forth with regards to the interviewer and the interviewee. One feature about the interview is that both the interviewer and the interviewee may use their respective powers to negotiate the level of information provided about the study.

During the interviews for this study, I tended to listen more than speak. Additionally, participation in interviews was optional and based on decisions made by the interviewees. Both the researcher and the participants seemed to have the same motivation about improving Deaf education in Saudi Arabian context. Furthermore, I employed respectful strategies including

paying close attention to what I was being told, showing interest in what was being said and listening carefully without interruption (Green & Thorogood, 2018).

Furthermore, I remained mindful and observant of what was occurring before, during and after the interview. I used a digital recorder and took notes in order to undertake what Bhattacharya (2017) observes that the interviewer must record everything in the interview and keep the notebook in hand during the interview and also after the recorder is turned off[16] to gain maximum benefit from the interview. Using these strategies helped me to manage the time and conduct of the interviews (Olson, 2016).

However, conducting interviews with adults who were formerly students in the Saudi Deaf education system required additional and particular preparation and attention. I needed the assistance of a sign language interpreter, even though I am a fluent signer. The main reason for this support is that my role as researcher required me to attend to more issues than asking questions and understanding responses. Kohler, Gothberg, and Coyle (2012) provided some useful advice to assist interviewers of members of marginalized populations. Ensuring that the participants fully understood the purpose of the study and what I would ask of them was part of gaining informed consent. I asked the sign language interpreter to translate the plain language statement and the consent form for the participants in advance of the interviews to ensure this document was understood. Together with the emailed information I had previously sent, this safeguarded the important issue of fully informed consent.

The second piece of advice that I found useful was the importance of supporting appropriate communication options (Kohler, Gothberg, & Coyle, 2012). In this study, sign language was the appropriate communication method for these interviewees. In preparation, I recruited three sign language interpreters to assist in all interviews with Deaf participants. Furthermore, I employed different techniques including repeating or rephrasing the question, providing more time for responses which allowed for thinking time for the participants. I also asked clarifying

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[16] The notes that were taken after the recorder was turned off were not data from participants. They were some notes for me to remember some important events that happened during the interviews or to link information to other data.

questions. Together these strategies ensured that the interviews were relaxed, and everything was clearly understood by the interviewer and interviewees.

Additionally, my seven years' experience of teaching students with hearing impairments at the primary school level proved to be very helpful for my research work interviewing adult members of the Saudi Deaf community.

Ultimately, it is important to acknowledge that there were a range of methods that could have been used. However, this study does not use other possible approaches to collect data, such as observation because the researcher is very familiar with the context of study as he spent more than seven years in this field. However, future studies may find this method very useful.

3.8.3   Population, selection participants

I used the 'purposive selecting' strategy to identify the desired participants for this study. This strategy is based on the capacity of the participant to provide needed data that will add to the rigour and plausibility of the study (Padgett, 2016). The participants for this study were purposively selected in four distinct groups. The first group was made up of two policymakers who were employed in the Deaf Education Department of the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education. These two policymakers have a high position in the Ministry of Education, which allows them to take effective decisions with regards to Deaf education in the context of Saudi Arabia.

The second group included eight adults who were formerly students in the Saudi Deaf education system. These participants were educated in isolated 'self-contained' classrooms. Their perspectives were of particular value for this study and I wanted to investigate the impact and consequences of their educational experience.

The third group comprised six teachers for students with hearing impairments. These teachers taught in schools that had isolated 'self-contained' classrooms. I was interested to hear from these teachers about their experiences, assumptions and points of view. I conducted interviews with these participants, aiming to critically investigate what they said and implied about the inclusion and exclusion of students with hearing impairments. Every participants' group is discussed in more detail below.

The considerable constraints in Saudi Arabia mean that the participants for this study were all male. I was unable to meet female participants for religious and cultural reasons. Religiously, Saudi Arabia follows the Islamic Salafism[17] (Gause, 2014). Culturally, the majority of males in Saudi Arabia and some Arabic countries do not accept any stranger male to talk or seat with their female relatives because this consider as a blatant infringement on family honour (Alselaimi & Lord, 2012). The gender separation occurs in every aspect of Saudi society where the majority of women do not agree to communicate with unrelated men as the country is largely conservative and religious (Al-Saggaf & Williamson, 2004).

3.8.3.1 Group 1: Policymakers

3.8.3.1.1 Policymaker 1 (PM1)

This man has held his senior position within the Ministry of Education for 15 years. He has qualifications in Deaf Education and holds a Master's degree in Education Techniques.

3.8.3.1.2 Policymaker 2 (PM2)

This man seemed highly motivated to participate in this study and also has held his senior position in the Ministry for two decades. He is qualified in Deaf Education and has experienced many national and international workshops and conferences that relate to Deaf education.

3.8.3.2 Second Group: Former Students with Hearing Impairments

This group comprises of six former students with deafness. Each participant was given a pseudonym and is briefly introduced below.

3.8.3.2.1 Ali (STU1)

Ali is aged about 24 years of age and he has been profoundly Deaf from birth. He was a student in isolated classrooms for the Deaf during his education from primary to high school level. Nowadays, he is a university student even though he failed to enter this university after

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[17] Salafism teachings prevent a male to seat with a female unless they are relatives such as sister, mother, grandmother, aunt, wife and mother of wife.

finishing his high school. This required him to study a further two years in a technical college to improve his skills to meet university requirements. His only communication tool is sign language. I refer to him in this study as 'STU1'.

3.8.3.2.2 Samer (STU2)

The second participant is 25-years old and is a profoundly Deaf. Sign language is his main communication tool. Because he was living with his family in a rural area, he began primary school very late at 9 years of age. And this occurred in a Deaf Institute after the family moved to Riyadh city. Two years later, at aged 11, Samer moved to study in an isolated classroom for Deaf students located within a general school. He is now studying a preparatory year as a requirement to enrol at university. I refer to him in this study by the shorthand, 'STU2'.

3.8.3.2.3 Fisal (STU3)

Fisal is 25 and is also profoundly Deaf. Unlike Ali and Samer, Fisal lost his hearing at the age of four. He also uses sign language as his main communication tool. He has a hearing twin brother. Fisal graduated from a 'self-contained' classroom after studying at all school levels but has not yet found a job. I use for him the reference 'STU3'.

3.8.3.2.4 Hatim (STU4)

Hatim is a 26-year-old who is a profoundly Deaf who mostly uses sign language but sometimes employs lip reading to communicate with others. He is socially very active, being a member of social clubs and a participant in volunteer activities. He likes to travel and to build new friendships with hearing and non-hearing people. Hatim is currently studying in the final year of a university degree. 'STU4' references Hatim (that is, Former Student who is Deaf 4).

3.8.3.2.5 Salem (STU5)

The fifth participant is a 27-year-old who works in primary school as an event organiser. He studies part-time at university and is completing a degree. He lost hearing when he was in grade two, aged at about 7 years of age. After two years he was shifted from his ordinary classroom to a 'self-contained' classroom for Deaf students. He is 'STU5' (Former Student who is Deaf 5).

3.8.3.2.6 Rayan (STU6)

Rayan is the last participant in this group and is aged about 22. He has been profoundly Deaf from birth and sign language is his main means of communication. He was a student in isolated classrooms throughout his education until he graduated from high school. He is currently a student in a private university in his first year and is facing some difficulties at this university. I denote him in this study by 'STU6'.

3.8.3.3 Third Group: Teachers for Students with Hearing Impairments

This group contains six teachers who work in 'self-contained' classrooms. I also refer to them using pseudonyms.

3.8.3.3.1 Abdelaziz (TEA1)

The first participant is a 36-year-old who holds both Bachelor and Masters level degrees in Deaf education. His experience of teaching Deaf students in this type of classroom extends beyond 13 years. I symbolized him in this study with the reference 'TEA1' (Teacher for Deaf Student 1).

3.8.3.3.2 Ahmed (TEA2)

Ahmed is about 42 years of age. He was a general science teacher before transferring to teach Deaf students in 'self-contained' classrooms, after obtaining a diploma in Deaf education. He also holds a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Educational Curriculum and Instruction. His experience with Deaf students includes more than 15 years of engagement. He is proponent for studies in Deaf education to improve the current situation. I call him here 'TEA2'.

3.8.3.3.3 Nasser (TEA3)

Nasser is in his fifties and he has been a teacher of Deaf students for more than 20 years. He holds a Bachelor level degree in Deaf education. He views the biggest problem for Deaf students as their ability to communicate. In this study, I designate him 'TEA3'.

3.8.3.3.4 Saad (TEA4)

Saad is a 34-year-old who holds Bachelor and Masters level degrees in Deaf Education and has more than 10 years of experience as teacher of Deaf students in 'self-contained classrooms'. He views the power of change as being in the hands of policymakers. His reference here is 'TEA4'.

3.8.3.3.5 Khaled (TEA5)

Khaled is aged 41 is a teacher and leader in 'self-contained' classrooms in his school. He has had more than 18 years in this position. He is a proponent of Inclusive Education but believes the time is not right to apply it in the Saudi Arabian context. Instead of naming him, I reference him as 'TEA5'.

3.8.3.3.6 Bassam (TEA6)

Bassam is in his fifties, and he has been a teacher for Deaf students for more than 23 years. He has Bachelor level qualification in Deaf education. He is strongly opposed to the idea of including Deaf students in general classrooms and sees it as theoretical issue more than a practical one. I reference him in this study as 'TEA6'.

Table 1: Participants of this study

First group (Policymakers)	Policymaker 1	PM1
	Policymaker 2	PM2
Second group (Former students with hearing	Former Deaf Student 1	STU1
	Former Deaf Student 2	STU2
	Former Deaf Student 3	STU3

impairments)	Former Deaf Student 4	STU4
	Former Deaf Student 5	STU5
	Former Deaf Student 6	STU6
Third group (Teachers for students with hearing impairments)	Teacher for Deaf Student 1	TEA1
	Teacher for Deaf Student 2	TEA2
	Teacher for Deaf Student 3	TEA3
	Teacher for Deaf Student 4	TEA4
	Teacher for Deaf Student 5	TEA5
	Teacher for Deaf Student 6	TEA6

The total number of participants in this study is 14 as described above.

3.8.4 Interviews questions

I purposely chose to limit the main interview questions in a specific few questions to ensure focus on quality not quantity.

Simultaneously, I planned for flexibility during interviews by encouraging questions from the participants as well as asking follow-up questions for more clarification. (See these questions in Appendices A, B and C).

3.9 Research procedures

3.9.1 Process of data collection

The procedures followed in collecting the data in the Saudi Arabia fieldwork are described in this section. The ethics approval was firstly obtained from the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee (VUHREC) for this study, its number is (HRE16-174). Then I directed this approval to the SACM (Cultural Mission of Saudi Arabia). SACM then provided me with a letter of endorsement for this research. Once I had this approval letter, I then directed it, with a description regarding the study, to the General Administration for Scholarship and Training at the Saudi Ministry of Education. In turn, the Ministry, provided me with approval to contact targeted schools[18].

I followed key procedures for recruiting teachers as study participants from schools. Firstly, an e-mail was sent to each school's principal that included information about myself and the study. After some weeks, I the required responses were received and arrangements were made to visit the schools to conduct informational meetings. During these meetings I described my study, providing a written description about what would be involved in agreeing to be interviewed. I received calls from teachers who agreed to take part in an interview. After this, I prepared a schedule and negotiated the location for the interviews with each teacher.

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[18] Targeted schools: all primary schools that have isolated classrooms for Deaf students in Riyadh city. There are 38 of them (Ministry of Education, 2016).

Additionally, I followed some steps to recruit former students as participants for this study. I sent another email to the same principals to ask them if they could communicate about my study with some former students. However, this was not successful. Instead I sent emails to the Deaf Club in the Riyadh and Saudi Society for Hearing Impairment. In these emails I included a description of the study, a request for interview participants and SACM's enabling letter. I was pleased to receive positive responses and organised meetings with four former students. As I wanted to include more participants, I send an email to the principal of Deaf Education at Alfisal University. Once I received more responses, I organised a meeting with each participant to describe the interview and I arranged a schedule with some sign language interpreters to translate all interviews.

In order to conduct interviews with policymakers in the Deaf education department in the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, I needed permission, so I sent a formal email to the General Director of Deaf Education Department and his deputy about my study. After two days, I had received their permission and the interviews to be scheduled at the Ministry of Education building.

3.10 Methods of data analysis

Two phases were employed in the analytical process of this study as outlined in the table below.

Table 2: The analytical process

Phase No.	Name	Mission
1	The Critical Policy Analysis in Education (CPAE) phase (Diem et al., 2014)	To analyse the policy and Regulations of Special Education Programs and Institutes (RSEPI).

2	The Foucauldian Discourse Analysis framework (FDA) phase (Willig, 2013).	To analyse gathered data from participants.

Firstly, the policy related to the Regulations of Special Education Programs and Institutes (RSEPI) (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 2016) was analysed by applying Critical Policy Analysis in Education (CPAE) (Diem, Young, Welton, Mansfield, & Lee, 2014). Secondly, the discourses of all three groups of participants were analysed via the Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) framework (Willig, 2013). Following that, the discussion is extended to include more concepts from Inclusive Education theory and Critical Disability Studies.

3.10.1 Analysing policy documents

The first phase involved analysing the policy documents related to Deaf Education in Saudi Arabia (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 2016). The purpose of this analysis was to address the extent to which this policy includes the Deaf in Saudi contexts.

Indeed, investigating policy is important in this study for two reasons. Firstly, it is important to take the related policy in account because this study embraces poststructuralist ontological and epistemological stances that attribute the problem of this study to many complicated entities. Thus, the relevant policy is examined to determine if this policy constitutes part of the problem of this study. Secondly, due to this study aiming to be transformative rather than descriptive, it is important to analyse the relevant policy because it may enhance the transformative reform and help researchers to undertake additional investigation.

Document analysis is a method employed to interpret and analyse documentation in a way that gives a voice and meaning for the content of this documentation (Bowen, 2009). It is a significant inquiry tool in its own right and is invaluable in combination with other methods to examine phenomena from different angles (Bowen, 2009). Furthermore, this method is useful as tool to analyse policy and to discover limitations and problematic issues in the policy in order to resolve them (Dunn, 2015). The Critical Policy Analysis in Education (CPAE) (Diem

et al., 2017) lens was also employed to analyse policy. The specific policy under examination is the Saudi Arabian 'Regulations of Special Education Programs and Institutes' (RSEPI). This policy addresses all aspects of education for students with disabilities, including Deaf students. Indeed, I used the CPAE approach to question the policy and its effects particularly pertaining to practice. The next section discusses this approach in more detail.

3.10.1.1 Critical Policy Analysis in Education (CPAE)

Critical Policy Analysis in Education (CPAE) (Diem et al., 2017) is employed as an analytical tool to analyse the policy pertaining to Deaf education in Saudi Arabia. I do this for two main reasons. Firstly, this study falls under the critical paradigm and employs poststructuralist ontology and epistemology, as discussed in the earlier philosophical and methodological orientation section. And secondly, all practices in the education system for all students with disabilities are based on this policy. Therefore, analysing this policy is important to see the extent of its contribution to Deaf education.

One of the reasons for the emergence of Critical Policy Analysis was the need to critique the traditional positivist approaches that were dominant in this field (Diem & Young, 2015). Traditional policy analysis approaches relied on realist ontology and positivist epistemology in terms of rationalism and functionalism (Levinson, Sutton, & Winstead, 2009). Because of the limitations of this stance, the need arose for Critical Policy Analysis as an analytical method. In the last three decades, a tangible transformation occurred from traditional policy analysis to critical approaches that seek to investigate the agendas, beliefs, historical constructions and practices resulting from the policy under scrutiny (McDonnell, 2012). Indeed, CPAE help us to analyse policy by considering many critical questions such as those mentioned by Young and Diem (2017, p. 4):

> How policies that are presented as reality are often political rhetoric; how knowledge, power, and resources are distributed inequitably; how educational programs and policies, regardless of intent, reproduce stratified social relations; how policies institutionalize inequality; and how individuals react to policy and policy processes.

This study will adapt a framework from the work of Diem et al. (2014) to analyse the policy

relevant to Deaf education in the Saudi context. This framework contains five themes:

1. The root of policy and its development and effects.
2. The extent to which the policy rhetoric differs from practiced reality.
3. Who benefits and who loses from this policy?
4. The social effects of the policy on relationships of inequality and privilege.
5. The role of members of non-dominant groups in this policy (Diem et al., 2017, p. 23).

These five themes will be used as a framework to analyse issues and articles related to Deaf education policy in Saudi Arabia (Special Education Department in Ministry of Education, 2016).

3.10.2 Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA)

Using a form of Critical Discourse Analysis as an analytical approach assists with deconstruction, challenging, troubling and critiquing discourses and data (Dieronitou, 2014). Some discourses will be examined in this study that revealed some assumptions and attitudes from participants. Indeed, employing such analytical approach can assist with critical investigations and demystification of discourses that constitute inequality. And this is done by deciphering explicit and implicit ideologies and assumptions (Wodak & Meyer, 2015). In addition, it is a suitable method to critique practices that result in marginalization or oppression for any group of society. For instance, Rogers (2011) argues that analysing discourse critically is an appropriate tool to expose the negative uses of power that result from domination or marginalization.

There are many approaches in Critical Discourse Analysis. However, I employ Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) (Willig, 2013) as an analytical framework in this study. FAD acknowledges the relationships between linguistic discourse and power and how participants think or feel (Willig, 2008). It alows for a critical analysing for all collected discourses to examine how they constitute subject positions as a result of adopting such discourses (Willig, 2013). Discourses in this case refer to all collected speech (data) from participants.

In this framework, six stages were followed. The first stage involves identifying discursive

constructions pertaining to the rationale of those who placed those students (Willig, 2013). During this stage, all the transcripts were red and re-red many times, keeping in mind the main discursive object which is 'reason for isolating'. A range of discursive constructions about reasons for isolating students, whether through direct or indirect means as well as via implicit or explicit references, have been highlighted and written to be taken in account during the analysis of interview transcripts.

In stage two, all discursive constructions about *reason for isolating* are located in wider discourses. During this stage, five wider discourses are developed by locating the discursive constructions of those in the policymakers' group; two from former students, and four from teachers of Deaf students.

Stages three and four will be applied together as they are related. During these two stages, I pay close attention during the examination all discursive constructions, keeping in mind key critical questions such as:

- Who benefits and who loses from such constructed discourses?
- What are the consequences of embracing these discourses and positioning them in this or that way?
- How do these discourses contribute to locating the speaker or the object of this speech?
- How do these acts of positioning construct the subjectivity of Deaf students? (Willig, 2013).

In stage five, I examine the relationships between discourses and practices to view how stakeholder discourses result in particular practices. Different practices were taken into account in terms of whether they allowed or prevented actions, or whether they empowered or disempowered related subjects.

The sixth stage investigates how these discourses construct the subjectivity of participants. It considers how these participants use these discourses to make a way of seeing or being in the world.

All these six stages are extensively discussed below for more clarification:

3.10.2.1 Discursive constructions

This stage is the first step in the journey of data analysis. At this stage, discursive objects are identified by using the aims and questions of this study. This step requires us to determine all discursive objects among targeted discourses. In this study, the discursive object is 'reasons for the isolation of Deaf students from general classrooms'. This was identified as a result of aims and objectives of this study.

3.10.2.2 Wider discourses

At this stage, the focus is on the different instances that constitute discursive objects. In this analytical step, I aim to "locate the various discursive constructions of the object within wider discourses" (Willig, 2013, p. 385). To obtain this stage, I have read all collected data many times to determine some potential wider discourses. In this study, five wider discourses have been located. These provide potential reasons related to the concept and meaning of inclusive education.

