The influence of overseas professional development experiences on the cognitions and practices of EFL teachers: A cross-case analysis of two Saudi universities

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Declaration

I, Esraa Saad Alhuwaydi, declare that the PhD thesis entitled, *The influence of overseas professional development experiences on the cognitions and practices of EFL teachers: A cross-case analysis of two Saudi universities,* 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: *Esraa Saad Alhuwaydi*

Date: 4/May/2020

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Abstract

The Saudi educational context has undergone several developments in the past few years, particularly in the field of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). One of the ways through which such development is sought is by replacing traditional, teacher-centred instructional approaches with more communicative and learner-centred approaches. To help achieve the aims for educational development, the government implemented several professional development initiatives, including an overseas scholarship program for instructors in higher education institutions. University EFL instructors are required to complete a postgraduate degree in a native English-speaking country. Once they return to their Saudi universities, these instructors are expected to contribute to educational development in the local EFL context and implement knowledge and skills that they had developed overseas. This includes implementing teaching approaches that enhance Saudi learners' linguistic and communicative competence (Barnawi & Alhawsawi, 2017; Tatweer, 2007).

This qualitative research utilises a multiple case study approach, in which the cases are two Saudi universities, to explore the experiences of female teachers who have completed overseas postgraduate programs and returned home to teach EFL in the two universities. The purpose of this thesis is to understand the influence of extended, overseas professional development experiences on the Language Teacher Cognition (LTC) and observed practice of Saudi EFL teachers. This study also highlights the role of the local teaching context in influencing how returnees implement their overseas-developed cognitions.

Analysis of data findings is underpinned by Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of learning, framed within a social-constructivist research paradigm. Borg's (2006) LTC framework is utilised as a guide for conceptualising the influence of various life experiences on teachers' cognition development. Several qualitative data collection methods are adopted, including interviews with teachers and supervisors, document reviews and classroom observations. The participants are 10 female teachers (five from each university) and 2 supervisors (one from each university), with a total of 12 participants. Data from each teacher was collected through two semi-structured interviews and two classroom observation sessions. One semi-structured interview was also conducted with each supervisor. Additionally, institutional documents regarding teaching guidelines were collected from each university.

The findings highlight that, during their overseas educational experiences, the teachers underwent multidimensional developments that persisted for years after they had returned to the Saudi context. These developments are represented by transformations and expansions in teachers' cognitive and affective dimensions, and include developed pedagogical notions, teaching approaches, professional identities and professional agency. Teachers' observed classroom practices highlight their varied capacity to implement communicatively oriented and learner-centred practices in local classrooms. The translation of cognitions into practices was found to be influenced by factors relating to each teacher as an individual. Additionally, cross-case analysis of the two universities highlighted several contextual factors relating to the wider institutional context, which influenced teachers' implementation of their overseas-developed cognitions.

The study contributes to understanding the nature of Language Teacher Cognition (LTC) and how it develops during extended overseas education experiences. It identifies personal, social and contextual factors which influence the translation of teachers' developed cognitions into practices. Several recommendations are made that can help Saudi educational officials to capitalise on the knowledge and skills that returnee teachers acquire from overseas. Implications are also discussed for advancing educational reform in the Saudi higher education context.

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List of Abbreviations

CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
COS	Communicative Orientation Score
COLT	Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
L1	Language 1 – mother tongue / native language
L2	Language 2 – target language being learned
LTC	Language Teacher Cognition
LTCC	Language Teacher Conceptual Change
MoE	Ministry of Education (Saudi)
NEST	Native English Speaker Teacher
NNEST	Non-Native English Speaker Teacher
OEE	Overseas Educational Experience
PD	Professional Development
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SLTE	Second Language Teacher Education
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
UIV	University of Innovative Vision
UTP	University of Traditional Prestige

Chapter 1.
Introduction

The driving force behind this study has been my personal history, and my attempt to make sense of my experience in an overseas professional development (PD) program. Like the participants in this research, I am a teacher of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) who worked in a Saudi tertiary institution. Several years ago, I was sponsored to undergo an overseas Masters program in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), at the University of Melbourne, Australia. Those enrolled in the program included many in-service Australian teachers, in addition to international teachers from countries as diverse as Chile, Iran, Turkey, Indonesia, China, and Vietnam. Despite our different educational and cultural backgrounds, as international students we had one thing in common. We were there to learn to be better teachers, so that we could return to our home countries and help our local EFL learners. We were heavily invested in our education, because we had all made substantial sacrifices to undertake these educational experiences. We were also aware that we were 'the chosen ones'. Our sponsoring bodies were counting on us to bring back advanced knowledge and skills that would help implement educational developments in our local contexts.

Throughout the program, I developed a criterion system through which I interpreted the new concepts presented to me. There were notions that I liked, and thought were applicable back home. There were notions that I liked, but thought were unrealistic in my home teaching context. There were also notions that just did not sit well with how I perceived EFL teaching to be, so I disregarded them. Interestingly, my approach seemed to be similar to what my fellow international teachers were doing. Among the questions that we continuously raised was how do we implement these new concepts once we return home? Despite this concern, the learning experience during the program, in and of itself, had been life changing in many personal and professional ways. My perceptions of language teaching and learning, and the role I play in that process, had developed immensely. I constructed pedagogical ideals that reflected a more developed personal teaching approach. I had set ideals regarding what skills EFL students needed to learn, how they learned, and what facilitated their learning.

Soon after graduation, I travelled back home and returned to my role as a teacher in the same institution that I worked in prior to my overseas education program. Initially, I was confident that the skills I had gained would enable me to put my ideas into practice. However, I soon found myself slipping back into practices that were not in line with my newly developed teaching ideals. I got caught up in the daily demands of being a teacher, and I could not find the time to plan how to implement my pedagogical ideals. I was not prepared for the feelings of disappointment in myself, as I was overcome by the same system that I had aspired to develop. I maintained contact with some of my Chilean and Turkish friends from the program, and they shared similar experiences to mine. I tried to read research on this issue, and the results further disappointed me. The research on the Saudi EFL context focused on what teachers do, from an evaluative observational perspective. There was rarely any in-depth investigation of what teachers think, or the conceptions underlying their practice. I knew that teaching, and the process of putting ideas into practice, was far more complicated than what can be observed in one or two classroom observations.

When I was presented with the opportunity to pursue my PhD, I embarked on this research with the goal to understand, empirically and in depth, how extended Overseas Educational Experiences (OEEs) influence in-service EFL teachers. The influences that I seek to uncover relate to two seminal areas in teachers' professional development; their cognitions and their practices. As a teacher who has successfully completed an OEE, I understand that teaching and learning are both context specific. As a consequence of this understanding, my research also sheds light on the role of the local teaching context in influencing teachers' implementation of their overseas-developed cognitions.

1.1 Research context: EFL education in Saudi Arabia

The EFL educational context of Saudi Arabia is one where English is recognised as an official foreign language. English is valued for its role as the lingua franca of international relations. It is also an important medium of communication with non-Arab Muslims during Hajj, the annual Islamic pilgrimage to the Holy City of Makkah in Saudi Arabia. English is also viewed as a necessary tool to advance local healthcare, science and technology along with advancing businesses and trade. Local citizens who are fluent in English also help to ensure the competitiveness of Saudi Arabia in the global economy. Today, it is common for employers in public and private institutions to require applicants to be fluent

speakers and users of English. As a consequence of its increasing value, mastering English has become necessary for the career progression of current and prospective Saudi workers.

English was first introduced in the Saudi educational system in 1958 and was taught as a core subject. Since then, EFL has been given great importance in the Saudi plans for educational development, and this has been evident more so in recent years. The Ministry of Education (MoE) has realised the growing international status of English and recognised the need to equip younger generations with advanced English skills and knowledge. The main objective in teaching English in Saudi institutions is for learners to have advanced communicative and linguistic competence that enables them to a) benefit from, and contribute to, global sciences, b) disseminate and clarify Islamic teachings to Muslims and non-Muslims who do not speak Arabic, c) foster local awareness of international cultures and respect differences among nations, d) have the skills and knowledge to participate in local and international professions, and e) interact with colleagues from various cultural backgrounds (Tatweer, 2007).

To fulfil these objectives for EFL education, the MoE periodically implements developments in the national education system. In 2007, for example, it introduced a maximum exposure initiative that aimed to increase students' EFL learning in schools and in universities (Tatweer, 2007). Previously, students only started taking English lessons in grade 7. Following this initiative, it has become a core subject from the fourth year of primary school all the way to the final grade 12 of high school. English lessons consist of four EFL classes a week, each 45 minutes long, throughout these eight years. Students also continue to learn English when they enrol in public universities regardless of their different majors. They have to complete one year of intensive English general and academic skills before they can move on to study their specialised courses.

The MoE also periodically develops the national EFL curriculum, educational facilities, and teacher training programs for schools and universities. These developments include upgrading the state of classrooms in urban and rural areas to include educational technology equipment. Additionally, revisions to the national EFL curriculum are implemented to ensure its inclusion of the Saudi culture and that it targets the needs of Saudi students. Major investments have also been made in in-service PD programs for EFL teachers in universities and schools (Ministry of Education, 2015). In 2001, the MoE revealed a new set of objectives for teaching EFL in its schools, reflecting the county's

reformed vision for its future. Among these objectives is shifting towards communicatively oriented EFL education (Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013). This objective was motivated by concerns that previous EFL curricula focused on the linguistic component of language learning and failed to develop students' communicative competence (Alzayid, 2012; Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013). In accordance with the revised objectives, the MoE issued new textbooks and advocated communicative teaching approaches that promote students' communicative competence (Alotaibi, 2004; Batawi, 2006). However, despite publicised attempts to improve the quality of EFL education in the country, there are several challenges and criticisms that teachers and learners continue to face.

One of the main criticisms of Saudi EFL education is that graduating students have low proficiency levels. Both earlier (Alhajailan, 1999; Alhazmi, 2003; Alnafisah, 2000; Sheshsha, 1982; Zaid, 1994) and more recent researchers (Ahmad, 2014; Alkubaidi, 2014; Alqahtani, 2016; Alrashidi & Phan, 2015; Alseghayer, 2014; Alsubaie, 2014) express the view that the low English skills do not reflect what should be expected from Saudi students' long years of language learning in schools and universities. Alseghayer (2011) argues that the language proficiency of Saudi college students lags far behind their counterparts in most Middle Eastern and Asian countries. He bases his argument on the published average scores of TOEFL test takers from 2003 to 2009, which consistently placed Saudis in the bottom two ranks among 32 Asian countries and 21 Middle Eastern countries. A look at more recent results shows that this ranking remains consistent. Scores published in 2017 show that Saudis had the lowest average scores in the Middle East, with an overall 69 out of 120. Lebanese test takers in comparison scored the highest at 89 (Educational Testing Services, 2017). These scores have been extensively used as an indicator of Saudi students' low English levels, justified by the increasing number of Saudis who take these tests each year.

Public perceptions also support the contention that Saudi students' English proficiency is generally weak. In 2015, for instance, the local Al-Jazirh newspaper (as cited in Alseghayer, 2017) conducted a survey to investigate the views of 867 high school graduates. Report findings indicated that 87% of participants believed they did not have the proficiency to effectively communicate in English. Local education officials seem to share these views. The MoE recently reported its concerns with the currently low English proficiency levels of students and is planning future curriculum developments that aim to

elevate students' English levels (Ministry of Education, 2018). In exploring the weaknesses of Saudi EFL students, Alseghayer (2017) reports that there is a prevalent deficiency in their oral communication skills. This is similarly argued by Alharbi (2015), who contends that among all four skills, Saudi students' speaking and oral communication skills are suffering the most.

Several reasons have been proposed for Saudi students' limited oral communication skills. Some relate to contextual factors in and surrounding local EFL classrooms. For example, Alharbi (2015) asserts that the lack of exposure to authentic English usage outside the classroom poses a significant hindrance to developing students' oral communicative competence. Alseghayer (2017) contends that the number of then current EFL lessons per week are not sufficient to allow students appropriate practice opportunities. The evaluations of Alnafisah (2000), Alshumaimeri (2003) and Assalahi (2015) suggest that despite several developments, the EFL curriculum continues to be largely controlled by written exams, and does not give adequate focus to developing students' communication skills. The large number of students in school and university classrooms has also been suggested to play a role in influencing students' limited communication skills, as insufficient opportunities to practice English are available to students (Fareh, 2010; Liton, 2013).

Cultural influences have also been viewed to contribute to students' low oral communication skills. Specifically, the distribution of authority in educational contexts influences relationships that can be formed between teachers and students. In the Saudi culture, a persons' level of authority is reflective of an individual's age and educational qualifications (Aljohani, 2009). Therefore, the teacher, being older and more educated than the student, is given complete authority within the classroom. Students are expected to be obedient followers and passive listeners, thus showing respect and gratitude for the knowledge bestowed upon them (Alseghayer, 2011). Elyas and Picard (2010) highlighted that this view of the teacher as a valued keeper of knowledge who must not be negotiated or questioned has limited students' contribution and communication in the classroom. A further cultural influence on teaching and learning in Saudi Arabia is the traditional understanding of what knowledge is. In Saudi Arabia, knowledge is strongly associated with how well a learner can memorise and recite information (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015; Fareh, 2010). Viewing memorisation as a tool for knowledge has influenced the Saudi

education system to be focused on written exams. A consequence is that it overlooks the development of skills such as critical thinking, learner autonomy, and oral communication.

Despite different contextual and cultural factors that contribute to students' low oral communication development, the area that receives extensive criticism is instructional practices implemented by Saudi EFL teachers. Researchers such as Alrabai (2014) and Alrashidi and Phan (2015) contend that teachers' practices are hindering the development of students' communicative competence. According to Alrashidi and Phan (2015), teachers rely on traditional teaching approaches such as grammar translation; therefore, students learn the language through memorisation instead of active communication. Alrabai (2014) adds that teachers' dominance of English classes causes students to be receptors, memorisers and reproducers, contributing to students' lack of productive communicative skills. Alkeaid (2004) explored the teaching practices of 85 teachers in two Saudi universities using self-reported questionnaires, finding that the majority relied on lecturing and held authoritarian positions that minimised students' chances of collaborative participation. A study by Alghanmi and Shukri (2016), which surveyed 30 EFL teachers and observed the practices of 10 teachers in a Saudi university, found that their instruction predominately focused on forms and grammar. Therefore, it is believed that the ineffective approaches applied by language teachers largely contribute to Saudi students' low English proficiency level (Barnawi & Alhawsawi, 2017). This necessitates an exploration of how EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia are trained in teaching methodologies that can lead to greater student competence and engagement in English language learning.

1.2. Pre-service education for EFL teachers

Since the 1980s, EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia have had to obtain a 4-year Bachelor degree in English in order to qualify as an EFL teacher. Over the years, teacher education programs have undergone several transformations. In the 1980s, EFL teacher education programs emphasised the teaching of English literature, including poetry, novels and drama, while little attention was given to teaching skills and linguistic knowledge (Sheshsha, 1982). In the 1990s, the focus expanded to include courses for developing candidates' English skills and linguistic knowledge (Alhajailan, 1999). A review by Alseghayer (2014) highlighted more recent directional changes in teacher-preparation programs. He noted that programs required candidates to complete intensive English skills courses during their first two or three semesters. Candidates then moved on to study

academic courses in linguistics, English literature, teaching methodologies and translation. However, Alseghayer (2014) noted that courses on teaching methodologies do not exceed 10% of program content, calling for an increase in both courses and practicum hours that train candidates in EFL pedagogies.

Despite advancements in the quality and focus of EFL teacher preparation programs, they continue to be criticised by researchers. One criticism is directed at the limited communicative competence of graduates, and that it is directly hindering the development of their students' communicative competence (Alhazmi, 2003; Khan, 2011; Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013). Another criticism is directed at the teaching skills of graduates, mainly their limited capacity to move away from traditional teaching skills to more constructivist and learner-centred approaches (Alseghayer, 2014; Pavan, 2016). Moskovsky's (2018) review of research on the quality of EFL teacher preparation programs in Saudi Arabia described the findings as "not very encouraging" (p. 27). He highlights the need for such programs to focus primarily on developing the practical skills of future teachers, noting that they currently focus on enriching their knowledge of English literature and translation conventions.

Some studies have also highlighted Saudi English teachers' dissatisfaction with the teacher education programs they graduated from, asserting that they had not prepared them for the challenges of in-service teaching. This is further supported by an extensive study conducted by Alharbi (2006). He explored the views of 531 in-service teachers (272 males and 259 females) and their perceptions of the skills and knowledge gained during their studies. These participants expressed a need for further training in constructivist teaching approaches, classroom management, teaching grammar and using technology in the classroom. Similarly, Alshuaifan (2009) surveyed 83 EFL teachers, the majority of whom asserted dissatisfaction with the quality of their pre-service programs. They reported that the programs lacked enough courses in linguistics, syllabus design and intercultural awareness.

These studies indicate that pre-service EFL teacher preparation programs may be lagging behind the MoE's vision for advancing the pedagogical approaches adopted by EFL teachers. This is especially so with regards to training teachers to create constructivist and learner-centred classrooms in which the students' communicative and linguistic competence are given equal attention.

1.3. Professional development for in-service teachers: Overseas scholarships

In 2007, a public education development project called Tatweer was initiated. Among its aims was to invest extensively in the PD of current EFL teachers. This included "providing rich professional opportunities to develop English language teachers professionally through improving their language skills and teaching strategies" (Tatweer, 2007, p. 1). For EFL school teachers, these PD opportunities include periodical workshops on teaching methodologies that focus on replacing traditional form-focused instruction with interactive and communicative teaching approaches. However, the largest PD initiative for public sector employees in Saudi Arabia has been the overseas education scholarship program for university instructors, including EFL teachers.

The overseas education scholarship program has stemmed from the dire need for highly qualified instructors to teach in the increasing number of Saudi universities. The past two decades have witnessed a huge growth in the number of higher education institutions, with 47 new universities, 12 of which were established in the past nine years. The total number as of 2019 is 168 universities, offering free education to around 1,165,000 enrolled Saudi students, and accommodating 90% of high school graduates (Ministry of Education, 2019). However, given the current limitations of the Saudi higher education sector, holders of Master's and PhD degrees are limited, and finding sufficient numbers of local instructors to work in these universities has been challenging.

To overcome these limitations, EFL university instructors are employed with Bachelor degree qualifications and are immediately required to complete a minimum of two-year graduate programs in an overseas university within the US, UK, Canada or Australia. These programs are not designed specifically for Saudi teachers, but they are mainstream graduate programs offering a Master's degree in TESOL or Applied Linguistics. However, Saudi sponsoring bodies scrutinise these programs and only approve scholarships to those compatible with the local goals of teacher development, ensuring that they award graduates with a Master's degree in Applied Linguistics or TESOL with a focus on second language teaching methodologies. Among the underlying expectations of teachers who complete graduate programs overseas is that they would return home to their university posts and participate in the educational development of the country (Pikos-Sallie, 2018). EFL teachers are specifically expected to advance their own English skills while studying overseas, learn the latest theories and skills in foreign language instruction, and apply them

to Saudi classrooms in a way that would enhance students' linguistic and communicative competence (Barnawi & Phan, 2014; Osailan, 2009). Transforming university EFL classrooms from lecture halls to an interactive and communicative learning environment has consistently been one of the goals of educational development in the country.

Overseas scholarships have been utilised by the Saudi government for over 40 years to develop the educational and research capacities of local universities (Alandejani, 2013). However, the number of scholarship recipients among university instructors has soared due to the many new universities that have been founded in the last decade. From 2004 to 2009, EFL teacher returnees reached 6091 (Albloi, 2009). This number is expected to increase. In 2018 alone, the official MoE spokesperson announced that there were 12,542 Saudi university instructors enrolled in overseas scholarship programs, including EFL teachers (Altheyabi, 2018). Despite Saudi Arabia's long history of sponsoring overseas scholarships and the increasing number of scholarship beneficiaries, the influence of these scholarships on local development remains unclear. The government has not initiated evaluation projects to explore outcomes of the scholarship program. So far, Saudi officials have relied solely on teachers' course completion rates within expected timeframes as an indicator of their scholarship success, "no other measurements have been put in place" (British Council, 2014, p. 44). However, as argued by Pikos-Sallie (2018), course completion rates alone cannot thoroughly represent the skills and knowledge which Saudi teachers developed overseas, nor can these numbers indicate the extent to which such skills are implemented in the Saudi educational context. Therefore, "little is known about the impact of the scholarship program on higher education in Saudi Arabia" (p. 162).

Though no official evaluation has been conducted, several small-scale studies have explored the influence of these overseas scholarships on developing EFL teacher returnees' classroom practices. Specifically, researchers have sought to investigate the extent to which returnees complied with the national vision of EFL education reform by implementing communicative and learner-centred practices in university classrooms. A dominant conclusion among these studies is that EFL teachers continue to implement traditional teaching approaches that conflict with the national vision of educational reform, and that communicative teaching practices are rarely used. Alhawsawi (2014) investigated the state of EFL education in a Saudi university program using interviews with students and teachers, document reviews of institutional policies, and observations of classrooms. He contended that, although university policies mandated a communicative teaching

approach, the majority of teachers' practices reflected the traditional grammar translation approach that focused primarily on language forms. Farooq (2015) similarly surveyed the views of 100 university EFL teachers and observed the classroom practices of 10 teachers. He found that despite their eagerness to implement communicative teaching approaches, the majority attributed their inability to do so to contextual factors such as overcrowded classrooms and time constraints. Instead, they relied on lecturing as a primary teaching strategy and used grammar translation techniques. Similar conclusions have been made by Alsubaie (2014) and Alshuaifan (2009). The criticism of teachers' instructional practices has resulted in claims that current teacher development programs, including overseas scholarships, are not sufficient. As a result, recommendations are extensively made for additional PD programs and for policies that regulate teachers' practices (Alhawsawi, 2014; Alhazmi, 2003; Alseghayer, 2011, 2017; Asiri, 2013). The criticisms surrounding Saudi teachers' instructional practices following the completion of PD programs are among the issues addressed in this study. Particularly, this study aims to uncover the extent to which current overseas PD programs have helped develop the cognitions and practices of teachers participating in this research.

Additional teacher development programs may not be the only way to help teachers align their classroom practices with the national vision of reform. Some attention should be directed towards understanding teachers' sense making of all these mandated changes. In the Saudi context, reforms have mainly followed a top-down approach, and ministerial officials mandate change in teaching approaches without much consideration of teachers' perceptions and views (Alseghayer, 2014; Barnawi & Alhawsawi, 2017). Assalahi (2015) highlighted that Saudi EFL teachers' perceptions of educational reforms play an important role in whether or not they are implemented in the classroom. His small-scale qualitative study drew attention to the feelings of three EFL teachers' who reported feeling marginalised by policy makers during educational reforms. Most importantly, Assalahi (2015) found that teachers' negative views towards MoE's reform process resulted in their adamant refusal to implement instructional recommendations. This was despite teachers agreeing with the underlying message of progressive teaching and learning developments embedded in government reforms. Educational development therefore runs the risk of failure when teachers' voices and perceptions are ignored and/or silenced (Assalahi, 2015; Kavanoz, 2006).

Studies that criticised Saudi EFL teachers' instructional practices have relied mostly on observation sessions and surveys (Alkeaid, 2004; Alqahtani, 2016; Batawi, 2006), or students' reviews of their teachers (Alhawsawi, 2014; Alrabai, 2014; Hamouda, 2012). However, understanding teachers' classroom practices necessitates an understanding of their underlying thoughts, beliefs and knowledge, or what is known Language Teacher Cognition (LTC) (Borg, 2006). The recognition of teachers' underlying cognitions as a valuable source for understanding their practices is the guiding notion of this research. Understanding LTC is especially pertinent and necessary in the case of Saudi teachers who completed Overseas Educational Experiences (OEEs), given the expectation that they will be equipped to return home and implement communicative and learner-centred teaching approaches.