3.10.2.3 Action orientation

This stage led to questions about who gains and who loses from constructing the current situation of Saudi Deaf education in this way. In addition, we ask how participants explicitly and implicitly construct the reasons for excluding Deaf students from general classrooms in the Saudi educational system. How do these discursive constructions relate to other parts of the participants' discourses? Thus, this action orientation concentrates on how discursive objects are positioning and positioned by different participants. Willig (2013) argues that "a focus on action orientation allows us to gain a clearer understanding of what the various constructions of the discursive object are capable of achieving within the text" (p. 386).

3.10.2.4 Positioning

After identifying discursive objects and their wider discourses, this stage relates to action orientation and aims to focus on positions that have been offered by/for participants. As discourses construct positions for different identities of the participants, this analytical step will take these poisonings in account to investigate their impacts. Willig (2013, p. 387) points out

that:

> Subject positions are different from roles in that they offer discursive locations from which to speak and act rather than prescribing a particular part to be acted out. In addition, roles can be played without subjective identification, whereas taking up a subject position has direct implications for subjectivity.

In this study, I pay close attention to how participants position themselves and others and how they categorize related entities via their direct and indirect discourses.

3.10.2.5 Practice

This stage concentrates on the relationships that exist between the discourses of the participants and the lived practices. It requires the researcher to explore how discursive constructions and their subjective positions enable or limit potential for action (Willig, 2013). Indeed, constructing discourses in particular ways by participates contributes to allowing or limiting what can be done or said. Furthermore, practices need relevant participants to take up appropriate roles to create discourses that enhance these practices (Van Leeuwen, 2008).

In this research, the discourses and positions of policymakers, former Deaf students and teachers of the Deaf in the Saudi educational system play significant roles in related practices. Thus, I investigate how their discourse and positions effect the current situation for Deaf students in their education in Saudi Arabia.

3.10.2.6 Subjectivity

In this stage, the relationship between discourse and subjectivity is explored and discursive positions play an important role in this process. Willig (2013) argues that "Discourses make available certain ways-of-seeing the world and certain ways-of-being in the world" (p. 388). In this stage, I trace some thoughts, feelings and experience that are produced as a result of stakeholders' embodying different subject positions.

3.11   Trustworthiness and quality of this study

Trustworthiness is a significant factor that helps to judge the quality of research

in qualitative studies. In the coming sections, trustworthiness will be discussed using four main criteria: credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability (Lincoln, 2007).

The first criterion—credibility—refers to the amount of researcher confidence in the achieved findings (Connelly, 2016). It is an important criterion in order to check the internal validity in quantitative inquiry (Polit & Beck, 2014). There are some strategies to achieve credibility and I will focus on those that are related to this current study. The first strategy is triangulation. Triangulation is the use of different methods to collect data for the topic, collecting different data, recruiting participants from different organisations and/or using different means to analyse the gathered data (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Shenton, 2004). As a result, this current study achieved triangulation by using different methods to collect the required data by using semi-structured interviews, interviews and documentation. In addition, it collected the data from participants who come from diverse organisations such as schools, clubs for Deaf people, universities and the ministry of education. Finally, it recruited different methods and theories to analyse the collected data such as Critical Policy Analysis in Education (CPAE), Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA), Inclusive Education theory and Critical Disability theory.

Another strategy to achieve credibility in qualitative research is as Shenton (2004, p. 65) states "the development of an early familiarity with the culture of participating organisations before the first data collection dialogues take place". Consequently, my extensive experience in Deaf education enhances this strategy, which increases the credibility of this current study.

Additionally, techniques used to establish credibility include persistent

observation where the researcher has "constantly read and reread the data, analysed them, theorized about them and revised the concepts accordingly" (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p. 122). In this current study, I apply these steps and discuss them extensively in Chapter Four.

Another important strategy used to enhance credibility is to ensure honesty by giving space of freedom for participants to participate and provide any information they want, also giving them opportunities to refuse to participate and the right of withdrawal any time they want (Shenton, 2004). In this current study, participation was voluntary, and all participants were given consent forms that assured their right to withdraw from the study at any point without any consequences.

The second criterion of trustworthiness is transferability. It means the potential of transferring the findings from one context or position to another one (Polit & Beck, 2014). It differs from statistical generalisation in quantitative studies, although they seem to have the same concept (Connelly, 2016). However, transferability in qualitative research is achieved by providing sufficient contextual information about the studied topic to enable the other interested readers to transfer the achieved findings and conclusions (Lincoln, 2007; Shenton, 2004). As a result, I provide a thick description about the fieldwork, participants, used methods and all aspects in this current study in Chapters Three and Four.

The third criterion of trustworthiness is dependability. Shenton (2004) confirms that "in order to address the dependability issue more directly, the processes within the study should be reported in detail, thereby enabling a future researcher to repeat the work, if not necessarily to gain the same results" (2004,

p. 71). Thus, this current study provides a detailed description for every process and step that was taken from beginning to the end.

The last criterion of trustworthiness is confirmability. To ensure confirmability, the beliefs, underpinning decisions, used methods and researcher's position and predispositions should be acknowledged and explained within the research report (Miles, Huberman, Huberman, & Huberman, 1994; Shenton, 2004). As discussed earlier, I afford a thick and extensive explanation for my position, experience, decisions and used methods during the different chapters in this thesis.

3.12 Conclusion

The chapter began by positioning me in this study by discussing the impact of my experience of teaching in isolated 'self-contained' classrooms for Deaf students at a Saudi primary school for seven years and the effect of my journey on this study. Some narratives were provided to reflect the unforeseen challenges facing Deaf students. Following that, this chapter outlined the motivation underpinning this study.

Additionally, my justification for selecting the critical paradigm as a general umbrella for this study was provided. The philosophical and methodological orientations with the ontological and epistemological stances of this study were discussed next. Following that, the theoretical framework was outlined, with particular attention to the two main theories that have been employed in this study.

The study design was discussed next alongside some issues pertaining to ethics approval, fieldwork, access to participants, the semi-structured interview, the stages of gathering the data and the methods of analysing related policy and collected data.

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Phase One: Materialistic Status of Deaf Students in Primary Schools in Saudi Arabia

4.3 Phase Two: Using Critical Policy Analysis in Education (CPAE)

4.4 Extend analysis to include more concepts on Inclusive Education Theory

4.5 Extend analysis to include more concepts on Critical Disability Theory

4.6 Conclusion

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4 Chapter Four: Analysis

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter a detailed discussion is provided about the analytical processes. The reason for providing this close level of analysis is to demonstrate and justify how I have drawn my conclusions. In Chapter 5 these conclusions are outlined but, in this chapter, I have aimed to provide transparency in my analysis so that my conclusions have credibility.

I use two phases to address the research questions. In doing so, I embrace poststructuralist ontological and epistemological stances, the influences of which were discussed in the methodology chapter. Firstly, I analyse the policies and issues related to Deaf Education and inclusion in the Regulations of Special Education Programs and Institutes (RSEPI) in Saudi Arabia (Special Education Department in Ministry of Education, 2001, 2016). This stage will be undertaken using the Critical Policy Analysis in Education (CPAE) (Diem et al., 2017) lens.

Secondly, the Foucauldian Discourse Analysis framework (Willig, 2013) will be used to analyse the data gathered from semi-structured interviews conducted with three groups of participants in Saudi context– policymakers, former students who are Deaf, and teachers of Deaf students. This framework will be employed to analyse interview transcripts in order to view the different constructions these three stakeholder groups put on the isolationism of Deaf students from ordinary classrooms.

These two phases are shown in below table to provide more clarification for the reader:

Analytical Phase	Analytical Tool	Stages	Targeted
1	Critical Policy Analysis in Education (CPAE)	1. Root of policy	Regulations of Special Education Programs and Institutes (RSEPI) in Saudi Arabia
		2. Policy rhetoric	
		3. Who benefits and who loses?	
		4. Social effects	
		5. Non-dominant input	
2	Foucauldian discourse analysis (FAD)	1. Discursive constructions	
		2. Wider Discourses	
		3. and 4. Action orientation and positions	
		5. Practice Position	
		6. Subjectivity	

The above table illustrates the main two analytical tools in this study. During these analytical procedures, Inclusive Education theory is heavily used and Critical Disability Theory is employed but to a lesser extent.

After applying these phases of my analysis, some surprising findings will be revealed, such as a tendency to shift blame to others among all three groups of participants. In addition, this analysis has shown that fear and resistance existed in all three groups, resulting in all three groups resisting change. Other findings will also be outlined, but now I will move to demonstrate how the findings were arrived at in more detail.

4.2 Phase one: using Critical Policy Analysis in Education (CPAE to analyse associated policy)

I have employed a framework from Critical Policy Analysis in Education to analyse the key Saudi policy. As mentioned earlier, two theories have been employed during this process of analysing, namely Inclusive Education theory (Slee, 2011, 2018) and, to a lesser extent, Critical Disability Theory (CDT). This framework includes five themes that are adapted from Diem and others (2014) that are discussed below:

4.2.1 Root, development and effects of policy

The Regulations for Special Education Programs and Institutes (RSEPI) in Saudi Arabia (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 2001, 2016) were issued in 2001, when the special education Department in the Ministry of Education jointly collaborated with professors from the special education Department in King Saud University, who had graduated from special education departments in different American universities (Aldabas, 2015). These regulations were adapted from the United States' special education policies, including the Education for all Handicapped Children Act (EHA) in 1975 and the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990 (Alquraini, 2011).

Indeed, this policy was not based on any national or local researched issues. Instead it appears to have been developed on the basis of the personal perspectives, experience and power of some administrators from the special education Departments in the Ministry of Education and a handful of professors from King Saudi University. These underpinnings have served to entrench the philosophical and practical underpinnings of special education into all aspects of this policy.

This policy document was updated in 2016 with a new format, designs and colours, but without

any substantial change in content. The new policy merely provides a procedural guide that included explanations of required daily practices to workers in this system. Thus, the substantive content of this policy continued as it had been established.

To analyse the root of this policy, it is clear that this policy was issued under a special education agenda. Firstly, it was issued by special education Departments in the Ministry of Education and King Saudi University by professors well-versed in special education policy. These establishing circumstances clearly affected the spirit of this policy which is representative of the special education agenda. This influence extended until it became dominant in this policy, even down to its name.

The consequence was that special education has dominated as the ongoing practice in Saudi educational contexts, especially in the Deaf Education sector, where such practices are represented as the normalized situation. Indeed, this practice resulted in isolating Deaf students from general classrooms and placing them in either isolated classrooms or schools, even though this policy briefly alludes to an article about inclusion for students with disabilities. This law and its related issues will be discussed in the next theme.

Additionally, the medical model of disability appears in many parts in this document. This appearance is expected because the special education agenda is the foundation of this policy. Further, there is a strong relationship between special education and the medicalization of disability, as outlined in the chapter where the literature was reviewed.

Some examples from that policy document reflect the sense of the medical model of disability. Firstly, this policy emphasizes the importance of rehabilitation, and it defines rehabilitation as:

> A coordinated process to recruit the medical, psychological, educational and professional services to help students with disabilities to achieve the maximum functional efficiency with the aim of enabling them to meet the normal requirements of surrounding environment and society to enhance their independent abilities to be productive members as far as possible (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 2016, p. 6).

Moreover, this policy defines support services as:

The required services and programs for the educational growth for students with disabilities such as physical, functional, speech and psychological therapy" (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 2016, p. 7).

Furthermore, the policy document confirms that:

The importance of special education lies in its being a form of educational services that been designed to meet the needs and abilities of students with disabilities with aim to improve these abilities to meet normalization as possible (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 2016, p. 8).

On the same page, this policy confirms that:

The aim of special schools and the schools that applied inclusion is to teach and rehabilitate all categories of students with disabilities with aim to train them to acquire adequate skills according to their abilities by studied plans and special programs to push their limitations and prepare them for normal life and inclusion in society.

Indeed, there are many examples in this policy document reflecting the agendas of special education and medical model of disability. Few pages in this document are free from the clear referencing of these agendas.

These examples show how this policy enhances the concept of normalism inside the education system. They also demonstrate how some agendas are entrenched in this policy, an issue that will be examined further in the later discussion chapter.

4.2.2 To what extent does policy rhetoric differ from reality?

'Inclusion' was mentioned in this policy only twice. The first time was in the operational definitions for key terms when it defines inclusion as:

Educating the students with disabilities in general schools with providing them with special education services" (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 2016, p. 7).

This definition includes two parts. Firstly, it covers the placement of providing the educational services. Secondly, it explains the forms of these educational services. This definition is problematic in relation to both parts. These issues will be examined further in the subsequent discussion chapter.

The second mention of inclusion in this policy document was in the first article under the Admission and Competence section that entitled "Educational placements for students with disabilities" (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 2016, p. 15). This article prioritizes these placements starting from general classrooms in the first four options, and states that:

> The educational provision for students with disabilities must be provided at the least restrictive environment according to the following priority:
>
> 1. General classroom with counsellor teacher services.
>
> 2. General classroom with itinerant teacher services.
>
> 3. General classroom with resource room services.
>
> 4. Self-contained classroom inside general schools.
>
> 5. Special schools (Special Education Institutes).
>
> (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 2016, p. 15).

The abovementioned section of the policy is problematic in two ways. First of all, it refers to concepts that exist rhetorically but is completely absent from practiced reality. All Deaf students in Saudi Arabia are educated in either isolated classrooms or separated schools. At present no Deaf student—in the entire Saudi education system—is studying in the general classrooms options, mentioned in points 1, 2 and 3 above. While some students with other disabilities are allowed to study general classroom options such as the students in wheelchairs and the students with vision impairments (Ministry of Education, 2016).

The second problematic issue raised here is that the existence of isolating options, mentioned in 4 and 5 above, represents the systematic approach that legitimizes the exclusionary practices

against Deaf students in Saudi Arabia. These issues will be developed further the discussion chapter.

4.2.3 Who benefits and who loses from this policy?

From analysing the foundations of this policy and its agenda, I argue that this policy is a form of special education policy and its name discloses that. It benefits special education sectors and associated stakeholders. As outlined early in this thesis, those who work in the Saudi Arabian special education sector gain extra money in their salaries as a 'special education allowance'. Specifically, this amounts to 20% additional pay for administrators and specialists and 30% extra salary for teachers of those students[19]. This is undoubtedly attractive for recipients. In addition, fewer students are enrolled in special education (isolated) classes and so less work is involved. These issues will be discussed in more detail in a later section.

It might be argued that this policy advantages Deaf students by legislating the provision of special education services for those students in "special" classrooms or schools. However, the outcomes of these isolating practices remain questionable and this will be developed in the discussion part of this thesis. These viewpoints will be extensively discussed in discussion chapter.

4.2.4 The social effects of the policy on relationships of inequality and privilege

This policy may constitute a ground for inequality in education system where a group of students in this system are excluded from their right in access general classrooms. This isolation that resulted from this policy could hold many negative transformative effects on many aspects on deaf students and their lives socially, academically and professionally. From interviewing former students, five from six confirmed the consequence of studying in this isolating schools. For example, STU6 argues that 'We graduated from high school with very weak academic skills. I am 26 years old and cannot write one sentence without any mistake

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[19] The Regulations of Special Education Programs and Institutes (RSEPI) in Saudi Arabia confirms the extra payment in salaries of all people who work with students with disabilities.

and I cannot read one paragraph. They teach us nothing' (Lines, 11-13). Simultaneously, this isolating policy may hold some privileges for other stakeholders in this system. In the same vein, Brantlinger (2006) suggests that the special education and its related policy predominantly hold many benefits for working professionals while it causes a loss for other people's children.

4.2.5 The role of members of non-dominant groups in this policy

The least obvious group to have been shown full consideration in this policy are individuals with disabilities. There is no evidence that any person with a disability played any role in constructing this policy, or being consulted about its contents and implications. Ironically, this policy document has not taken into account the perspectives and interests of individuals with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. Indeed, the constructing factors and entities of this policy were mentioned in this document (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 2016, p. 9) and the absence of individuals with disabilities in this construction shows how they are positioned outside this this policy.

In previous pages, I have shown how I employed CPAE to analyse associated policy to provide transparency about how I have drawn conclusions about the impact of this policy on inclusion of Deaf students. In the next section I take up FDA to analyse the collected data from interviewing the participants in this study as second level of analysis. This section is organised to discuss all three participants groups separately starting by policymakers then former students and concluding by teachers of Deaf students. I now move to analyse the collected data from the interviews using Foucauldian Discourse Analysis.

4.3   Phase 2: Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

In this phase, Willig's six stages of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (2013) have been applied, as flagged in the methodology chapter. The purpose of this analysis is to a provide deeper understanding. All three participant groups will be discussed together in the first and second stages. However, in the other stages (3, 4, 5 and 6) all group will be discussed separately. Starting with first stage below:

4.3.1 Stage 1: Discursive constructions

In order to fully address the research questions[20] guiding this study, the discursive object of this study was developed to: *reasons for isolation*. As a result, this stage involves identifying how constructions of participant discourse serve to define the discursive object of this study. To achieve this, all interview transcriptions were re-read, keeping in my mind the discursive object *reasons for isolation*. All instances where reasons for isolation were depicted, whether through implicit, explicit, direct or indirect references was noted about each interview transcription was noted. This was undertaken several times to provide a rigorous and authentic analysis of this data. Table 4, Table 5 and Table 6, below, show the different ways that the discursive object is constructed by the three groups of participants is shown.

Table 4: Policymakers discursive themes

Some discursive themes from policymaker interviews that reflect the discursive object of this study (reasons for isolation)
• Saudi Arabia is the first country in Arabic region that applied inclusion for Deaf students.
• Saudi Deaf Education has applied inclusion for Deaf students for 30 years.
• Some Arabic countries seek our (Saudi Deaf Education) help to improve their education systems for Deaf students.
• There is a bureaucratic mind-set in the work of the Ministry of Education.
• Teachers of Deaf students have a pessimistic tone and a negative vision.

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[20] 1. How is inclusive education policy enacted in Saudi primary schools?

2. How well are Deaf students served by this school system, and why?

• The problem in abilities of Deaf students as a result of their impairments.
• There are many scholars who report that inclusive education does not work for Deaf students.
• I am a proponent for "full integration" [inclusion] for Deaf students but nowadays I see partial integration [self-contained classrooms] as the best choice.
• We are sticking to educating Deaf students in partial inclusion [self-contained classrooms] because we can guarantee that they learn in this placement better than including them in ordinary classrooms.

Table 4 includes some discursive themes that illustrate how policymakers construct the discursive object of this study (reasons for isolation).

Table 5: Former students discursive themes

Some discursive themes from interviews of former student who are Deaf that reflect the discursive object of this study (reasons for isolation)
• There is no law or policy that allow us to study in ordinary classrooms.
• No, I do not contribute to any movement or organisation to claim our rights to study in ordinary classrooms.
• People with hearing impairments do not contribute to planning for Deaf Education or to making any decisions for Deaf students.
• Deaf students constitute a small group in school community because they fear interacting with hearing students and hearing teachers.
• As a Deaf student, I avoided communication with hearing students because I

feared rejection or ignorant comments from them.

Table 5 includes some discursive themes that illustrate how former student who are Deaf construct the discursive object of this study (reasons for isolation).