1.4. Aims

The overall aim is to explore how extended OEEs have contributed to the professional development of Saudi EFL teachers, with a specific focus on developments that occurred in teachers' cognitions and classroom practices. Recognising the power of LTC is an integral notion in this research, and it is based on the argument that teachers' classroom practices cannot be fully understood without considering the cognitions behind them.

A further aim is to explore teachers' experiences of returning home to work in two Saudi universities. Particularly, this study will highlight the ways in which returnees implement their overseas-developed cognitions and transform them into instructional classroom practices. The context of teaching is also recognised as influential on teachers' daily practices. As such, this research also aims to highlight the role of the local institutional context, including peers, supervisors, and institutional policies, in influencing how returnee teachers transfer their overseas-developed cognitions.

This research aims to answer the following questions:

- How have experiences in overseas PD programs influenced teachers' cognitions about EFL teaching approaches?
- After returning home, in what ways do contextual factors influence the translation of teachers' overseas-developed teaching approaches to classroom practices?

- How have experiences in overseas PD programs influenced teachers' practices after returning to Saudi classrooms?

This study is designed to advance currently limited knowledge of long-term influences of overseas educational experiences on EFL teachers' cognition development. It presents a unique understanding of how such experiences impact teaching practices once teachers return to their home context – a dimension continuously overlooked in the literature. The research design responds to growing calls to consider the development and implementation of teachers' cognitions through a social ontological lens (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015; Skott, 2014). This social ontology views professional development as socially situated and influenced by teachers' active participation with their communities of practice. By adopting a social ontology in a cross-case analysis of two university contexts, this study has the potential to generate new understandings of the influence of contextual dimensions on LTC and classroom practices.

The knowledge gained through the research is expected to inform designers of PD programs about how they can better support EFL teachers in making long-lasting LTC developments. This is especially so regarding teachers who plan to return to teach in their various home contexts. Given that overseas scholarships for teachers are part of educational developments in many countries worldwide, insights from this study can also inform the support offered to international academic returnees. It is specifically expected to guide senior leadership teams in Saudi universities toward supporting returnees and fully capitalising on skills and knowledge that they developed overseas.

1.5. Overview of theoretical perspective, methodology and methods

A social-constructivist philosophical paradigm has been adopted as the overarching framework for the research. It draws on Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of learning: a 'theory of mind' which views learning as a cognitive practice that is socioculturally embedded and not limited to the confines of the human mind. The sociocultural approach undertaken to explore teachers' LTC development reflects the contemporary stance of the field of LTC. In this contemporary stance, research is viewed as an interpretive activity that present in-depth understandings of how cognitions are influenced by social, historical and contextual factors and how cognitions unfold in teachers' daily practices (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015; Li, 2019; Skott, 2014). By adopting this approach, this study dissociates itself from cognitivist conceptualizations in

LTC research, which focus on identifying the individual components of teachers' mental constructs, without situating them within the wider context of teachers' everyday work (Borg, 2018b; Burns, Freeman, & Edwards, 2015).

In acknowledging the powerful role of contextual factors in influencing the teaching and learning process, this project employs a comparative case study design, in which the selected cases are two Saudi women's universities. The aim of the comparative case study design is to highlight how different local educational contexts can shape returnee teachers' experiences of implementing their overseas-developed cognitions. The study employed several data collection tools, which include in-depth semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and reviews of official institutional documents. The participants include 10 EFL teachers, five from each university, who have completed their OEEs and returned to their teaching duties in Saudi Arabia. Each teacher participated in an initial interview with the aim of understanding how their OEEs influenced their current teaching cognitions. Subsequent to this interview, two classroom observations were conducted per teacher, with the aim of uncovering how each teacher implemented her overseas-developed cognitions in local classrooms. The observations were then followed by a post observation interview that explored how each teacher reflected on her practices and factors that influenced her classroom decision making. In addition, two teacher-supervisors participated in this study, one from each university. The supervisors were interviewed to assist in understanding how institutional leadership can influence teachers' implementation of overseas-developed cognitions into the local teaching context. Institutional teaching guidelines were also collected and analysed. These helped highlight different roles and expectations that each institution had of their teachers, and provided background information on the EFL program in each university.

1.6. Organisation of the thesis

This thesis is organised into eight chapters. Chapter one presented the personal drive behind the study. It also highlighted the context in which the research is situated by providing an overview of the Saudi EFL context, including pre-service and in-service training of local EFL teachers. The research aims and research questions were also presented in the first chapter.

Chapter two highlights concepts that are central to this study, including EFL teaching approaches and Language Teacher Cognition (LTC). It sheds light on the cognitive and

affective dimensions associated with exploring teachers' professional development and the different experiential and contextual factors that influence such development. A review of literature surrounding language teachers' overseas PD experiences is also presented, along with research that explores teachers' experiences of returning home to their respective local contexts.

Chapter three explains the methodological approach of this comparative case study. It highlights the overarching research paradigm and the different methods used to collect, analyse and present the data. This chapter also elaborates on the positioning of the researcher and ways in which this positioning has influenced the design of the study, recruiting participants, and conducting data collection and analysis. Important ethical considerations are also highlighted in this chapter.

Chapter four presents the first case study (UIV). It starts with an analysis of UIV teachers' experiences of participating in OEEs, through which different themes of LTC development are highlighted. This is followed by an analysis of teachers' experiences of returning home to work in UIV, and the local contextual factors that influence teachers' ability to implement their overseas-developed cognitions. Chapter four concludes with an analysis of teachers' observed classroom practices.

Chapter five presents the second case study (UTP). Similar to Chapter four, it highlights UTP teachers' cognition development following their participation in OEEs, and teachers' experiences of returning home to teach in their local Saudi university.

Chapter six is a cross-case analysis that builds on insights presented individually from the two case studies in Chapters four and five. It explores the nature and trends of overseas cognition development across all 10 participating teachers from both universities and uncovers the factors which contributed to these developments. A comparison between observed classroom practices of teachers in both universities is presented, which highlights institutional and contextual factors that influence teachers' classroom practices. In this chapter, special attention is drawn to the nature of institutional constraints across both cases and how teachers' experiences differed as returnees to these two university contexts.

Chapter seven provides a synthesised discussion of the research findings in light of the insights gained from analysing the data of the two universities. Emerging themes that

respond to the three research questions are highlighted. The chapter also identifies the relationship between the three dimensions of cognition, practice, and context as reflected through participants' experiences, shedding light on how each dimension affects and is affected by the other.

Chapter eight concludes the thesis by highlighting theoretical contributions and practical implications of the study. It identifies limitations associated with this research and makes recommendations for future studies that can further extend the findings presented.

Chapter 2.
Literature Review

The literature review brings together concepts and findings relevant to the aims and objectives of this research. It starts with highlighting the development of EFL teaching approaches and methodologies throughout history, before discussing, the prevalence of the Communicative Language Teaching approach and how this approach has developed in recent years. The link between teachers' classroom practices and their underlying cognitions is then highlighted through an overview of LTC research. Definitional issues and approaches used to explore LTC are identified, along with an explanation of how LTC is defined in this study. What follows is a review of empirical studies with findings relevant to this study. Specifically, experiential and contextual influences on LTC development and implementation are highlighted, along with an exploration of the influences of OEEs for EFL teachers. Finally, this chapter will conclude by clearly identifying gaps in the existing knowledge and how the contributions of this study will address them.

2.1. EFL teaching approaches and methodologies

The field of second language learning has long been characterised by its search for the most beneficial method of language instruction. A review of the history of EFL teaching shows that every few years, a method of instruction had been presented, praised, then subsequently rejected for a newer one in a cycle that has been repeated since the 1940s (Hoffman, 1997). This has resulted in a plethora of teaching methods, the remnants of which continue to be found in many EFL learning contexts worldwide, including that of Saudi Arabia. Each of these teaching methods has evolved from specific learning theories, therefore, an exploration of these theories is necessary to understand the differences between the teaching methods.

This section will explore the learning theories upon which seminal debates in foreign language teaching have evolved. An exploration of the most prominent EFL teaching methods is then presented. What follows is an analysis of the conditions leading to the development of each method, its associated theoretical underpinnings and aligned classroom techniques. A discussion of this kind is necessary to understand the history of EFL education around the world, and the struggles that EFL contexts, including Saudi Arabia, have faced in choosing a teaching approach that aligns with their aspired

educational goals. A presentation of this material will also help highlight the reasons behind the popularity of the communicative approach in particular, and why it is advocated today in the Saudi educational context.

2.1.1. Learning theories

Research in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has contributed to the development of diverse learning theories that explain how language learning takes place (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Three main learning theories relevant to language learning research are behaviourism, cognitivism, and constructivism. These theories have been specifically influential in the development of several language teaching approaches since the 1940s.

Behaviourism assumes that learning takes place through the development of certain behaviours when a specific external stimulus is presented. Therefore, the importance of repetition is emphasised for its assumed ability to reinforce correct learning habits (Skinner, 1957). Behaviourists encourage teachers to explicitly correct learners' language errors to avoid those becoming habits that are difficult to change. Behaviourism also proposes that the native language (L1) can negatively interfere with the acquisition of the target language (L2) and can cause errors to occur (Thao, 2020). Therefore, the use of L1 in instruction is discouraged to minimise negative interference (Ellis, 1989).

Cognitivism was developed as an alternative to the behaviourist view of learning. Unlike behaviourism, it regards language learning as an innate mental process, and that learners are naturally able to acquire language (Chomsky, 1965). Language learning takes place inductively and deductively and depends on meaningful practice. In accordance with the cognitivist view, teachers present grammatical rules explicitly during language lessons, and then encourage students to apply these rules during practice.

Constructivism is a language learning theory that draws on the work of Lev Vygotsky (1987). It assumes that learning is not restricted to receiving knowledge passively from external sources, but instead is an active process of constructing knowledge that is highly autonomous and subjective (Aljohani, 2017). In language learning settings, students are contributors to this process as they make their own meanings of the material presented to them. Constructivism emphasises both the cognitive and social dimensions of learning. Through the cognitive dimension, learners internalise new concepts on the basis of

existing knowledge. In the social dimension, learners communicate with those around them and form knowledge through these interactions. Classrooms that are based on constructivism are learner centred rather than teacher centred.

2.1.2. Defining language teaching approaches, methods, and techniques

A vast literature surrounds the disucussion of second and foreign language teaching that dates back to the early 1900s. Given the scope of this thesis, the literature discussed here will focus on some of the key debates that surround EFL teaching in relevant contexts that are similar to Saudi Arabia. Before highlighting the different second language teaching approaches, it is important to clarify the terminology associated with defining the concepts of approach, method and techniques as used in language learning settings. Anthony (1963) defines the relationship between the three concepts as hierarchical, in that "techniques carry out a method which is consistent with an approach" (p. 63). He considers an approach to be a collection of assumptions and philosophical notions that define the nature of language and the process of language learning. A method, however, is defined by Richards and Rodgers (2014) as "a systematic set of teaching practices based on a particular theory of language and language learning" (p. 3). A technique is the implementation of the method through a classroom activity, or as Anthony (1963) describes it, "a particular trick, stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective" (p. 66).

2.1.2.1. The grammar debate

The role that grammar instruction plays in the language learning process has been a central debate among the different language learning methodologies throughout history (McCarthy, 2020). Butzkamm (2003) considers grammar instruction to be "the most discussed methodological problem" (p. 300) in second language teaching. Borg (1999) similarly contends that "more than 20 years of research have failed to yield firm guidelines for grammar teaching methodology" (p. 157). The fundamental basis of the grammar debate, as explained by Canale and Swain (1980), is mainly about whether students should be taught the explicit grammar of the target language or to communicate using the target language. Today, ongoing debate is more a question of how, not if, grammar should be taught in classrooms. As explained by Blyth (1997), two contrasting arguments underpin this debate. The first proposes explicit grammar teaching, where grammar rules are

prescribed with no representation of their functional or contextual use, and the main objective is accuracy of language forms. The second proposes implicit grammar learning, where language forms are presented in context and grammar is inductively hypothesised, but not explicitly explained. In the following review of methods in second language teaching, the role of grammar instruction will be further explored based on the assumptions of each method.

2.1.2.2. *Grammar translation method*

Grammar translation is often referred to as the traditional approach to language teaching. It is a method of language teaching that prevailed from the 1840s to 1940s, and continues to exist in a modified form in many EFL contexts today (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). This method emphasises accuracy of form and sentence structure, and therefore highly values the memorisation of word lists and grammar rules. Early applications of this method prioritised the development of accurate language forms, because the sole method of evaluation was formal written examinations (Howatt, 1984). The target language (L2) is presented to learners through a deductive and detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by translation of texts to and from the target language. L1 is frequently used as a medium of instruction, because it is viewed to help make comparisons between L1 and L2 which develops students' translation skills (Stern, 1983). Developing students' reading and writing skills is highly prioritised in the grammar translation method, while speaking and listening skills are often overlooked.

The underlying assumption of grammar translation is that language learning occurs by acquiring one grammatical item at a time, which must be mastered before moving on to the next item (Nunan, 1998). However, the notion that language learning is a linear process has been disputed by later developments in SLA research. These developments highlighted language learning as a complicated process that "bears little resemblance to a steady learning curve, is characterised by interference from and interaction with other structures, and involves as much regression as progression" (Klapper, 1997, p. 24). Due to its inaccurate assumptions and controlled classroom practice, a major limitation of the grammar translation method was that students commonly struggled with using the language to communicate outside the classroom (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Today, this method is rarely, if ever, adopted explicitly by language teachers or curriculum designers.

However, it continues to have an influence on applied teaching practices in many contexts worldwide (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

2.1.2.3. Audio-lingual method

Audio-lingualism is based on the underpinnings of the behaviourist theory of learning. As a teaching method, it emerged as an alternative to grammar translation and gained popularity from the 1940s to 1960s. Unlike grammar translation, audio-lingualism views language as speech, and therefore focuses on developing learners' oral skills (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). In early learning stages, the input of L2 is introduced to students aurally, followed by speaking, reading and writing, while grammar instruction is conducted inductively rather than deductively (Brown, 2000). As audio-lingualism is based on behaviourist theory, it assumes that all language errors must be corrected to avoid future errors. It also promotes exclusive use of L2 during the lesson. The belief here is that exclusive use of L2 will help to avoid the negative interference of L1 in the acquisition of the target language. Among the core assumptions of this method is that a second language is fundamentally acquired through imitation and repetition in the same way that a first language is developed (Ellis, 1989). Therefore, audio-lingual instructors frequently use the drill technique to provide students with pronunciation practice based on repetition. Over time, the concept of drills, which consist of repeating isolated language structures for language practice, became strongly associated with audio-lingualism. However, Howatt and Widdowson (2004) suggest that as a technique, drills predate audio-lingualism and were also prevalent in classrooms that used the grammar translation method.

Much of the criticisms surrounding audio-lingualism is targeted towards the limited roles it assumes for learners. The method is essentially teacher centred, and learners are seen to be responders to external stimulus. They are therefore discouraged from the initiation of spontaneous interaction because of fears that it can lead to mistakes (Ellis, 1989). Richards and Rodgers (2014) explain that among the results of this method is that learners often struggle to communicate in real-life contexts, a shortcoming similar to that of grammar translation. They also report that students often find the repetitive nature of instruction boring. This is because there is limited stimulation in a learner's engagement with authentic communicative language tasks. Additionally, Meiring and Norman (2002) questioned the psychological influence of constant error correction on learners. They

highlighted that students can develop a fear of making mistakes, and their anxiety can limit their ability to practice the language in unstructured situations.

2.1.2.4. Communicative Language Teaching approach

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emerged in the 1970s. CLT quickly gained prominence in second language teaching literature and continues to be the most sought-after teaching approach in EFL contexts. However, unlike audio-lingual and grammar translation methods, CLT does not have clearly defined instructional practices (Spada, 2007). Rather it is a broad collection of assumptions and therefore considered to be an approach and not a method (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). A review of relevant literature highlights inconsistent definitions and interpretations of CLT. Jones (2000) argues, for example, that since its inception, the "communicative framework has been…defined variously and idiosyncratically" (p. 142). In an attempt to provide clarity about this approach, its underlying assumptions will be presented and compared to other previous methods.

CLT theorises that language is a system for expressing meanings for the purpose of interaction and communication (Klapper, 2003). Practices utilised in a communicative classroom setting are designed to encourage interaction among learners, and these commonly include role-play, group work, and information gap activities. Such a view of interactive learning is linked to Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which highlights the role of social interaction in cognitive development. The aim of language teaching through the CLT approach is to develop learners' 'communicative competence', a term coined by Hymes (1972) to describe the ability to use linguistic systems effectively and appropriately in communication. As proposed by Hymes and Halliday (1987), this view of language represented a paradigm shift in the field of second language teaching. Unlike previous methodologies which proposed that language learning is best achieved when one grammatical structure is introduced at a time, the communicative approach is

> *A reaction against the view of language as a set of structures; it is a reaction towards a view of language as communication, a view in which meaning and the uses to which language is put play a central part. (p.3)*

A main difference between CLT and traditional language teaching methods (audio-lingual and grammar translation) is the roles attributed to learners and teachers (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Traditional approaches advocate teacher-centred instruction where the

students are passive listeners and receivers of knowledge. CLT advocates learner-centred instruction which views students as active contributors to their language development and values their previous learning experiences. In CLT, a cooperative rather than individualistic approach to learning is adopted. Therefore, students are expected to participate in group activities and negotiate meanings with the teacher and other students (Breen & Candlin, 1980). The teacher takes on the role of a facilitator who guides the negotiation of meanings between texts and students, and between student groups. The teacher is also a needs analyst, responsible for determining students' needs within their specific context and making instructional decisions based on these needs (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

The prioritising of communication and meaning is one of the agreed upon notions of CLT. However, there is less clarity surrounding how language forms and grammar are addressed during communicatively oriented lessons (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Much of the literature highlights that grammar is to be taught inductively, and thus exclusive attention on forms should be minimised. However, these general guidelines have not resulted in uniform understandings among language teachers. After exploring the literature surrounding CLT, Jones (2000) concluded that

> *The role of grammar within communicative methodology is elusive, sometimes excluded as an irrelevance, sometimes 'done' latently in classrooms, sometimes reinvented in what is deemed to be a more accessible, palatable format and centring on a discourse that focuses on language as 'patterns'. (p.142)*

Spada (2007) highlighted scholarly disputes regarding whether or not the communicative approach has any focus on language forms. The first stance describes CLT as exclusively meaning-based with no explicit focus on grammar or forms. Grammar teaching was pushed to the margins in this stance, with the contention that accurate form does not necessitate adequate communicative function (McCarthy, 2020). The second stance views the implementation of CLT to include both a focus on language forms and language functions. The difference in these views correspond with an earlier notion by Howatt (1984) who distinguished between two versions of the communicative approach, a *weak* or *strong* version. The weak version considers the approach as a way to "learn to use English" whereas the communication aspect is integrated within a wider language teaching program that may focus on other skills as well. The strong version views communication as the fundamental developer of the language system and entails "using English to learn

it" (Howatt, 1984, p. 279). However, ELT research has witnessed increasing evidence that counters the strong version of CLT and advocates the weaker one. Recent research has found that failure to strike a balance between form and function by prioritizing communicative meanings over accurate grammar can lead to the premature fossilisation of language errors (Thornbury, 2016). The pressure on language learners to communicate meanings which require the use of structures beyond their levels of proficiency can lead to a reliance on oversimplified forms of communication. Therefore, a focus on form, whether through grammar instruction or explicit error correction, is necessary for language learners linguistic progress (Thornbury, 2016). These different views regarding CLT implementation clearly highlight a constant feature surrounding the approach, that is, different interpretations of what it entails and how it is translated in the classroom.Despite lack of consensus regarding CLT implementation, the approach has become widely advocated in ESL and EFL contexts worldwide. Its popularity is due to its promise of developing learners' communicative competence, which, in today's globalised world, has become a goal for many that aspire to compete in international trade, science, media and politics (Littlewood, 2014). Communicative teaching guidelines have become part of national educational reform policies in many EFL contexts, such as the Asia-Pacific region (Nunan, 2003), East Asia (Ho & Wong, 2002), and the Middle East (Alwazir & Shukri, 2016) including Saudi Arabia (Moskovsky, 2018). However, with this vast growth came questions of the discourse implied by this Western-originated approach and its underlying assumptions of knowledge. Specifically, the discourse of *othering* has been highlighted by McKay (2011), who questioned whether the dominance of such an approach disadvantaged local cultures of learning in non-native English contexts. Othering, as defined by Palfreyman (2005) refers to the ways in which the "discourse of a particular group defines other groups in opposition to itself; an Us and Them view that constructs an identity for the Other and, implicitly for the Self" (p. 213). Concern for the othering of EFL local contexts emerged in recognition of a dominant discourse in literature surrounding EFL pedagogy, which often portrays the education systems of EFL contexts and non-native English learners and teachers as deficient, compared to native speakers. As a result, this discourse of othering has led to the idealisation of Western teaching approaches, most particularly CLT, and a rejection of local traditions of teaching that do not fit Western moulds of educational approaches.

An othering discourse is evident in discussions of the implementation of CLT mandates in EFL contexts. When the anticipated results of CLT are not met, non-native learners or teachers are viewed as flawed or intrinsically deficient, and incapable of meeting Western standards of proficient learning skills. This reflects an ethnocentric stance where there is an inability to understand how different cultural contexts influence the kind of teaching that occurs in EFL contexts. McKay (2011) clearly highlights the discourse of othering in discussions of critical thinking, a skill highly promoted in CLT. She provides the example of a "powerful Othering discourse" reflected in Atkinson's (1997) analysis of "critical thinking and non-native thinkers" (p. 79). Central to Atkinson's analysis is that critical thinking is a socially situated practice that is absent in "non-Western … non-European peoples" (p. 79). However, such a claim overlooks that critical thinking is not universally defined and is often interpreted differently among different cultures. More importantly, however, such a discourse questions whether it is truly necessary for people of diverse cultures and backgrounds to engage in Western understandings of skills and knowledge in order to reach advanced levels of English proficiency (McKay, 2011).

Awareness of the discourse of othering is crucial for mandators of educational development reforms in EFL contexts worldwide, especially those calling for CLT implementation. This includes the Saudi Arabian EFL context, which is undergoing a shift from traditional EFL teaching approaches towards a more communicatively oriented approach. Awareness of the discourse of othering can help adopt EFL pedagogies that are culturally sensitive to educational contexts, and minimise arbitrary imposing of Western practices that clash with local cultures in education (Zheng, 2015). Clashes evidently occur when local institutions mandate transformative change in common local practices and substitute them with foreign pedagogies. Zheng provided an example of such a clash in the Chinese context. He highlighted the Ministry of Education's war against age-old Chinese learning traditions, such as using memorisation as a tool for learning, and its efforts to replace them with "features of Western cultures of learning, emphasising individuality and experiential learning" (p. 48). Indeed, the literature surrounding CLT application has documented various ways in which its pedagogical ideals clashed with contextual realities of EFL classrooms, such as large classrooms, different teacher/learner roles, and the prevalence of written assessments.

A positive shift is currently recognised in the field of EFL education which offers a broader perspective of the role of teaching approaches in diverse contexts. The contemporary

stance acknowledges the role of the context in influencing how any teaching approach is implemented, including CLT. In what is called the 'post-method era' (Kumaravadivelu, 2003), researchers are no longer trying to delineate a method that benefits all language learners (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Spada, 2007). Instead, the focus is on flexible implementation of EFL teaching approaches, guided by teachers' cognitions, students' needs and consideration of the local culture of learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). This shift in perspective is overtaking CLT literature as well. The contemporary approach borrows from the original meaning, which recognises the role of meaningful learning experiences in developing students' skills and aims to help students "use the language effectively for their communicative needs" (Hiep, 2007, p. 196). However, it disassociates itself from "techniques transferred from the West or indeed any other specific set of techniques" (Littlewood, 2011, p. 543). Additionaly, this contemporary view recognizes that teaching grammar and focusing on language forms is essential for effective language learning, and that doing so in meaningful settings does not threaten the development of students' communicative competence (Alamri, 2018). To better represent the shift in how the communicative approach is conceptualised, Littlewood (2014) proposes no longer using the term CLT to refer to the post-method version; instead he proposes Communication-Oriented Language Teaching (COLT) as an alternative, "which is uncontroversial about the goals of teaching (successful communication) but implies more flexibility regarding the means (which will vary with context)" (p. 355). This definition has the potential to develop "a post-method pedagogical framework in a globalised world, within which teachers can design methods appropriate to their own contexts but based on principled reflection" (Littlewood, 2011, p. 543). Indeed, such a contemporary view has been gaining appreciation by researchers and EFL teachers around the world. This includes some researchers in Saudi Arabia, such as Alamri (2018) and Alasmari (2015) who highlighted the need for a more flexible and context-specific implementation of communicative teaching in local classrooms.

It is clear then that the field of EFL pedagogy has gone through various stages in its quest to understand and subsequently recommend the most beneficial language teaching practices. Because communicatively oriented instruction is highly advocated in Saudi EFL institutions, it was necessary to specifically explore both the historical aims of this approach and its more contemporary perspective. By doing so in the previous section, it has become clear that this field is shifting from a one-size-fits-all perspective, towards a

more eclectic approach that emerges, first and foremost, from the contexts' needs and recognises teachers as essential classroom decision makers. By recognising the role of teachers' cognitions, the field of EFL pedagogy seems to align with developments in the field of applied linguistics, where LTC has been receiving increasing attention in the past fifteen years. As a seminal point in this study, the following section will review the relevant literature on LTC, and highlight the relationship between teachers' cognitions, pedagogical practices, and teaching context.

2.2. Language Teacher Cognition

2.2.1. Definition and approaches

Classroom teaching is a process that combines teachers' practices with unobservable mental work that is often difficult to explore (Burns et al., 2015). Borg (2015a) emphasised that this unobservable dimension was neglected in more dated educational research. However, since the mid-1990s, researchers started to realise that teachers' enactment of particular instructional methods was linked to the way they are represented in their underlying cognitive constructs. The notion of teachers as informed decision makers highlighted the need to explore teachers' meaning-based cognitive activity in order to understand their classroom practices (Burns et al., 2015). Exploring the mental lives of language teachers has become the primary interest of a sub-discipline of applied linguistics known as Language Teacher Cognition (LTC) (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015).

As the discipline expanded, several issues have emerged that relate to the terms used in this field. The increased interest in teachers' decision making resulted in ever growing terms that researchers were coining to define teachers' unobserved mental constructs (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996; Fenstermacher, 1994; Woods, 1996). Pajares (1992), for example, noticed this early on and argued that excessive definitions have made researching teachers' cognitions increasingly challenging. In describing the numerous terms, Pajares adds that "they travel in disguise and often under alias—attitudes, values, judgments, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, … to name but a few that can be found in [the] literature" (p. 309). However, this is not seen as an issue for other researchers, such as Woods (2009), who argues that terminological proliferation should not be viewed negatively, because "different terms help thoughtful readers to think beyond the word" (p. 2).

Viewing definitional problems as a hindrance to emerging research, Borg (2006) attempted to impose coherence on this field by proposing an umbrella term that describes the different mental processes that teachers have about language teaching and learning. He introduced LTC as a term that initially defined the "unobservable dimension of teaching—what teachers know, believe, and think" (p. 81), in which he includes beliefs, knowledge, theories, attitudes, images, assumptions, metaphors, conceptions, and perspectives. Although LTC is becoming widely adopted by researchers who used it as an "enveloping term" (Feryok, 2010, p. 272) for the overlapping concepts, it has not gone without its share of criticism.

Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015) and Woods (2009) warned that using LTC as an inclusive term does not necessarily eliminate the tensions between the different constructs it refers to, such as beliefs and knowledge. However, the complex nature of humans' minds and how they respond to various experiences make it difficult to identify the differences between teachers' unobservable mental constructs. As Verloop, Van Driel, and Meijer (2001) argued, "in the mind of the teacher, components of knowledge, beliefs, conceptions, and intuitions are inextricably intertwined" (p. 446). Also, researchers themselves have been unable to present unified definitions for these constructs and ways to differentiate between them (Borg, 2005; Moodie, 2015; Skott, 2014), which novice researchers greatly need in order to expand on the existing literature. Therefore, although LTC is a broad term, "in its breadth lays its strength; it is inclusive of related concepts and thus forms a significant body of research for review" (Moodie, 2015, p. 41).

Another criticism of the term LTC is that it can be understood to acknowledge the power of teachers' cognitive dimensions of beliefs and knowledge, and overlook affective dimensions which include emotions and identities (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). This implied distinction between affective and cognitive dimensions is partially due to Borg's early definition of LTC, which referred to "what teachers know, believe, and think" (2003, p. 81). Since the term was coined, LTC has been widely used to refer only to the cognitive dimension of teachers' unobserved mental lives. Although Borg's (2012, 2018b) more recent work has highlighted the role of teachers' affective dimensions in influencing their development as professionals, emerging LTC research continues to use the term as representing only the cognitive dimension (Alzaanin, 2014; Llovet Vilà, 2016; Santos & Miguel, 2019). Recent recommendations in the field have highlighted the need to adopt a

comprehensive view of LTC, one which acknowledges both the cognitive and affective dimensions of teachers' sense making constructs. An early call for this comprehensive view of teachers' unobserved constructs was highlighted by Snow, Corno, and Jackson (1996), who warned that without including affect in cognitive models the "dynamic, energizing aspects of human functioning are lost" (p. 295). The separation of cognitive and affective dimensions in LTC research needs to be replaced by expanding contentions which view both constructs as "mutually influential and distinguishable but not dissociable" (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015, p. 436).

The relevance of research on teachers' affective dimensions is significant to this study, which explores how teachers' professional development unfolds within an educational context undergoing change. Educational changes and top-down policies influence affective reactions from teachers. In turn, these affective reactions influence teachers' implementation of such policies in everyday practices. Teachers' emotions, a main construct of the affective dimension, are recognised as an integral factor in cognitive processes and developments (Bartels, 2006; Golombek, 2015; Golombek & Doran, 2014; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Professional identity is another affective construct that influences language teachers' development and their classroom practices (Alsup, 2018; Basalama, 2010; Hong, Francis, & Schutz, 2018; Song, 2016). Professional identity is identified as a teacher's "personal meaning of occupying the teacher role in a particular social-cultural situation" (Kaplan & Garner, 2018, p. 72). It is related to teachers' conception of their personal and social attributes that are relevant to teaching practice, and the conception of the roles they play within dynamic educational and professional contexts. Language teachers' emotions and professional identity were highlighted in Hiver (2013) as having a core influence on teachers' engagement with educational policies in language teaching institutions. Hiver (2013) argues that incompatibility between imposed policies and teachers' affective dimensions limit the possibility of teachers' "internalisation" (p. 221) of educational change initiatives, which in turn leads to minimal effort and motivation to implement such change. Through this discussion of teachers' unobserved constructs, it is clear that cognitive and affective dimensions both play important roles in teachers' professional development and in their enactment of institutional policies.

Given the points raised here regarding the definitions and approaches used to explore LTC, it is essential to highlight how LTC is defined in this study. LTC will be used to not only

refer to the "the complex, practically-oriented, personalised, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts and beliefs that language teachers draw on in their work" (Borg, 2015a, p. 125), but will also include their "identities and emotions" (Borg, 2012, p. 11). Adopting this expanded definition of LTC is specifically beneficial in this study which explores teachers' past and present experiences of teaching and learning, during which their cognitive and affective dimensions are bound to develop. Adopting a social ontology that recognises the role of social and contextual dimensions in shaping what teachers think, feel and do will help explore how Saudi teachers interact with their local teaching context following their extended OEEs.

2.3. Guiding theoretical framework

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is adopted as the guiding framework in this study. First, I will justify the need for such a theory to guide research that explores language teachers' cognition development. Following on from this is an explanation of what the theory entails and what it offers for advancing the field of LTC.

The need for a coherent and unified theory of learning, as a lens for understanding language teachers' learning and development, has been repeatedly highlighted by researchers through their extensive reviews of teacher education studies (Borg, 2006; Borko, Liston, & Whitcomb, 2007; Cross, 2010; Johnson & Golombek, 2003; Nguyen, 2019). For example, Borko et al. (2007) analysed the developments in language teacher education research and the approaches undertaken by empirical researchers. They concluded that an integral limitation of the research conducted to date was "the lack of shared conceptual frameworks and designs, which makes it a challenging task to aggregate findings and to draw comparisons across studies, even when those studies are of similar phenomena" (p. 5). Sharing this view within the specific field of LTC, Johnson and Golombek (2003) assert that the field "has yet to embrace a coherent theory of learning upon which to ground a common understanding of what the internal cognitive processes of teacher learning actually are" (p. 728). In arguing for such a unified theoretical framework that shares similar understandings of how learning is developed, Borg (2006) argues that it

> *Militates against the accumulation of isolated studies conducted without sufficient awareness of how these relate to existing work; it reminds researchers of key dimensions in language teacher cognition research; and*

highlights key themes, gaps and conceptual relationships and promotes more focused attention to these (p. 284).

Due to the need for a common theoretical framework, several prominent researchers in the field of LTC have proposed adopting Vygotsky's (1987) sociocultural perspective on learning. This framework has been argued to be a promising theoretical lens for supporting emerging studies on teachers' cognition development and connecting current research in language teacher education (Cross, 2010; Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2003; Li, 2019; Nguyen, 2019).

In this study, sociocultural theory refers to the theory of learning inspired by Lev Vygotsky's seminal work (Vygotsky, 1987), which has gained prominence in the field of language learning. Unfortunately, his untimely death before the theory could be fully conceptualised meant that his original notions were developed by his followers including Leontiev (1981), and expanded by more recent researchers such as Lantolf (2000) and Cole (1996). Therefore, some understanding of sociocultural theory is based on conceptualisations inspired by Vygotsky's work, but not originally developed by him. Since Vygotsky's work was translated from Russian to English, several terms emerged to refer to his research, such as 'cultural psychology' (Cole, 1996) and 'socio-historical psychology' (Ratner, 1991). However, 'sociocultural theory' continues to be commonly used among researchers of second language teaching (Lantolf, 2006).

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory refers to the field that "studies the content, mode of operation, and the interrelationships of psychological phenomena that are socially constructed and shared, and are rooted in other social artefacts" (Nguyen, 2019, p. 45). However, Lantolf (2004) emphasises that despite it being termed 'sociocultural', it is not concerned with the social and/or cultural aspects of human existence. Indeed, it is 'a theory of mind' that explores people's cognitive construction and recognises that it is influenced by social interactions and culturally formed artefacts.

The core epistemological stance of the sociocultural perspective is its view of learning as a "dynamic social activity that is situated in physical and social contexts and is distributed across people, tools and activities" (Johnson, 2009, p. 1). Human thinking within the sociocultural perspective is not seen to be limited to what occurs solely within the human mind, but is considered a socioculturally constructed cognitive practice (Lantolf, 2004). This means that cognitions are formed and developed through a person's participation in

social activities, and higher-level thinking is created through social relationships and culturally constructed artefacts that mediate those relationships. These cultural artefacts are generally known to include materials, signs, and symbols; however, Vygotsky also recognised meaningful social activities with people as mediating tools (Lantolf & Appel, 1994).

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory proposes human mental development to be situated across three different zones. The first is the zone of actual development (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 85), which is the level of developmental of an individual's mental functions that has already been established. The second is the zone of proximal development, or ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86), defined as the "the difference between what a person can achieve when acting alone and what the same person can accomplish when acting with support from someone else and/or cultural artefacts" (Lantolf, 2000, p. 17). The third zone is that of far development. It represents an area that lies beyond ZPD, which learners are unable to reach even with the support of mediational means such as more capable peers. Requiring learners to master skills within their zone of far development can be detrimental to their learning. Their continuous failure to master these skills may lead to negative feelings of frustration, which further limits their chance of development (Yang, 2015). This applies to teachers in PD programs, as they are in essence, learners of teaching (Johnson, 2009; Nguyen, 2019). When the skills, notions, and practices that teachers are required to adopt are beyond their ZPD, teachers will most likely be unable to achieve these requirements (Yang, 2015). This may lead teachers to experience negative feelings which hinder their professional development and growth.

The sociocultural perspective emphasises that human agency has a valuable role in a learners' development process (Johnson, 2009). It acknowledges that learning is not a simple adoption of external information and skill sets. Learning involves a gradual reconstruction of these external resources, and internalising them in ways that respond to the personal needs of individuals and the needs of the context around them. In teacher-education settings, this means that the process in which teachers learn, what they learn, and how they implement that knowledge, are influenced by internal and external factors. These factors include teachers' lifelong experiences, their present wants and needs, and sociocultural contexts in which learning and teaching take place (Johnson, 2009). These underpinnings of sociocultural theory guide the understanding of teacher cognition development in this study. The Vygotskian perspective arguably has the potential for

advancing LTC research by highlighting the relationships between teachers' thinking, practice, and context, as each of these three constructs has been identified as influencing teachers' overall development, but it is still unclear as to how they operate as a system (Cross, 2010; Nguyen, 2019).

Viewing human development through a sociocultural lens aligns with the calls for developing the epistemological standpoints of traditional LTC research. In the field of LTC, researchers have asserted the need to depart from the traditional cognitivist approach upon which the field had been established (Cross, 2010; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015; Skott, 2014). The cognitivist approach was based on assumptions that separate thought and behaviour. It has been criticised for focusing on defining the elements of teachers' cognitions while overlooking the social and contextual elements surrounding teachers and how these affect their cognitions (Barnard & Burns, 2012; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). To expand the boundaries of this traditional approach, researchers have asserted the need to adopt a social ontology, which "emphasises how the wider surroundings, both internal to the person and external in the social setting, shapes thinking" (Burns et al., 2015, p. 591). The Vygotskian perspective recognises the influence of social constructs in relation to teachers' cognitions and practices, therefore, it supports the social ontology that is needed to expand LTC research (Cross, 2010). In fact , Burns et al. (2015) argue that the developed view of LTC, as being socially situated, has drawn on the underpinnings of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. The advocated social ontology in LTC had found extensive theoretical and methodological support in Vygotsky's earlier notions. These notions were conceptualised before the field of LTC research was established, and originally focused on defining the social interactions of teaching and learning within classroom settings. Therefore, the transition from conceptualising LTC through a cognitivist to a social ontology reflected the earlier developments that occurred in understanding learning more generally, of which Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective played a seminal role in developing.

2.4. Conceptual frameworks in LTC literature

Borg (2006) developed a LTC framework following his meta-analysis of over 180 articles on teachers' thoughts, beliefs and knowledge published between 1976 and 2006. The framework (Figure 2.1) provided a breakthrough in LTC conceptualisation and has since formed a structure for subsequent reviews and research studies (Barnard & Burns, 2012),

including this study. The framework describes teachers' cognitions as dynamic, constantly changing and developing in response to different life experiences. It highlights three phases in teachers' lives that influence their LTC development: early school learning experiences, teacher education program experiences (professional coursework), and everyday classroom experiences (classroom practice). The framework also recognises the role of contextual factors, both inside and surrounding the classroom, which may lead to changes in cognitions or create tensions between cognitions and practices (Borg, 2006). One of the breakthroughs provided by this framework is presenting a historical view of LTC development, influenced by past experiences (schooling and previous PD experiences) and current events (everyday teaching and contextual factors).
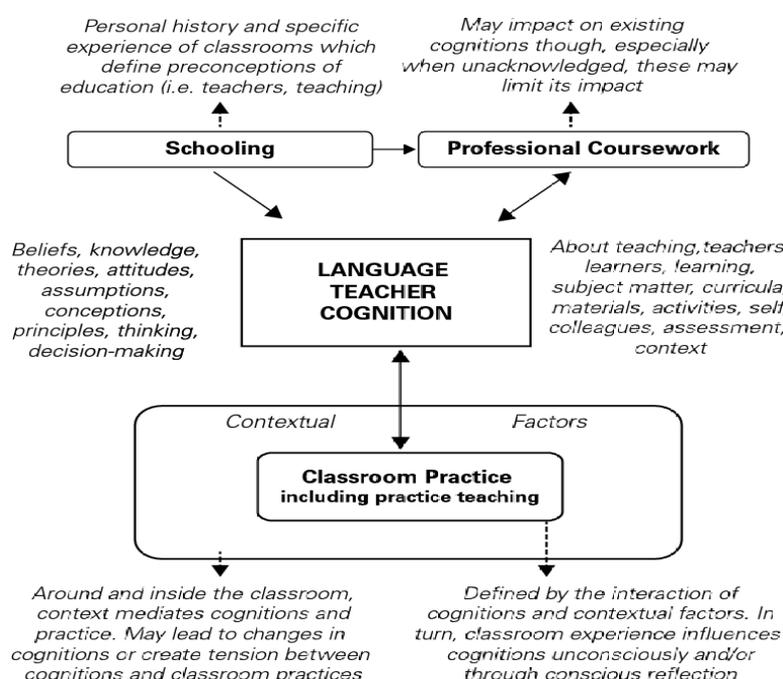
Figure 2.1. Language Teacher Cognition Framework (Borg, 2006)

Sharing similar characteristics with Borg's framework, Gregoire's (2003) cognitive-affective model of teachers' conceptual change explores how teachers resist instructional reforms that challenge their existing beliefs. Although the framework was designed with mathematics teachers in mind, Gregoire's (2003) model has helped expand the boundaries of LTC research by highlighting the interconnection between emotion and cognition in influencing conceptual change (Golombek & Doran, 2014; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). During in-service PD activities, Gregoire (2003) highlights that teachers' self-images and identities are questioned and reformed,

influencing teachers' decisions to change their instructional practices. Requesting teachers to change their instructional practices implies that their current way of teaching is detrimental to students' development. This message is considered a threat to teachers' professional identity, which ultimately influences teachers to resist that change. Additionally, teachers' decisions to change are highly influenced by whether they consider this change to be beneficial for their students' development and their own professional development. Therefore, Gregoire (2003) emphasises the need for policy makers to consider teachers' affective dimension as the "missing link between calls for reform and teachers' implementation of that reform" (p. 149).

To help ensure that teachers are receptive to reform, Gregoire's (2003) framework argues for the need to present teachers with adequate information on why reform is taking place. Moreover, this message needs to be "clear, intelligible, plausible, and fruitful" (Gregoire, 2003, p. 157) in the eyes of teachers. Additionally, the threat of these reforms to teachers' professional identities must be acknowledged by stakeholders, who should take steps towards increasing teachers' sense of efficacy towards advocated practices. This cannot be achieved my mere verbal persuasion, but by providing teachers with opportunities to practice implementing advocated practices under the supervision and assistance of experts.

Based on Gregoire's model, Kubanyiova (2012) designed and empirically supported a model for Language Teacher Conceptual Change (LTCC) situated within a social cognitive perspective. Her framework conceptualises the influence of an imagined future identity, Possible Language Teacher Self, which arguably functions as an incentive for conceptual development. Kubanyiova (2012) argues that language teachers' acceptance of messages of reform depends largely on the extent to which that message engages with their aspired future identities. The LTCC framework also provides a definition for the desired impact of language teacher education in a way that corresponds with the conceptualisation of this study. The results of teacher education and PD experiences is anticipated to be intentional conceptual change; however, the framework argues that conceptual change does not necessarily mean that teachers will replicate particular behaviours, typically understood in traditional teacher change frameworks. Instead, the framework views the impact in itself as the "depth of the teachers' cognitive engagement with the teacher education input, which can have a transformational impact on practice" (Kubanyiova, 2012, p. 57).

The frameworks presented here provide this research with a conceptual basis for exploring the multifaceted influences on teachers' cognitions. Specifically, how past experiences, external contextual factors, internal dimensions (cognitive, affective), and future aspirations influence how teachers engage with PD programs and how they respond to instructional reforms. My conceptualisation is also guided by the notion that these factors rarely operate in isolation and are highly interrelated. Barnard and Burns (2012) and Cross (2010), for instance, argue that in order to investigate the influence of one of these experiences, it is important to shed light on how it interacts with other influences that may have a role in constructing LTC. However, due to constraints associated with exploring different experiences in smaller studies, most researchers have focused on one of these factors in LTC, with little attention to how others may play a role (Borg, 2015a). This is changing though, with more researchers recently taking a comprehensive approach (Cooke, 2014; Moodie, 2015; Nishino, 2009). The following section highlights relevant studies.

2.5. Language Teacher Cognition research

The previous section presented the conceptual foundation for this research using current discussions about LTC development and its association with teachers' instructional practices. This section reviews empirical studies whose findings are relevant to my research. My study focuses on understanding how OEEs influence Saudi EFL teachers' cognitions. In particular, this thesis explores how teachers' overseas-developed cognitions are implemented in the local context, and the contextual demands that influence their ability to do so.

Therefore, this section provides a critical review of literature in the following relevant areas: 1) influences on LTC development, including a) early experiences of language learning, b) pre-service teacher education programs and in-service PD programs, and c) teachers' everyday classroom practices. This will be followed by 2) a review of literature that explores EFL teachers' experiences in overseas PD programs, including the influences of such experiences on a) teachers' cognition development, and b) classroom practices. Finally, the literature review chapter will conclude by 3) drawing on available literature that explores the experiences of Saudi teachers and academics in various disciplines who have returned to teach in local educational institutions following overseas PD programs. It will highlight the contextual challenges in Saudi

institutions that teachers face when they translate overseas-developed cognitions into local practices.

2.5.1. Influences on LTC development

2.5.1.1. Early learning experiences: The apprenticeship of observation

The first phase to be recognised for influencing teachers' cognitions in general, and LTC, in particular, is their early experiences in language learning classrooms. One of the earliest scholars who recognised this phase was Lortie (1975), who coined the term "the apprenticeship of observation" (p. 61). The term was used to describe the long hours that learners spend observing their teachers. Lortie argued that such observations result in forming early cognitions about teachers' roles and what appropriate classroom practices are. This in turn impacts on the type of teachers they later become and the pedagogical practices they use in their own classrooms. More recently, Rayati and Roshdi (2013) and Sexton (2007) found that cognitions formed in early learning stages are largely resistant to change. They also found that these cognitions form a filter which can limit the teachers' acceptance of new ideas during teacher education programs. Cognitions formed during early learning stages can influence teachers' classroom practices in one of two ways. Teachers either apply the same practices their own teachers did, regardless of whether or not they found the practices to be beneficial for their learning (Alzaanin, 2014; Johnson, 1994), or it results in an *anti-apprenticeship of observation*, where teachers consciously avoid certain practices because they had negative experiences with them as learners (Moodie, 2015).

Although the apprenticeship of observation affects teachers in different ways, the contexts in which teachers learn and later teach play an important role in determining the extent of that influence. This was evident in the study of Warford and Reeves (2003), who explored the influence of early school learning experiences on Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs) vs Non-Native English Speaking Teachers (NNESTs). Both groups were enrolled in a TESOL course in the USA, but the study reported differences between the two groups of teachers based on qualitative analysis of interview data. The analysis found that initial school learning experiences were much more influential on NNESTs, who learned English in EFL contexts and planned to return to teach in their respective local contexts. In comparison, initial school learning experiences were found to be less influential on NESTs. The study of Warford and Reeves (2003) has highlighted the differential effect of the

apprenticeship of observation on language teachers from different educational contexts. In doing so, their study emphasised that educational contexts have different influences on learners, and subsequently, teachers whom these learners will later become.

2.5.1.2. Experiences in teacher education programs

The ways in which teacher education programs shape teachers' growth is a core focus of LTC research. Studies that focused on the influence of such programs have largely differentiated between teachers' experiences in pre-service education programs and in-service PD programs. In particular, researchers have sought to understand how these official educational experiences influence sustainable development in teachers' later classroom practices, pedagogical cognitions and affective dimensions. This research study focuses solely on the experiences of in-service teachers in PD programs. However, given that pre-service education is an essential past experience of all participant teachers, there is merit in giving a brief overview of pre-service education literature below. This will be followed by a more extensive literature review on in-service education.