Table 6: Teachers of Deaf students discursive themes

Some discursive themes from interviews of teachers of Deaf students that reflect the discursive object of this study (reasons for isolation)
• We have inclusive programs for most Deaf students in our schools.
• By inclusive education, I mean either full integration or partial integration.
• Whatever strategies we try to use, full integration (inclusive education) remains very difficult to achieve for Deaf students.
• In books, inclusive education for Deaf students is easy, but in reality, it is very difficult.
• People in the Ministry of Education do not believe in Deaf student abilities.
• The decision of inclusion is in the policymakers' hands not in our hands as teachers.
• Deaf students have very weak skills because of their impairments. Deafness affects many learning skills and abilities.
• Inclusion is impossible. Indeed, including those students in ordinary classrooms would be a crime against their rights.
• Allah [God] creates them [Deaf students] like this, we should accept that their abilities are lower than hearing students. Asking for inclusion of those students into ordinary classrooms is more a humanitarian ideal than a

rational idea.
• Working as a teacher with Deaf students has some benefits such as working with fewer students, instead of working with 40 or 50 students. Also, I am paid more money and it was easy to get job in our time. But it is not as easy nowadays.

Table 6 includes discursive themes that illustrate how teachers of Deaf students construct the discursive object of this study (reasons for isolation).

These Tables above indicate the discursive themes raised by study participants and demonstrate how the main discursive object in this study was constructed. In the next section the second stage is outlined.

4.3.2 Stage 2: Wider discourses

As outlined in the methodology chapter, I have located the different discursive constructions within some wider discourses. I categorized themes and constructions about the discursive object for this study *reasons for isolation* within five main wider groups:

- Ignoring or not empathising with the problem.
- Shifting blame.
- Fixed attitudes.
- Low expectations.
- Fear or resistance

I have concluded with these five wider discourses after reading the collected data many times taking in my account the main discursive object *reasons for isolation.* During the interviews and while analysing policy data, other wider discourses also presented themselves.

However, this theme was not included because the motivation of participants in this study indicated their hope in reform for the current situation. This reduced the plausibility of this potential theme, so it was discarded during the analytical process. Another theme that also began to emerge was the lack of awareness and knowledge about inclusive education. But this

too was eliminated because policymakers and teachers of Deaf students indicated that they had adequate knowledge about related issues in Deaf Education system, including the international debate about inclusive and special education.

Of course, a different researcher may well have interpreted the data and literature differently. As I pointed out in Chapter 3, research of this nature is always, to some extent, subjective. During the analysis and interpretation phases, I have chosen to identify wider discourses around the problem under discussion. The critical questions that could now be raised relate to responsibility for reform.

In all remaining stages, namely action orientation, positioning, practice and subjectivity, I will analyse every interview group separately in search of a way to make it more accessible and less burdensome for the reader.

4.3.3   Stages 3 and 4: Action orientation and positioning (policymakers):

The started with the policymakers, who comprise two participants who hold senior positions Saudi Arabia. I simplified reference to them by using PM1 and PM2.

As mentioned above, five wider discourses emerged from analysing the policymaker interview transcriptions, and these are discussed below.

4.3.3.1   Ignoring or not empathising with the problem

Interesting discursive constructions emerged from the policymaker interview transcriptions. These discourses might constitute reasons for excluding Deaf students from ordinary classrooms in Saudi Arabia. Both policymakers positioned the Deaf Education provision Saudi Arabia as a very good system and claimed that it was the best one in the region. These claims were made early in the interviews but changed as the interviews progressed. Indeed, towards the end of the interviews, both policymakers acknowledged the existence of problems in this system.

My interpretation of the policymakers discourse that positioned this educational system as 'the best' in the Arabic region is a factor that contributes to the phenomenon of ignoring or not empathising the problem. This has led to the systematic blocking of Deaf students from

equitable opportunity to study in ordinary classrooms. As a result, the positioning of Saudi Arabia as the best educational system contributes to the isolation of Deaf students from ordinary classrooms. Here some examples of this positioning:

> We have the best Deaf Education system in Arabic region (PM1, line 9).

> Some Arabic countries seek and ask for our help to provide some suggestions to improve their education systems for Deaf students in those countries (PM2, lines 8-9).

> Our Deaf Education is better than before (PM1, line10).

These themes contradict the discourse of all former Deaf students who attributed their current challenges at university or lack of paid employment, to the failure of this educational system to meet their needs. Some verbatim quotes from those students are below:

> We learn nothing from our schooling (STU3, line 11).

> To be honest, it was very bad experience to be a student in this educational system… (STU2, line 14).

> We graduated from high school with very weak academic skills…I am 26 years old and cannot write one sentence without any mistake, and I cannot read one paragraph, they teach us nothing (STU6, lines 11-13).

4.3.3.2 Shifting blame

One of the most interesting findings from analysing policymaker transcripts was the tendency to shift blame onto others through discursive constructions. Both policymakers shifted the responsibility to related entities. Sometimes they blamed Deaf students. After that they started to blame the impairment of those students; then they blamed their teachers. This shapes a clear picture of shifting blame onto others. Some examples of shifting the blame in the policymaker discourse appears in the quotations below:

> There is a bureaucratic mindset in the work of the Ministry and this

bureaucracy delays any intention of applying full integration for Deaf students (PM1, lines 15-16).

In this statement, PM1 positioned the problem in the nature of the work at the Ministry of Education, even though he is in a high position in this organisation. Other examples of 'buck passing' that emerged from his discourse are that:

Teachers of Deaf students have a pessimistic tone and wrong vision (PM1, line 16).

The problem in hearing impairment itself, it affects the language and learning process (PM1, line 17).

These examples reflect how PM1 positioned the problem in external entities such as teachers and hearing impairment instead of taking responsibility for what is going on in the Deaf Education system in Saudi Arabia.

In addition, the same issues appeared in PM2's discourse. For instance, he shifted blame to others in such comments as:

The problem is in the Deaf student "as you know", his problem in language and everything relates to the language (PM2, line 15).

And there is a problem in teacher training programs where teachers find difficulties to teach some subjects (PM2, line 16-17).

Deaf students hold the responsibility because they tend to be isolated (PM2, line 19).

4.3.3.3 Fixed attitudes

From my analysis of the interview transcriptions of policymakers, a negative discourse became apparent. Specifically, it emerged that negative attitudes towards inclusive education were clear, although this was not mentioned explicitly. For example, PM2 positioned partial inclusion (so-called self-contained classrooms) as the best educational option. Simultaneously,

he positioned inclusive education as an inappropriate placement although he claims that he tends to support inclusive education, however he may have defined it. These two positions depict unwelcoming attitudes towards inclusion of Deaf students in ordinary classrooms. Indeed, this tendency towards a negative attitude regarding inclusion constitutes a reasonable justification to take these attitudes into account when I create the wider discourse in this stage. Here are some further examples of those assertions:

> There are many scholars who said that inclusive education does not work for Deaf students (PM1, line 23).

> The ultimate goal is that the Deaf student learns correctly, receives the education correctly or adequately, but currently, we do not guarantee that "full integration" will help Deaf students to be well educated because they, currently, are not capable to study in ordinary classrooms (PM1, lines 25-28).

From the previous examples, PM1 positioned inclusive education as an inappropriate option for educating Deaf students. This position indicates either negative attitude towards inclusion of Deaf students or a different understanding of the term. Other examples emerged from reading PM2's transcript as well:

> By the way, I am a proponent for "full integration" [inclusion] for Deaf students, but nowadays I see partial integration [self-contained classrooms] is the best choice for Deaf students in our education system (PM2, line 21-23).

> We are sticking to educating Deaf students in partial inclusion [self-contained classrooms] because we guarantee that they learn in this placement better than including them in ordinary classrooms (PM2, lines 25-26).

A serious question with this argument, however, is the issue of whether PM2 has been informed by scholarly investigation? Or is it simply opinion? To clarify this point, during the interview, I followed this statement with the question, "Have you conducted any studies to examine the effectiveness of current placements for Deaf students?" But he responded, "No, we do not have any position to undertake such studies. It is not part of our duties" (PM2, line 27).

4.3.3.4   Low expectations

Another issue that emerged in policymaker discourse is the low expectations they have about Deaf students. The abilities of Deaf students were positioned by the policymakers as lower than standard and as problematic. This clearly indicates the low expectations which constitute their rationale for denying Deaf students the right to obtain equitable educational opportunity by accessing ordinary classrooms. These low expectations appeared explicitly and implicitly in policymaker discourse. Some examples are below:

> Deaf students' abilities are weak in language and they fail in some subjects as a result of these abilities (PM1, line 18).

> The problem with Deaf students is that they tend to be isolated because they do not have adequate skills and abilities to communicate and interact with hearing students (PM2, line 19-21).

> Currently, we do not guarantee that "full integration" will help Deaf students to be well educated because they, currently, are not capable to study in ordinary classrooms (PM1, lines 25-27).

> The idea that calls for teaching Deaf students to be teachers, pilots, engineers and so forth is not true because such professions require the perfection in all of the senses (PM2, lines 23-24).

These participant comments illustrate and justify my argument about low expectations.

4.3.3.5   Fear and resistance

Analysis of the interview transcriptions of policymakers, revealed that some comments indicate fear and resistance towards change. For instance, the following comments emerged during policymaker interviews:

> We are sticking to educating Deaf students in partial inclusion [self-contained classrooms] because we guarantee that they will learn in this placement better than including them in ordinary classrooms. And we fear that any change will

be worse for these students (PM1, lines 30-32).

> Inclusive education for Deaf students calls for humanitarian considerations
> rather than realistic considerations, so, at this time, we support placing those
> students in self-contained classrooms. We do not see general classrooms good
> placements in near future because we are afraid these students will be affected
> if we push to include them with hearing students (PM2, lines 29-32).

The previous statements positioned the idea of failure in inclusive education as a logical reason for the fear of changing and facilitating inclusion for Deaf students. This view has resulted in a strong resistance against Deaf students having the right to equitable opportunity by accessing and being included in ordinary classrooms. My argument here was confirmed during the interviews with policymakers about why they did not contribute to establish inclusive placement as a genuine option. One of them responded with a clear statement that shows a strong resistance to inclusion, by using the Ministry's policy as a lifeline from my question:

> The Ministry's policy that is related to the affairs of special education teachers
> has its considerations that do not allow us to apply the inclusion of the Deaf
> students in ordinary classroom (PM1 lines, 35-37).

Indeed, the strong resistance to the idea of including Deaf students in general classrooms that appeared in policymaker discourse appears to result from their fear. But, the question to be raised here concerns whether this fear relates to something of benefit to these students or whether it relates to the self-interests of the policymakers themselves. I will discuss this question further alongside other related issues in the next chapter.

4.3.4   Stage 5: Practice position (policymakers)

As discussed in the methodology chapter, and to remind the reader, the term 'practice' here means the ultimate action result of discursive constructions and related positioning. There are many practice positions that result from five policymakers' wider discourses (Ignoring or not empathising with the problem, shifting blame, fixed attitudes, low expectations and fear or resistance) see (4.3.2 section). In this coming section, I will widen the discourse and identify its practice positions thoroughly, considering whether it allows or prevents practice.

The first wider discourse is ignoring or not empathising with the problem that Deaf students face in the educational system. This situation results in some practice positions. For instance, despite some claims of policymakers, the same practices are continually applied in the Deaf Education system in Saudi contexts. There is a gap between rhetoric and practice. Another problematic issue is that this discourse allows leaders in Saudi's education system to provide suggestions and workshops that reflect special education and isolation agendas to key stakeholders in the Arabic speaking region, effectively meaning more Deaf students will be excluded.

Another wider discourse I have raised above is that of shifting blame. This indicates the position of practicing power from the policymakers' perspectives. Through their privileged positions, they assert that they have the right and the ability to issue judgments against other identities. For example, it is evident that these participants confidently assert their right to make decisions for Deaf students, without concern about other points of view or negative consequences. Simultaneously, it serves to practice the evasion of responsibility. More interestingly, the shifting of blame demonstrates the contradiction in policymaker assertions. This blaming of others underlines the accuracy of Deaf student comments that confirm the problems with their education system. Furthermore, shifting blame prevents the practices of seeking solutions, using buck-passing as a tool to escape from responsibility or as a means to protect one's own interests. Indeed, it is a useful example of scapegoating. By investigating the policymaker discourse, it can be seen that the scapegoats are Deaf students, their impairments and their teachers.

Fixed attitudes constitute a wider discourse that results in some different practice positions. For example, the policymaker discourse appears to consistently work against applying inclusive education in Deaf Education system. This contributes to the continuity of isolating Deaf students into separate classrooms. Moreover, it deflects the need to employ appropriate plans to practice inclusive education in the Saudi Deaf Education system in the future.

Another important wider discourse relates to the expression of low expectations about Deaf students. This contributes significantly to practicing the marginalization of Deaf students by denying their perspectives in education, social events and other related issues. More importantly, the practice of expecting little from Deaf students enhances another practice - that

of the ongoing deprivation of rights to inclusion for these students. Simultaneously, these students must bear the consequences and impacts of the continuation of isolationist practices. Additionally, such a discursive construction promotes looking down on Deaf students as if they are inferior. Another significant practice position emerging from low-expectation discourse is the lack of evaluation, monitoring and accountability for professionals and related service providers working with Deaf students.

Finally, fear and resistance as a further wider discourse construction presents some practice positions. For instance, these assertions include fear of failure of Deaf students in ordinary classrooms, which in turn result in practicing resistance against change to include these students. Furthermore, the fear of losing personal benefits associated with the identity as a special education provider, being educational capital and financial benefits, might contribute to the practice of resistance to inclusion seen in policymaker interviews.

4.3.5   Stage 6: Subjectivity (policymakers)

In the policymaker discourse, a contradiction is apparent when they talked about Deaf Education in Saudi Arabia. Firstly, they positioned it as the best Deaf Education in Arabic region; then they confirmed that it is better now than before. After a while, they acknowledged the problem, but commented that it will need long time to be addressed. When PM1 says that "If we need to improve Deaf Education, we will need a long time - let's say, ten to twenty years" (PM1, line 27). After acknowledging the problems in the Deaf Education system, policymakers claim no responsibility but blame other identities. For example, they blamed teachers for providing a pessimistic picture of Deaf Education. Then they commented on teachers' abilities and cast doubt on their professional capacity. They also blamed teacher preparation programs in universities. Not only that, but the next group to be blamed was the Deaf students themselves. For instance, the impairments of these students were forwarded as the main cause for their suffering in the educational system. Indeed, the policymakers seemed compelled to put forward the idea that they are not responsible for these Deaf Education problems.

Conversely, however, in another part of the interview transcripts, the policymaker participants acknowledged full responsibility for the Deaf Education system in Saudi Arabia, which is

contradictory and somewhat confusing. To illustrate this, I will describe their responses to my question, "From your response, I understand that the decisions related to Deaf Education in Saudi Arabia are not in your hands? Is this right?" To which replies like the one below was received: "No of course. We are working behind the scenes to prepare every decision and send it to the Minister of Education to sign (PM1, lines 41-42). This illustrates the marked contradiction in policymaker comments and overall assertions resulting from the interviews.

Another issue that emerged from the policymaker discourse is the practice of power as leaders of Deaf Education in Saudi Arabia. Little justification or defence of decision appears to be required. This may lead us to believe that policymakers may not be sufficiently accountable. This was indicated in some statements such as "We are working behind the scenes to prepare every decision" (PM1, line 41), "We support placing those students in self-contained classrooms" (PM2, line 30) and "We do not see general classrooms as good placements" (PM2, line 31). This allows policymakers to simultaneously deflect responsibility and to shift blame. Moreover, this situation appears to promote a powerful conviction among policymakers that others such as teachers with hearing impairments do not have the right or the ability to contribute to the decision-making process associated with Deaf Education.

Another theme that is present throughout the policymaker discourse is the tendency to disclaim responsibility for the weaknesses evident in Deaf Education. This was evident through the blame for any problems being shifted onto other components of the education system, instead of acknowledging the possibility of the existence of alternative underpinning reasons.

Additionally, there is a sense of owning and alignment with special education as identity in the policymaker discourse. For example, PM1 says that "I have been working in the special education Department for eighteen years" (line, 7). Also, PM2 states that "We are the oldest department in Arabic region and all supervisors and leaders who are working in our department are specialized in Special Education" (lines, 11-12). This sense of belonging and expertise implies that resistance to inclusive education is likely for a number of reasons. For example, special education serves personal interests for those who work with students with special needs in Saudi Arabia. As outlined early in the thesis, policymakers and teachers in the special education sector are given a higher salary (20% for policymakers and 30% for teachers) as a bonus. These teachers have fewer students and less hours of work. Policy formalizes the

requirement for special education teachers to work a maximum of 18 hours per week).

To conclude, through the analysis of policymakers' interviews, a number of discursive constructions had been classified into six wider discourses that constitute some reasons for the exclusion of Deaf students from ordinary classrooms in Saudi Arabia. These discursive constructions had been discussed above and now moving to discuss the collected data from interviewing former students' group.

4.3.6 Stages 3 and 4: Action orientation and positioning (former students):

Here, I again present both stages (3 and 4) of the six stages of analysing the interviews of former students who are Deaf together. Again, I will present discursive constructions with some verbatim quotes to provide more illustrations of the action orientations and subject positions related to the discursive constructions of Deaf students. Indeed, wider discourses that emerge from the transcripts of former students are only two and these are shifting blame and fear and resistance.

4.3.6.1 Shifting blame

I could argue that former students who are Deaf have the right to blame other entities that contribute to their isolation. Yet I realize that there is a tendency to use blame-shifting as a tool to evade responsibilities for advocating the right to inclusion. Shifting blame emerges in more than one place in comments by those students and I will present some of them to clarify my point here:

> The leaders and practitioners in special education do not like including Deaf students with their hearing peers because they will lose their positions and all related advantages (STU3, lines 29-30).

> There is no law or policy that allow us to study in ordinary classrooms (STU2, line 19).

> People with hearing impairments do not contribute in planning for Deaf Education or making decision process in this system, no one cares about our opinions... (STU5, line 21-22).

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These assertions could be interpreted as hopelessness from these students. In addition, the Deaf students are well placed to critique their education system and its stakeholders who have contributed to their isolation and right to inclusion. However, this discourse indicates a tendency from Deaf students to blame people who are working in the Deaf Education system. Indeed, in this case, I consider these comments as a variety of shifting the blame. When I asked some of the students what they have done to change this situation, their responses revealed the same tendency to blame others instead of taking a critical stance or a leadership role to advocate their right to inclusion. To clarify my point, here are some examples:

> No, I do not contribute in any movement or organisation to claim our rights in studying in ordinary classrooms. (STU4, lines 31-32).

> To be honest, Deaf people in Saudi Arabia are not active and they do not raise their voices in some important issues such as inclusion, they ask for some services that make them more dependent but forget important thing like education… and some time they might fight hearing people who work to advocate their rights (STU2, lines 20-23).

> No, I do not try this, I do not know how I can do that. (PM5, line 24).

These quotes are provided here to indicate a possible culture of shifting blame among Deaf students. However, it is more understandable with these students; they are disempowered, excluded, and graduated with underdeveloped skills that may not help them to take on this advocacy role. Taking on such roles to enact change is the work of the leaders, scholars, parents, teachers and others who can help. These students lacked the power, positioning and agency to work with the discourse of leadership.

4.3.6.2   Fear and resistance

Another wider discourse that emerged from analysing the interviews of former students is that of fear and resistance. Indeed, fear was noticed among most of the former student participants. In particular, they articulate the fear of being included with hearing students in general classrooms. This fear may contribute to their resistance to the idea of inclusion. This could also constitute the reason for the continued isolation of those students from studying beside hearing

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students. Here are some quotes from the interview transcripts that helps to clarify this point:

> Deaf students constitute a small group in school community because they fear from interaction with hearing students and hearing teachers as well (STU1, line 19).

> Some Deaf students are worried from studying with hearing students in ordinary classrooms because they may lose their identity or teacher's attention (STU5, line 17).

> As Deaf student, I avoid the communication with hearing students because I fear the rejection or ignorance from them, … they do not know sign language (STU4, lines 22-23).