2.5.1.2.1. Pre-service teacher education programs

The development of pre-service language teachers and how their cognitions and practices evolve as a result of educational programs has received much interest in the field of LTC. Despite this interest, findings of such studies continue to produce contradictory evidence on whether and how educational programs can develop pre-service teachers' cognitions (Borg, 2006; Busch, 2010; Zheng, 2009). Several factors, including methodological approaches and the nature of educational programs, account for such contrasting findings.

The methodological approach that researchers adopt in studying LTC development seems to play a significant role in influencing their findings. One of the most common ways that pre-service teachers' cognitions are examined are through questionnaires administered to teachers before and after their education programs (Borg, 2006, 2015b). The purpose of such questionnaires is to determine participants' cognitive orientation and evaluate whether changes in these cognitions have occurred as a result of such educational programs. However, a notable feature of studies which employ this method is that they commonly report minimal change in participants' LTC following the completion of such programs. This minimal change in LTC is commonly attributed to the strong influence of teachers' apprenticeship of observation, which limits the chance for cognitive

developments to occur (Urmston, 2003). However, in his comprehensive review, Borg (2006) found that the results of questionnaire-based studies contrast with results of qualitative studies which allow for a more in-depth exploration of teachers' cognitions. Borg found that qualitative studies tend to highlight much more positive results that indicate the influence of education programs on pre-service teachers' development. A review of qualitative studies that explored pre-service teachers' cognition development (Borg, 2005; Busch, 2010; Richards, Ho, & Giblin, 1996) seems to assert Borg's (2006, 2015b) argument for the value of using qualitative frameworks to explore LTC development. These studies all indicated that educational programs have the potential to influence noticeable developments in the pedagogical cognitions of pre-service teachers.

Teacher education programs may also have the potential to influence the affective dimension of pre-service teachers' cognitions. Existing studies have found evidence that highlights developments in teachers' professional identity and agency in response to their respective educational experiences (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Li & De Costa, 2018; Liu & Fisher, 2006; Mora, Trejo, & Roux, 2016). Liu and Fisher (2006) explored the cognition development of three pre-service foreign language teachers during a one-year teacher training program. The researchers focused on the participants' conceptions of self, specifically "conceptions of their classroom performance … their relationship with pupils … their self-image in pupils' eyes … and their teacher identity" (p. 357). The longitudinal study reported the program's role in influencing consistent positive developments in teachers' cognitions regarding their classroom performance and professional identity. Liu and Fisher attributed pre-service teachers' cognition development to two categories of influence: academic, institutional, and curricular factors on one hand, and cognitive, affective and social factors on the other. Liu and Fisher's (2006) study provided an important contribution to the literature by exploring cognition development through the lens of teacher identity, and by highlighting the interplay of social, affective, cognitive, and contextual factors. Although the focus was on pre-service teachers, Liu and Fisher's (2006) study is significant here, because this research explores the same influential factors but in the context of in-service EFL teachers. However, as Yazan (2014) contested, Liu and Fisher (2006) left out an important component of pre-service teachers' interactions with their context, which is their relationship with members of their professional community including colleagues and supervisors. This is an area that my research aims to include in its exploration of teachers' experience of returning to the local Saudi context.

2.5.1.2.2. In-service professional development programs

Compared to the literature on pre-service EFL teachers, research that explores the development of in-service teachers following PD programs is noticeably limited. Existing studies tend to adopt cognitivist approaches which focus primarily on the content of in-service teachers' cognitions. However, there is limited focus on the process of cognition development through PD programs (Borg, 2015a, 2018b; Kubanyiova, 2012). As this is a primary focus of this study, the relevant literature will be reviewed below and its significance to this research will be highlighted.

First, it is important to consider the unique nature of in-service teachers, and how this nature influences the extent to which their cognitions develop during PD experiences. In highlighting this unique nature, Borg (2003) compares the cognitions of pre-service and in-service teachers. He notes that pre-service teachers often enter programs with "inappropriate, unrealistic or naive understandings of teaching and learning" (Borg, 2003, p. 83). In contrast, in-service teachers attending PD programs usually come with a wide contextual understanding of the educational environment, which stems from their teaching experience. Therefore, attempting to make transformative changes in the cognitions of in-service teachers can be particularly challenging (Borg, 2006). This is because in-service teachers already have well-established cognitions of what works, what students need, and how to approach their teaching. They are more likely to disregard newly introduced notions if such notions do not align with the cognitions they have accumulated during their extensive experiences in the field.

When examining the impact of PD programs on in-service language teachers, existing studies have come to inconsistent conclusions. For example, Lamie (2004) and Coburn (2016) report evidence that the PD programs they examined had impacted on participating in-service teachers' cognitions. In contrast, Lamb (1995) found that the PD program he designed and co-tutored had limited impact on both in-service teachers' cognitions and practices. Through observations and interviews after the program was completed, Lamb (1995) reported that "a great deal of [the program's] original input had simply been lost" (p. 78). Inconsistencies in such findings are understandable and can be attributed to different factors. These factors include the programs' consideration of teachers' prior experiences, the different understandings of what constitutes as significant cognitive

impact, and the consideration of long-term as well as short-term effects. I will attempt to unpack the influence of each of these factors by highlighting relevant studies.

In his study on the influence of in-service PD programs on language teachers, Borg (2011) concluded that such programs must consider the power of teachers' extensive teaching experiences. He argues that these programs should encourage teachers to reflect on their previous practices and make their cognitions explicit. More importantly, however, is that programs should also offer teachers the opportunity to question and doubt those powerful cognitions against equally powerful alternatives (Borg, 2011). PD programs must also recognise that teachers' motivation to develop certain cognitions is closely related to how supportive their respective teaching contexts are of such cognitions (Coburn, 2016).

Another important issue to consider is how researchers and teachers differ in their understandings of what counts as an influence or change in cognitions (Borg, 2006; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). When reporting on research findings, researchers might only consider deep and radical changes in teachers' cognitions to be indicators of development. A danger of this approach is that it assumes that teachers are entering PD programs with wrong/inappropriate views that need to be changed in order to match underlying views of these programs. However, in some cases, such as that in Borg (2005) study, teachers may already have cognitions that are in line with what the program offers. Therefore, these cognitions may not experience transformative change. However, the programs' ability to reaffirm teachers' cognitions and allow them to develop appropriate skills to match them must be considered a significant impact in and of itself. This issue can also be reflected in the views of teachers who participate in research. Participating teachers may expect PD programs to completely change how they view language teaching and learning. When that does not happen, they report that these programs have limited impact on their professional development. This was indeed the case of some participants in another study by Borg (2011). However, despite participants' conclusions, qualitative analysis showed that the PD program helped teachers develop new cognitions and strengthen and extend old ones. The program was also found to increase teachers' awareness of such cognitions, which helped them to assume a form that can be verbalised. A further highlighted influence of the PD program was that it helped teachers to put their cognitions into practice and develop links between cognitions and educational theories.

The research reviewed above shows that a more comprehensive view of impact needs to be considered when exploring the influence of PD programs on in-service teachers' cognitions. Limiting the notion of impact to be the equivalent of radical and transformative change runs the risk of overlooking several influences that deserve attention. This seems to be acknowledged in recent conceptualisations of language teachers' cognition development, such as Kubaniyova's (2012) Language Teacher Conceptual Change framework. Although the name of her framework implies a focus on transformed cognitions, she asserts that it does not intend to devalue other forms of learning. In fact, she asserts that change is not the only reflection of development, because development is mostly "intuitive, tacit and incidental rather than conscious and intentional" (Kubanyiova, 2012, p. 57).

Another point to highlight is that long-term influences of PD programs on in-service teachers are still unclear. Studies that have reviewed in-service PD programs have tended to focus on their immediate impact, commonly within weeks of the programs' completion (Borg, 2011; Coburn, 2016; Kurihara & Samimy, 2007; Moodie, 2015; Richards et al., 1996). This short-term focus neglects a more important consideration – the longer-term impact in developing teachers' cognitions and practices. Following the completion of PD programs, teachers return to their classrooms and will be subjected to contextual factors that can be expected to influence how they implement the cognitions that they acquired during these programs (Kang & Cheng, 2014; Lamb, 1995). However, whilst concerns about understanding the long-term effects of in-service educational experiences has been highlighted by early researchers, such as Lamb (1995) and Tomlinson (1988), research about such effects continues to be relatively limited. This study addresses limited research in this area by exploring the long-term influences of overseas PD experiences for in-service Saudi EFL teachers.

2.5.1.3. Teachers' classroom experiences

The third factor to have an influence on LTC is teachers' everyday classroom experiences. The relationship between classroom experiences and cognition development is not unidirectional. This is because although cognitions are largely recognised to influence teachers' practices, they are also shaped by teachers' accumulated experiences in the classrooms (Borg, 2018b; Buehl & Beck, 2015).

One way of understanding the influence of classroom experience on teachers' cognitions is by drawing on insights from research that explores the characteristics of expert and novice language teachers. In Tsui's (2005) review, she identifies that the most important characteristic of expert teachers is their rich and integrated knowledge base, which enables them to represent and analyse problems at a level deeper than that of novice teachers. Engaging in instructional and social practices within educational institutions also helps develop the affective dimension of teachers. As highlighted by Miller (2009), teachers construct "their ways of being in the language classroom" (p. 172), through which dimensions of identity and agency are both enacted and developed. Also, while novice teachers are more likely to struggle with their professional identity and confidence (Farrell, 2006), expert teachers enjoy greater confidence and the ability to recognise when to comply with prescribed procedures and when to deviate from them in favour of others that are more beneficial for their students (Tsui, 2005). A further characteristic of expert teachers is their ability to constructively respond to criticism from members of their community of practice (COP). When their decisions are challenged by others, expert teachers display a great sense of responsibility for their decisions and are able to support them based on theoretical grounds (Johnson, 2005; Westerman, 1991). Tsui's (2003) study revealed expert teachers' ability and tendency to 'problematise the unproblematic' by making reflections part of their everyday work, instead of just when something wrong happens. In doing so, expert teachers become more able to modify their teaching approaches and teaching materials to meet their goals. These studies have shown that expertise which arises from teachers' accumulated classroom experiences and their experiences in engaging with a community of practice can greatly influence their cognition development. However, it should not be assumed that cognition development can be easily translated into practices, or that practices are a direct translation of teachers' cognitions. In fact, the relationship between the two is much more complicated and not easily defined, but I attempt to do so by reviewing the relevant studies below.

2.5.2. The relationship between cognition and practice

Early understandings based on the psycho-cognitive paradigm presumed that teachers' cognitions are translated directly into behaviour (Cross, 2010). However, the 1980s and 1990s witnessed a focus on the relationship between cognitions and practice, revealing that teachers' cognitions may not always be reflected in their instructional practice, even if

those cognitions are strongly held (Barnard & Burns, 2012). Studies that examined the relationship between the two have highlighted that incongruences can exist between teachers' ideal instructional cognitions and their actual observed practices (Farrell & Lim, 2005; Le, 2011; Phipps & Borg, 2009).

Drawing on the literature from mainstream teacher cognition research, it is commonly agreed, as mentioned above, that the relationship between cognitions and practices is complex (Buehl & Beck, 2015). Some researchers explain that whether the former is translated into the latter is based on different internal and external factors. In discussing the internal factors, Fives and Buehl (2012) emphasised that teachers' perceived self-efficacy and identity play a great role in determining whether their beliefs are implemented in the classroom. External contextual factors have also been identified as "intervening institutional variables that modify belief enactment" (Skott, 2014, p. 22), and they can include students' reactions to pedagogical practices, the dominant culture of the institution, time constraints, curricular materials, and assessment routines (Skott, 2014).

Other views have proposed that the mismatches found between teachers' cognitions and actions may be due to the types of cognitions being explored (Pajares, 1992), their position within a teacher's belief system (Phipps & Borg, 2009) or their functions (Fives & Buehl, 2012). For example, Phipps and Borg (2009) explain that teachers' cognitions are divided into cores and peripherals, with core cognitions being more strongly held and most influential in shaping teachers' instructional decisions. The function of cognitions may also play a role (Fives & Buehl, 2012), in that cognitions that are closely related to practices are more likely to be observed in teachers' classrooms, whereas cognitions used to interpret new information, for example, may not be as easily observed (Buehl & Beck, 2015).

More recently, a call was made for studies exploring the relationship between cognitions and actions to view cognitions as "emergent sense making in action" (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). This view considers practices to not be spaces in which reified cognitions may or may not be applied, but as "dynamic and evolving outcomes of individual and communal acts of meaning-making" (Skott, 2014, p. 24). From this perspective, the researcher's task is not eliciting teachers' cognitions, but understanding how cognitions develop and unfold in response to teaching practice.

These different perspectives on the relationship between cognitions and practices not only provide explanations as to why cognitions may not be enacted in classroom observations, but encourage researchers to no longer view the differences between cognitions and practices as an undesirable or negative phenomenon (Phipps & Borg, 2009). A broader and more positive view is encouraged, one that considers the dynamic and emerging nature of cognitions and the broader social context surrounding the teaching practice.

This section provided an overview of factors that influence LTC development, including teachers' early language learning experiences, their experiences in pre-service and in-service programs, and their everyday classroom experiences. Identifying these factors and discussing the research approaches used to explore them was crucial for this study which explores the development of teachers' LTC. A main topic explored in this study is teachers' participation in OEEs. Therefore, the following section will review the available literature on this underexplored domain, shedding light on how OEEs can develop and shape teachers' LTC and classroom practice.

2.6. Overseas Educational Experiences (OEEs) for EFL teachers

Research on OEEs has highlighted their potential to generate significant positive influences on the skills and professional development of teachers across disciplines (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Mahan & Stachowski, 1994; Pikos-Sallie, 2018; Willard-Holt, 2001), including for language teachers (Cook, 2010; Lamie, 2004; Lee, 2009).

Although quite limited, the research on EFL teachers' OEE is mostly emerging within the Asian context, such as Japan (Cook, 2010; Greenholtz, 2003) and Malaysia (Erlam, 2014; Kabilan, 2013; Macalister, 2017). Similar to the situation in Saudi Arabia, EFL teachers in these contexts are required and sponsored to take on OEEs as part of nationwide educational reform. Upon completing the programs, teachers are expected to return to their respective local contexts and participate in implementing educational developments that primarily target reformed classroom practices. Two areas relevant to this study will be considered when reviewing the literature. The first is how OEEs influence developments in teachers' cognitions. The second is how teachers translate their overseas-developed cognitions into classroom practices upon returning to their respective local contexts. This insight is important, because the teachers participating in this study are expected to acquire developed educational notions during their OEEs and return home with improved and communicatively oriented teaching practices.

2.6.1. *The influence of OEEs on teachers' cognitions*

An analysis by Macalister (2016) highlights the capacity for overseas programs to have significant positive influences on EFL teachers' cognitions, more so than local programs. He compared the impact of two pre-service education programs on Malaysian EFL teachers, one entirely local (Wong, 2010) and one with an overseas component (Erlam, 2014). Using quantitative design, Wong (2010) found that the local program had limited impacts on teachers' cognitions over time. In contrast, Erlam (2014), using qualitative analysis, reported that the overseas program helped develop teachers' cognitions and enabled them to adopt new teaching approaches.

By comparing these studies, and through his own research on transnational language teacher education, Macalister (2016) argued that OEEs offer greater potential to develop language teachers' cognitions. In locally held programs, educators and learners often have experienced similar education systems, speak the same mother tongue, and have similar understandings of cultural interactions. These commonalities form a comfortable background that limits the dissonance that can arise during the educational process. In comparison, overseas education programs offer greater scope to challenge previously formed cognitions by allowing dissonance to occur between the known and unknown, between previously formed cognitions about language teaching and learning, and what is experienced and observed during overseas education (Macalister, 2016). Allowing dissonance to arise during educational programs has been recognised as an important element in generating change in the cognitions of both pre-service (Richardson, 2003) and in-service teachers (Borg, 2006). In discussing language teachers' conceptual change during PD programs, Kubanyiova (2012) contends that emotional dissonance emerges as a result of the discrepancy between a teacher's 'actual' self (current self attributes) on one hand, her 'ideal' self (ideal future aspirations) and 'ought to' self (presumed responsibilities) on the other. This dissonance is argued to be the initial trigger for cognition development and change (Kubanyiova, 2012).

The argument for the benefits of OEEs in influencing cognition development is supported by research that explored its effect on EFL teachers in the Japanese context. The Japanese government had funded overseas PD programs for EFL teachers with the aim of changing traditional teaching approaches to be more communicative (Pacek, 1996). In evaluating the programs' effectiveness, several studies reported positive developments in the

participating teachers' cognitions about EFL teaching, particularly regarding adopting communicative teaching approaches (Cook, 2010; Lamie, 2004; Lundy, 2011; Pacek, 1996). In Pacek (1996), teachers were surveyed after a one-year program in the UK, reporting that it positively developed their cognition about communicative teaching. Similarly, Lundy (2011) explored developments in the cognitions of six teachers after a six-month program in Canada. Using reflective logs and pre- and post-program interviews, Lundy (2011) found that the overseas program was instrumental in developing teachers' cognitions of effective teaching methodologies such as Communicative Language Teaching. The program was also found to raise teachers' awareness of their responsibility towards creating an environment that is conducive to student learning. Kurihara and Samimy (2007) reported similar findings in their study on the influence of a six-month program for Japanese teachers in the USA. Using questionnaires, interviews and evaluations from program coordinators, the researchers reported that the overseas program increased teachers' positive attitudes toward communicative approaches and their confidence as EFL instructors.

The reviewed studies above indicate that OEEs have the potential to influence positive developments in language teachers' cognitions. This is encouraging, given that sponsoring governments, such as Saudi Arabia, expect OEEs to advance teachers' PD on various levels, including their cognitions. However, an important area to consider is how these developed cognitions are translated into practices. Indeed, a central goal behind the overseas scholarship program is that teachers would return to local classrooms with developed or changed instructional and professional practices. Pacek (1996) argues that teachers' initial positive reviews following OEEs should not be the sole indicator of a program's success in reaching its developmental aims. The primary indicator should be whether these developed cognitions persist and transform into actions, or be replaced by older and more established cognitions soon after teachers return home. He explains that,

> By putting aside, at least initially, the positive evaluation and concentrating on the negative responses, we can learn about difficulties encountered by teachers in their home country. Only then can we start to bring programmes closer to participants' expectations and to compatibility with their educational traditions. (Pacek, 1996, p. 341)

To shed light on how teacher returnees implement their overseas-developed cognitions after returning to their local contexts, the following section reviews relevant studies and highlights some of their conceptual and methodological limitations.

2.6.2. *Teachers' instructional practices following OEEs*

Studies that reported positive developments in teachers' cognitions following OEEs overwhelmingly highlight teachers' limited ability to implement these various cognitions once they returned to their local classrooms. An earlier study by Pacek (1996) reported that Japanese teachers' implementation of overseas-developed knowledge was hindered by contextual constraints in the teaching context. A more recent study by Lundy (2011) on Japanese returnees from Canadian programs reported similar findings. All participating teachers had developed a new preference for communicative teaching; however, only two out of six teachers reported implementing this approach in their local classrooms. Lundy (2011) concludes that contextual factors and personal attributes influence whether teachers can apply new and developed ideas. Such a finding resonates with that of Kurihara and Samimy (2007), in which returnees reported using more communicative techniques following their overseas PD program; however, they found such techniques difficult to maintain due to contextual factors such as large class size.

These studies are significant in that they offered a glimpse of teachers' practices after returning home. However, their conclusions were based on reported data from follow-up questionnaires. Because teachers' reports of their practice may not always represent their actual practice (Borg, 2015b), it is still unclear as to how teachers do or do not implement overseas-developed cognitions within local classrooms. As explained by Kurihara and Samimy (2007), teachers go through critical phases of accommodation, adaptation and negotiation when returning to their local respective contexts. These phases need to be acknowledged and further explored by investigating the specific contexts in which teachers return to work. To do that, researchers need to adopt a holistic data collection approach, through which multiple data collection tools and sources are employed (Kubanyiova, 2012). Such an approach must also allow researchers to immerse themselves in the explored research context and use tools that can appropriately reflect the state of that context. Observational instruments are specifically necessary to fully explore teachers' classroom practices following their OEEs. Such a holistic approach is necessary if we are to determine the extent to which overseas-developed cognitions can be implemented and sustained after teachers return to local classrooms, and what can be done to support teachers' efforts to do so (Kurihara & Samimy, 2007).

The limited representation of the local context through holistic data collection approaches also limits our understanding of how the wider context, including colleagues, students, supervisors, and institutional policies, can influence the transfer of new knowledge. Cook (2010) and Macalister (2016) attempted to overcome this limitation by providing insights as to how the local context can influence returnee teachers' implementation of their developed cognitions. Cook (2010) evaluated the influence of a four-month overseas program on five Japanese teachers by collecting observed and reported data at two stages: the first stage was six months after the program and the second stage was one year after the program. Her study found that local contextual constraints such as form-focused exams, and internal influences, such as a perceived need to replicate the practices of colleagues, can hinder teachers' ability to implement the practices they learned overseas. Although no details were mentioned about the number, length, location, or method of using observations to explore the returnee teachers' practices, Cook (2010) argues for the benefits of OEEs in developing teachers' long-term practices. Her study also highlights that teachers' ability to implement innovative instructional practices depends on the support of the local teaching context.

Macalister (2016) similarly explored the influence of a two-year PD program based in New Zealand for Malaysian EFL teachers. Using classroom observations after teachers had returned home, his findings suggest that some teachers' practices were positively influenced by their New Zealand education. Upon their return, many of these participants were found to have implemented fluency-focused activities, a technique heavily advocated during the overseas educational program. However, Macalister (2016) found that teachers' practices were more evidently influenced by the context in which they practice; specifically the classroom context and the context formed by friends, colleagues, and mentors. However, it is important to highlight that Macalister (2016) observed teachers' practices during the final practicum component of the program, which took place when they had returned to Malaysian schools. This is critical because, in a sense, Macalister played the role of a program evaluator and researcher observer. In the interview excerpts that the researcher included, one of the participants mentioned that he tried to "pull out all the stunts" during his observed sessions, which indicates the teacher's perception of observations as being an evaluation of his professional skills. This may have caused what is known as the Hawthorne effect (Cook, 1962). Teachers' decision making may have

been influenced by the presence of the researcher, causing them to teach in a way that may not be representative of their day-to-day practices.

Despite reporting the OEEs' different influences on returnees' practices, Macalister (2016) and Cook (2010) agree that further research should be done once teachers settle into their roles. They argue that the goal of such research should be to explore whether the overseas influence would persist, or would be undermined by the more immediate contextual influence. This is not fully understood in the context of EFL teachers, and as mentioned before, the influence of overseas education is rarely explored in LTC research. However, this research will draw on available Saudi literature that explores the experiences of returnee academics in different disciplines, in an attempt to shed light on this understudied field. The long-term influences of their postgraduate education and experiences of returning to their respective home contexts is highlighted in the following section.

2.6.3. Saudi academic returnees from OEEs

Sponsoring academics for overseas scholarships is a widespread practice adopted by many governments and educational officials worldwide. The magnitude of such a global practice reflects the expectation that sponsored academics will return home with advanced skills and knowledge that benefit the educational development in their local context. This is certainly the case in Saudi Arabia, where university teachers "complete their respective overseas degrees on the grounds that such qualifications have great value in Saudi Arabia" (Barnawi & Phan, 2014, p. 274). However, there is a shortage of research that provides an in-depth understanding of professional development outcomes of these OEEs. Sponsoring countries, including Saudi Arabia, tend to rely on rates of successful course completion to signify returnees' acquisition of advanced skills (British Council, 2014).

In Saudi Arabia, sponsoring academics for overseas postgraduate degrees has been practiced in different forms for 40 years. However, an extensive review of available research revealed only three studies that explored academics' experiences as returnees (Alandejani, 2013; Almutairi, 2018; Pikos-Sallie, 2018), and only one reported the experiences of EFL teachers specifically, through a small-scale study of two returnees (Barnawi & Phan, 2014). Indeed, one of the aims of this study is to contribute to addressing this gap in the available research on the Saudi context. Despite the limited number of studies, they provide insights into the benefits gained from OEEs and the challenges that

Saudi returnees face when re-integrating into their local teaching context and implementing overseas-developed cognitions.

The common reported benefits of extended OEEs for Saudi academics included improved knowledge of their discipline, improved research skills, teaching attitudes, intercultural competence, and English language proficiency. In Alandejani (2013), five female returnees reported that OEEs helped influence their teaching approaches to be more learner centred. The teachers had also become more attentive of students' needs and less focused on students' grades and examinations. However, Alandejani also revealed that teachers faced several challenges in trying to fully implement their acquired cognitions in their respective local contexts. These challenges include students' and administrators' resistance to teachers' attempts for change, difficulties in adjusting to the universities' culture of conformity, and insufficient support for recent returnees. Similar findings were also reflected in the studies of Pikos-Sallie (2018) and Almutairi (2018). Pikos-Sallie used interviews with both male and female academic returnees and found that these challenges are equally present in both women's and men's universities in Saudi Arabia. Almutairi's study, however, provided a unique insight into the perceptions of administrators who worked with returnee scholars. His study showed that while returnees viewed their institution's organisational system to be tradition-bound and bureaucratic, administrators viewed returnees as being non-cooperative with institutional guidelines.

These limited studies highlight that Saudi academics in various disciplines return to the local education context with developed professional skills and knowledge. However, it seems that they face different contextual limitations within their local universities that limit their capacity to transfer what they have learnt into practice. Notably, conducted studies to date are predominantly based on academics' perceptions in interviews. Although these academics reported adopting and implementing developed instructional practices following their OEEs, using a single data collection tool, such as interviews, limits the insights that can emerge about returnees' practices following OEE's. Such an individualist approach to data collection also limits the understanding of the local context and how it influences the teachers' practices. The present study takes a case study approach and collects data through various tools and different sources. This approach aims to alleviate some of the limitations of single data collection tools and potentially provide a comprehensive, more context-specific view of the challenges faced by EFL returnee teachers in Saudi universities. This study provides an in-depth exploration of two different

university contexts, and sheds light on the regulations and policies that mandate teachers' everyday practices. It is expected that the differences among both universities, including their histories, visions and institutional regulations may translate into different ways of engaging with returnee teachers, including how they are supported and the roles they are expected to play.

2.7. Summary

By reviewing the literature on the nature of LTC development and teachers' experiences in OEEs, it has been established in this chapter that OEEs offer potential for the development of teachers' LTC and their classroom practices. However, the review of literature also enabled the identification of certain gaps in research that can be further explored. The first gap is the limited investigation and understanding of long-term OEE influences on in-service EFL teachers' cognitions. The second gap is the limited understanding of how teachers implement their overseas-developed cognitions within local contexts. The third gap is represented by the need to explore developments in LTC through a social ontology that considers the social and contextually embedded nature of LTC growth, as this is not well represented in current studies. Taking into consideration the conceptual frameworks guiding this study, the local context of practice is identified as having an integral role in influencing both teachers' LTC and their practical ability to translate them to classroom practices. As returnees, the teachers face the dilemma of trying to conform to the pressures and expectations of their local context, including those of their colleagues and seniors, while also trying to apply teaching approaches generated from Western philosophies (Yeh, 2011). Each cohort of returnees is bound to face constraints specific to their country's context, due to the highly influential social and cultural norms that control teachers' interactions within educational contexts. Therefore, it is crucial that LTC research is conducted with specific representation of the socially and contextually embedded nature of LTC growth. My study addresses these issues by answering the following research questions.

- How have experiences in overseas PD programs influenced teachers' cognitions about EFL teaching approaches?
- After returning home, in what ways do contextual factors influence the translation of teachers' overseas-developed teaching approaches to classroom practices?

- How have experiences in overseas PD programs influenced teachers' practices after returning to Saudi classrooms?

This study contributes to redressing gaps in the literature by analysing long-term cognition developments of Saudi EFL teacher returnees who currently work in two local universities. These teachers participated in extended OEEs and they have returned to teach in local respective universities which advocate communicatively oriented instruction. The study employs a qualitative study to explore teachers' perceptions and the perceptions of their supervisors regarding the influence of OEEs on teachers' LTC development. Current classroom practices are also explored to determine how teachers implement their overseas-developed cognitions and the advocated communicative and learner-centered approaches. Additionally, the contextual factors which influence teachers' implementation of overseas developed cognitions are also explored.The following chapter provides a detailed explanation of the methodological approach adopted in this research and methods used to collect the data.

Chapter 3.
Methodology and methods

The overarching aim of this research is to explore how the cognitions of Saudi EFL teachers are influenced by extended OEEs in PD programs, and how these experiences influence their professional practices once they return to their local respective contexts. This research utilised a qualitative approach and a comparative case study methodology. The cases are two Saudi women's universities, the University of Innovative Vision (UIV) and the University of Traditional Prestige (UTP)[1]. Twelve participants were involved in this study. These include ten EFL teachers (five from each of the two universities) and two teacher-supervisors (one from each university). The teachers are faculty members who were sent on overseas scholarships to complete their Masters degree in TESOL/Applied Linguistics. A prominent aim of these scholarships was to guide teachers towards adopting communicative-oriented and learner-centered instructional approaches. After completing the overseas programs, the teachers returned to resume their positions in their respective universities. The case studies presented in the chapters that follow explore the influence of OEEs on returning teachers' cognition and professional practice. In addition, the research sought to investigate in detail the role of local context in influencing how teachers act on what they learnt overseas.

This chapter presents the methodological framework used in the research project. It starts by elaborating on the research paradigm. Following on is an outline of the methodological approach, data collection tools and the analytical procedures that generated overall data findings. Finally, I reflect on my position as an insider researcher (Kanuha, 2000), and consider how my stance relates to the methodological decisions that were made during the research process.

3.1. Research paradigm

A social-constructivist philosophical paradigm was adopted as the overarching framework in this study. It is usually adopted by researchers who "seek understanding of the world in which they live and work" (Creswell, 2012, p. 8). Research conducted through the

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[1] Pseudonyms are used to protect the confidentiality of the universities involved. The names given to these universities were based solely on their history and educational vision.

constructivist paradigm "emphasises the social constructions, or meaning-making and sense-making activities of participants in research settings" (Lincoln, 2001, p. 43).

The constructivist paradigm has specific notions of what the nature of reality is (ontology), and how the researcher and participants come to know it (epistemology). Because these two notions guide the researcher's decisions, it is important to be clear about them at the outset. Ontologically, the constructivist paradigm considers reality as "existing in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them" (Guba, 1990, p. 27). As a researcher positioned within this paradigm, this meant that the knowledge emerging from this study is based on the meanings that have been developed socially and experientially through the participants' experiences and my interactions with them (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). The constructivist epistemology considers meanings to be co-created as a result of the interaction between researchers and their participants. Thus my role in conducting this study was by being an active participant, not a passive documenter of information (Lincoln et al., 2011). A thorough discussion of this role as active participant is further explained in Chapter 3.6, where I expand on my positioning as a researcher and how that has influenced the design and data collection procedures.

Adopting a social constructivist paradigm has helped me shed light on the meanings carried by teachers and how these become embodied teaching and learning practices in their EFL classrooms. Social constructivism also acknowledges the importance of social and historical elements that influence participants' subjective meanings (Creswell, 2012). This is particularly relevant for this study, because recent LTC literature emphasises the role of previous life experiences and current contextual factors in influencing teachers' cognitions (Nguyen, 2019).

3.2. Qualitative framework

A qualitative framework has been chosen to conduct this research which explores the influence of OEEs on Saudi EFL teachers' cognitions and classroom practices. The choice to adopt a qualitative framework has been influenced by recent recommendations in LTC literature (Borg, 2015b, 2018b; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). Quantitative methods, on the other hand, have long been employed by early researchers to explore LTC, such as Kinzer (1988) and Karavas-Doukas (1996), and they continue to be commonly used in LTC research today (Borg, 2018b). However, recent analyses suggest that quantitative

approaches may provide incomplete or misinformed data (Burns et al., 2015; Skott, 2014). Skott (2014) maintains that using quantitative surveys to elicit teachers' beliefs carries the risk of imposing pre-defined beliefs on the participants, instead of allowing them to express their own. Additionally, using standardised instruments assumes that items on the survey are understood in a similar way by both teachers and researchers. However, survey items in studies that explore cognitions can carry very different connotations, due to the highly personal nature of cognitions (Borg, 2006).

LTC development is explored in this research through an interpretive research lens, which transcends elicitations of cognitions through self-reported data collection tools such as questionnaires. Instead, there is an emphasis on gaining a deeper understanding of how cognitions are influenced by numerous life experiences; how these experiences unfold in the context of teachers' practice is central to this thesis (Borg, 2006; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015; Skott, 2014).

3.3. Comparative case study methodology

Several qualitative methodological designs have been considered for this research, including those recommended in LTC literature. Borg (2006) recommends longitudinal designs that highlight change in teachers' cognitions over time. Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015) recommend ethnographic designs that allow in-depth analysis of the context and assist in generating thick, storied descriptions of practice. Although these approaches would have potentially enriched the contribution of this study in specific ways, they were not deemed feasible because longitudinal and ethnographic studies both require prolonged engagement in the field (Creswell, 2012). Data collection for both research designs also involves a time frame that exceeds the three months supported by the sponsor of this research project. Other qualitative methodologies, such as phenomenology and narrative enquiry, were also considered. However, they both focus on participants' personal accounts of lived experiences more so than contextual factors and observed practices (Creswell, 2012). They would have limited insights into how teachers' practices are mediated by the overall context, a facet considered to be important to this study.

Because the research questions and the circumstances surrounding an inquiry should determine the adopted methodology (Flyvbjerg, 2006), a qualitative case study approach was considered the most appropriate for this study. Yin (2013) defines a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life

context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13). A qualitative case study serves the aims of this study because it will allow me to study the influence of OEEs on teachers' reported cognitions and observed practices within their real-life contexts. Because teachers' experiences, practices and cognitions cannot be separated from their teaching context, this study fits the case study methodology definition proposed by Yin (2013).

The analytical benefits of having two (or more) cases substantially exceeds that of single-case designs (Yin, 2013). Therefore, I have opted for a multiple case study approach, where the researcher focuses on an issue then selects multiple cases to illustrate it (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). The two case studies in this research allowed for a greater opportunity to uncover the contextual factors in different universities which influence how teachers implement their overseas-developed cognitions. The use of case studies also drew attention to how each context supports teachers' contributions to local educational development.

3.3.1. The cases

In case studies, Merriam (2009) suggests implementing a two-level sampling process. In the first process, a set of criteria is established for purposefully choosing cases that represent the phenomenon. The power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases which offer valuable insights about issues of central importance (Patton, 2014). In this study, the first sampling criterion was established based on my knowledge as a cultural insider. The Saudi educational system is completely gender segregated due to cultural and religious considerations, and this segregation includes all employees, students and visitors. Therefore, men's universities were excluded, because, as a female researcher, permission to enter male departments would not have been granted.

The chosen cases are two Saudi women's universities: the University of Traditional Prestige (UTP) and the University of Innovative Vision (UIV). Additional criteria were established to ensure that both universities could provide rich data and different perspectives on the issue being studied (Creswell, 2012). Firstly, both universities share the Ministry of Education's vision of enhancing students' English proficiency by focusing on their spoken communicative competence among other skills. Secondly, as is the case in all Saudi state universities, the chosen cases both require EFL teachers to enrol in overseas

PD programs. However, the two universities differ in their history and general educational approach. These differences are essential to showcasing diverse perspectives on teachers' post-OEE practices in the Saudi context. Such diverse perspectives could emerge from the universities' different educational approaches, including the roles assigned to returnees and institutional expectations of them. The UTP is among the 'old' nine state universities founded between 1957 and 1978. It is one of the first universities to offer EFL education and is known for its well-established guidelines and commitment to maintaining the country's traditional cultural values. The UIV, on the other hand, is among 21 'young' universities founded between 2003 and 2014 (Ministry of Education, 2019). The UIV is one of several universities seeking innovative methods for learning and promoting creativity and distinction, as well as launching social initiatives that focus on empowering women in Saudi Arabia.

In selecting these case studies, I also considered that both universities had a sufficient number of teachers who were returnees from overseas PD experiences. This was important in order to provide a rich source for data collection. Universities which had less than 10 returnees were excluded, because it was not guaranteed as to how many would participate. However, the UTP has more than 20 returnees, and the UIV has more than 25 returnees, all of which had completed two or more years of OEEs. It was also important that both universities were in the same city, as this would facilitate the collection of data within the allocated time frame. The two different, yet similar contexts allowed me to analyse the role of contextual factors in influencing teachers' implementation of their overseas-developed cognitions, including how teachers contribute to the quality of EFL education in their local institutions.

3.3.2. *Data collection methods*

Triangulation of sources and methods for data collection is a main characteristic of case study research, because it helps researchers capture the complexity and entirety of a case while providing a holistic analysis of the phenomenon in context (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2013). The methods used to collect data from each case study are:

- semi-structured interviews with teachers (i.e. two interviews per teacher, one before observation sessions and one after);
- classroom observations (i.e. two classroom observations for each teacher);

- one semi-structured interview with a teacher supervisor in each university; and
- documents of university teaching guidelines.

Because this study explores teachers' cognitions in context, relying on one source or tool to collect the data would have provided a narrow view of the phenomenon. This is because cognitions are unobservable and influenced by both past experiences and current contextual factors. On their own, every data collection method has its strengths and limitations, but triangulating them in one study increases the chance that these limitations are counteracted (Borg, 2006). The following section provides justifications for using each method, and the strengths and limitations that it provided.

3.3.3. *Strengths and limitations of employed data collection methods*

Interviews have been widely recognised as an important method in understanding teachers' unobserved cognitions, being "by far the most common data-collection strategy" in teacher cognition research (Borg, 2012, p. 25). Their power lies in allowing researchers to "enter into another person's perspective" (Patton, 1990, p. 196), and explore their unobservable thoughts, feelings, and interpretations of the world around them. The use of interviews is also critical in understanding past events that cannot be replicated (Merriam, 1998). Using semi-structured interviews in this study was necessary to capture teachers' perspectives regarding their past experiences in overseas programs.

It is important to note that data collected from interviews is representative of how participants view their realities. What is expressed during interviews is still reported data, which may or may not be an accurate representation of classroom realities. In a study such as mine, which explores teachers' cognitions regarding their implemented classroom practices, relying on interviews alone has its limitations. One of these limitations is that, when using interviews to explore teachers' cognitions about their implemented classroom practices, teachers may express various notions related to how they would like to teach (ideal cognitions) instead of how they do teach in reality (Borg, 2012).

The limitation of semi-structured interviews conducted in this study is minimised by the use of classroom observations. The strength of observations lies in their ability to make inferences about cognitive processes and the decision making that takes place during classroom practices (Kubanyiova, 2012). When combined with interviews, observations work by providing a concrete descriptive basis against which teachers' cognitions are

examined (Borg, 2006). On their own, observations are unable to facilitate in-depth analysis of these cognitive processes and determine the validity of inferences made (Borg, 2012). Therefore, semi-structured interviews and observations were employed in this study to counteract the limitations associated with using each method on its own. The two data collection methods were implemented in a four-stage sequence consisting of an initial interview, two classroom observations, and a follow-up interview. The observations were used to frame follow-up interviews in a way that elicited teachers' rationale behind these observed practices; by inviting teachers to explain what had been seen and noted during the observations (Borg, 2006).

Documents, on the other hand, are different from interviews and observations, because they are not specifically designed to be part of research studies. They do not intrude upon the context, as observations do, nor do they depend on the impulses of the participants involved, as interviews do (Merriam, 1998). Their strength lies in providing data that support data gathered from interviews and observations, and also highlighting the issues that need to be explored (Bowen, 2009; Merriam, 1998).

3.3.4. *Participant sampling and recruitment*

In choosing what data to collect, the second stage of purposive sampling comes into effect to determine who to interview, what to observe, and what documents to review (Merriam, 2009). Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend sampling until saturation is achieved; however, "there is no one-size-fits-all method to reach data saturation" (Fusch & Ness, 2015, p. 1413). In fact, large samples are not necessarily better than small ones (Fusch & Ness, 2015), especially in qualitative designs. Patton (2002) suggests using small samples to facilitate in-depth inquiry. Instead of recommending an ideal sample number, Fusch and Ness (2015) argue that qualitative data saturation can be attained by triangulating data collection sources, which this study has done.

Twelve female participants, consisting of 10 EFL teachers and two supervisors across both universities were recruited. A diverse group of teachers who could provide different perspectives was desired; therefore, participants included teachers who had been teaching for various lengths of time after completing their overseas PD programs. In the following tables, background information on participants from both universities is provided. Pseudonyms have been used to conceal the identity of the participants.

Table 3.1. Participants from the UIV (Case 1)

Teacher	Teaching experience before OEE	Overseas degree/ location	OEE period	Teaching experience after OEE
Afaf	2 years	Masters in Applied Linguistics/USA	2 years	18 months
Sara	1 year	Masters in TESOL USA	2 years	2 years
Amal	5 years	Masters in Applied Linguistics/ USA	2.5 years	3 years
Mariam	7 years	PhD in Linguistics UK	4 years	6 months
Deema	3 years	Masters in Linguistics/UK	2 years	4 years
Supervisor	**Qualifications**	**Overall experience in UTP**	**Supervisory experience**	**Overseas experience**
Dr. Amira	PhD in TESOL	11 years	3 years	3 years in USA

Table 3.2. Participants from the UTP (Case 2)

Teacher	Teaching experience before OEE	Overseas degree/location	OEE period	Teaching experience after OEE
Salma	1 year	Masters in Linguistics/UK	2 years	3 years
Worod	1 year	Masters in TESOL/USA	2.5 years	2 years
Mona	2 years	Masters in Linguistics/USA	2 years	4 years
Razan	2 years	PhD in Linguistics/UK	4 years	6 months
Hadeel	5 years	Masters in TESOL/UK	2.5 years	7 years
Supervisor	**Qualifications**	**Overall UTP experience**	**Supervisory experience**	**Overseas experience**
Dr. Rania	PhD in Linguistics	15 years	5 years	4 years in UK

The teachers participating in this study have been awarded a masters degree or a PhD in either TESOL or Linguistics following the completion of overseas programs in the UK or the USA. The programs had been pre-approved by the teachers' Saudi sponsoring bodies. This means that the content of each program was found by Saudi officials to be compatible with local goals of teacher development, and that it had a primary focus on second language teaching methodologies, especially communicative language teaching. Another common feature of the teachers' programs was that it included a practicum component which allowed participants to implement their newly acquired knowledge and skills in real life English teaching classrooms. 3.3.5. Documents

Data collection began with gathering institutional documents from both universities that outlined their main EFL educational goals and teaching policies. University policies that recommended or mandated specific teaching approaches and techniques were of primary interest. These documents provided supplementary research data used to describe the context in which these teachers work (Bowen, 2009). They provided information on assessment guidelines, student numbers, the standardised syllabus, etc. The initial analysis of institutional documents from each university also helped to highlight the necessary questions that needed to be asked of both teachers and supervisors. For example, teaching guidelines obtained from each university helped conduct an in-depth inquiry of the autonomy given to teachers in both universities.

3.3.6. Semi-structured interviews

Two in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with each teacher who participated in this study, taking place before and after the observation sessions. In the initial research design, the interviews were each scheduled for one hour. However, due to participants' different communication patterns, interviews ranged from 45 to 90 minutes. The following topics were covered in the interviews:

3.3.6.1. Teacher interview 1

- Initial teacher training and early teaching experiences.
- Teachers' experiences in overseas PD programs.
- How it influenced their cognitions and practices after returning home.
- The role of contextual factors in determining their teaching practices, and whether

that role changed after completing overseas PD programs.

After the first interview, two classroom observations were conducted per teacher. Data collected from observations were used to conduct a follow-up interview on the following topics:

3.3.6.2. Teacher interview 2

- How do their practices relate to their previously reported teaching approaches?
- How do their practices reflect what they learned during overseas programs? How, if at all, have they modified the practices they have learnt within each lesson to fit with local expectations and policies?
- How communicative do they view their practices to be? What are the barriers to making each of the lessons more communicative?
- Any unexpected factors that surfaced during the observations.

The topics above guided the interviews. For a detailed outline of the interview questions guide, refer to Appendices 3 and 4. It is important to note that exact wording and order of questions varied during the interviews from one participant to other. The variation was due to the use of open-ended questions, through which participants were able to "develop their responses in ways which the interviewer might not have foreseen" (Campbell, McNamara, & Gilroy, 2004, p. 99). Although I had already established the range of topics that I was interested in exploring, using open-ended questions and allowing each teachers' responses to guide and shape the direction of the interview was necessary. This is because "a researcher can never know for certain which experiences have been influential and relevant in a particular sphere of life" (Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p. 28).

In addition to the semi-structured interviews with teachers, one semi-structured interview with a teacher supervisor was conducted in each university. Supervisors have worked with many teachers before and after their OEEs. They were asked for insights on the influence of OEEs on teachers' cognitions and practices. Additionally, the interview questions enquired about their role in facilitating teachers' implementation of their newly acquired cognitions and skills and/or ensuring that institutional expectations were met. A comprehensive question guide for the supervisor interviews in provided in Appendix 5.

In the interviews with both teachers and supervisors, the questions were asked in English.

All the participants were proficient in English; however, they were given the choice to answer in Arabic or English. They all opted to communicate in English during the interviews; however, some teachers used Arabic phrases and expressions, especially when explaining personal feelings and reactions. Being a certified English/Arabic translator and interpreter, I translated these expressions to English but I also kept the original Arabic phrases in the transcripts. A copy of each participant's transcripts was sent to her via email asking for her approval of the overall content and my translations, as they were all fluent English speakers and able to provide feedback on the accuracy of translations.

3.3.7. Observations

Observations in this study served three purposes. First, they allowed me to observe how teachers' elicited cognitions, which were expressed during the pre observation interviews, unfold in their actual classroom practices. Secondly, they allowed me to observe how the classroom context influences teachers' implementation of their ideal cognitions. Thirdly, they allowed me to identify the communicative orientation of teachers' practices.

To achieve these goals, a semi-structured observational approach was conducted, using both a structured observation tool and unstructured observational field notes (Borg, 2006). The structured observation tool is the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) observation scheme developed by Spada and Fröhlich (1995).

3.3.7.1 Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) observation scheme

As the name entails, the COLT scheme is grounded in the communicative approach to language teaching. It allows the observer to time and classify classroom activities against several explicit pre-set categories. These are later quantified using specific scores that help describe the communicative orientation of a teachers' classroom practices. In COLT, communicatively oriented lessons are those that encourage students to produce a variety of discourse types, focus on the development of several skills in a single activity, emphasise both form and meaning while minimising explicit error correction, facilitating group work and encouraging students to participate in negotiating topics and tasks. Less communicatively oriented lessons are those that use traditional instruction techniques which include explicit error correction, simplified input, focus on language forms, have a

limited range of language discourse types, and emphasise the development of skills in isolation (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995). COLT is divided into two parts, Part A, which describes classroom activities and teachers' practices, and B, which describes verbal interactions for discourse analysis purposes. For the purpose of this study, only part A was used (see Figure 3.1). A larger version of the framework is also provided in Appendix 9.

COLT PART A
Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching Observation Scheme
© Spada & Fröhlich 1995

School	Grade(s)	Observer
Teacher	Lesson (min.)	Visit No
Subject	Date	Page

TIME	ACTIVITIES & EPISODES	PARTICIPANT ORGANISATION							CONTENT								CONTENT CONTROL			STUDENT MODALITY					MATERIALS							
		Class			Group		Indiv.		Manag.		Language				Other topics										Type				Source			
																									Text							
		T→S/C	S→S/C	Choral	Same task	Different tasks	Same task	Different tasks	Procedure	Discipline	Form	Function	Discourse	Socioling.	Narrow	Broad	Teacher/Text	Teacher/Text/Stud.	Student	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Other	Minimal	Extended	Audio	Visual	L2-NNS	L2-NS	L2-NSA	Student-made
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33

Figure 3.1. Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) Observations Scheme

Part A comprises of several categories that describe each classroom activity, which is the unit of analysis. The beginning and end of an activity is marked by a change in overall theme or content. For example, separate activities can be categorised as a drill, a game, or a presentation. Activities are commonly composed of several episodes that differ in categorical focus but have an overall common theme. For example, three episodes of one activity could be: teacher introduces dialogue, teacher reads dialogue aloud, and students take turns reading dialogue. These details are all recorded under the *Activities & Episodes* category.