> Many Deaf students have a doubt, and I am one of them, when we see hearing students talking to each other's, we think they talk about us, as a result we fear to interact with them (STU6, lines 20-23).

The previous examples show how the former Deaf students feared interaction and communication with hearing students and teachers. This fear is understandable because they were isolated into separated classrooms and had not experienced an inclusive environment before. This fear of what is never experienced and hence unknown may contribute somewhat to the resistance seen in the former Deaf students towards inclusion within ordinary classrooms. This quote indicates this resistance:

> For me and some Deaf students, we prefer to stay in small group instead of including with hearing people because we do not understand them, and they do not understand us, it is hard to communicate with each other (STU1, lines 28-30).

Indeed, it is an understandable fear and resistance because neither Deaf nor hearing students have ever experienced inclusionary learning and it is human nature to fear and resist the unknown. This will be discussed in more detail in my discussion chapter.

4.3.7 Stage 5: Practice position (former students who are Deaf)

The practice position here means that all practices resulting from the discursive constructions of former students who are Deaf. When Deaf students tend to blame others for their isolation from ordinary classrooms in the Saudi context, this act of blaming results in evidenced practice positions. For example, STU4 positioned people who work in the Deaf Education system as self-interested. Another example is that STU2 positioned the absence of appropriate laws and policy for including Deaf students as main reason for isolating them from ordinary classrooms.

Additionally, STU5 positioned the marginalization of students from participating in planning and decision-making about their educational system as one cause of excluding them from general classrooms. Regardless of the accuracy of previous discourses, these positions indicate an act of blaming others. I consider this as one important cause underpinning the isolating of Deaf student for reasons. Firstly, Deaf students' practice of blame-shifting highlights the inability or lack of awareness those former students have about advocating for their right to inclusion. Secondly, the practice position of shifting blame may be considered as an easy way to avoid the burden of advocacy.

Other practice positions emerged from the second wider discourse of these students, namely fear and resistance. For instance, STU3 positioned the potential for communication with hearing students and teachers as a source of fear. This position leads to practicing isolationism and avoiding any type of interaction with hearing people. As a result, this practice may constitute a reason to resist including Deaf students in ordinary classrooms.

Another example is also illustrative: STU5 positioned studying beside hearing students as source of fear of losing both his own identity and the teacher's attention. This position contributes to resistance to inclusion which, in turn, serves to justify a reason for the isolation of these students. Furthermore, STU4 positioned the possibility of rejection or disregard from hearing students as a source of fear resulting from imagined communication attempts. The practice position of this situation is avoiding any opportunity of interaction with hearing students. This practice may constitute a potential cause for excluding Deaf students.

Additionally, STU6 positioned the doubt of Deaf students when hearing people are seen talking, as a source of fear from interaction with those students. This situation leads to

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practicing of eschewing any type of inclusion or interaction. This practice may create a resistance among some Deaf students. Finally, STU1 positioned the difficulty in communication as a reason for the tendency of some Deaf students to create a small isolated group, a safe Deaf silo, inside the community of school. This act of practicing may promote resistant thoughts against inclusion and this, in turn, constitutes a clear reason to continue isolating Deaf students from ordinary classrooms.

4.3.8   Stage 6: Subjectivity (former students who are Deaf)

This section will discuss the consequences of embracing particular subject positions on the subjective experiences of former students who are Deaf that emerged through their comments during interviews.

The former students who are Deaf, positioned themselves as victims of a Deaf Education system that does not meet their needs, even though they did not declare this directly. These study participants tended to put forward the idea that this system had failed them and this declaration constitutes a bigger barrier to their success and inclusion. Indeed, there is a strong sense of frustration and anger in their discursive constructions about this educational system. They hold the system as fully responsible for their educational weaknesses, social exclusion and physical dependency.

Moreover, their discourse indicates that they are objects of power to others such as policymakers and teachers as they do not have any voice or role in planning or making decisions in their educational system. Moreover, their comments revealed that they positioned themselves as pawns used to advance the personal interests of others who work in this field. Interestingly, as seen earlier this chapter, policymakers explained how working with students with special needs was a job that contains lots of financial and practical benefits.

Furthermore, the discourse of the former students reflects the absence of an advocacy culture among Deaf people in Saudi Arabia. This absence strongly affects their rights in many different sectors and issues. This situation entrenches the widespread acceptance of exclusion as a fait accompli. This powerlessness prevents individuals from attempting improvements or changes. The discursive constructions of former students had been discussed above and now I move to discuss the data that was generated from interviewing teachers of the Deaf students' group.

4.3.9   Stages 3 and 4: Action orientation and positioning (teachers of Deaf students)

In this stage, I analyse some wider discourses that emerged from the discursive constructions of teachers of Deaf students. Four wider discourses are presented here as follows:

- Shifting blame.

- Low expectations.

- Fixed attitudes.

- Fear or resistance.

4.3.9.1   Shifting blame

Again, shifting blame emerged through analysing teachers' discursive constructions. Teachers of Deaf students blamed other entities during their comments. Indeed, they blamed many different stakeholders within Deaf Education apart from themselves. Even though some of them mentioned negative issues related to their skills and preparation programs, there is a general trend among them to shift blame about the weakness of Deaf Education and its isolating practices onto others.

For instance, some teachers blamed leaders and professionals who work in the special education department in the Ministry of Education:

> People in the Ministry of Education do not believe in Deaf students' abilities
> (TEA4, line 25).

> There are few people who are specialized in special education work in the
> Ministry of Education which resulting in enacting inappropriate decisions and
> policy in regards of Deaf Education (TEA2, lines 27-28).

> The decision of inclusion in policymakers' hands not in our hands as teachers,
> we just implement what they planned (TEA4, lines 29-31).

The previous quotations show that teachers tend to shift the blame to policymakers and people

working in the Ministry. Regardless of the accuracy of these statements, I asked the teachers what they did to improve this situation; for instance, 'Do they send letters to leaders to advocate inclusion for Deaf students?' They all replied in the negative. Interestingly, one teacher was very frank:

> To be honest, we sent many letters to the special education department in the ministry to ask them to activate some supportive services and to provide some needed resources, but not for including Deaf students in ordinary classrooms, how can I ask or advocate something I consider it as crime in Deaf Education (TEA6, lines 29-31).

Another example can be seen in the fact that some teachers targeted the ability of Deaf students or their impairments:

> The language capacity of Deaf students is very low, and it is a problematic itself… (TEA1, line 34).

> They [Deaf students] have very weak skills because of their impairments. deafness affects many learning skills and abilities (TEA3, lines 35-36).

> The biggest barrier for including Deaf students in ordinary classrooms is the abilities of Deaf students themselves… (TEA6, lines 32-33).

4.3.9.2   Low expectations

Interestingly, the discursive constructions of teachers show some sense of low expectations they held towards Deaf students. The low expectations, from these teachers, affects their beliefs in the feasibility of including those students in ordinary classrooms. As a result, teachers will not ask policymakers in the Ministry of Education to change the existing situation of Deaf Education and will not move to advocate the rights of those students to inclusion. This situation constitutes one clear reason for the continued isolation of those students. Next, I present examples that show how these low expectations emerged in the comments of the teachers.

> The biggest problem faces including those students is the shortage of their ability to understand all things will be mentioned during instructions in general

classrooms (TEA1, lines 34-35).

> "As you know", hearing impairment strongly affects language capacity of Deaf students which result in weakness in their abilities to meet the requirements of full integration [inclusion] in ordinary classrooms with hearing peers (TEA5, lines 19-21).

> Allah [God] creates them [Deaf students] like this, we should accept that their abilities are lower than hearing students. Asking for including those students in ordinary classrooms is more humanitarian than rational (TEA6, lines 29-31).

Although Deaf students have some challenges that may affect their achievements, the culture of low expectations among their teachers appears to constitute a big challenge. In this regard, Davies, Osborne and Sibley (2016) argue that low expectations from teachers plays a significant role in the entire educational process and it is reflected on student achievements. This discussion will be extended in chapter five.

4.3.9.3 Fixed attitudes

There are discursive constructions that reflect negative attitudes among teachers towards including Deaf students in ordinary classrooms. Even though few assertions indicate positive attitudes, four of the six participants explicitly and implicitly revealed their negative attitudes towards this idea. These attitudes constitute a strong potential reason for isolating Deaf students. The inability or refusal of educators to advocate for inclusive education to policymakers in the Ministry. Here are some quotations that show this tendency:

> Whatever we apply and use strategies, full integration (inclusive education) for Deaf students is very difficult to achieve (TEA1, lines 27-28).

> In books, inclusive education for Deaf students is easy, but in reality, it is very difficult. Attendance of Deaf students with their sign language interpreter in ordinary classroom will cause in confusion for hearing students and vice versa (TEA3, lines 29-31).

> Aha…you mean full integration! We don't have it in Saudi Arabia yet, but if

you ask for full integration [inclusive education], you are asking for the impossible (TEA5, lines 14-16).

For me as a teacher who lives with Deaf students for two decades, I see it is impossible, indeed, including those students in ordinary classrooms is a crime in their rights and in hearing students' right as well (TEA6, lines 25-27).

4.3.9.4   Fear or resistance

One statement from a former student who is Deaf encourages me to think about teachers' resistance against the potential inclusion of Deaf students in general classrooms:

The leaders and practitioners in special education do not like including Deaf students with their hearing peers because they will lose their positions and all related advantages. (STU4, lines 29-30)

Such discursive constructions of teachers resist inclusion and results from the fear of losing advantages. To investigate this claim, I asked those teachers why they chose this job and about the opportunity to change this job to become a general teacher. I found that all teachers who presented strong opposition to inclusion of Deaf students also talked about the advantages of their jobs. They strongly rejected the idea of changing their position. TEA1 expressed strong opposition and a negative attitude towards including Deaf students in ordinary classrooms and answered the question about his motivation for choosing to work with Deaf students as follows:

Working as teacher with Deaf students has some benefit such as working with few students instead of working with 40 or 50 students, also, more money and easy to get job in our time not nowadays (TEA1, lines 6-8).

Moreover, when I asked him about the idea of shifting to be a general teacher if he could, he declared: "it is impossible" (TEA1, line 9).

A further example of this phenomenon can be seen in TEA3 who is also an opponent of including Deaf students in ordinary classrooms. He, too, holds negative attitudes towards inclusion. He responded to my question about his motivation of choosing this job with these words: "I chose to work with Deaf students from human side" (TEA3, line 7).

Interestingly enough, when I asked him if he would agree to change from teaching Deaf students to teaching hearing students, he answered that:

> It is a crazy idea to be honest, how to change from teaching two or three
> students to teach more than thirty students, also from working 10 or 12 hours
> per week to working more than 24 hours per week, no I will not agree (TEA3,
> lines 8-10).

In addition, TEA6, who holds a strong negative attitude towards including Deaf students, mentioned the particular advantages of working as teacher for Deaf students.

> I decided to study special education and to be a teacher for Deaf students for
> some reasons. Firstly, it guarantees an immediate teaching position for
> graduated student. Secondly, special education teacher earns a higher salary
> than general teacher. Also, it is a smooth work because you focus in three or
> four students for 10 or 12 hours per week (TEA6, lines 7-11).

In the same way, TEA6 refused the idea of shifting from being a special education teacher to becoming a general teacher, mentioning that he would not agree: "Teaching as special educator is more than a profession, it is identity" (TEA6, line 13).

These cited examples clearly show the strong resistance to the idea of shifting from special education teacher to general teacher due to the many benefits obtained from working as a special educator. This resistance results from fear of losing obtained advantages. The fear of losing such privilege surely contributes to resistance to any idea or practice that threaten this status, such as inclusive education. Thus, resistance to including Deaf students in ordinary classrooms is partly the result of a self-interested fear of losing related advantages. This situation constitutes another reason for the continued isolation of those students from general classrooms in Saudi Arabia.

4.3.10 Stage 5: Practice position (teachers of Deaf students)

The practice position of teachers of Deaf students is the direct result of actions or inactions, whether allowing or preventing actions, as evidenced in the discursive constructions of those

teachers. In fact, evidence of practice appears in the teachers' wider discourses and I will present some of this evidence next.

Some teachers of Deaf students positioned power and adjunct decision-making in policymakers' hands. Even though this positioning is true, it embodies and continues some negative practices towards inclusion such as abrogating responsibility and denying their potential role in reforming the status quo of isolationism for those students.

Moreover, the majority of teachers in this study positioned the disability and skills of Deaf students as a main reason for isolating them. For example, TEA3 positioned the impairment of those students as one cause of excluding them from ordinary classrooms. In another example, TEA1 and TEA6 positioned the weakness in skills and abilities of those students as a logical justification for teaching them in isolated placements. The practice of these positions shows the teachers' acceptance of isolating Deaf students from general classrooms. They consider the isolated placement as the most appropriate option.

Four out of six teacher participants positioned inclusive education as a principle that is easy in theory, but difficult to apply to reality. This position leads to negative attitudes towards inclusion of Deaf students. Indeed, these negative attitudes clearly emerged during the interviews with teacher participants.

In addition, TEA3 positioned the presence of Deaf students and the sign language interpreter inside general classrooms as a cause of distraction for hearing students and their teacher. In a more extreme way, TEA6 positioned the inclusion of Deaf students in ordinary classrooms as a crime in their educational life. He also positioned advocacy for inclusive education for Deaf students as an agenda driven by humanism, rather than logical reasoning. The practice of these positions embraces negative attitudes towards including those students.

Finally, five teachers of Deaf students positioned working with those students as a privileged position that embodies and reflects many personal interests. Simultaneously, they positioned the idea of changing from being a special education teacher to becoming a general teacher as a crazy idea that is not agreeable. Both positions result in practicing strong resistance to any idea of changing the status quo of Deaf Education in the Saudi context.

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4.3.11   Stage 6: Subjectivity (teachers of Deaf students)

In this section, the discussion focuses on the consequences of embracing particular subject positions on the subjective experiences of teachers of Deaf students, that emerged from their discourse.

All teachers involved in this study, explicitly or implicitly admitted that the Deaf Education system in Saudi Arabia is very weak and contributes to bad outcomes for Deaf students. These acknowledgments emerged at the beginning of their interviews when I started by asking them about this educational system. Here are some quotations to clarify this point:

> Our education for Deaf students suffers from many problems… (TEA1, line 11).

> No… to be honest I am not satisfied about outcomes of Deaf graduates, they graduated with very weak academic skills, the majority if not all of them graduated from high schools and cannot read or write in good way... our system of course is the responsible for this tragedy (TEA2, lines 7-10).

> The biggest problem in Deaf Education in Saudi context is the productivity. We work with Deaf students and teach them for many years, after that they become adults with less expected or hoped situation (TEA5, lines 9-11).

These reflect conviction among these teachers about the weakness of the Deaf education system. However, the important question concerns whether this conviction translates into those teachers becoming interested or involved in any change. Perhaps they were willing to accept this situation, even though it led to poor outcomes for their students, in order to protect their own interests. The following sections address this proposition.

Even though there was conviction expressed by teachers about shortcomings in Deaf Education, a sense of collective indifference emerged during the majority of interviews. The collective indifference shows in their strong interest in the continuation of existing practices and resistance to change, such as inclusion of Deaf students into ordinary classrooms. Many teacher participants expressed doubt about the feasibility of inclusion for Deaf students. Some

examples about these doubts have already been mentioned in the preceding sections, so will not be repeated here.

Another issue that emerged from teacher participants' comments is the claim of the intellectual and moral higher ground by this, the view that any intelligent person would know what is right and what is wrong in terms of Deaf Education. For instance, TEA6 positioned himself as an expert with two decades of experience in teaching Deaf Education who knows very well where the benefits of Deaf students are located and what the best form of educational placement for them should be:

> For me as a teacher who lives with Deaf students for two decades, I see it
> impossible, indeed, including those students in ordinary classrooms is a crime
> in their rights and the best option for those students is isolated 'self-contained'
> classroom (TEA6, lines 25-28).

Furthermore, the discourse of some teachers reflects their fear of losing special educator identity and its related advantages. As a result, they tended to resist any idea of change that could threat this situation. Indeed, the majority of these participants acknowledged the problems facing Deaf Education but resisted any change. Presumably this was to protect their professional privileges. Simultaneously, a tendency to shift the blame to external stakeholders was apparent. In addition, they attributed their values and beliefs about Deaf Education to the teacher preparation programs at universities that they had undertaken.

Even though the preparation programs and policymakers play significant roles in the limitations of the Deaf Education system, this study highlights the reluctance of teachers to contribute to change or to reduce the consequences of these problems. This will be discussed in next chapter. In the coming section, I will briefly raise some key reasons for the isolation of Deaf students that was a recurring theme in the interviews with participants.

4.4 Extend analysis to include more concepts on Inclusive Education Theory

From reading the discourse of participants via the lens of Inclusive Education Theory, I reach some important points. There are confusions about what inclusive education actually means. I have already described the conflation of self-contained 'isolated' placement and inclusive

classrooms in both the discourses of the policymakers and the teachers. Furthermore, the teachers' discourse indicated a misunderstanding about the application of inclusive education. These recurring issues from the policymaker and teacher interviews will be discussed in more detail in this section.

Firstly, one important note that emerged from reading policymaker interview transcripts is the lack of clarity about the meaning and the concept of inclusive education. Indeed, there is considerable confusion and mixing up of terminology regarding educational placements for Deaf students. I realized during the interviews with policymakers that there is an overlap between the meanings of inclusive education and so-called self-contained classrooms for Deaf students in the Saudi education system.

Policymakers positioned self-contained classrooms as placements that represent inclusive education. This situation reflects a confused vision about the meaning of inclusive education that results in inappropriate practices in relation to the concept of inclusion. This confusion holds the concept of inclusive education responsible for the consequences of this misapplication. Indeed, this situation constitutes one of the most significant factors contributing to the excluding of Deaf students from ordinary classrooms in the Saudi context.

For example, PM1 says that:

> The kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the first country that applied inclusion for Deaf students in Arabic region (line 3-4).

He adds, "We have applied inclusion for Deaf students for 30 years" (line 4-5). Additionally, PM2 asserts that "more than 90% of Deaf students in Saudi Arabia are studying in inclusive programs" (line 7).

However, when I asked them about the nature of these programs, I discovered that they meant isolated 'self-contained' classrooms:

> Students in these placements are studying in their own classes and they integrated with hearing students in sports and food time… No, we do not have full integrated programs for Deaf students (PM2, lines 7-8).

Secondly, in terms of the teacher discourse, there is a confusion about the meaning of inclusive education as well. Most teacher comments reflected the confusion between isolated 'self-contained' classrooms and inclusive education. The majority of teachers considered isolated classrooms an option for inclusive educational practices. They positioned those isolated classrooms as inclusive placements. This reflects what teachers learned during their studies in special education departments at Saudi universities. Indeed, this adds further evidence to my assertion that the concept of special education is firmly entrenched in the Saudi context. The quotes below demonstrate this confusion:

> We have inclusive programs for most Deaf students in our schools, nowadays few students who still studying in Deaf institutions (TEA2, lines 9-10).

> What do you mean by inclusion? Full integration or partial integration? (TEA3, line 18).

> Aha…you mean full integration! We don't have it in Saudi Arabia yet… (TEA5, line 14).

> Alammel Program is inclusive placement that provides opportunity for Deaf students to be integrated with hearing students in sport and food time (TEA6, lines12-13).

Another issue emerging from the discursive constructions of teachers of Deaf students is that inclusive education is difficult to attain practically, let alone conceive of intellectually. This viewpoint was entrenched by studying in special education departments at universities in Saudi Arabia. This reflects the agendas of these departments that valorize 'Special Education' and simultaneously marginalize inclusive education by depicting it as an impossible practice. Here are some examples to show how this myth[21] has been entrenched in teachers' thoughts:

> Whatever we apply and use strategies, full integration (inclusive education) for

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[21] What I mean by 'myth' here is that believing the inclusive education is imposable to achieve.