As for the rest of the categories in the scheme, Spada and Fröhlich (1995) provide a definition and theoretical rationale to help link them to general understandings of

communicative teaching. These categories are *time, participant organisation, content, content control, student modality, and materials*.

Time:

All activities and episodes are numbered and timed. This is necessary to later determine the percentage of time spent on various categories within each activity and across the entire lesson. The percentages are later used to score each classroom's communicative orientation.

Participant organisation:

This category distinguishes group and pair work activities from those led entirely by the teachers, in order to help determine the level of teacher-centred instruction. It differentiates between three basic patterns: class activities, individual activities and group activities. In communicative classrooms, group work is important because it encourages students to negotiate meaning and use a variety of linguistic forms and functions which develops their overall fluency. Teacher-centred instruction, where students often spend the majority of time answering teachers' direct questions and seldom initiate discourse, is identified through this category. During observations, the activities that are limited to direct instructions from the teacher to a student/class are classified as *T↔S/C* and reflect a teacher-centred activity.

Content:

This category helps identify whether the primary focus of an activity is on meaning or form. If the primary focus is on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc. it is categorised as an activity that focuses on form. The activity may also have a focus on (function) if it involves communicative acts, on (discourse) if it focuses on combining sentences to form cohesive and coherent sequences, or on (sociolinguistics) if it focuses on forms or styles that are appropriate to specific contexts. The subjects presented in the lesson are also identified in the subcategory (Other topics): those that refer to the immediate environment and experiences of the classroom and students are *Narrow,* and those that go beyond that are classified as *Broad*, such as international events and hypothetical situations. The content category also identifies the time spent on classroom management, such as explaining an activity's procedure or making disciplinary statements. COLT considers classroom management as an activity that focuses on meaning provided that it is being

conducted in the target language. In the analysis recommendations, an activity that is classified as having a focus on meaning needs to include a focus on classroom management, other topics (both narrow and broad), or a combination of form and other content category(ies), such as function, discourse, or sociolinguistics.

Content control:

The extent to which students are involved in controlling instructional content is described in this category. Communicative classrooms commonly advocate the benefits of involving students by negotiating tasks, materials, and content. The features in this category determine how the topic or task is chosen, or controlled, by the teacher/the text/the students or jointly between them.

Student modality:

This category describes the various skills involved in a single activity; whether they are *Speaking*, *Listening*, *Writing, Reading* or a combination of these skills. Activities that do not fall under these categories, such as drawing, are identified under *Other*. The rationale behind this description lies in the importance of integrating several skills to reflect a more authentic use of language. This contrasts with traditional language teaching instruction which isolates both grammatical features and skill areas.

Materials:

This category identifies the type of materials used and their source. CLT values authentic materials as it prepares learners to deal with real language use outside the classroom. The type of material in this category are classified as: *Text*, *Audio*, and *Visual*. The text can be either minimal or extended. Minimal text refers to word lists and isolated sentences, while extended text refers to stories, dialogue, connected sentences and paragraphs. Classes are considered more communicative and are given scores in the analysis if the lesson includes extended texts. Spada and Fröhlich rationalise this by arguing that L2 learners' discourse competence is supported by being exposed to extended texts rather than isolated sentences and words.

The sources of materials are categorised as*: L2 – non-native speaker,* instructional materials specifically designed for language teaching such as course books. *L2 – native speaker,* instructional materials originally made for native speakers of the target language such as newspapers. *L2 native speaker – adapted*, these are authentic material later adapted

for L2 learning purposes such as linguistically simplified stories. *Student made* are materials made by students such as reports and presentations.

3.3.7.2. Use of COLT

<u>Justifications</u>

Using COLT as a data collection tool for both observation sessions is justified by the role of observations in this study. The initial decision to choose COLT was because it allowed the researcher to determine the different communicative orientations of teachers' classroom practices. This was important because Saudi EFL teachers that return from overseas scholarships are required to move away from traditional teaching practices and adopt more communicatively oriented approaches. Therefore, it was essential to determine the extent to which this goal had been met, based on teachers' observed practices, after years of them returning to their local context. As the exploration of teachers' cognitions developed, the data gathered through the COLT tool proved even more valuable. This is because the teachers all reported that their overseas programs emphasised communicative, learner-centred teaching in their practicum component. Additionally, the cognition development of all participating teachers indicates they adopted the communicative approach as part of their teaching philosophies to different degrees following their OEEs. Therefore, the COLT tool allowed the researcher to explore how their reported cognitions related to their observed practices.

<u>Strengths</u>

COLT was designed based on established principles for communicatively oriented teaching and it turned these principles into a systematic set of observational categories. The reliability of COLT is enhanced by having explicit categories that require low inferences by coders. The COLT manual (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995) provided clear definitions of each category and extensive examples for coding them, which helped clarify the coding progress.

Part A of COLT is designed to allow coding to be conducted in real time. This proved beneficial to this specific study because, due to cultural considerations of the Saudi female context, video recording and audio recording of the lessons was not permitted by the universities. Further, documenting observational data depended solely on written field

notes. However, not all COLT coding was finalised during observations in this study. Initial coding was done for all lesson activities during observations, but these were later compared to the unstructured field notes that provided extensive details for each activity. This sometimes led to adding more codes, as field notes clarified that some activities can be categorised differently to better reflect what took place during the lesson. For example, one activity was coded during the observation session as focusing on three skills (speaking, listening, and writing). The activity involved students asking each other for specific descriptions and then writing down a few sentences to document them. After reading the documented notes of the activity, it became apparent that the activity can also be coded as focusing on reading, because students checked their writing against several writing modules provided by the teacher. This led to modifying how that specific activity was initially coded. An example of the data collected during the observation sessions, and how they were coded, is provided in Appendix 10.

Analysis of the data collected through this scheme produced quantitative measures that are used to place each classroom on a communicative scale based on its teacher's observed practices. These measures are discussed more fully in the following section. The quantitative measures enabled the study to compare the communicative orientation of all observed classrooms. An added strength of this scheme is that it has been widely accepted by researchers in various ESL/EFL contexts (Kumaravadivelu, 1999; Mackey & Gass, 2015), and its validity and reliability have been established in both earlier and more recent studies (Dicks, 1992; Ghorbani, 2013; Strube, 2006; Vandergrift, 1992). This also provided the opportunity for comparing various implementations of the scheme in different contexts and their findings.

Analysis and limitations

Spada and Fröhlich's recommended approach to analyse COLT data recommends calculating the percentages of five categories to obtain a Communicative Orientation Score (COS), which is later used to place each observed classroom on a "communicative continuum''(Spada & Fröhlich, 1995, p. 128). In their approach, Spada and Fröhlich selected five subcategories from Part A of COLT that they considered to be representative of communicative teaching. These subcategories are: the percentage of group work, the percentage of meaning-focused activities, whether the content is controlled by teacher/student/text, use of extended texts, and authenticity of materials. Each of these

subcategories are assigned a score from 1 to 5, depending on the percentage of class time spent on that feature. The scoring technique is based on a five-interval scale: 0-19 % of lesson time is scored 1, 20 - 39 % is scored 2, 40-59% is scored 3, 60-79% is scored 4 and 80-100% is scored 5. For example, if group work accounts for 15% of the class time, a focus on meaning is incorporated in 45% of the activities, students control 10% of the content, extended texts are used in 90% of the materials, and non-pedagogic materials are used in 15% of the activities, these subcategories would receive the individual scores of 1 + 3 + 1 + 5 + 1. Thus, the total COS would be 11 for that class. All classroom scores are later placed on a continuum to provide an overall view of the differences in communicative orientation.

Although this is the recommended approach to analysing the observation data in Spada and Fröhlich's (1995) manual, it posed several limitations for this study. The first limitation is that the recommended approach to calculating each classroom's COS excludes two essential categories, which could help highlight the communicative orientation of a lesson in a way that corresponds with aims of this study. The first of these excluded categories is Student Modality, which as previously explained, highlights whether an observed activity had focused on one individual skill or had integrated several skills. This category is excluded from the recommended COS calculations, despite Spada and Fröhlich's contention that skill integration is an essential feature of communicative teaching. Also, the recommended approach to scoring does not award points to activities that incorporate a speaking component, although the COLT framework enables coding the percentage of oral activities in each lesson. Encouraging oral communication is a core target for communicative teaching in the Saudi context. Therefore, the extent to which a lesson incorporated oral communication activities for students was considered an essential category and was included in calculating each classroom's COS.

Another limitation of Spada and Fröhlich's analysis approach is that the recommended calculation method gives materials double points in the scoring, the first point is for extended texts and the second point is for authentic materials. In communicatively oriented lessons, authentic materials are valued because they help prepare learners to deal with real language use outside the classroom (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995). However, I believe that scoring a lesson as communicatively oriented, due to its use of only authentic material, can discredit the value of simplified or adjusted pedagogical materials. Indeed,

research in SLA has shown that simplified or adjusted materials can be valuable for increasing students' ability to comprehend, especially at beginner level students (Cook, 2011). Because the classrooms that were observed in this study included students from various skill levels, ranging from beginners to advanced, the value of authentic materials varied according to the students' levels. Therefore, in analysing the classrooms' COS, the material authenticity was maintained as a primary category whose percentage added up to each classroom's score. However, I also provided explicit descriptions of the level of students in each classroom to allow readers to have a clear representation of the value of authentic material for each specific lesson.

To alleviate the abovementioned limitations, the calculation method for the COS was adapted to include two more subcategories, in addition to the five recommended by the original framework. The total seven subcategories are: the percentage of group work, the percentage of meaning-focused activities, the percentage of students' contribution to content control, the use of extended texts, the authenticity of the materials, integration of skills, and the percentage of the activities' speaking component.

A further limitation of the COLT analysis procedures is that the percentage intervals between each score, which are 0-19%, may be too great for studies that require a detailed representation of the teachers' instructional differences. As a result, readers may have a limited capacity to identify the differences between teachers' practices based on the scores alone. This limitation was conceded by Spada and Fröhlich, and they recommend such studies to consider smaller intervals between scores. However, this study will instead provide a descriptive analysis of each teachers' classroom practices, including the percentages of classroom time awarded to each of the COLT categories. This descriptive analysis will be presented in addition to the COS. This is expected to provide readers with a detailed representation of each teachers' practices, which would not be attained even with a smaller score interval. It will also allow readers to make their own assumptions about the degree of communicative orientation in each classroom.

The observation sessions also included an unstructured component. It documented classroom occurrences which represent day-to-day influences on teachers' practices, such as class size and students' engagement with classroom activities. It also documented classroom practices that relate to teachers' cognitions which were elicited in the pre-observation interviews. The insights gained helped shape the post observation interviews,

in that teachers were encouraged to reflect on, and make sense of, the documented incidents and influences that were observed by the researcher. Their reflections helped to give insight on how teachers deal, both cognitively and affectively, with unexpected contextual constraints. The insights also helped to understand the experiences or events that lead teachers to adopt certain classroom practices.

3.3.7.3. Role of the observer researcher

Observation as a tool for data collection can be categorised as participant and non-participant observation. Participant observers actively interact with the observed group and take part in their activities during the observation session, in addition to collecting the data for later reflection and analysis (Patton, 2014). Nonparticipant observers do not take part in group activities during the session, but quietly observe and document the interactions around them (Wildemuth, 2017). In this study, observations were nonparticipant. My role in the setting was limited to entering the classroom quietly before the students and teacher arrived, sitting on a chair at the back of the classroom and taking notes as the lesson started. I did not interact with the students or the teacher during the lesson, other than offering occasional smiles to those who looked my way.

Another classification of observations is the extent to which participants are aware of the observation taking place. In overt observation, participants are aware of the researcher's presence and intention to collect data for research purposes. The issue with this form of observation is that the researcher's presence can influence the authenticity of the context, in that participants may either consciously or unconsciously behave in atypical ways when they know they are being observed (Patton, 2002). This is what is commonly known as the Hawthorne effect (Cook, 1962). Researchers conducting overt observations need to be aware of this potential and highly probable influence, as "nothing is stranger than the business of humans observing other humans in order to write about them" (Behar, 1996, p. 5). Particularly, researchers need to be aware that the observed bahavior would not have occured in the same exact way had they not been present as observers. Therefore, overt observers must engage in practices of self-reflixivity and take steps to minimise their influence on the observed scene (Behar, 1996). Covert observation, on the other hand, occurs when participants are unaware of the observation taking place or that it is undertaken for research purposes. Although this form of observation enables researchers to capture the natural and authentic behaviours of participants, it is generally considered

unethical in educational research (Borg, 2006).

In terms of participants' awareness of my identity and purpose, I classify my observations as overt. All the observed teachers were aware of my presence and why I was collecting data. In the case of students, I had left the decision to the teachers to introduce my presence in the class. In some cases, teachers introduced me at the beginning of the lesson, and other times at the end. Before I conducted the observations, I was aware that my presence may make teachers anxious or self-conscious, causing them to behave differently than they normally would. In an effort to minimise that negative influence, I explained that I was not there to evaluate them as good or bad teachers. I explained that the data I collected from them would help me understand the dynamics of implementing overseas-developed cognitions in a context that may or may not facilitate that implementation. I attempted to minimise the negative influence of my presence as an observer; however, I cannot claim that I have completely prevented it, or that my presence was totally unobtrusive. My presence as an observer in UTP classrooms seemed less noticeable, by both teachers and students, than my presence in UIV classrooms. This seemed to be due to the common practice of peer observation among UTP teachers. As suggested by participating teachers from UTP, students had become accustomed to having different people observing their classrooms throughout the semester. In UIV classrooms, I felt that my presence was more noticeable, especially during the first few minutes of the first session. The teachers would glance my way more often, and I could feel the students staring at me, or trying to figure out what I was writing down in my notes. However, it appeared that my presence became less noticeable as the time passed. An advantage of conducting two observation sessions per teacher was that, during the second observation session, both teachers and students seemed more relaxed and their interactions more natural.

In both universities, the school year consisted of two semesters with fourteen weeks each, with a one-week break between them. Classroom observations took place on weeks eight to ten of the first semester at the UIV, and on weeks three and four of the second semester at the UTP. The arrangement of observation dates was primarily based on what teachers felt comfortable with. However, several steps were taken to maximise the benefits gained from each session. For example, I avoided scheduling observations in the first couple of weeks in the semester. This was because teachers are assigned to new groups each semester, and I wanted to give both teachers and students time to develop a degree of

rapport and familiarity before observing their classes. I also avoided the last few weeks in the semester, when classroom activities usually focus on preparation for final exams.

3.4. Approaches to data analysis

Data analysis is "making sense out of the data, which involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read" (Merriam, 1998, p. 178). In qualitative studies, analysis of data is commonly encouraged to be undertaken inductively, by allowing the themes to emerge from the data without applying pre-established theories to them. However, as a researcher positioned within the constructivist paradigm, my role meant that I was not completely free of my theoretical and epistemological background, and this needed to be acknowledged instead of claiming to code my data in an epistemological vacuum (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis was adopted in this study for "identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Thematic analysis advocates an inductive approach to generating themes; however, it also acknowledges the deductive influence of research questions on the analysis process. Braun and Clarke (2006) provided practical steps to implement thematic analysis, in the form of a six-step guide. These are: familiarising oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing the themes, defining and naming the themes, and finally, producing the report. These steps were performed separately for each case. They served as general guidelines; however, the analysis did not take place in a linear fashion of moving from one step to the next. Instead, it followed a more recursive process, where I moved back and forth across different steps of the analysis.

Throughout the data analysis process, constant comparisons and contrasts were made between data collected from different participants and data from different sources within each case. After the themes were generated for each case, a cross-case analysis compared these themes to highlight congruences and incongruences, which then was followed by an exploration of the reasons why they existed.

3.4.1. Data analysis procedures

Analysis of data began during the collection process, where initial reflections and notes were written following each interview, observation session and day spent in the universities (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). This simultaneous process supported

emerging designs advocated in qualitative methodology, as initial analyses helped modify subsequent research steps to serve the overall aim (Merriam, 1998). The initial analysis of collected data helped shape the way subsequent data collection sessions were conducted, and this was especially evident with the semi-structured interviews. A list of interview questions was already designed to cover the themes for the three research questions before the data collection commenced. However, after the first interview with each teacher was completed, insights from its initial analysis helped add more questions to the second interview that was planned for that same teacher. The initial insights gained from each teacher's interview were also beneficial for conducting the interviews with other teachers. These insights helped uncover the prevalence of a certain experience among teachers within a university, or compare the views of teachers with those of their supervisors regarding a particular issue that was revealed by a participant.

Due to the large amount of data gathered from both sites, the organisation of data had to start from the outset. Nvivo12 was used to organise different data sources by creating files for each university, and subfiles for each participant. Contextual data, including policy documents, were filed separately according to the case that it was collected from.

Three stages of analysis were conducted. The first and second stages consisted of a within case analysis for each university individually, where each was considered as an independent and comprehensive case. This involved searching across the datasets (interviews with teachers and supervisors, classroom observations and documents) of each case to find repeated patterns of meaning that related to the research questions. Throughout the analysis within each case, constant comparisons and contrasts were made between data from different participants and data from different sources. The data from each case were analysed and organised into sequences of recurrent patterns. These patterns established the general themes within each case that related to the three areas of focus in this study, which are teachers' cognitions, teachers' classroom practices, and the influence of the local university context. This step was followed by a detailed description of each case and themes within them (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 1998).

This was followed by the third stage, the comparative cross-case analysis, which highlighted similarities and differences in both cases in relation to the research questions and theoretical frameworks proposed by the literature (Yin, 2013). This included comparing the main themes generated from each case as a whole, and comparing themes

which emerged from each dataset. Figure 3.2. highlights within-case and cross-case analysis procedures in this study.
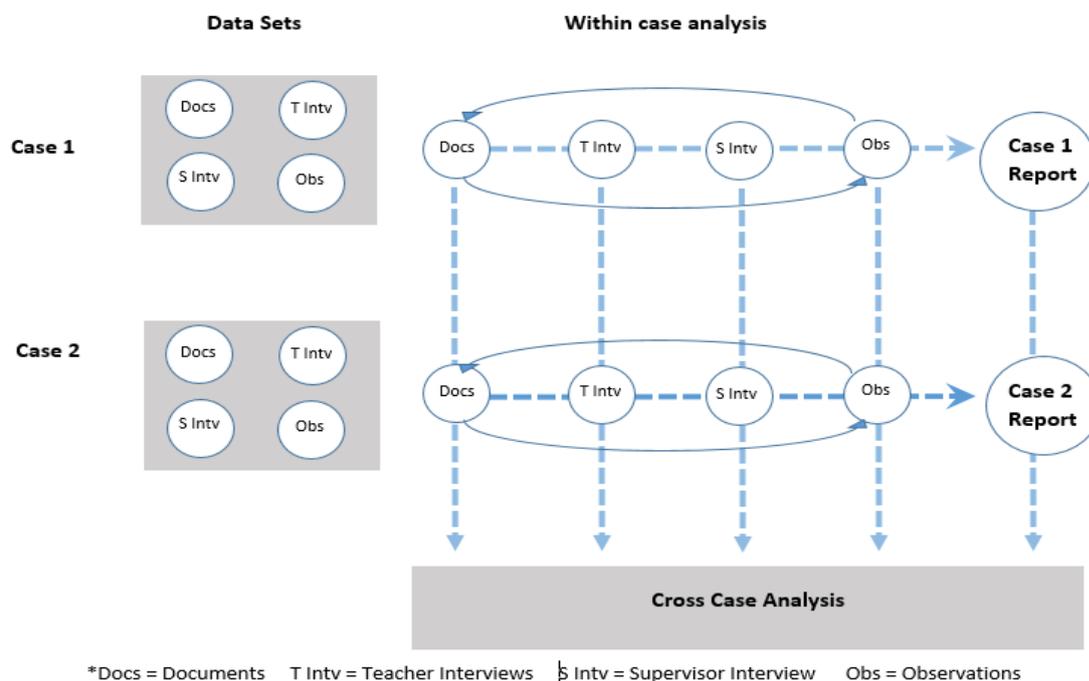
Figure 3.2. Data analysis procedures

The analysis of each dataset (semi-structured interviews, observations, document reviews) was performed using different approaches. The observation data was coded and analysed using the COLT framework procedures, as explained earlier. The documents provided information on the structure of the EFL programs in each university, including how the students are assigned to different levels, the recommended class size, textbooks, etc. These helped present the background of each case study. The documents also highlighted policies that guide teachers' duties, including recommended teaching approaches. This information highlighted the congruences and incongruences between reported contextual constraints and prescribed policies, which helped highlight how each context restricts/facilitates teachers' practices.

The semi-structured interviews were analysed using the six-step thematic analysis procedures suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). This process was supported by using qualitative data analysis software, Nvivo12, which enhanced the organisation of data and facilitated the analysis (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013).

3.4.2. Thematic analysis

Step one: familiarising oneself with the data

I started to familiarise myself with each interview by transcribing their audio recordings and translating any Arabic content into English. I opted to do the translations myself because I was a certified Arabic/English translator with a degree in translation and interpreting. I was well experienced in translation conventions which maintain cultural connotations of the spoken word and written text. I opted not to have another translator check my translations in order to avoid any unnecessary risk to the confidentiality of participant identities. I then read all the data gathered from each case individually to get an initial understanding of the context of each university. After that, I re-read the datasets collected from each participant, including interview transcripts, observation data and field notes, to immerse myself in this material and "become familiar with the breadth and depth of the content" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). While I was reading, I took notes about initial ideas for coding so that I could come back to them later on.

Step two: generating initial codes

In this step, I worked systematically through each interview and assigned code names to every aspect in the data without trying to perceive connections across the datasets at this stage. I use codes here to refer to "the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 63). This was done with the aid of Nvivo12, by creating codes (called nodes in Nvivo) and highlighting the texts that seemed to represent them. Examples of these initial codes include *school learning experience, early feelings towards English, first teaching experience.* Sometimes the same statement was grouped in different nodes, as they seemed to represent a number of relatable meanings. Using Nvivo, I also made memo links which contained my own reflections, and a summary of each participant's background information. These memos were particularly helpful as the research progressed and it became difficult to remember the subtle differences between participants' experiences and personalities. Reading the reflective notes in the memos helped avoid any confusion and also provided a clear picture of the conditions surrounding each teacher's practices. An example of these memos is included in Appendix 11.

Step three: searching for themes

After the initial codes were assigned, I reviewed them all, looking for ways to categorise them. Categories are used here to refer to the terms that define the hierarchical structure of codes. For example, the initial codes of *feeling confident, feeling valued* were categorised into a subcategory *teachers' positive emotions,* and which was under the broader category *emotions.* This method was followed to organise data into tree nodes within Nvivo. An example of one of the tree nodes is provided in appendix 12. This hierarchical structure helped clarify the themes that represented a pattern of meaning within the dataset and related to each research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Step four: reviewing the themes

In this stage, initial themes that were previously assigned were refined. This involved reviewing each theme to make sure that the coded data they contain formed coherent patterns. Themes that did not seem to contain coherent patterns of codes were renamed, or the data within them reassigned to other themes.

Step five: defining and naming the themes

After themes had been refined, they were addressed in relation to the research questions in order to consider how best to represent them in the write-up phase. For example, the themes that relate to the teachers' overseas educational experience were used to address the first and third research questions. The themes that relate to the teachers' experiences of returning home, however, were used to address the second research question. Although themes were already given initial names and explanations, these were reconsidered and some names were changed to better represent the meanings they contain and "immediately give the reader a sense of what the theme is about" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 93).