Deaf students is very difficult to achieve (TEA1, lines 27-28).

In books, inclusive education for Deaf students is easy, but in reality, it is very difficult (TEA3, line 29).

Theorizing inclusive education for Deaf students is easy, but for me as a teacher who lives with Deaf students for two decades, I see it impossible (TEA6, lines25-26).

Indeed, these issues emerged in policymaker discourse and allowed for the practicing of the educational provision for Deaf students to be in isolated classrooms, while believing that this is an inclusive placement. This practice position started 30 years ago in the Saudi education system and continues. Simultaneously, this creates a practice position that excludes Deaf students from studying in ordinary classrooms. The problematic issue of considering isolated classroom as inclusive education provision is that it holds the inclusive education the responsibility of isolated classrooms failure in meeting Deaf students' needs.

Moreover, the majority of teachers of Deaf student participants positioned isolated 'self-contained' classrooms as inclusive placements. This results in the continuation of the practice of teaching Deaf students in this isolated option, while under the (mis)apprehension this placement is a type of inclusion. Additionally, the same group positioned inclusive education as "full integration" and as a difficult or imposable option to reach. This position promotes misapprehensions about applying inclusive education for Deaf students. In my discussion chapter, these issues will be considered more fully.

4.5   Extend analysis to include more concepts on Critical Disability theory

Even though there is a strong link and interaction between Inclusive Education theory and Critical Disability Theory, in this section I will use two major perspectives that are distinctive to CDT. These concepts are disablism and ableism. From re-reading the transcripts of collected data while evoking these two concepts in my account, I developed the findings discussed below.

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Firstly, I discuss how the concept of disablism appeared in participant discourses. Indeed, some exclusionary practices that face Deaf students in the Saudi context are the result of believing that those students are of less concern and importance than able-bodied students. This can also be seen as ignoring their rights to equitable services and education. This view (of those not able-bodied) as inferior appears in the discourse of two groups (policymakers and teachers for Deaf students).

I begin with policymakers. They occupy the top echelon of the pyramid of the education system for those students, yet their comments uphold an adherence to disablism. Indeed, many of their assertions reflect this concept clearly and evoke it frequently. For example, PM1 illustrates how disablism is represented:

> The problem in hearing impairment itself, it affects the language and learning process (PM1, line 17).

> Deaf students' abilities are weak in language and they fail in some subjects as a result of these abilities (PM1, line 18).

> We do not guarantee that the "full integration" will help Deaf student to educate well because they, currently, are not qualified to study in ordinary classrooms (PM1, line 25-27).

Other examples appear in PM2's interview:

> The problem in Deaf student "as you know", his problem in language and everything relates to the language (PM2, line 15).

> They [Deaf students] do not have adequate skills and abilities to communicate and interact with hearing students (PM2, lines 20-21).

Each of these citations reflect embracing the concept of to disablism. Not only do the policymakers embracing disablism, but so do the teachers of Deaf students. Some following examples illustrate this:

> The language capacity of Deaf students is very low, and it is a problematic

itself… (TEA1, line 34).

The biggest barrier for including Deaf students in ordinary classrooms is the abilities of Deaf students themselves… (TEA6, lines 32-33).

As you know, hearing impairment strongly affects language capacity of Deaf students which result in weakness in their abilities to meet the requirements of full integration [inclusion] in ordinary classrooms with hearing peers (TEA5, lines 19-21).

The consequences of embracing the concept of disablism among policymakers and teachers of Deaf students will be raised further in the discussion chapter.

The second concept taken into account here is that of ableism. This concept been used to reveal Ableist thoughts among the comments of participants. In the process of re-reading the transcripts, some assertions reflected various thoughts and stances among policymakers and teachers of Deaf students towards Deaf students and their abilities. Those views indicate how the Ableist thoughts dominate in the education system in Saudi Arabia.

Examples from the interviews of policymakers are found below to provide a clear picture of the Ableist views and beliefs that were explicitly or implicitly expressed. PMI observed that:

We do not guarantee that the "full integration" will help Deaf student to educate well because they, currently, are not qualified to study in ordinary classrooms…the environment inside these classrooms [ordinary classrooms] is high competitive (PM1, line 25-29).

In addition, PM2 argued that:

The idea that calls for teach Deaf students to be teachers, pilots, engineers and so forth is not true because such professions require the perfection in all senses (PM2, line 23-24).

The previous two examples illustrate how policymakers in the Ministry of Education embrace the Ableist ontological stance with or without consciousness. Not only do policymakers hold

these views, but so do teachers of Deaf students as well. Some representative examples follow:

> Attendance of Deaf students with their sign language interpreter in ordinary classroom will cause in confusion for hearing students and vice versa (TEA3, lines 29-31).

> Aha…you mean full integration! We don't have it in Saudi Arabia yet, but If you ask for full integration [inclusive education], you are asking for the impossible because Deaf students do not have adequate abilities to compete hearing students or to meet test and curriculum requirements (TEA5, lines 14-19).

> Let's to be honest with ourselves, Deaf students do not have adequate abilities to fit with all academic and social requirements to be included in general classrooms with hearing students, it is so difficult. More than that, I think it is impossible. (TEA6, lines 27-29).

All above citations provide clear evidence in that adherence to ableism is a widespread phenomenon among policymakers and teachers of Deaf students, for a start. This issue and connected ones will be taken up in my discussion chapter.

4.6   Conclusion

This chapter has analysed aspects of the current situation of Deaf Education system in the Saudi context. I began by recruiting an adapted framework from Critical Policy Analysis in Education (Diem et al., 2014) to analyse the Regulations of Special Education Programs and Institutes (RSEPI) in Saudi Arabia. Five themes were used to guide this analysis.

Secondly, the Foucauldian Discourse Analysis framework (Willig, 2013) was employed to analyse the interview data from three groups of participants: policymakers, former Deaf students and teachers of Deaf students. This six-stage framework was adopted to view how these groups viewed the reasons for isolating Deaf students from ordinary classrooms in Saudi context. The findings of this analysis have revealed themes as shifting blame and fear and resistance, among all three groups. Furthermore, confusion about the concept of 'inclusion', the ignoring or not empathising with the problem of isolating these students, the recurrence of

negative attitudes, and the continuation of a culture of low expectations provide other reasons for isolating those students.

Following that, the discussion extended to re-reading the data using some concepts from Inclusive Education theory and Critical Disability theory to excavate other meanings and interpretations. There was an interconnection between the outcomes of this analysis and other analytical phases. This will be linked to related literature to extend the discussion in the next chapter.

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Materialistic Status of Deaf Students in Primary Schools in Saudi Arabia

5.3 Findings from Applying Critical Policy Analysis in Education

5.4 Findings from Applying Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA)

5.5 Reconsidering Findings via the Lens of Inclusive Education Theory

5.6 Reconsidering Findings via the Lens of Critical Disability Theory

5.7 Conclusion

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5 Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

As previously mentioned, this study embraces poststructuralist ontological and epistemological stances. Consequently, the problems and challenges associated with the education of Deaf students in Primary schools in Saudi Arabia is examined from different perspectives. This chapter is organised into four sub-sections to correspond with the phases used throughout the analysis chapter:

1. The findings from applying the Critical Policy Analysis in Education.
2. The findings from applying the Foucauldian Discourse Analysis.
3. The findings from extending the analysis to include more concepts from Inclusive Education Theory.
4. The findings from extending the analysis to include more concepts from Critical Disability Theory.

Before discussing the findings of this study, I would like to remind my readers of my research questions:

1. How is inclusive education policy enacted in Saudi primary schools?
2. How well are Deaf students served by this school system, and why?

All sub-sections are discussed below.

5.2 The findings from applying the Critical Policy Analysis in Education

Close examination of legislation and policy, using a critical microscope has been important for this study and crucial in this inquiry into the educational inclusion of Deaf students. Adequate consideration should be given to determining those aspects that organise and legislate injustice and inequality in standards, customs and rules, and are deeply embedded in policy (Barton, 1996). Employment of an adapted framework from Critical Policy Analysis in Education (CPAE) was therefore important to analyse the legislation that forms the policy for Deaf education in Saudi contexts. This discussion is divided into five parts according to the five themes of the framework.

5.2.1 Root, development and effects of policy

From analysing the root of this policy and its establishing circumstances, it has become clear that its overriding purpose is to justify and retain Special Education. This policy was founded by special education educators. All personnel graduated from the special education Department in King Saud University. At the time when there was no special education Department in any Saudi university except for this university. In addition, the other contributors to the development of this policy are professors from the special education Department in King Saud University who had graduated from special education Departments in a number of American universities. All contributors are therefore focused on and influenced by special education values and beliefs. As a result, the Saudi inclusion policy is inlaid with special education terminology and agendas. There is evidenced throughout the document. As a result, the policy document ensured that special education approaches have been ingrained into the Saudi education system.

The assumptions, concepts, understandings and indeed the language about disability are deeply entrenched in the mindsets of the policy founders. These play a significant role in constituting the exclusionary nature of this policy document (Whitburn, 2015). Barton (1996) argued that the definitions of 'disability' and the understanding of its related issues are crucial in underpinning the assumptions in legislation and policy. The definition of 'disability' in some documents points not just to language use but rather to the legislations that surround it (Oliver, 2017). Policy and legislation related to students with disabilities sometimes also relies on misconceptions about the link between the student and disablement. In this situation, policy falls into the trap of diagnosis and classification, which results in the systemic isolation of students with disabilities (Slee, 2011).

The strong relationship between special education and medical model of disability has already been demonstrated in this thesis. Unsurprisingly, the medical model is evident throughout the Saudi policy document. Policy documents associated with disability in many countries were founded through the powerful discourse of the medical model of disability (Slee, 2011). This situation is clearly evident in the Saudi policy document as demonstrated with examples provided in the analysis chapter. That document was influenced by the medical model of disability and entrenches this view of disability as a deficit in the Saudi Arabian education

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system. The medical emphasis on disability as a pathological problem is accompanied by a disregard for the barriers that students face in their surrounding environments (Oliver, 2013).

The Saudi policy document enhances the exclusion and isolation of Deaf students from general classrooms by valorizing special education with its normalized provision of different forms of isolated placements for these students. No Deaf student has studied in a general classroom since the establishment of Deaf Education in Saudi Arabia (Ministry of Education, 2016). Indeed, the laws and policy establish life trajectories that limit opportunities and result in isolating students with disabilities from their peers and siblings at the neighborhood school (Slee, 2011). Put simply, the language and its hidden agendas efficiently contribute to the exclusion and isolation of students with disabilities (Whitburn, 2015). As I have tried to demonstrate throughout this thesis, the current policy document contributes to the systematic isolation of Deaf students from general classrooms, and from society.

The concept of inclusion was briefly mentioned twice in that policy document. However, these mentions seem to have been made to demonstrate for the international community that inclusion exists in Saudi education system. These issues will be discussed in next section as they relate more closely to next theme.

5.2.2 To what extent does policy rhetoric differ from reality?

The policy outlined in this document contains many references to the term Special Education, with many allusions to a medicalised view of disability. As I have argued above, these two concepts are incompatible within inclusive education. In addition, the policy does not actually differ from what is actually practiced in Saudi schools because special education is the main and only way that education is provided. During the process of interviewing policymakers and special needs teachers, and by close analysis of the policy and the interview transcriptions, I also found frequent use of terminologies that belongs to Special Education. Consequently, here, I will discuss the shallow mentions of inclusion in this policy document and describe how these mentions differ completely from practiced reality.

As mentioned in analysis chapter, inclusion was mentioned in just two places in the policy. The first mention was in the operational definitions of the key terms where inclusion is defined as, "Educating the students with disabilities in general schools by providing them with special

education services" (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 2016, p. 7). This definition is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, it is a ambiguous because educating these students in general schools holds more than one meaning. For example, in this context it means educating them in isolated classrooms (so-called self-contained classrooms) or resource rooms or including them in general classrooms. Secondly, this definition is a form of 'neo-special education' (Slee, 2011), where it wears an inclusive education mask but, indeed, legitimizes excluding Deaf students in isolated classrooms.

As a result, this definition in the policy document is used as a legal tool to legislate isolating Deaf students to be educated in separate classrooms onsite at general schools, while claiming that this is a form of inclusive education. Whitburn (2015) draws an attention to the linguistic challenges in policy and legislation concerning students with disabilities, including where the language can be open to interpretation and therefore invite disagreement with the concept of inclusion. Additionally, this definition contributes to the conflation of special and inclusive education, where special education provision is said to cover inclusive language to lend these isolated practices more modernity and attractiveness. In this regard, Walton (2016) argues that the language of inclusive education was conflation. Perhaps, this mention in the Saudi policy is merely a retouching technique to beautify the face of this document by (mis)using the term 'inclusive'? In any case, Slee (2011; 2018) has argued that the term inclusive education itself has therefore becomes meaningless.

The second mention of inclusive education in the Saudi policy document is in the first article under the Admission and Competence section that is entitled, *Educational Placements for Students with Disabilities* (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 2016, p. 15). This article prioritizes placements options for students beginning with general classrooms, in the first four options. The priority order of these options is:

1. General classroom with counsellor teacher services.

2. General classroom with itinerant teacher services.

3. General classroom with resource room services.

4. Self-contained classroom inside general schools.

5. Special schools (special education institutes).

This could be interpreted as a way of decorating the policy document, making it seem it has a few inclusive options. However, the three first options do not exist at all in practiced reality in Saudi Deaf Education (Ministry of Education, 2016). Therefore, the policy rhetoric that includes these 'inclusive' options differs from the practiced reality in the fieldwork where Deaf students are always isolated into separate classrooms, as in the last two options listed. With the widespread international commitment to inclusive education, Saudi Arabia is not alone in adding the language of inclusiveness to their educational policy and legislation. The reality, however is that practices of exclusion and isolation of students with disabilities is formally and informally sanctioned and increased (Riddell et al., 2016). From my analysis, it appears that Saudi Arabia fits into this category of using the language of inclusion but the practice of Special Education.

5.2.3   Who benefits and who loses from this policy?

Earlier in the thesis I identified the range of benefits adult professionals who working in this sector in Saudi Arabia receive. This includes higher salary levels for both teachers and bureaucrats as well as reduced numbers of students and contact hours for teachers. It could be argued that the beneficiaries of this exclusionary policy document are these stakeholders. Simultaneously, the losers from this policy are Deaf students and their families. However, this is too simplistic. It is my contention that all members of Saudi society lose because of the absence of inclusive education. Additionally, the factors of low expectations in achievement and the absence of monitoring and accountability are of particular concern.

Furthermore, this isolating policy promotes the benefits of *normal schools and normal students*. As Slee (2018) has argued, "[Isolating students with disabilities] has certainly served some people's interests. Separating the education of children with disabilities allowed the general school to avoid the difficulties of redesigning purpose, plant, programs, pedagogy and personnel" (p. 26).

This Saudi policy also contributes to losses for Deaf students. First and foremost, it provides the legal basis for isolating these students and legitimating this isolation. The isolation brings with it many negative effects for these students, socially, academically, occupationally and in

terms of family, as discussed in the review of the literature. The important thing here is to demonstrate that, on one hand, this policy document promotes the benefits for staff in the special education sector and, on the other, causes significantly negative effects on Deaf students and their futures. The policy is not merely a text; it is a discourse, carrying with it many resultant benefits, consequences and disadvantages (Bowe, Ball & Gold, 2017).

5.2.4   The social effects of the policy on relationships of inequality and privilege

The social effect of this policy is evident, long after the production of the document and its implementation. The resulting exclusionary practices in schooling have negatively transformative students' lives into their futures because the act of isolating them has meant exclusion in subsequent social life. Goodley (2016) describes individuals with disabilities as being having a powerless status, as children. They are excluded from general classrooms and have little representation in society. As adults, they do not have equitable access to human resources, the economy, jobs and societal resources. In addition, these negative effects serve to exclude Deaf people from others in the community because communication and interaction is difficult in adulthood, especially if there was no previous experience for these people in their school days. Indeed, this policy document and its educational system represents a systemic process to prepare Deaf students to live their futures under the what Sennett (2007) calls a "spectre of uselessness" (p. 83).

What I want to emphasize here, is that the exclusion and isolation of people with disabilities affects all aspects of society and casts a permanent shadow over them (Slee, 2018). People with disabilities are out of consideration. Slee (2011) argues elsewhere that the policy and regulations often put the interests of institutions and vested individuals over the interests of students with disabilities. A clear example of this exists in the case of policy documentation related to Deaf education in the Saudi context.

5.2.5   The role of members of non-dominant groups in this policy

The non-dominant groups in this policy document are students with disabilities in the Saudi context. The question here is whether those students have any role in this policy. My analysis indicates that they do not have any role apart from being the object of this policy document. They were not invited to participate or to consult in any aspect of the establishment or

enactment stages of this policy. Indeed, students with disabilities in the Saudi context are excluded not just from general classrooms in schools, but from participating in the policy that directly affects their lives. Oliver (2017) confirms that there is a systemic exclusion of people with disabilities from contribution in their related issues. Enacting policy and laws are one of these issues.

The effect of exclusion from participating in this policy and related legislation becomes destructive if this exclusion accompanies closed ears and a collective indifference from all stakeholders in this field. Slee (2018, p. 70) argues that "It is tragic enough that their ears are blocked… Worse still is the fact they have been encouraged to refuse to listen to what the research on inclusive education is telling them".

In the next section I turn to the differing discourses and analysis of them.

5.3   Application of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA)

The ways participants constructed the reasons for isolating Deaf students into their discourses were presented in Chapter 4 and grouped according to wider discourses. However, they will now be discussed further and presented from the perspective of each theme (the wider discourse).

Five themes (wider discourses) appeared from analysing the data from policymakers and four themes from the data of teachers of Deaf students. These themes may constitute reasons for isolating Deaf students from general classrooms. Furthermore, three wider discourses emerged from analysing the data gathered from former students. As all three participant groups had common themes, I have discussed them together and will also do so here. The themes (wider discourses) that emerged from all groups are listed below:

- Ignoring or not empathising the problem.
- Shifting the blame.
- Fixed attitudes.
- Low expectations.
- Fear or resistance.

Now, wider discourses are discussed and detailed below.

5.3.1.1 Ignoring or not empathising the problem

This theme appeared in analyses of data from interviewing the policymakers' group only. During the reading of data collected from this group, I noticed that there was an inconsistency in their discourses. Where policymakers praised the Deaf education in Saudi Arabia at the beginning of the interviews, they acknowledged problems later in the interview, explaining that the failure of the system due to external factors. Some quotations were presented in the previous analysis chapter. These paradoxical discourses lead me to construe them in two directions, namely: disregarding the problems or/and not appreciating the emotional impact of these problems in the Deaf education system in Saudi context.

Regarding the issue of ignoring these problems, I found that in the beginning of the interviews, both policymakers (PM1 and PM2) proudly claimed that the Deaf education system in Saudi Arabia was the best one in the Arabic region and that many countries had asked their help to improve their systems. Based on my discussion above, the inconsistencies between rhetoric and practice indicate that this ignorance constitutes a crucial factor mitigating against any improvement or reform to this system. In fact, disregarding the problem leads to inconsistency in its performance and resistance to any change or claim for reform. In line with my claim, Brunsson and Olsen (2018) also argue that acknowledging the problem and living with it is much better than ignoring it because ignorance weakens the whole organisation and delays any reform. Based on this and on data from policymaker discourses, the reform of Deaf education system in Saudi Arabia seems unlikely unless the policymakers acknowledge the problems within this system and begin to work to improve it.

The second interpretation of the contradictory discourses of policymakers is that they do not understand the emotional impact of the problems of the Deaf education system in their Ministry. I see this potential is less likely because of that the both policymakers acknowledged some problematic issues during the interviews. However, I will discuss this potential in order to open a different window to these inconsistent discourses. Indeed, not empathising with the problem, or not acknowledging its existence, indicates that the status quo will continue.

Additionally, this act of not empathising prevents policymakers from prioritizing reform or

improvement in this system. The effectiveness of any organisation lies in its ability to identify a problem and subsequently establish priorities, goals and strategies to address the issues identified (Kerzner & Kerzner, 2017). Overlooking these problems may be why implementing solutions are likely to be so difficult. If a lack of awareness about the problems among policymakers is assumed, this leads to a difficulty in addressing these problems, unless research provide new evidence and critique, such as my study aims to do.

5.3.1.2 Shifting the blame

The second wider discourse that emerged is shifting the blame. The two policymakers blamed external entities beyond their own agency for the problems in Deaf education even though they acknowledged these problems in the end. As the presented examples demonstrated in the analytical chapter, policymakers blamed teachers of Deaf students, training programs for teachers at university, Deaf students and their disabilities and abilities. While it is important to acknowledge the policymakers' tendency to blame others, I will now discuss the impact of this blame-shifting on Deaf education as an organisational system.

The tendency to shift the blame leads disavows the responsibility of the Ministry officials for the negative outcomes for Deaf students. In this regard, Robinson (2017) argues that blaming others means offloading the responsibility without accepting any part of it. The culture of shifting the blame is an organisational norm and attitude. It is found in the administrative mindset of many systems with the management focusing blame onto others, even for administrative failures (Khatri, Brown, & Hicks, 2009; Metcalfe, 2017). Indeed, this raises questions about the culture of the Deaf Education Department in the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia. Deaf students have received the same educational services at the same isolated placements for thirty years with no discernible change in outcomes for the students. Pearn and Mulrooney (2017) suggest that the way a person responds to the problem is constituted in one of three reactions (a) acknowledging it and learning how to solve it to prevent repetition; (b) denying it which results in its expansion, or (c) blaming others that results in its constancy and repetition. The discourses of policymakers show both denial of the problem and the blaming of others, while the acknowledging there is a problem with Deaf education.

Furthermore, the culture of shifting the blame emerged in interviews with the teacher group.

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Like the policymakers, teachers tended to blame others for the problematic issues in Deaf education. Even though they blamed policymakers to some extent, the interviews showed that they tended to blame everyone except themselves. And this included the Deaf students for their impairments and lack of ability. Specific examples of this are detailed in the analysis chapter. The teachers interviewed tended to find somebody else to shoulder the responsibility (Robinson, 2017). The teachers' blaming others is problematic because it seems that the function of this blame is to distance the self from responsibility and to evade responsibility. In the teacher discourses, the shifting of blame is present, and the discussion about this issue will be extended below.

It is worth discussing teachers' blame toward policymakers a little further. As I mentioned above, blaming policymakers is evident and understandable as these officers operate in the highest position in the hierarchy of the Deaf Education system. Further, they have the capacity and power to implement many changes and enhance reform. However, teachers share some responsibility, since they have multiple means to put pressure on policymakers and departmental leaders to take action to reform this system. Indeed, the role and responsibility of teachers is not limited to teaching and national curriculum, but it is part and parcel of their collective responsibility with other stakeholders to reform the whole education system (Bowe, Ball & Gold, 2017). Next, I move on to discuss teachers' blaming Deaf students and their abilities and disabilities.

The majority of teachers interviewed for this study (five out of six participants) blamed the Deaf students themselves for being excluded. Additionally, these teachers blamed other related issues in the current education system (see some examples in analysis chapter).

This tendency to blame the victim indicates how the medical model of disability is entrenched in the mindsets of those teachers. Indeed, the medical model is deeply embedded in special education as its main agenda, as I have argued above. It views the defect as being in a child's body or mind and its 'cure' means excluding them in school and other societal environments (Slee, 2011). As Murtadha-Watts and Stoughton (2014) argue, "School personnel tend to view children through the medical model" (p. 6). Indeed, the academic program of Saudi teachers at special education departments at Saudi universities served to reinforce the special education agenda. In this regard, Collins and Ferri (2016) argue that New Disability Studies offers an

alternative to the special education taught in most pre-service teacher programs. Where these programs embrace the policy of Special Education, the medical model is automatically associated (Ashby, 2012).

Additionally, blaming Deaf students and their impairments and lack of ability is disrespectful and is likely to discourage some teachers to adopt appropriate teaching and learning practices, as they are in these isolated placements, and nobody can see what they are doing. For instance, some teachers may do little teaching for Deaf students inside isolated classrooms, blaming the students as a way of justifying their inferior teaching outcomes. In another scenario, some teachers may transfer students to professionals who provide special education services because they do not have anything to offer them beyond blaming their abilities and disabilities (Slee, 2013). Slee (2011) argues that special education teachers "have been encouraged to acquire limited and particular knowledge about disability and disablement and are constantly persuaded to defer and refer to experts" (p. 124). On the whole, when it comes to blame in schooling, the student is the most targeted subject for this blame and also the most common victim (Severinsson, 2017). The situation becomes worse when this student has a disability.

Both the policymakers and the teachers interviewed demonstrated a culture of shifting the blame, but the former students themselves also participate to some extent in this action. Shifting the blame appeared in discourses of former students in many instances. Indeed, it is understandable that the former students blamed other entities (such as the education system, policymakers, teachers and society) because they do not have sufficient power or voice to select their own educational placements. STU5 argues that "People with hearing impairments do not contribute to planning for Deaf education or decision processes in this system. No one cares about our opinions" (line 21-22).

However, the literature shows that Deaf people play only a small part in taking responsibility for their isolated situation, but the reasons for this apparent contradiction are complex. Although it is understandable that they blame others who may constitute actual factors in their exclusion, to what extent should Deaf people in Saudi Arabia accept responsibility for their circumstance? All former students (now adults) interviewed for this study were asked about whether they participated in any movement, activity or event that called for their inclusion in in general classrooms. All of them responded 'No'. Nevertheless, it should be noted here that

advocacy and the demanding of one's human rights is not an everyday occurrence in Saudi Arabia.

It could be argued, however, that the act of blaming others, without working to resist these undesirable situations, contributes to the weakening of stance. This is because self-advocacy is considered by many to be a vital factor for all people with disabilities. Advocacy indicates the desire for agency to choose the best educational placement, design the best curriculum, and to enact policies that serve the interests of people with disabilities and their related issues (Paradiz, Kelso, Nelson, & Earl, 2018). Research shows self-advocacy is a successful means to obtaining the right of inclusion (Frawley & Bigby, 2015). In contrast, passive blaming of others without taking part in advocacy may contribute indirectly to further isolation. Nevertheless, the real question here is whether these students are in situation that allows them take self-advocacy measures.

Indeed, there are reasons behind shifting the blame from these participants to other entities, such as Fixed attitudes and low self-regard. These reasons emerged as themes and are discussed in more detail in next sections.

5.3.1.3   Fixed attitudes

I have critiqued the studies that focused on attitudes towards inclusion in the literature review chapter. However, I now turn to address some of the negative attitudes that emerged from interviewing the policymakers. Their wider discourse helps to explain why Deaf students remain excluded from general classrooms. For example, PM1 argued that "There are many scholars who said that inclusive education does not work for Deaf students" (PM1, line 23). This assertion reflects a negative attitude towards including Deaf students in general classrooms, even though it is not explicitly mentioned. In response to this claim, many studies and scholars have provided evidence about the effectiveness of including Deaf students in general classrooms.Indeed, the academic performance of Deaf students who study in general classrooms have performed better than those in isolated placements (Angelides & Aravi, 2006; Doherty, 2012; Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014; Freire, 2007; Power & Hyde, 2002).

The majority of Deaf students are successfully enrolled in general classrooms in many developed countries (Heward, 2013; Hyde et al., 2016). This promotes the contention that the

inclusion of Deaf students into ordinary classrooms assists in their higher achievement in education. Another claim was appeared from PM1 discourse is that:

> The ultimate goal is that the Deaf student learns correctly, receives the education correctly or adequately, but currently, we do not guarantee that the inclusion will help Deaf student to be educated well (PM1, line 25-27).

This claim reproduces the negative attitude from PM1 towards the inclusion of Deaf students. There are overlaps in the discourses with those relied up on PM1. Under examination, it seems clear that this statement is built on opinion and belief, rather than scholarship because policymakers in this system do not conduct any academic research according to PM2 (line, 27). Thus, this statement is a form of 'unrehearsed opinion', which means an uncritical acceptance of a position from a recipient without awareness of supporting arguments (Pelinka, 2017). Indeed, any opinion must rely on adequate information to support it to be acceptable and reasonable (Kelman, 2017).

It is not only PM1 who holds these negative attitudes; but PM2 also represents some comments that hold the same agendas. For example, and in the same way, PM2 (line 21-23) claims that the isolated classroom is the best placement for Deaf students, although in theory he "supports" including these students in general classrooms. Additionally, he confirms this tendency by their sticking to "partial inclusion" (isolated classroom) because they guarantee it as best option to educate Deaf students (PM2, lines 25-26).

To respond to these statements, it is important to return to the same question again. How does PM2 knows that the "partial inclusion" is the best choice for Deaf students? How can they, as policymakers in the Deaf Education Department, "guarantee" that Deaf students will learn in this placement better than including them in ordinary classrooms? I asked them if they had conducted any studies or used related research to inform their stance, but their answer was that they had not. This adds weight to my assertion that their arguments stand as personal viewpoints, not evidenced claims.

There is little doubt that these negative attitudes have contributed to the exclusion of Deaf students from general classrooms in Saudi Arabia for the past thirty years. In a similar way, Naicker (2017) argues that discriminatory attitudes, that resulted from prejudice in education

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systems against disadvantaged individuals, constituted a crucial reason for excluding those students and depriving them from adequate education.

The teachers of Deaf students also hold complex attitudes towards the inclusion of these students in general classrooms. This is problematic because the attitudes of teachers constitute a significant factor in terms of including or excluding these students. The literature shows that positive attitudes toward inclusion by teachers, provide a condition for its success (Hodkinson, 2015; Lüke & Grosche, 2018), while, negative attitudes put up strong barriers to inclusive education (Rouse, 2017). Consequently, these attitudes are discussed as a potential reason behind the exclusion of Deaf students. From the data analysis it is evident that the teachers who participated in this study hold negative attitudes toward the idea of inclusion. As a result, their attitudinal stance will now be discussed as potential reasons for isolating Deaf students in Saudi contexts.

The negative attitudes of these teachers are inseparable from the culture of low expectations. Both factors overlap. Holding low expectations about Deaf students and their abilities contributes to promulgating negative attitudes towards including them in general classrooms with their hearing peers. As Peterson, Rubie-Davies, Osborne and Sibley (2016) suggest, the expectations of teachers shape their attitudes toward their students. Holding low expectations goes hand in hand with negative attitudes, and this was in evidence in my interview data.

Indeed, other factors contribute to the development of such attitudes. For instance, these negative attitudes were attributed to professional, philosophical and logistical issues such as lack of knowledge, training or support related to including students with disabilities in general classrooms (Gehrke, Cocchiarella, Harris, & Puckett, 2014; Sermier Dessemontet, Morin, & Crocker, 2014). Furthermore, some scholars attributed these negative attitudes to rejectionist thoughts against the idea of inclusion itself (Kahn & Lewis, 2014; Sheppard-Jones, Kleinert, Druckemiller, & Ray, 2015).

However, in this study, the data analysis indicates a number of other factors that may affect the teacher attitudes toward inclusion of Deaf students. These include the culture of competitive ethos, fixed roles and fixed curriculum and a lack of required resources in the schooling system. These are fundamental sources for the negative attitudes among teachers toward inclusion

(Rouse, 2017). Moreover, teacher education programs in special education university departments seem to contribute to widespread negative attitudes towards inclusion of Deaf students in general classrooms.

In contrast, others have argued that the provision of appropriate training programs and courses play significant roles in enhancing positive attitudes toward inclusive education (Amzat & Padilla-Valdez, 2017; Hodkinson, 2015). Indeed, holding low expectations plays a significant role in creating such negative attitudes (Rouse, 2017). The next section will discuss low expectations as a wider discourse through a process of analysing policymaker discourses.

5.3.1.4   Low expectations

Holding low expectations constitutes a fundamental factor in forming many concepts that contribute to isolating Deaf students from general classrooms. For instance, having low expectations is considered to be an important element in shaping attitudes. And this relates to Deaf students. When policymakers hold the view that Deaf students are weak and inferior to other students, their attitudes toward inclusion of these students in general classrooms will no doubt be negative. In this regard, Rouse (2017) argues that the task of creating inclusive schools and classrooms for all students, while facing the issue of low expectations, is itself a challenge that creates negative attitudes toward this trend.

Moreover, the holding of low expectations contributes to the failure to provide appropriate services to Deaf students. In turn, this deprives those students from the right to access education in general classrooms. In contrast, an educational system promoting a culture of high expectations for everyone succeeds in creating inclusive and successful environments for all students, including students with disabilities (Florian, Rouse, & Black-Hawkins, 2016).

Indeed, the culture of low expectations corresponds with the medical model of disability, where both stances view the problem as situated in the disabled person. To illustrate, the culture of low expectations sees people with disabilities as weak and less than others, simply because of their impairments (Sullivan, 2011). In the same vein, as I have argued, the medical model of disability views the problem of these weaknesses in individuals as disabilities that need to be fixed (Sibanda, 2015). Thus, the culture of low expectations among policymakers strongly affects their decisions, in turn impacting the procedures which result in providing special

educational services in isolated placements. This means divesting these students of their rights to inclusive education.

More importantly, the attitude of low expectations plays a significant role in limiting the quality of monitoring and the evaluation roles of policymakers for currently provided services. Indeed, evaluating and monitoring the performance of leaders in any organisation is based on the constructed and agreed expectations inside this institution (Martin, Danzig, Wright, Flanary, & Orr, 2016). The culture of low expectations among policymakers in the Deaf education system in Saudi Arabia leads to attributing the inadequacy in this system to the intellectual weakness and limitation in abilities of Deaf students instead of investigating the actual source of this shortcoming and instigating reform.

Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that the concept of low expectations enhances the sense of collective indifference among important stakeholders in Deaf education, such as policymakers and teachers. For example, the lack of faith in the abilities of Deaf students from policymakers increases their indifference towards the achievement of weak outcomes among those students (Cook, 2004). Additionally, this situation leads to neglecting the needs of those students, in terms of providing equitable and adequate educational services, under the same roof as their hearing peers.

On the other hand, embracing low expectations towards Deaf students from such stakeholders in society as parents, activists, teachers and the students themselves enhances the lack of demand in providing the required missions and reforms from policymakers as the leaders of this educational system. Moreover, the concept of low expectations promotes policymakers to treat those students, in Bauman's (2013, p. 37) terms, as "surplus population" perceived as constituting additional students within an already full education system.

Furthermore, the theme of low expectations emerged through reading the teacher interviews transcriptions as a wider discourse. The culture of low expectations is a fundamental factor that significantly affects Deaf students in many ways. For instance, the belief that these students should not be expected to be achievers is considered a significant barrier to creating inclusive classrooms (Rouse, 2017). The presupposition that those students would fail in general classrooms is itself based on the belief of low expectations.

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Additionally, the culture of low expectations enhances the atmosphere of frustration among all school members including those students and their teachers. A discourse of positive hope and expectations in any school environment is a significant element that leads to positive impacts on performance and progress in the whole organisation (Florian et al., 2016). In contrast, the fact that teachers themselves have low expectations drives their Deaf students to achieve very low outcomes or to fail to meet required tasks for inclusive placements (Gargiulo & Metcalf, 2017). It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Many of those teachers may provide inferior educational opportunities for Deaf students because they do not believe in their abilities to succeed or to fulfil the required tasks. Gershenson and Papageorge (2018, p. 66) argue that "Teachers with expectations for certain types of students may modify how they teach, evaluate, and advise them, and in the case of low expectations, could perhaps shift their attention, time, and effort to other students". The culture of low expectations may affect some teachers to not push their limits in terms of teaching Deaf students. Some of them may suppose that they will not be questioned or punished for this dereliction of duty as the principals have the same low expectations themselves. Indeed, the level of expectations plays a significant role in monitoring and evaluation procedures and then, in turn, sanctions decisions from the leaders toward their staff (Martin et al., 2016).

Not only does the culture of low expectations appear in participant discourses as a wider discourse, but so, too, does the theme of fear of or resistance to change. The above issues, in one way or another, may result in strong resistance against including Deaf students with their hearing peers.

5.3.1.5   Fear or resistance

Both policymakers interviewed did not explicitly mention their fear of change. The role of researcher is to probe the discourse and reveal latent themes such as that of this fear and the resulting resistance. As Putnam, Grant, Michelson and Cutcher (2005, p. 14) argued:

> It is important to note that the production of resistance is a dynamic process that
> is intertwined with discourse, meanings, and subjectivities. Adopting a discourse
> approach allows researchers to unpack these interrelationships and their intended

and unintended consequences.

Next, I will discuss how the discourses of the policymakers reflect this fear and result in resistance. Putnam et al. (2005) suggest that the discourses are "individualized acts of resistance for personal and private purposes" (p. 8). Notably, the policymakers did not explicitly mention their fear of change, but their statements reflect this fear that contributes to very strong resistance to any change or reform in terms of educating Deaf students in this system. When PM1 says that "They have to study in partial integration as the best option" and PM2 claims that "We do not see general classrooms good placement in near future", this indicates their resistance to any action that changes the status quo.

This begs the question: Does this fear relate to any benefit for these students or to the self-interests of the policymakers themselves? This question came to my mind after one statement emerged from one former Deaf student (STU4) who said:

> The leaders and practitioners in special education do not like including Deaf students with their hearing peers because they will lose their positions and all related advantages (STU4, lines 29-30).

It is tempting to give policymakers the benefit of the doubt and attribute their apparent resistance to inclusion to their fear and concern about Deaf students. On the other hand the current situation for Deaf students and their later outcomes does not warrant or justify such a generous interpretation. This is because the current education system constitutes a dilemma for those students and their futures and this dilemma is not recognised by the policymakers themselves. The policymakers allude to this troubled situation in the Deaf education system, but they remain deeply defensive of the status quo. For additional examples, see the analysis chapter.

The second possible explanation for their fear and resistance is the apprehension of losing benefits and the perks of working in special education services. How do the policymakers benefit by keeping those students in isolated placements? As mentioned earlier, special education in Saudi Arabia brings advantages for those who work in this field, such as an increase of 30% increased salary for teachers and 20% extra for administrators. There is also less work, fewer students, a distinctive identity and less accountability. No doubt these

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privileges are at risk if Deaf students were to be included in general classrooms. Is this not a good reason to resist? In this direction, Berry and Wilcox (2018) argue that "People pursue their self-interest, even though the policies they advocate may hurt others and may not be in the best interest of the nation" (p. 2). It could be argued that by including Deaf students in general classrooms in Saudi context, special education will lose its dominant presence, including the attached privileges.

Any move from special to inclusive education is likely to face resistance from special education stakeholders, as inclusion constitutes a serious threat to the benefits provided. Retaining as many children as possible in the control of special education services, through their isolated placements, would serve the interests for educational administrators. Issues of power and funding are at stake. Yet normal schools would still be able to function without disabled students and special education teachers providing their services (Tomlinson, 2012, 2017). Accordingly, Slee (2011, p. 70) argues that:

> Special education, as a subset of schooling in general, is a vital part of a political project to order and regulate the childhood population. Maintaining regular and special education involves decisions about the distribution of public funds.