Step six: producing the report

In this step, a report that explains the main themes and subthemes which emerged from the data was produced for each university, forming within-case analysis. This was then followed by a cross-case analysis, during which similarities and differences between the two reports were highlighted.

3.5. Ethical considerations

The Australian national statement on ethical conduct in human research (2007) was considered in the design of this research project. Before collecting any data, an ethics approval was sought and granted from Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee (VUHREC). Approval was given to application number HRE16-181. Approval was also granted by both Saudi universities from which the data was gathered. The applications included details for maintaining participant anonymity, data confidentiality, the voluntary nature of the study, and the steps made to store data. The letters of ethics approval from both universities are included in Appendices 1 and 2.

Several steps were also taken to maintain adequate ethical care of Saudi educational, cultural and religious contexts. Examples of such cultural and religious mindfulness included not recording observation sessions which took place in the all-female context. Female teachers and students who wear the Islamic hijab (head cover) often remove it in all-female settings in Saudi Arabia, such as the universities in the case studies. Therefore, permission to videotape them would not be granted as it would invade their privacy and comfort.

The participants included teachers and supervisors who worked on a daily basis in the same university context. This represented a potential risk to the anonymity of identities and voluntarism of the recruitment process due to existing power dimensions within the workplace. To ensure that participation was voluntary, recruitment was done by me and not by anyone in a position of authority over the participants. Undue pressure to participate was avoided by inviting teachers via email, and allowing them several days to think about the study and ask any questions before giving their consent. Participants were also informed of the risks associated with this study, which included my inability to guarantee that other teachers or supervisors within the university were unaware of their participatory status. However, several steps were taken to ensure that this risk was minimised. This included using pseudonyms in the data transcriptions and thesis write-up, not mentioning participants' names in audio recorded interviews, keeping the data in safe locations, and not discussing the data with anyone outside the research team. This information was explained in the information for participants form (Appendix 6), and in the consent forms that teachers and supervisors were given to sign (Appendices 7 & 8). Additionally, there were cases where certain teachers were worried that someone would overhear the interviews, and they were not comfortable expressing their opinions on the

university campus. In those cases, I invited them to a quiet place off campus. Because women at the time of data collection were not yet allowed to drive in Saudi Arabia, I paid for their Uber taxi rides so as not to place any financial burden on them.

Consent forms were sought and granted by all those participating in the study, and these included teachers and supervisors from two universities. Consent from students was not deemed necessary as they were not direct participants in the study. During the conducted observation sessions, the target of observations were the teachers and their classroom practices, and not the students. Also, no video or audio recordings were collected during the observations, and therefore no data from students was collected.

It was crucial to take steps to maintain confidentiality and anonymity of data so that participants felt able to fully share their experiences and thoughts. It was later revealed to the researcher that some teachers had had negative experiences when participating in past studies. In some cases, their identities were made public after the researcher had left, or something they said was traced back to them. Therefore, in this study it was not only important to maintain adequate ethical considerations for anonymity, but it was also important to be transparent and discuss with them the steps that I was taking, and what I could and could not guarantee.

The following section will elaborate my position as an insider researcher, and how this influenced some of the methodological decisions I made.

3.6. Positioning the researcher

The case studies that make up this research project were both conducted in a context in which I view myself as an insider researcher. Being an 'insider researcher' involves conducting studies on contexts and populations in which insider researchers are members and sharing a certain identity, language and experience with their participants (Asselin, 2003). I share the cultural and linguistic background of my participants by being an Arabic speaking Saudi woman who has spent most of her life in Saudi Arabia. Like my participants, I was raised with Saudi cultural values. I also share a professional and experiential base with my participants. I too am an EFL teacher who has had the experience of attending an overseas postgraduate program in an English native speaking country.

My position as an insider researcher has sparked the initial interest in this research. This interest has fuelled a need to study the views of other teachers who have completed the

overseas program. After being exposed to many views (Alrabai, 2014; Alrashidi & Phan, 2015; Alseghayer, 2011) that blamed Saudi EFL teachers for students' low English skills, I was aware that research studies had not been successful in fully exploring who Saudi teachers are, and what influences their teaching decisions and classroom practice. Being a Saudi EFL teacher myself, I was able to relate to teachers who were on the receiving end of the negative judgements. It led me to understand the value of representing teachers' voices and highlighting their experiences, as described by them.

One of the advantages of having insider status is that it often gives researchers easy access to their participants (Greene, 2014). In my case, this was true in some instances, but not others. Although I underwent the right procedures and obtained all the clearance documents that allowed me to access the university campuses, I faced much resistance from campus security who were not convinced about my identity. Because I was neither a student nor faculty member, I needed to seek further approval letters to be allowed on-campus. I was informed to do so because, although I had approval to conduct my research and collect data, I needed another kind of approval to enter the campus in the first place. This process was long and required more time than I had at my disposal. Luckily, having support from inside the university proved very beneficial. Because of my correspondence with the Dean, she was able to help me enter the campus and facilitated the approval process. Although my status as an insider researcher was expected to facilitate the recruitment process, I needed the support of another insider whose authority extended mine to be able to complete the recruitment and collect the necessary data for my research.

An insider researcher's pre-existing relations and knowledge of the context can often help find and invite participants to be a part of the study. Being an insider researcher also helps establish a pre-existing level of acceptance and trust, resulting in participants being open about their perceptions, which in turn allows for greater depth in relation to the data gathered (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

Another advantage of having insider status is that it provides researchers with the necessary cultural and historical knowledge of the context and the appropriate ways of interacting with participants (Greene, 2014). In my case, being an insider researcher made me aware of age hierarchies and gender segregations that are characteristic of the Saudi culture. Recognising these cultural characteristics and the restrictions associated with them influenced the data collection process and recruitment of participants. For example, the

choice of restricting participants to only female teachers was made based on my understanding of the social and physical boundaries between males and females in the Saudi culture. Although the act of communication itself is not uncommon between males and females, getting male participants to speak to me at length about their honest beliefs and experiences can be very difficult. Saudi cultural norms discourage men from speaking to women about their insecurities or struggles, as it is seen as a sign of weakness (Alzarah, 2008). Therefore, had I interviewed male participants, they would have most likely provided a more polished picture of their realities. This would have led to an absence of discussion around feelings involving difficulties and vulnerability. Consequently, Saudi women are discouraged from sympathising with non-relative men or showing them emotional support, because doing so may cause men to 'lose face' (Alzarah, 2008). Effective data collection involves participants being able to openly discuss their experiences and express their beliefs and perceptions. However, such boundaries between men and women in the Saudi context prevent the establishment of rapport between male participants and a female researcher such as myself.

My status as an insider has also increased my awareness of the cultural considerations that need to be taken in relation to participants' age. With participants of a similar age to me, rapport was sought by speaking about commonalities, shared experiences and ambitions. However, this was different from my interactions with older participants. Due to cultural norms regarding interaction, it is more preferable to assign them to a more esteemed and respected position than oneself. With older participants, rapport was sought before and during the interviews by my display of various attitudes of respect. This includes constantly expressing admiration for their professional and educational achievements and hoping that I would one day follow in their footsteps. Also, the interview questions were presented in a way that highlighted my limited knowledge compared to theirs. This was designed to encourage them to go into more detail about their experiences and generate thick, rich data.

Being a cultural insider, I was also able to downplay my power in the researcher-participant relationship during observations. To alleviate teachers' worries of being judged, I portrayed myself as a researcher who aims to learn from their stories. I constantly stressed that I wanted to learn from them by observing firsthand the contextual factors they have to deal with on a daily basis.

The adopted approach for recruitment was also influenced by my insider positioning and understanding of the social context. The decision to not involve senior administrators in the recruitment process allowed teachers to freely agree to or decline their participation. My combined knowledge of the Saudi culture and educational context helped to recognise how difficult it would be for teachers to refuse to participate if it was suggested by their seniors. To avoid pressuring participants, recruitment was undertaken entirely by me.

Although being an insider has the advantage of allowing a deeper understanding of a group of people in a way that may be inaccessible to outsiders, it also carries a 'stigma'. This stigma often relates to the increased researcher subjectivity or bias that might negatively affect the research design, methodology, and/or results (Adler & Adler, 1987; Greene, 2014; Kanuha, 2000). For example, a researcher's insider status may lead participants to assume that he/she is aware of certain issues, and would therefore refrain from fully describing their unique experiences. This was clearly present in both stages of the study. In my attempt to establish rapport and familiarity with the teachers, I shared some information about my status as an EFL teacher who similarly went through an overseas PD experience. However, I realised that teachers in several instances used phrases like "you know how it is" or "I'm sure you've seen this before" during the interviews. In both studies, I was closely attentive to this issue by looking out for these signs and phrases which indicated that participants were making inaccurate assumptions regarding similarity. To minimise the negative influence that this may have had on my data, I encouraged participants to fully express their meanings during interviews and to give as much detail about their experiences as possible.

A further risk of the insider status may occur at the level of data analysis, leading researchers to highlight experiences, notions, or opinions that they share with participants, while overlooking those that are unique to participants alone (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). This risk can take place especially if the researcher is unaware of the influence of his insider status and rushes through the analysis phase without adequate rigour. Despite these risks, having insider status does not automatically impose a negative effect on the research process. In fact, several steps can and should be taken to minimise their influence. One of these steps is raising one's awareness of their potential from the outset (Greene, 2014). Constant and thoughtful reflection on the subjectivity of the research process can also minimise concerns associated with the insider status (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

My position as an insider was constantly revisited by keeping a daily reflection journal during the data collection process. My awareness of the advantages and risks of being an insider was further developed following extensive conversations with my supervisors before, during, and after data collection and data analysis. I also joined my associate supervisor in giving a talk to students in a research methodology course, during which I shared reflections on my position as an insider and how this unfolded during data collection. The questions asked and the discussions made during that session added to my awareness. Such conscious personal reflections and meaningful conversations with research experts are suggested by Van Heugten (2004) to "deconstruct the familiar world of private practice" (p. 207). In my study, these strategies also minimised negative influences of my insider status and increased my awareness of the choices I made.

As an insider researcher, it was important to realise the nature of qualitative research and the extent of my own ability to restrict biases. Various forms of relationships evolve during qualitative research; therefore, it is important to not hide behind a fabricated wall of professional distancing. Glesne (1999) explained that qualitative researchers must be fully authentic in their interactions with their participants and "honour the consequences of acting with genuineness" (p. 105).

3.7. Quality considerations

Lincoln and Guba (1985) highlight that trustworthiness of a qualitative study is determined through credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Credibility, sometimes termed internal validity (Merriam, 2009), refers to how a study's findings are congruent with reality, in other words, its capacity to present the participants' world through their own views. Merriam (2009) recommends five strategies to enhance the credibility of a qualitative study. These are triangulation of data, member checking, peer-reviewing, researchers' reflexivity and prolonged engagement. All these strategies were integrated in the current study.

First, triangulation of data collection tools and sources was used in both case studies (two classroom observations per teacher, two semi-structured interviews per teacher, semi-structured interviews with supervisors and reviews of institutional guidelines). Second, member checking was used by sending all participants an emailed copy of their transcribed interviews, to confirm that the transcript represented their meanings and that my translation of their Arabic phrases was accurate. Third, peer-reviewing was conducted

with the research supervisors as we went through the coding categories and the data interpretations. Fourth, the researcher's reflexivity was also maintained before, during and after the data collection and analysis phases, using the abovementioned strategies explained in the previous section (i.e. positioning the researcher). Fifth, prolonged engagement with the research sites was sought by spending six consecutive weeks in each university context. This duration facilitated the collection of the necessary research data and also helped to establish a holistic understanding of the teachers' experiences, observed practices and the contextual dynamics of each university. The time spent within the research sites also facilitated the establishing of rapport with the participating teachers, as I had engaged with each of them for four data collection sessions, (two interviews and two observations), in addition to our introductory meetings during which I explained the research and what the data collection entails. These prolonged and multiple engagements with each participant enabled me to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the teachers' experiences and how these may differ across both contexts

Transferability, sometimes known as external validity, refers to the extent to which the findings of a study can be generalised or applied to other situations (Merriam, 2009). This traditional view of transferability does not apply to this qualitative comparative case study, because the aim was to understand a phenomenon in depth, not generalise a set of findings on broader contexts. A more refined understanding of generalisability for qualitative researchers was explained by Cusick (1983). Cusick determined that field study attempts "to unravel and explain a human event giving particular attention to the collective understanding of those who created the event" (p. 135). Therefore, its generalisability relies "not on proposition-like laws, but on the assumption that…behaviour that occurs in a particular setting may also occur in another similar setting" (p. 134).

Merriam (2009) suggests two strategies to enhance transferability in qualitative research: thick description and multisite designs. This study included thick descriptions for each case and participant, as much as can be supplied without jeopardising their anonymity, as well as detailed descriptions of the findings using extensive quotes from conducted interviews and descriptions of observed practices. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest, this was conducted to provide a "thick description of the sending context so that someone in a potential receiving context may assess the similarity between them and … the study" (p. 125). The second strategy to foster transferability of the findings was by employing a multisite research design using two different universities, UTP and UIV. The value of such

a design lies in using "several sites, cases and situations that maximise diversity in the phenomenon of interest" (Merriam, 1998, p. 212), which in turn maximises the readers' ability to apply the results to other situations.

Dependability and confirmability are used to substitute the quantitative notion of reliability, which refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Because the replication of a qualitative study will not present identical results, qualitative researchers are more concerned with whether the results are consistent with the collected data, in other words, are they dependable? (Merriam, 2009). Four strategies to enhance the dependability of research results are recommended by Merriam (1998): explanation of an investigator's position in the study, triangulation, examining the data with peers or experienced experts, (the use of these three strategies in this study has been explained earlier in this section) and the use of an audit trail.

The assumption underlying an audit trail is that "if we cannot expect others to replicate our account, the best we can do is explain how we arrived at our results" (Dey, 2003, p. 251). This is done by including a detailed description of "how data were collected, how categories were derived and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry" (Merriam, 1998, p. 207). This chapter includes detailed descriptions of data collection phases and the process of data analysis, as well as ethical considerations and difficulties faced, aiming to enhance the study's transparency for readers.

3.8. Difficulties faced during the data collection process

In planning data collection, every effort was made to follow the necessary steps and gain the approval needed to facilitate data collection within the allocated time. As the process commenced, however, several obstacles were encountered. The first was gaining access to one university site, explained earlier in section 3.6. The second obstacle was recruiting teacher participants. I had originally planned to send two rounds of emails, an initial invitation and a reminder. The intent was to avoid pressuring would-be participants and to allow them time to think and make any enquiries about the research project. Invitations and reminders were sent to 52 teachers across both universities, but I received no replies. I had to go to teachers' offices and knock on their doors, one by one, introduce myself and my study, and invite them to participate. I gave them information forms that explained how the study would be conducted, and I also provided my contact number and email. I presented myself in a way that was relatable to teachers, being a teacher myself and sharing

common experiences. I wanted them to be comfortable and not view me as an outsider who wanted to benefit from their stories and personal experiences. Some participants later explained that because of their negative experiences with previous researchers, they were hesitant to participate in further studies. As a consequence, they did not reply to my initial emails. Other teachers later explained that they would not agree to participate in a study with someone they had never met or seen. They did not reply to my emails assuming that others would definitely participate. These explanations gave me an insight into the dynamics of participant/researcher communication in that specific context. Although I consider myself an insider researcher, these things were not clear to me at the outset.

One of the teachers agreed to participate in the study on the condition that she would keep the hard copy of her signed consent form after I scan it and keep an electronic version. I agreed to that, and she used the shredder in her office to destroy the hardcopy consent form before we started our first interview. She was worried that it would accidentally fall into the hands of someone at the university, and that they would be able to trace her interview data back to her. Another teacher pulled out of the research for health reasons after participating in a pre observation interview. She was pregnant and later developed complications that prevented her from teaching and returning to work. Her interview data was not used in the study because it would have provided only a partial view of her experiences, that did not include observation data or post observation data to support it.

3.9 Summary

The difficulties faced during the data collection highlight the dynamic nature of research which involves people, and reflect how unexpected conditions can emerge and influence the data collection process. It is hoped that by highlighting these challenges, readers would have a better understanding of the nature of the research context.

This chapter presented the methodological infrastructure of this study. It started with an explanation of the overarching paradigm and qualitative approach undertaken to explore teachers' cognitions and practices within the Saudi context. A detailed explanation of the tools used to collect the data and analytical approaches used to present the findings was given. I also explained the reasoning behind those choices, based on recommendations in the literature and my own judgement of what is ethically accepted in the Saudi educational context. The following chapter will present the analysis chapters, where findings of both case studies are presented in two consecutive chapters, followed by a cross-case analysis.

Chapter 4. First case study:
University of Innovative Vision

This chapter presents the insights which emerged from the first case study, the University of Innovative Vision (UIV), in a way that contributes to answering each of the three research questions. To do that, this chapter will first highlight the experiences of the five UIV teachers during their overseas educational programs (Afaf, Sara, Amal, Mariam and Deema). The various themes of development which occurred in the teachers' LTC will be presented, reflecting the influence of OEEs on their growth. These insights will contribute to answering the first research question: how have teachers' experiences in overseas PD programs influenced their cognitions regarding EFL teaching approaches?

This will be followed by an exploration of UIV teachers' experiences of returning home to work as EFL teachers in the university. The emerged insights will highlight the nature of the UIV context, and the specific contextual factors which influence teachers' implementation of overseas-developed cognitions. The presented themes will help in answering the second research question: after returning home, in what ways do contextual factors influence the translation of teachers' overseas-developed teaching approaches into classroom practices?

The final section of this chapter will explore the teachers' observed classroom practices. It will highlight the teachers' instructional approaches, and how these relate to the institutional guidelines which advocate communicative and learner-centered instruction. The presented themes will also highlight the relationship between the teachers' pedagogical cognitions - which they developed overseas - and their observed classroom practices. In highlighting this relationship, I will draw on the teachers' own post-observation reflections which help to make sense of their observed practices. The insights presented in the final section of this chapter will contribute to answering the third research question: how have experiences in overseas PD programs influenced the teachers' practices after returning to Saudi classrooms?

4.1. Teachers' cognition development

During their OEEs, the teachers spent several years immersed in foreign contexts while engaging with different educational systems. This experience exposed them to different

world views and perspectives about language teaching and learning and encouraged them to reevaluate the cognitions they previously held. As a consequence, the teachers adopted new educational and personal notions, abandoned old ones, and reassessed previously held perspectives about their own contexts. They also acquired skills that reflected their professional development. This analysis highlights developments that occurred in teachers' reported LTC, shedding light on the complexity of the development process.

To begin, I would like to highlight my use of 'development' instead of 'change' when referring to teachers' modified LTCs. I view development as a word that gives credit to different levels of modification, not just those that are significantly transformative. I believe it is important to highlight more subtle developments in teachers' cognitions, as failing to do so may provide a superficial understanding of how cognitions expand in response to different life experiences.

Figure 4.1 summarises the developments which occurred in the teachers' LTCs following extended OEEs. The analysis of interview data revealed three main themes and several subthemes of development in teachers' reported LTCs.

Enhanced theoretical understandings	• Learning theories • Language teaching approaches
Re-evaluation of self	• Confidence in their knowledge and skills • Entitlement as decision makers • Role as teachers in the classroom
Re-evaluation of local context	• Role of context in influencing language learning • Teacher/learner relationship within local educational norms
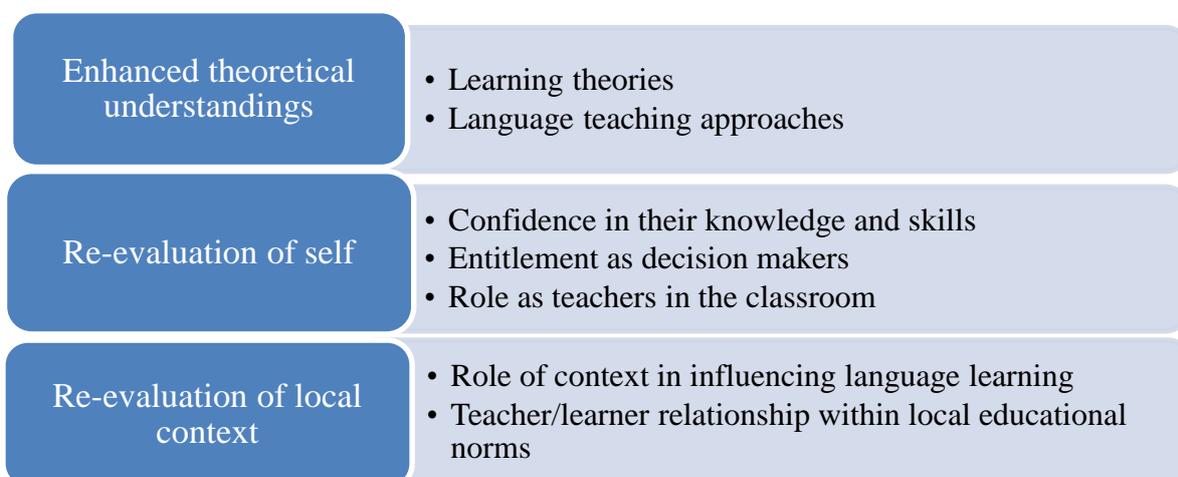
Figure 4.1. Themes of development in UIV teachers' cognitions

4.1.1. Enhanced theoretical and pedagogical understandings

4.1.1.1. Learning theories

A main component of all teachers' overseas programs is theoretical content that introduces them to the main learning theories, such as constructivism and behaviorism. Some teachers (e.g. Afaf, Deema) had never been exposed to these learning theories before, despite

completing a pre-service teaching program and then practising teaching for several years. The other teachers had some pre-established ideas regarding these theories, but these were either limited or did not enable them to link learning theory and classroom practice.

Some teachers quickly realised that understanding these learning theories was essential to their professional development. For example, Deema recalls that during the overseas program, "I realised that the things I knew before were not enough to make me a highly qualified teacher". Afaf also realised that an integral part of her education as a teacher was lacking, and she was determined to make up for that by taking advantage of content made available through the overseas program. We see this when she asserts, "I read so many articles during that course…I was hungry to learn the core ideas… I felt like I was making up for lost time".

Some teachers highlighted the extensive theoretical content of the overseas programs by comparing it to their pre-service programs which they had completed in Saudi Arabia. Mariam, for example, was presented with teaching and learning theories during her pre-service education. She reports that, "I remember there was little bit mentioned" however "it was only memorising their names, constructivism, behaviourism". Deema, however, does not recall these learning theories as part of her pre-service education when she raises the question, "how come they [local pre-service programs] didn't teach us this before? They mentioned nothing". In comparison, the theoretical content of the overseas programs was presented in an extensive form. The teachers use strong phrases to describe the role of these theories such as "an important building block" (Amal) and "corner- stone of teacher education" (Afaf). These descriptions highlight teachers' views of how important the theoretical content was for developing their cognitions on teaching and learning.

Increasing their knowledge of core learning theories influenced teachers to develop, articulate and assess their own teaching philosophies. This is evident in the experiences of Sara and Mariam. Although both teachers had had several years of teaching experience before the overseas programs, they had not been comfortable with describing their teaching approaches: "Learning the theories … it helped me put a name to what I am doing and why" (Mariam). "Before, [the overseas program] I used to hate this question: what is your teaching approach? … I only took two courses about theories [during overseas program], but they helped me make a sound description of my teaching approach".

Understanding the advantages and disadvantages of each approach, and identifying how their previous teaching was located within different learning theories, led Mariam and Sara to abandon some previous perspectives in favour of others. "I try to be open to all of them [the learning theories], but I lean towards the constructivist one now" (Mariam). "I realised that my teaching fell under the behaviourist approach. I didn't like that, but at least I knew where I needed to be. And I needed to be more of a constructivist" (Sara). Additionally, Amal conveys the value of understanding the core theoretical understandings of learning, and how it supported her further development. She explains that it "…really helped me shift my mindset on how to teach".