In the Deaf education system in Saudi Arabia, significant government funds are allocated for the privileges of stakeholders in the special education sector. This enhances the position of special education in every entity related to Deaf education, including policy. Simultaneously, this will have an effect on other strategies that promote the opportunities of inclusive education for Deaf students.

The theme of fear of including Deaf students in general classrooms does not only appear in policymaker discourses; it also is seen in the discourses of teachers also. The majority of them hold negative attitudes toward the idea of inclusion and this fact leads me to theorize this situation results potentially from fear. This tendency was promoted by one former student STU4 (lines 29-30) when he argued that special education people in the Saudi education system resist inclusion of Deaf students as a result of their fear of losing attached privileges for working with isolating practices.

Thus, I will discuss the fear these teachers have about including Deaf students with their

hearing peers. To do so, I have to raise again the question of whether fear benefits these students or relates to self-interests for the teachers themselves. The findings from this study suggest that the benefits for Deaf students are not prioritized. Nor are the interests of Deaf students seen as important as the self-interests of teachers. The argument for this assertion is that these teachers have worked with Deaf students in this educational system for decades and would therefore have seen the inferior outcomes for those students.

Thus, showing no interest in changing this educational system indicates that this fear may be based on personal interests, particularly the privileges associated with teaching Deaf students in isolated placements are taken in account. As already stated, these advantages include 30% extra salary, fewer students and less working hours per week. There is also a lack of supervision and accountability and low level of expectations for high achievement by students in their care.

Is it my contention that teachers fears about including those students into general classrooms is associated with their fear of losing such privileges and personal benefits. To advance the inclusive education scenario, where Deaf students were included in general classrooms, would mean the disappearance of special education services and its attached privileges. Furthermore, inclusion of these students constitutes a threat to the identity of special education and its teachers as well. Indeed, inclusive education threatens the identity of special education teachers and their entrenched assumptions about many aspects of the education system (Etherington & Boyce, 2017; Rouse, 2017).

This fear results in a strong resistance from those teachers to any idea of reforming this system in ways that allow Deaf student to study inside general classrooms. This resistance clearly emerged in their discourses where five participating teachers out of the six disagreed with the idea of inclusion. This resistance is not surprising given the high level of privileges and the culture of low expectations. There are people who support decisions that save or provide self-benefits even though these decisions harm or marginalize another part of population (Berry & Wilcox, 2018).

Therefore, the fear and resistance of teachers constitutes a strong potential reason for excluding Deaf students in Saudi Arabia from general classrooms. There are two main reasons. Firstly, the teachers are a fundamental factor in structuring the success of any agenda involving the

inclusion of students with disabilities (Rouse, 2017). However, they contribute, too, to the isolation of students with disabilities because they support the exclusionary decisions of policymakers because they turn away from the idea of inclusion. Secondly, by embracing the negative attitudes toward including Deaf students in general classrooms, this may affect the rights of these students to inclusion. In other contexts, the beliefs and values of teachers about inclusive education would establish a central platform for cooperative work with policymakers and other authorities to enhance inclusive practices in education systems (Lehtonen, Toom, & Husu, 2017).

Furthermore, the participants in the former students group show fear towards advocacy and resistance. Fear among Deaf students in the Saudi context may offer a possible reason for continuing to isolate these students from general classrooms. The discourses of these former students reflect fear about many matters, such as interaction with hearing students, rejection or ignorance, mockery and losing their identity. This fear results in avoiding interactions with hearing individuals. Deaf students at schools are limited to existing in silos or small groups inside the community of schools. Moreover, this fear may result in resistance to the idea of inclusion in general classrooms even though only one participant from six explicitly mentioned this.

Additionally, this fear may constitute a logical reason for excluding those students from general classrooms. As mentioned above, this fear leads Deaf students to avoid any interaction or communication with hearing students and this leads to Deaf students creating a safe, small group inside the school environment. These situations may indicate to other entities such as policymakers, administrators at schools, professionals and practitioners that Deaf students like to be self-grouped or that they fail to meet inclusion requirements. As a result, they construct exclusionary decisions and practices based on illusionary conclusions not empirical data. In support of this theory, Mosier and Skitka (2018) argue that many wrong decisions are taken based on inaccurate or misunderstood outcomes.

It is worth discussing the reasons for this fear among Deaf students. It is human nature to fear the unknown where interacting and being included with hearing peers for Deaf students is an unlived experience as they have been excluded from their first schooling day. Carleton (2016) defines the fear of unknown as "an individual's propensity to experience fear caused by the

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perceived absence of information at any level of consciousness or point of processing" (p. 31). Additionally, Deaf students' fear is related to their concern about their identity and culture as a Deaf community. Deaf people resist any idea that considers deafness a form of sickness that needs to be cured and in fact they argue that deafness should be regarded as a unique culture and identity (Holcomb, 2013; Ladd, 2003). Additionally, some studies confirm that the Deaf community and special schools for Deaf students strongly enhance their identities and culture as Deaf individuals (Chapman & Dammeyer, 2016; Nikolaraizi & Hadjikakou, 2006). Thus, they fear any factor that would pose a threat to this identity, and they may view including them with hearing peers as an element potentially threatening to this identity.

After discussing all themes (wider discourses) that emerged from analysing the collected data through using Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) (Willig, 2013), I will re-discuss key issues in this data using Inclusive Education Theory (Slee, 2011, 2018).

5.4 Extending the discussion of Inclusive Education Theory

The first finding from analysing the gathered data concerns isolating Deaf students in separate classrooms inside general schools and calling these placements 'self-contained classrooms'. All discourses of the participants confirmed the placing of Deaf students in isolated classrooms in the Saudi context is the dominant situation for the majority of them. For instance, PM2 confirms that all Deaf students in Saudi Arabia have two options– either separate schools or isolated classrooms and there is no 'full integration' for them yet. More importantly, the policymakers and some participants considered isolated classrooms to be mutually inclusive options. However, these classrooms are forms of special educational provision and clearly represent exclusion to Deaf students. In the same vein, Ainscow and César (2006) argued that the self-contained classroom is a special education placement but located inside a general school. They added the 'self-contained' label is merely an illusion and an attempt to imbue spirit of inclusive education into these classrooms.

Furthermore, educating Deaf students in isolated classrooms is purely a re-placement process where those students moved from one isolated locus to another isolated one. Indeed, I argue that accommodating Deaf students from separated schools into isolated classroom is merely placing them from a big jail to a small one, where the small one is worse because Deaf students

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see the freedom, but they cannot live it. I build this argument on Demchuk (2000) when he refers to the situation of educating students with disabilities in self-contained classrooms as "being educated in exile" (p. 95). Moreover, inclusion does not mean locating. Nutbrown et al. (2013) argue that, unfortunately, for some individuals, inclusive education is merely matter of location where they claim that as long as students with disabilities are educated in the same location then the effects of inclusive education are being achieved.

Additionally, isolating Deaf students in these classrooms is might be a result of the medical model conceptual background. Here, all services are directed to students to fix or improve their weaknesses. Indeed, this placement tends to focus on impairments and weakness to be fixed to meet the normal standards (Armstrong, 2016a). This philosophical underpinning is prevalent among stakeholders in Deaf education in Saudi Arabia such as policymakers and special education teachers. As a consequence, the isolated placement so-called "Alamal programs" became the dominant placement for Deaf students in Saudi Arabia where more than 90% of Deaf students are placed (Ministry of Education, 2016).

Another key finding from this study involves the ongoing constituting of Deaf students as small group inside the school environment. They spend their lunchtime or extracurricular activities together in a small, isolated group. This results from the continued isolation of those students in separate classrooms during classes for the whole school day (Oliva & Lytel, 2014). Furthermore, Deaf students constitute an isolated group subject to such reported behaviours from hearing students as abuse, assault, bullying and mockery. Indeed, the isolation of Deaf students from hearing students from an early age may contribute in the increasing of such behaviours.

The isolation of Deaf students within classrooms contributes to an absence of familiarity between them and their peers which enhances the appearance of such behaviours. Evidence suggests that where the social structures within schools promote interplay and interrelationships between peers via inclusion, the results are the increasing of familiarity between those students and a reduction in negative behaviours (Rodkin, Hanish, Wang, & Logis, 2014). Moreover, it is necessary to understand that these behaviours from the hearing are rooted in the social dynamics of schools (Farmer, Lines, & Hamm, 2011). It is illogical to expect all school environments to be places free from any form of bullying or mockery (Alborz,

Slee, & Miles, 2013; Slee, 2018) but it is the role of operators in the education system to control these issues by constructing a dynamic system that resists these behaviours and includes all students.

Isolating Deaf students in self-contained classrooms is the physical reality, but it carries with it some unfortunate practices mentioned during participant interviews. For instance, as mentioned in the analysis chapter, some of the Deaf students commented that some teachers do not teach those students anything during class time and wasted their time by browsing on their phones or venturing outside the classroom, instead of paying attention to their students.

I attribute this to two main reasons. The first one is the absence of monitoring and inspection from administrators or oversight from the principal of school. Even if monitoring occurs, it will be questionable because in the schools that have isolated classrooms, in Saudi context, school principals do not have adequate knowledge of Deaf students and their education. This issue was mentioned in interviews with teachers of Deaf students more than once. For example, TFD 4 says that "The principal and all administrator staff at school do not know nor study anything about Deaf students and they avoid interacting with these students and ask us [teachers of Deaf students] to solve all related issues to Deaf students" (TFD 4, lines 25-26).

Further supporting this observation, Alothman (2014) argues that there is a lack of knowledge about Deaf education and their inclusion among school principals with self-contained classrooms. This problematic issue is also addressed by Murtadha-Watts and Stoughton (2014) who argue that:

> Many teachers in special education often work with school administrators who are responsible for providing instructional leadership and influencing overall school climate but have little knowledge of the specific learning theories and teaching strategies used with children who have special needs or of the multicultural issues that affect placement and services (p. 1).

The second reason and the more important one is that of low expectations. Deaf students in these classrooms are caught in a cycle of low expectations from every direction: teachers, parents, school principal and administrators (Kelly & Byrne, 2018). The status quo requires teachers in these classrooms to do the bare minimum that is legally required of them to educate

Deaf students. The low expectation mindset contributes to indifference among teachers and a lack of collective faith in the abilities of these students (Gargiulo & Metcalf, 2017). Another related point here is that the low expectations among school principals and administrators makes monitoring ineffective (Martin et al., 2016) and at the same time continues the trend of less dedicated teachers not trying to increase their efforts to teach those students. The low expectations apparent in the discourses of participants enables me to construct it as wider discourse, and it will be discussed in more detail shortly.

The previous sections have addressed the first part of first research question of this study that is: How is inclusive education enacted in Saudi primary schools?

Here, I argue that have there is an absence of inclusive education provision for Deaf students in the Saudi context. Simultaneously, there is a special education service that contributes to excluding those students and results in low educational outcomes. Indeed, I argue that Deaf students in Saudi Arabia are merely placed in isolated classrooms or separate schools and then paid little attention. Now, the important question to raise is, 'Why don't those students have inclusive education?' The next section will extend the discussion to include further concepts from Inclusive Education theory to address this question.

It is worth acknowledging that there is no one agreed theory for inclusive education. Instead, as Slee (2018) argues, "I say [inclusive education] theories because there is no general theory of inclusive education" (p. 11). I apply two theoretical concepts that emerged (Slee, 2011, 2018) to reread the discourses of policymakers and teachers of Deaf students who participated in this study. These two main concepts are the confusion between isolated and inclusive placements and the re-producing of special education services as options for inclusive education.

I will begin with the issue of mixing up the provision of special education and inclusive education where the lack of conceptual clarity about inclusive education leads to mixing it up with other special education forms such as isolated units at schools (Slee, 2011, 2018). As I argued in the analysis chapter, this confusion clearly emerged in the discourses of both policymakers and five of the teachers.

As mentioned in earlier parts in this study, the confusion between the different forms of special

education (the so-called self-contained classrooms and inclusive education) among the study participants suggested a logical reason for excluding Deaf students from general classrooms in Saudi context. There are three key reasons behind this. Firstly, viewing isolated classrooms as an inclusive option leads to a misunderstanding of the problem of isolating those students. The status quo of continuing this isolating practice systemically is maintained. Secondly, considering self-contained classrooms as inclusive education leads to the legitimization of these placements as inclusive education provision in Saudi Arabia.

The gulf between rhetoric and practice remains central in the Saudi Arabian education system. Even though the Saudi government signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Protocol including Article 24 that called for inclusive education at all levels of education (Almousa, 2010), systematic exclusionary practices remain in Saudi Arabia. There are many countries that are also committed to the idea of establishing inclusive education systems, yet in practice they merely increased special education services, entrenching forms of exclusion and isolation (Riddell et al., 2016). Lastly, this conflation evokes the collective indifference of stakeholders in the whole Deaf education system as Slee (2011) argues that "The moment we allow inclusive education to be special education for new times is the moment we submit to collective indifference" (p. 121). Indeed, the collective indifference among some teachers of Deaf students prevents them from advocating for the inclusion of these students in general classrooms, thereby perpetuating inferior outcomes for these students as inevitable results. Thus, the question to raise at this point relates to why self-contained classrooms are called inclusive education?

To answer this question, I will discuss just two main reasons. The first reason is the established beliefs toward self-contained classrooms held by individuals who had been educated in special education departments at universities. Oliver (2017, p. 42) argues that:

> This terminological confusion is not just a matter of agreeing to use the same words in the same way. It is also about understanding and appeared when a policy analyst attempted to relate her own experience to policy issues in the area of disability.

The second reason is the manipulating of language to serve vested interests. This issue emerges

from applying the second theoretical concept used from Inclusive Education Theory to re-read the data. The second theoretical concept in Inclusive Education Theory applied here concerns privileging the language of Special Education. Goodley & Runswick-Cole (2016) argue that the use of language via naming and labelling plays a significant role in including or excluding people with disabilities from social organisations including schools. A widespread practice in many countries is to attach 'inclusive' to the language used in special education to appear to keep up with the latest international orientation. This reproduces the isolation of Special Education, despite this new labelling and packaging. This dressing up of special education is Slee's (2011) "neo-special education". Both policymakers interviewed for this study referred to the isolated classrooms in Saudi Deaf education system as 'inclusive' programs. Furthermore, five teachers from six who participated in this study called these placements 'inclusive' classrooms.

Both the linguistic conflation of terms and misrepresentation in neo-special education lie behind exclusionary practices. Other justifications include the lack of understanding about the emotional impact for Deaf students in isolated placements and enhancing the collective indifference among stakeholders of Deaf education in Saudi context. In the words of Slee (2018, p. 11):

> The near perfect attempt to silence inclusive education through the colonisation of its language and new franchising deals with units and classrooms in the neighbourhood school diminishes inclusive education's original manifesto of justice for children and young people with disabilities.

To conclude, the mixing of language between special and inclusive education and the borrowing the word 'inclusive' by those in special education constitute reasons why exclusion of Deaf students persists in Saudi Arabia. In the next section, an alternative perspective will be opened by discussing the collected data using some concepts from the Critical Disability Theory.

5.5   Extending the discussion through Critical Disability theory

Although Critical Disability theory (CDT) has many concepts that theorise and interpret a number of issues within disability studies, in this research I have employed two main concepts, disablism and ableism. Here, I will discuss how discourses of policymakers and teachers of Deaf students reflect these two concepts. Then I situate this as potential reasons behind exclusion of Deaf students from general classrooms. As I argued above, the impact of language is a key construct in constituting the experiences for students with disabilities. As Shakespeare (2018) asserts, our choice and use of terminology reflects our way of thinking about disability and its people.

Disabilism, as I have explained is a form of discrimination that results from holding a belief that considers individuals with disabilities as less worthy of concern and position than able-bodied people (Thomas, 2007). This belief emerged in some participant discourses in this study. For example, in the discourses of both policymakers, disablism was evident when the problem of Deaf education system was attributed to the abilities of Deaf students and their impairments. In the same vein, five participants from the teachers group referred to such problems as the weakness of abilities of Deaf students and the impact of their disabilities. This tendency clearly reflects the entrenching of disablism in the mindsets of those participants and contributes to exclusionary practices against those students. As Thomas (2007) argues, adopting the concept of disablism leads to exclusionary, discriminatory, oppressive and arbitrary practices against people with disabilities.

As I have outlined, the discrimination that results from disablism has resulted in the justification of excluding Deaf students from general classrooms in Saudi context. These exclusionary practices indicate how this system views Deaf student as less than other students. Being a Deaf student in this schooling system leads to further isolation. Whereas some assumptions about disability and ability are often linked to marginalization and exclusion from societal organisations (Liddiard & Goodley, 2016), the disablism concept is associated with another concept: so-called ableism. Goodley and Runswick-Cole (2016) argue that to understand the exclusionary and discriminatory practices that resulted from embracing disablism, we have to take into account the normative domination of ableism. As a result, I will discuss in the next section this concept and its effect in isolating Deaf students in Saudi context.

As I have explained, ableism is any form of discrimination against people with disability that results from the favour of those with ability (Brittain & Beacom, 2018). This viewpoint clearly appeared among the collected discourses of both policymakers and teachers of Deaf students in this study. For example, PM1 mentioned how general classrooms constitute a strong challenge for Deaf students as a result of the spirit of high competition inside these schools, while PM2 claims that Deaf students cannot engage in some professions that require perfection in all senses. In the same vein, as I have already emphasized in my analysis, how teachers of Deaf students show the same ableist viewpoints toward the abilities of Deaf students to undertake some tasks.

This tendency provides evidence of how the ableist ontological stances are entrenched among some stakeholders in the Deaf Education system in the Saudi context. This stance reflects stable beliefs about such varied concepts as people, ability, disability, schooling and indeed life itself. It is associated with the cultural understanding of independence and autonomy in many aspects of life (Goodley et al., 2018). Indeed, the organisational and cultural structures of education systems enhance and feed the idea of ableism until it becomes an inherent notion in this system that systemically isolates students with disabilities from general classrooms (Slee, 2018). Thus, some administrators and teachers in Saudi's Deaf education system view the school as a field for competition rather than education. Accordingly, Deaf students in this system are treated and viewed as less than normal students because of their impairments affecting their abilities and skills and preventing them from competing. As a result, they have been excluded from this idealized education system as they do not have these ideal standards to achieve the expected results. In this regard, Slee (2018, p 16) argues that "Schools are forged within the furnace of competitive individualism, and students are reduced to the bearers of results".

Moreover, the notion of ableism and exclusion of students with disabilities have a mutual relationship where ableist ontology leads to exclusion and exclusion enhances the sense of ableism in discourses of exclusion represented by special education. In the previous section, the impact of the notion of ableism on excluding students with disabilities was discussed and here Slee (2018) demonstrates how excluding students with disabilities in special education promotes the ableist ontology:

Special education, serving the so-called special educational needs of subnormal,

defective and handicapped children established ableism in bricks and mortar, and ableism has endured through the organisation and institutional discourse of education (Slee, 2018, p. 40).

Furthermore, embracing the ableist ontological stance has multiple effects on students with disabilities and their educational services. Additionally, to their exclusion, the idea of ableism plays a significant role in the distribution of resources and governmental funds. This issue was clearly mentioned by PM1:

> The higher management in the Ministry of Education views special education as additional, they look after "normal" students and their needs after that if some sources still available, they ask to send them to us in special education department (lines 16 – 18).

As a result of adopting the normative thinking of ableism, Deaf students in the Saudi education system are treated as additional students. Indeed, some decisions in some education systems have been taken based on normative judgements about the ability and disability of students that result in discrimination between students that lead to isolation in groups with disabilities and consider them as additional burden (Slee, 2011).

In sum, the existence of both disablism and ableism in the mindsets of some policymakers and teachers in the Saudi Deaf education system that were reflected in their discourses illustrates the structural and cultural underpinnings of this system. This existence demonstrates how these organisational and cultural structures constitute strong reasons for isolating Deaf students from general classrooms in this system.

5.6   Conclusion

This section discusses the findings of the study based on the two major research questions. Which are:

1. How is inclusive education policy enacted in Saudi primary schools?
2. How well are Deaf students served by this school system, and why?

From applying five phases to investigate the current situation of Deaf students at Saudi

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primary schools and to read collected data from participants of this study, I argue that there is no inclusive education for Deaf students in Saudi primary schools. Nevertheless, what is happening in this system is aligned with special education where Deaf students are isolated in either isolated classrooms or separate schools even though stakeholders in this system claim the opposite.

As I have argued, this isolation is due to several reasons. For instance, the policy and legislation in Deaf education in the Saudi context systemically work to providing special education services that contribute to isolating Deaf students from general classrooms. In addition, policymakers have potentiality and power to change or resist. This study discussed some potential reasons of isolating Deaf students that are associated with policymakers.

In summary, these reasons include:

- Their ignoring the problem of exclusion;
- Their tendency to shift the blame of this problem to other external factors and agents;
- Some negative attitudes toward the idea of inclusion;
- Their low expectations of Deaf students and
- Their fear of including these students that resulted in a strong resistance to any change.

Furthermore, my analysis revealed that there are two reasons related to Deaf students themselves, namely; blaming others without taking any action or action to resist their isolation and their fear of change and inclusion with hearing students. Additionally, lack of inclusive education is also linked to teachers of these students. For example, shifting the blame of this problem to other stakeholders; holding some negative attitudes toward inclusion; holding low expectations for Deaf students and the teachers fear of including these students in general classrooms, resulting in a strong resistance to any change.

By recruiting Inclusive Education theory (Slee, 2011), it has become evident that the policymakers and teachers of Deaf students are perceived to have confused understandings about isolated and inclusive placements. In addition, some major concepts from Critical Discourse Theory (Goodley et al., 2017) been recruited to reread the data. The result of this exercise indicates that policymakers and teachers of Deaf students have entrenched disablist and ableist assumptions toward Deaf students and these factors may go some way towards

explaining why Deaf students are excluded in Saudi Arabia.

In the next and final chapter of this thesis, I will conclude by drawing together the major findings of this study.

6.1 Introduction

6.2 The Main Outcomes

6.3 Some Recommendations

6.4 Some limitations of this study

6.5 The significance of this study

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6   Chapter Six: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

In this thesis I sought to investigate how inclusive education policy is enacted in Saudi primary schools and how well Deaf students are served by this school system, and why this is the case. To provide a brief overview of this study, my thesis comprises six chapters. The first chapter outlines the context for this study, the research questions and overall thesis structure. In the second chapter, the relevant scholarly literature was critically reviewed in order to locate this study and to identify theory that would be employed. The third chapter elucidated my position in this study and outlined my methodological choices and decisions. Some philosophical underpinnings and qualitative methods have also been discussed. The fourth chapter demonstrated how the analysis of data was undertaken, with two major analytical phases. Critical Policy Analysis in Education (CPAE) (Diem et al., 2017) was employed to analyse associated policy and a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis framework (Willig, 2013) was adopted to assist with the analysis of the interview data. A detailed discussion of the main findings is found in Chapter Five. These findings were then related to the literature and theory employed, to arrive at some conclusions that help to address the research questions of this study. Finally, in this concluding chapter the major issues of this thesis have been summarized.

This thesis investigates reasons behind the exclusion of Deaf students in Saudi Arabia these students by applying two phases of analysis. The analytical process began with analysis of the core policy document to determine the extent to which this policy enhanced inclusion for Deaf students. I then critically analysed the interview data was read and re-read from different perspectives, by employing Inclusive Education Theory (Slee, 2011, 2018) and Critical Disability Theory (Goodley, 2016; Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2016).

This study thoroughly investigated the research questions and, as part of this conclusion, some suggestions are briefly offered as they that may go some way towards helping Saudi Arabia to constructively address its problem of systematic exclusion. In this way, my aim for this study to be transformative, and therefore make a useful contribution is fulfilled. Moving beyond a critical study towards a transformative one offers hope of change. As Edward (2015) argues,

the "critical theoretical perspective provides the philosophical basis for work rooted in advocacy and motivated by the goal of transformative change" (p. 94).

Before discussing these recommendations, the main outcomes of this study will be firstly discussed.

6.2 Study Outcomes

Through my systematic analysis of policy and data, the research questions have been addressed in a straightforward way. Inclusive education does not exist for Deaf students in Saudi Arabia. What occurs in the Saudi Education system is the provision of special education within isolated placements. The majority of Deaf students are educated together in separate classrooms. These classrooms are located in the grounds of general schools and a small number of students are educated in Special Schools for the Deaf. This is referred to by the Saudi system as inclusive education but does not meet any definition of that. Moreover, the policy related to Deaf education in the Saudi context systematically reinforces the maintenance of this status quo. Saudi policy describes its special education agenda. This is despite the use of terminology related to inclusivity. Presumably, this language has been added to the policy documents to indicate fidelity to signed international protocols. The language of inclusive education used in that policy is not reflected in practice.

This study has found how the discourses of policymakers, teachers of the Deaf and former students interact with educational practice for Deaf students, and how little has changed for the past thirty years. Additionally, evidence of appropriating the language of inclusive language into educational policy, systems and teacher values appears to align with international thinking. However, this did not stand up to scrutiny. Surprisingly, the protection of vested interests became apparent during the course of this study and this seems to consistently override the interests of Deaf students.

6.3 Recommendations for Deaf Education in Saudi Arabia

It is important to recognise that a completely transformative process from complete isolation and segregation of Deaf students to full inclusion into general classrooms will not be a straightforward task. However, it is possible but will require honest intentions, great effort and

dedicated time. One of the aims of this study was for it to be transformative. I am not satisfied with just describing the situation in my country. I want to contribute to changing it.

In these next few paragraphs I provide several suggestions for addressing this complex and multifaceted issue. Of course, detailing a change plan would involve another long study, but I do feel compelled to provide a starting point.

A useful first step would be to clarify the distinction between inclusive and special education. While the term "Aldamj" is preferred in Saudi Arabia, it is better as several scholars, myself included, call for the use of "Altaleem Alshameel" to distinguish 'inclusive education' from 'integration' and to give this concept a clearer interpretation and, hence, a stronger basis.

Another suggestion involves the recruitment of experts and scholars to create a new policy and procedures for the Saudi education system that promotes inclusive education as a priority and basic right for all students including Deaf students. Then, a widespread program of education for all stakeholders should be undertaken. This should include bureaucratic and administrative staff from the Ministry of Education, school principals and teachers. This is a huge undertaking, but focused consideration of inclusive education and what is required for it to be fully implemented in Saudi Arabia is necessary. This will assist the building of widespread awareness about the concept, while challenging entrenched but unanalysed assumptions about people with disabilities, the purpose of schooling, questioning entrenched norms of ableism and disablism and exclusionary language.

6.4 Some limitations of this study

Even though this study sought to provide a rich investigation about its phenomenon from different stances, it has limitations. Firstly, it included only male participants as a result of the religious and cultural barriers of Saudi Arabia.

Secondly, this study conducted semi-structured interviews with some stakeholder groups but there are obvious perspectives that have not been included, and this is a shortcoming of this study. Children and young people with hearing impairments have not been consulted. Nor have parents of Deaf students. The perspectives from general teachers and school principals would also be valuable.

Another possible limitation of this study is its theoretical position. Whereas this study takes Inclusive Education Theory (Slee, 2011; 2018) as its main stance, other theoretical perspectives may have been useful to analyse the data and may have resulted in different conclusions.

Finally, although I read the data many times (and from different perspectives) and developed and refined themes to determine to what extent they are relevant to address the research questions of this study. Of course, the interpretations I have made relied on my own discursive position. It is likely that different interpretations of this data would be of value.

6.5 The significance of this study

Regardless of these limitations, the contribution of this thesis is that, unlike other related Saudi studies, this study considers self-contained classrooms as a form of special education that serves to isolate Deaf students. In contrast, inclusive education involves Deaf students being educated in general classrooms with the provision of all required strategies and services. This study clarifies and theorizes the current exclusionary situation of Deaf students in Saudi Arabian primary schools. In addition, it has investigated how the current education system creates barriers to inclusion for Deaf students. It also analysed what is behind the rationales offered for retaining the exclusive structures, through the employment of multiple methodological approaches and theories. Thus, I have taken up Slee's (2011) point that inclusive education needs good studies that interrogate how schools and education system construct barriers barring including students with disabilities.

Furthermore, this study may serve as a body of knowledge that has the capacity to guide public opinion, and inform advocacy groups, researchers and other stakeholders on how Deaf students are facing exclusionary practices. The study offers reasons for these practices and offers the potential to resolve and amend this situation. Finally, this study serves as a resource for other researchers and scholars around the globe because it was informed by and utilised different approaches including Post-structuralism, Critical Policy Analysis in Education and Critical Discourse Analysis. It also employed theoretical perspectives from inclusive education and, to a lesser extent, Critical Disability Theory. It is hoped that this study will be useful for further studies on the inclusion of Deaf students in general classrooms in Saudi Arabia.

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APPENDIX A: Questions for policymakers in Deaf education system

1. As leader in Deaf education department, could you please tell me about the current situation for Deaf education in Saudi Arabia?
2. What is your opinion about Deaf students' academic levels and achievements as result of their education in this educational system?
3. What do think about Deaf students in these two options: self-contained classrooms or special schools for Deaf students?
4. What do you think about including Deaf students in ordinary classrooms, so they can learn and interact with their hearing peers?
5. What is your opinion about the challenges and barriers that prevent inclusion of Deaf students in general classrooms in primary schools?

APPENDIX B: Questions for former students who are Deaf

1. Can you please tell me about yourself since graduating from high school? For example, have you been involved in any paid work or volunteer work? Or have you done any further study?
2. Could you please tell me about your experiences as a student studying in a self-contained classroom?
3. What is your opinion about the academic levels and achievements for Deaf students as result of studying in this educational system?
4. What do think about Deaf students in these two options: self-contained classrooms or special schools for the Deaf?
5. What do you think about including Deaf students in general classrooms with their hearing peers? Do you think that would be a better option? Do you think that might raise other problems?
6. What is your opinion about the barriers that prevent the inclusion of Deaf students in ordinary classrooms at primary schools?

APPENDIX C: Questions for teachers of the Deaf students

1. As teacher for Deaf students in self-contained classrooms, could you please tell me about the current situation for Deaf education?

2. What is your opinion about your students' academic levels and achievements as result of their education in this educational system?

3. What do think about Deaf students in these two options: self-contained classrooms or special schools for Deaf students?

4. What do you think about including Deaf students in general classrooms, so they can learn and interact with their hearing peers?

5. What is your opinion about the challenges and barriers that prevent inclusion of Deaf students in ordinary classrooms in primary schools?

APPENDIX D: Details of data collection process

To start data collection in fieldwork in Saudi Arabia, there are some procedures that have been followed. I obtained ethics approval for this study from the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee (VUHREC). I then sent this approval with 'Starting Study Inquiry' form to The Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission in Australia (SACM). This is a condition required for research to be undertaken in Saudi Arabia. The SACM provided me with a letter of their approval for the research, which I sent to The Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia.

After that, I got this letter from SACM and send it with detailed description about this study and needed participants to General Administration for Training and Scholarship in The Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia to obtain an approval to conduct this study in Saudi context and a letter for targeted places. Then I followed this process for recruiting teachers' participants from schools:

1. An initial email was sent through my formal email to each potential school principal. The text of this letter includes who I am, detailed description about this study including the tool and reason of recording the interview, my contact details and the type of participants who I need from this school and asked him to contact me back in case of agreement to organise a meeting with targeted school staff.
2. A follow-up email to potential principals was sent one (1) week following my initial email, if I had responses from three principles but I need one or two responses.
3. After two weeks, I had got all responses that I need with agreement to come to school and conduct meetings with staff members (some teachers for Deaf and general teachers) in these schools.
4. During these meetings, I explained my study and provided detailed description form including all information about interviewing and this study, and consent form to potential participants and asked who wants to participate in this study to contact me within one week to organise the interview.

I received phone calls from teachers who wanted to participate more than what I planned to meet, and I organised a time and place for the interview with every teacher during the call and

wrote the details of every interview in my notebook. Indeed, all teachers chose their schools as suitable places to conduct the interviews.

Additionally, I followed next procedures to recruit some former students with hearing impairments as participants in this study:

1. I sent initial emails to the same school principals above to ask them if they could contact former students with hearing impairments, but they could not as they do not have contact information about those students.

2. After that, I sent an initial email including detailed description about this study including the tool and reason of recording the interview and SACM's facilitating task letter to Deaf social club in Riyadh asking for some former students to participate and I got agreement from two people only.

3. Because I need more former students as participants, I sent an initial email including detailed description about this study including the tool and reason of recording the interview and SACM's facilitating task letter to Saudi Association for Hearing Impairment in Riyadh and I got agreement from three former students.

4. As I still need more participants, I sent an initial email including detailed description about this study including the tool and reason of recording the interview and SACM's facilitating task letter to the principal of Deaf education department in Alfisal University to offer me more former students and he helped me and organised interviewing time with four participants.

Although I know Arabic sing language, I arranged time with sign language interpreters to interpret between former students who are Deaf, during all interviews.

In terms of conducting interviews with policymakers in Deaf education department in the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, I followed the following process to recruit them:

1. Initial emails were sent by my formal email to the General Director of Deaf Education Department and his deputy. The text of this email includes who I am, some essential details of my study, their role in my research, the length of the interview, the tool and reason of recording the interview, and asked them to respond through email if they wanted to participate or had any questions.

2. After two days, I received emails from them including their agreements and the time of interviews in their offices in the Ministry of Education main building in Riyadh city.

3. Once the participant had agreed to participate in this study, I scheduled (by phone with teachers; during my visiting with former students; and by email with policymakers) appointments for the interviews. When scheduling the interview time, I had ensured that it is an agreeable date, time, and location that is free from distractions and that offers privacy, so the participants felt comfortable to express their thoughts and voices. This could be their offices, a library, or any quiet place. In addition, I sent an electronic copy of the consent form to each participant for review at least three days prior to the interview appointment time. At the time of the interview, I brought some copies of the consent form and before beginning the interview, I reviewed the consent form with the interviewee and answered any questions that might he had.

4. Then, I asked him to sign the consent form and I informed every participant that he has a right to withdrawal from this study any time he wants without any consequences. I followed the same procedures with every participant. Indeed, I used pseudonyms for each interviewee at the beginning of the study to ensure confidentiality and protect my participants' identities. After finishing all interviews, all related documentations including interviews records, notes and consent forms will be kept in a locked cabinet or/and a password protected computer file.

5. Finally, I conducted all related work with the data such as collecting, transcripting and analysing to ensure the highest level of confidentiality and privacy.

APPENDIX E: Consent Forms and Study Information Forms:

Certified Translation
Reference No.: 11072016-E259

INFINITY**PLUS**
Translation Office

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

CONSENT FORM FOR FORMER STUDENT WHO WILL BE INVOLVED IN THIS STUDY

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:

You are invited to participate in a study investigating the barriers to inclusion deaf students in Saudi schools.

CERTIFICATION BY SUBJECT:

I, ………………………………………… certify that I am at least 18 years old*
and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study: **Inclusion and Exclusion of Deaf Students from Regular Classrooms in Saudi Arabia**
being conducted at Victoria University by: **Abdullah Madhesh**,
I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by: **Abdullah Madhesh**
and that I freely consent to participation in an Individual Interview.

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed:

Date:

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to:

Principal supervisor: Dr. Julie White. Tel: +61399191844
Julie.White@vu.edu.au

Student Researcher: Abdullah Madhesh. Tel: +966550332333
abdullah.madhesh@live.vu.edu.au

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
M E L B O U R N E · A U S T R A L I A

CONSENT FORM FOR THE TEACHER WHO WILL BE INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:

You are invited to participate in a study investigating the barriers to inclusion deaf students in Saudi schools.

CERTIFICATION BY SUBJECT:

I, ………………………………………. certify that I am at least 18 years old* and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study: **Inclusion and Exclusion of Deaf Students from Regular Classrooms in Saudi Arabia** *being conducted at Victoria University by:* **Abdullah Madhesh**.
I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by: **Abdullah Madhesh** *and that I freely consent to participation in an Individual Interview.*

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed:

Date:

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to:

Principal supervisor: Dr. Julie White. Tel: +61399191844
Julie.White@vu.edu.au

Student Researcher: Abdullah Madhesh. Tel: +966550332333
abdullah.madhesh@live.vu.edu.au

I, Mohammed Nasser, Managing Director, an authorized representative of Infinity Plus – Translation Office, do hereby swear to the following; to having had translated the above document from the original English text to Arabic which I believe to be true, accurate and complete rendering of the original text done by a qualified translator conversant in both languages.

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INFORMATION FOR FORMER STUDENTS WHO WILL BE INVOLVED IN THIS STUDY

You are invited to participate

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled **Inclusion and Exclusion of Deaf Students from Regular Classrooms in Saudi Arabia**.

This project is being conducted by a student researcher **Abdullah Madhesh** as part of a **PhD study** at Victoria University under the supervision of Dr Julie White from The Victoria Institute of Education at Victoria University, Australia.

Project explanation

This project aims to investigate barriers to inclusion for deaf students in regular classrooms at Saudi schools. Participants from two primary schools in Riyadh city that have separate classrooms for deaf students will be involved. Also, the researcher will ask up to four former deaf students to participate in four individual interviews.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be invited to participate in individual an interview. Your views will be sought about the inclusion of deaf students and how this relates to policy, academic achievement, school environment and social factors.

What will I gain from participating?

Your participation will help focus attention on and make a contribution to improving inclusion of deaf students in regular classrooms in Saudi Arabia. Involvement in this project is voluntary, and you able to withdraw any time without any consequences.

How will the information I give be used?

All information you provide will be used for research purposes, specifically for the development of my PhD thesis. In addition, this information will be used for other academic purposes such as journal articles, conferences presentations and book chapters about the study.

What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

There are no potential risks as a result of participation in this project because all information will be anonymised to ensure the confidentiality for participants. Each participant can raise issues of concern with the student researcher any time.

INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER WHO WILL BE INVOLVED IN THIS STUDY

You are invited to participate

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled **Inclusion and Exclusion of Deaf Students from Regular Classrooms in Saudi Arabia**.

This project is being conducted by a student researcher **Abdullah Madhesh** as part of a **PhD study** at Victoria University under the supervision of Dr Julie White from The Victoria Institute of Education at Victoria University, Australia.

Project explanation

This project aims to investigate barriers to inclusion for deaf students in regular classrooms at Saudi schools. Participants will involve teachers from two primary schools in Riyadh city that have separate classrooms for deaf students. The researcher will ask teachers from each school to participate in individual interviews.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be invited to participate in an individual interview. Your views will be sought about inclusion of deaf students and how this relates to policy, academic achievement, school environment and social factors.

What will I gain from participating?

Your participation will help focus attention on improving and make a contribution to inclusion of deaf students in regular classrooms in Saudi Arabia. Involvement in this project is voluntary, and you able to withdraw any time without any consequences.

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What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

There is no potential risk as a result of participation in this project because all information will be anonymised to ensure the confidentiality for participants. Each participant can raise issues of concern with the student researcher any time.

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