The content of the overseas programs, which had a core focus on learning theories, helped teachers to better understand how language learning occurs. This led teachers to develop the necessary awareness and subsequent skills that helped them to adapt their teaching to effectively meet the needs of their students. An apparent influence in Deema's experience was her developed ability to link these theoretical understandings to real classroom practice. We see this when she asserts "I needed to learn the theories and processes of learning because that is how I can choose the approach that suits my students".

4.1.1.2. Teaching approaches

In addition to gaining a better understanding of how students learn and acquire new information, the teachers' diverse overseas programs helped them recognise the second language teaching approaches beneficial to their students. The programs reportedly highlighted the advantages of learner-centered communicative teaching and the disadvantages of traditional teaching approaches, such as grammar translation and audio-lingual teaching. These notions were emphasised through classroom content, discussions and readings, observation sessions and a supervised practicum.

Following their OEEs, a prominent development that was recognized in all teachers' LTC is valuing learner-centered education and, importantly, understanding the limitations of teacher-centered education. While reflecting on their early school learning experiences in Saudi Arabia, the teachers explained that the classrooms were predominately teacher-centered with minimal oral production opportunities. Amal explains, "we barely said any words other than, 'yes Miss'". As they later undertook their pre-service teaching education in Saudi Arabia, Mariam, Sara and Afaf report that notions of learner-centered teaching were encouraged. However, they report a lack of proper presentation and implementation

of learner-centered education in the pre-service programs. Due to this lack of clarity, the teachers did not know how to implement learner-centered teaching in their classrooms. As they later became teachers, Sara, Mariam, Deema and Afaf all recall adopting a teacher-centered approach without being aware of it.

In some teachers' narratives, it was easy to recognise the influence of the apprenticeship of observation on their later adoption of a teacher-centered approach. We see this with Sara when she states, "I never knew it, but I was doing exactly everything my schoolteachers used to do". This highlights how teachers' experiences as learners may have had a strong influence on their later teaching. In contrast, the teachers' pre-service education did not have a strong influence on their later teaching practices. This was reflected through the narratives of Sara, Mariam and Afaf. These teachers clearly reported not implementing a learner-centred approach during their early years of practice, despite it being strongly advocated in their pre-service programs.

The overseas programs, however, provided teachers with the experience of learning in a learner-centered environment, and also explicitly highlighted the benefits of a learner-centered vs teacher-centered classroom. The overseas programs also guided them in practically implementing learner-centered approaches during the required teaching practicum. Today, the teachers all highlight different developments in their cognitions related to moving away from predominantly teacher-centered approaches towards an increased appreciation of learner-centered teaching. The teachers had different ways of explaining what a learner-centered education meant to them. For Amal, it meant encouraging students to be active learners instead of passive listeners. For Sara, it was minimising lecturing and giving students a chance to participate and work together. For Afaf, it was focusing on students' gradual skills development instead of tests and grades. This increased appreciation for a learner-centered education was evident in all teachers' experiences.

Another development in teachers' LTC is highlighted through their understanding of the benefits of communicative language teaching (CLT) and how this differs from other approaches like grammar translation and audio-lingual teaching. The teachers described this development either by comparing their current cognitions to those they held before the overseas program, or by describing their previous teaching approaches and how they changed due to their developed cognitions. The teachers had all been introduced to CLT

as an established teaching approach in their local pre-service education programs. However, other than Deema, these four teachers had either a limited or distorted understanding of what CLT entailed. For example, prior to the OEEs, Mariam had viewed CLT to be an approach that relied on games and fun activities to deliver content, with no real focus on language forms. Similarly, Sara perceived that CLT could only be applied in Western classrooms because it is an approach that was developed in the West.

Following their programs, the teachers all reported appreciating certain aspects of CLT and incorporating them as part of their respective teaching philosophies. These aspects include decreasing explicit error correction and exclusive focus on grammar, minimising rote learning, and creating opportunities for students to practice meaningful oral communication. Afaf reports completely adopting CLT as part of her teaching philosophy, viewing it as the "solution" to Saudi students' low English skills: "I love CLT, it is the best one. I try to always use it … I think all the teachers here should use CLT". The other teachers, however, were critical of identifying it as the only approach that was beneficial for the local context. As Mariam explains, "CLT is popular and effective sometimes, but I think, for us Saudis, an integrated one is most effective". Amal and Deema were critical of how their overseas programs portrayed traditional teaching approaches as completely negative. In their view, such approaches can be beneficial for different types of learning situations. They relate this contention to how they were taught English as young learners through traditional teaching approaches that included explicit focus on form and extended grammar content. Amal explains "if it [traditional teaching] was completely wrong and bad, how come we learned English then?" Reflecting on her thoughts during one of the courses, Deema adds,

> *The whole course was about CLT and how wonderful it is. I felt like, yes, fine, it's interesting … but some aspects of traditional teaching is effective too. Especially for Saudis, so why can't we use some of this and that? We can do CLT one class and then next class teach only grammar and make sure form is right.*

The teachers' OEEs helped them develop their teaching approaches by adopting new notions and/or modifying others in various ways. However, whether or not it was one of their programs' aims, the teachers had mostly developed a critical perspective of these teaching approaches. Using their past experiences as learners and teachers in the Saudi context, these teachers formed their own distinct views about what teaching approaches were beneficial to their Saudi context. As a result, all but one of the teachers (Afaf) did

not associate their current teaching approaches solely with CLT. Instead, they reported adopting an integrated one that incorporated aspects of different approaches based on their students' needs.

4.1.2. Re-evaluation of self

4.1.2.1. Confidence in their knowledge /skills as teachers

This theme highlights one of the more affective dimensions of teachers' cognition development during their OEEs. The teachers went through the process of learning new information and new ways to teach, which required them to unpack previous beliefs about themselves. The teachers had to unlearn their old ways of teaching, as they questioned and tested them against new notions that often seemed challenging. This was, at times, emotionally difficult for the teachers. Feelings of self-doubt and loss of direction regarding their roles as EFL teachers reportedly dominated their first few months overseas. However, these negative feelings changed as they progressed in their programs, transforming for many into a determination to improve and succeed. Gaining advanced knowledge about their profession and being supervised by qualified international professionals gave teachers a new appreciation of the stages they had reached in their journey of professional development. The challenges teachers overcame during their OEEs also led to a sense of achievement, increasing their appreciation of their knowledge and building their confidence in their teaching skills. The teachers' experiences below highlight how their confidence developed during their OEEs, and how it persisted years after they completed the programs and returned home.

Afaf showcased her pride in identifying herself as a "highly qualified teacher". At the beginning of her career, she reported that she had never wanted to be a teacher; however, her view of herself and her profession as a whole changed following her OEEs. She now recognises her different traits and the value she brings to any teaching context.

> "I was not very proud to be a teacher. I thought anybody can do it ... now coming back [from the OEE], I know I'm not just a teacher. I'm a thinker, a researcher, a problem solver. ... I am an excellent team player. I can bring so much to any group".

Amal's increased confidence in her skills as a teacher seems to have been partly influenced by succeeding in situations that challenged her, such as helping a particularly difficult

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group of students during the practicum overseas. She carries a sense of pride in her success, reflecting on this success when faced with feelings of self-doubt,

> *I realised that, wow, I'm good at this. They were difficult students to teach, and I almost gave up, but I didn't. And I'm so proud of myself because I kept trying until I succeeded. I always think, if I could teach those tough students [during the practicum] I could teach any students.*

Mariam, who taught for seven years before her overseas program, recalls constantly doubting her own decision making during those years. However, completing the program and being certified and recognised by professionals in the field increased her confidence in her ability to "make the best decisions". She explains, "getting that certificate and graduating with high marks was important for me. Because it meant that my level of knowledge now is very high". Reflecting on how this confidence influences her now, she mentions "I don't mind the observations, I used to hate them because I thought they [the observers] would judge me. But now I'm confident, no one will say that I don't know what I'm doing."

Deema, whose interviews highlighted a deep awareness of her feelings and self-image, reveals how the OEE was clarifying at both a professional and personal level. The OEE helped her develop a clear understanding of her "strength points and weakness points", leading her to confidently nominate herself and undertake certain projects after she returned to Saudi Arabia. Her OEE "helped me know myself very well … the things that I thought I knew about myself, about my personality, about my feelings, things got more clear … I am much more able than I believed".

For Sara, her increased confidence is influenced by what she calls "the ability to be flexible in my ideas". The OEE was especially humbling for her, proving that many of her previously hard-held notions had not been very beneficial to her students. Now, she knows how to be more "flexible". For Sara, being flexible meant "never be[ing] stuck in one mould", always searching for ways to improve her teaching skills and to be critical of anything that is portrayed as a solution to every problem. She explains, "my flexibility is the best thing about me now. It helps me have a broader horizon. It makes me feel good about myself as a teacher."

4.1.2.2. Entitlement as decision makers

As the teachers returned to their local Saudi institution, they carried developed notions of how EFL teaching should be conducted and how they expected to implement these notions in their classrooms. However, they found that some of these notions clashed with UIV's pre-set expectations of returnee teachers. This generated different reactions from the teachers and emphasised the roles they aspired to play in their local educational context. The teachers' reactions highlighted a sense of entitlement that they appeared to share, that is, the entitlement to have authority over classroom decision making and to have a role in the development of the EFL program.

As is the norm in the Saudi educational context, conformity is highly respected, and challenging decisions made by seniors is discouraged. Before their overseas programs, the teachers reported conforming with these expectations, recalling always following prescribed policies and institutional recommendations, "I used to be so passive" (Sara); "I just taught how they told me to" (Amal); "I didn't want to be disrespectful so I never asked them questions" (Afaf). However, the teachers' OEEs seem to have fuelled their desire to take on new roles, shifting from passive followers to active contributors. This is exemplified in the following examples.

Deema recalls a recent altercation with a senior member at the university who insisted that her students attend advanced level writing workshops, despite Deema not agreeing with the macro skills it targeted. Deema's reaction to this incident and the feelings that guided her are highlighted in her quote: "I will not let anyone tell me what to do, especially that she doesn't know my students. I am now qualified enough to make these decisions". This experience emphasises Deema's great sense of entitlement to make the best decisions for her students, as well as demonstrating her confidence in her judgment as a teacher.

Amal and Afaf believe that their opinions should be considered when deciding on certain aspects in the program design, such as the choice of textbooks, teaching assignments and allocation of groups. Amal takes a strong stance in expressing her right to be heard, mentioning her quality education to justify that right, "the government spent so much money to give us quality education from top universities, so please don't expect me to come back and do what I'm told without letting my opinion be heard". Afaf also adds, "I tell them: don't make these policies without consulting us, we know best what will and

won't work". For these two teachers, ensuring that their opinions are heard by their seniors was a crucial part of their perceived roles as returnees to their local context.

While the previous three teachers held strong, and somewhat confrontational attitudes when expressing their entitlement as decision makers, Sara and Mariam exemplify a more conciliatory stance. They both highly value their agency and their right to make classroom decisions; however, they choose to express that in subtle ways. In Sara's narratives, she expresses her awareness of the common expectation to not question decisions made by senior members, hence "I'm careful not to seem rude, because I will be working with this supervisor for a long time". However, she makes sure her views are considered by giving "tiny suggestions to the supervisor here and there, and in the end I do it my way with no problems". Mariam, having returned only six months ago, avoids all confrontation, "I don't want them to think that I'm already difficult to work with". It is unknown whether Mariam will be more assertive in voicing her opinions to her seniors in the future; however, her entitlement to make decisions is already evident in her reflections, "I believe it is my right to decide [on classroom decisions] … only *I* am capable to do that, because I know what my students need".

Dr. Amira, the supervisor working with these teachers, holds an important role in prescribing policies and recommendations for the EFL course. While commenting on returnee teachers' PD following their OEEs, she confirms that they return with new demands to participate in decision making. However, she describes the negative consequences of this attitude from a managerial position, as she struggles to convince returnees to adhere to certain teaching policies. She explains that "sometimes it's difficult to work with them, because they just don't listen. Everyone wants to do her own thing and it's hard to make them just do what they're told and follow the plans".

4.1.2.3. Role as teachers in the classroom

In addition to the previous areas of development in how the teachers view themselves following their OEEs, the interview narratives highlight several views concerning their roles in the classroom. Three teachers from UIV reported holding authoritarian roles before their OEEs. These are Mariam, Amal and Afaf. For example, during Mariam's early teaching she explains that, "I thought that I had to control the atmosphere and make sure students pay attention and just follow the rules". Mariam's reflections indicate that her

role in the classroom may have been influenced by her early learning experience as a student, "that is how all my teachers did it … that's how I was taught".

After the programs, however, a common development among teachers is their shifting role towards becoming a facilitator of knowledge, whether through "helping students help themselves" (Sara); "to be less dependent on me for every little piece of information" (Amal); or "giving them [students] more power" (Deema). However, undertaking this new role was not easy for all teachers. Amal was particularly aware that it differs from Saudi students' expectations of a teacher's role in the classroom. Although she was convinced of the new role she had adopted, she had to re-assure herself that it would not undermine her position. "I always reminded myself that giving them power will not threaten my important role. They will always need me, but in a different way. Not just information, but [they] need my guidance."

Sara's experience in a foreign education system which emphasised students' role in their own educational development had helped her to re-evaluate the role she previously adopted as a classroom teacher. She recognised its negative influence on her students and was inspired to change her "position" in order to better serve her students' needs. "I did not foster learner autonomy… Now, my position is completely different. The entire [overseas education] experience really helped me look at myself from the outside, assess myself, and change my ways". While recalling the classroom roles she had adopted before her OEE, Afaf mentions, "before, I had the sense that *I* am the teacher and *you* [the students] have to follow *me*". However, this changed following the OEE, "now I realise that they have a voice, and it's important for me to consider that".

Deema reflects on the difference between the education system in the UK and that in Saudi Arabia, identifying where she stands in terms of her role as a teacher in the classroom. In the UK program, Deema reported experiencing some negative attitudes from her instructors, and during an observation session, she was critical of one language teacher for being unsupportive towards his students. In analysing the development of her current role as a teacher, it did not seem to be solely attributed to her OEE. Deema's developed role can be attributed to her attempts to find a middle ground between the traditional role of Saudi teachers and that of her UK instructors, which she views as two ends of the spectrum.

> *[In the UK] students do 90% of the work. Teachers are there for guidance and feedback. Here [in Saudi Arabia] teachers do 90% of the work, students only study for exams. I want to make a balance. My role is not to spoonfeed them, but I will not leave them without support, either. I have to help them to help themselves.*

4.1.3. Re-evaluation of the local context

The analysis of teachers' reported experiences before, during and after their OEEs shows that some teachers returned with a more holistic understanding of the Saudi educational context. Although their education took place overseas, it gave them a critical outlook in relation to their local context and how this context influences language teaching and learning. The cognition developments in how teachers re-evaluated their local context is identified in regards to two areas: the role of the local context in influencing language learning, and the appropriate teacher/learner relationships within Saudi educational norms.

4.1.3.1 Role of the local context in influencing language learning

During the OEEs, the Saudi teachers worked and studied with peers from many EFL contexts around the world. The sharing of experiences among diverse cohorts, and the reflections made about different EFL contexts helped expand the participating teachers' understandings of the similarities and differences that exist among international EFL contexts. This enabled them to examine the Saudi EFL context through a fresh lens, as exemplified by the experiences of Mariam, Deema and Sara. Mariam recalled having negative views about the local educational context before her OEE. For example, she used to believe that learning English overseas was the only way to guarantee advanced skills. She also previously believed that certain teaching practices are not applicable in Saudi classrooms because students simply do not accept them. However, her OEEs helped her realise that "what works for others can definitely work for us, we are not faulty [sic]". Mariam's exposure to her colleagues' experiences in different EFL contexts and the struggles they each faced enabled her to compare them with her own Saudi context. For example, she explains, "I thought this was only restricted to our students, but even the Asian teachers abroad said the same thing about their students". These comparisons gave her a more positive view of her own EFL context, understanding that "there is nothing wrong with our students, our learning in Saudi Arabia".

Following the program, Deema became aware of the need to consider and "respect" Saudi educational culture, by ensuring that any practice is adapted to Saudi culture, not imposed on it. For example, she questions the common goal to "push" Saudi students to become better public speakers. She recalls labelling Saudi students as "weak English speakers" in the past; however, she now believes that this opinion "was not fair", because it does not consider the cultural role in influencing a fear of losing face. "I only looked at the surface, I didn't look at the whole picture". Deema now believes that teachers must stop forcing students to participate in university wide debates and presentation competitions, and instead try to build their confidence in expressing their opinions in the more comfortable setting of their classes first.

Sara reports developing a "better" understanding of how the mother tongue, Arabic, can influence students' repetition of certain mistakes. In her early teaching experience, she recalled being very hard on her students. Because she was never aware of notions such as the mother tongue interference, she believed that her students were simply lazy and were not taking her guidance seriously. During her OEE, she reflected on her Saudi students often and was able to change her negative views. Now, she believes she views students in "a less judgmental way", understanding that there are factors specific to their mother tongue and local context that influence their language acquisition.

> *"I used to correct certain mistakes for my students, over and over again, and they still made the same mistake. I was hard on them because I thought they were lazy. But* there [overseas] *I realised that the mother tongue can influence that* [experience]."

4.1.3.2 Teacher/learner relationships within Saudi educational norms

An important development in teachers' cognitions was their re-evaluation of appropriate teacher/learner relationships and how they are influenced by Saudi educational and cultural norms. When reflecting on their early experiences as learners, and the relationships they had with their Saudi instructors, the teachers expressed a common notion which was their display of great respect for their instructors. When they were young learners, the teachers understood the idea of respect differently, including being "extremely formal" (Sara), and "never negotiating or questioning their decisions" (Mariam). For Amal and Afaf, it even included an element of fear: "As students, we were afraid of them, intimidated by them" (Amal); "I was afraid to make mistakes in front of

my teachers" (Afaf). Generally, the participants had negative views toward their instructor's attitudes, exemplified by the following narratives: "our Saudi teachers weren't down to Earth … which was hard for us as students" (Deema); "being more flexible with students so they can communicate with you very easily. This is something I missed when I was a student. I had teachers who were very rigid" (Mariam).

The teachers saw very different attitudes from their instructors overseas. Unlike their early learning experiences in Saudi Arabia, the teachers responded positively towards the relationships they had with their instructors overseas. They especially appreciated their approachable and understanding attitudes. Implicit attributes such as the informality of classes, addressing their instructors by their first names, telling jokes, and sitting with instructors on the same table were all things they had not experienced in a classroom before. The attitude of their overseas instructors had positive influences on teachers' learning experiences; it specifically helped them to be open about their learning struggles and seek the advice and support they needed.

Having experienced the positive results of a relaxed and welcoming learning environment, the teachers attempted to replicate the attitudes of their overseas instructors when they returned to the Saudi context. However, four out of five UIV teachers reported that they were not successful in doing so. Mariam, who returned to Saudi Arabia six months ago, was positive about her ability to take on an "encouraging role, like their older sister". However, she has already started seeing unexpected reactions from some students, "they just don't listen to me ... I'm shocked, my students before never ignored me". Amal, Deema, and Afaf were also displeased with their Saudi students' response to their "nice", "friendly" and "like friends" attitudes, which they adopted following their OEEs. These teachers found that their Saudi students disregarded their instructions, and/or did not take their subjects seriously when they adopted approachable and non-authoritarian attitudes in the classroom. The students' reported reactions led their teachers to re-evaluate their notions of appropriate teacher/learner relationships. Afaf explained, "that's when I knew, I couldn't be like the teachers in America, so informal. There had to be some formality and respect, or else students don't take you or the subject seriously". Deema similarly mentioned, "it made me think that maybe the friendly relationship isn't the best one for them". After reassessing these attitudes, the teachers now report opting for one that was in-between the informal attitude of their overseas instructors and the authoritarian attitude of their own Saudi teachers. This in-between area meant "strict but fair" (Afaf); "maybe

not making jokes … but really showing them that you care" (Deema); "I am still approachable …but my rules are firm" (Amal).

These narratives highlight that teachers' OEEs had helped them form new understandings of the teacher/learner relationships that facilitate positive learning outcomes. They took on the notions of approachability and friendliness and abandoned previous notions of formality and authoritarian attitudes. As teachers returned home to local classrooms, they reassessed these adopted attitudes based on their students' response. The teachers further developed their classroom attitudes to reflect those they believe to be more appropriate for students in the local context. It is interesting that Amal, Deema, and Afaf believed that their overseas-developed teaching attitudes did not work well in local classrooms because students simply rejected them. This is, however, in stark contrast to Sara's experience. She did not report facing issues with her students' reaction to her "relaxed…informal" attitude which she adopted following her OEE. In fact, she believes that her local students are thriving, and their learning is supported by the relaxed classroom atmosphere and her approachable attitude.

The teachers' different experiences in implementing their overseas-adopted teaching attitudes, and their subsequent assessment of attitudes that are appropriate for local students, raises two main issues. First, it indicates that the teachers differed in their understanding of how best to set up a constructive student/teacher relationship, and what kind of boundaries need to be in place between teachers and students in a democratic classroom. There are different theories tied to classroom management and appropriate student/teacher relationships. Theorists such as Lewis (2008) and Rogers (2000) specifically highlight the need for clear and consistent boundaries to be established between students and teachers in order to foster constructive democratic classrooms. This requires teachers to maintain their authority and have advanced classroom management skills. It appears that Sara, of all the teachers, understood the balance needed to create a relaxed and constructive learning atmosphere which supports students' development. However, Amal, Deema, Afaf and Mariam's narratives indicate they may have displayed lenient or permissive attitudes which negatively influenced their classroom management and authority. This is highlighted through their "nice", "friendly" "like friends" and "like their older sister" attitudes.

Secondly, it appears that these returnee teachers, with the exception of Sara, initially struggled to maintain a constructive student/teacher relationship that supports positive learning outcomes. Their struggles to maintain such positive relationships with students in local classrooms highlights the returnees' need for support and guidance from peers or supervisors within the institution. This support can be in the form of peer observation or PD sessions that inform teachers of how best to adopt constructive classroom attitudes that align with a learner-centred approach. Such support is necessary to ensure that teachers do not have a simplistic notion of constructive teacher attitudes, viewing it to be the same as "friendly" attitudes.

The analysis has highlighted how OEEs had influenced various developments in teachers' LTCs. These developments were reflected through three main themes: enhanced theoretical and pedagogical understandings, a re-evaluation of self, and a re-evaluation of the local context. The developments in teachers' LTCs occurred as a result of their prolonged engagement with different education systems, during which they were exposed to new concepts, practices and ways of learning. It is clear the teachers' experiences overseas has substantially shaped the way the currently view EFL education and the roles they play as professionals in the field.

4.2. Influence of local educational context on UIV teachers' reported practices

This section highlights UIV teachers' experiences which contribute to answering the second research question: In what ways do contextual factors influence the translation of teachers' overseas-developed teaching approaches into classroom practices? To provide a holistic presentation of these factors, a background description of the UIV English program is presented first.

The English program provides all UIV students with intensive language courses during their first year at the university. The course is divided into four levels: beginner, elementary, intermediate and advanced. Within these levels, different language skills are taught. The program does not have a placement test that evaluates incoming students' skills. Instead, all new students are enrolled in the beginner level course, regardless of their English proficiency levels. Every class is equipped with advanced teaching equipment and software, such as multiple interactive smartboards, wireless internet and built-in sound systems. Students also have access to multimedia language labs, where they can practise

individual skills using computer software. The maximum number of students in each classroom is specified in the program guidelines to be 30; however, the observed classrooms ranged from 31-37 students. The faculty includes around 35 EFL teachers, all of whom have either returned from an OEE or are making plans to enrol in one. Overseeing all the teachers is one teacher-supervisor, Dr. Amira.

One of the original research aims was to understand the contextual components that influence teachers' implementation of overseas-developed teaching approaches. However, as the analysis progressed, it became evident that teachers' experiences as returnees is much more complex than their mere ability/inability to implement certain teaching approaches in Saudi classrooms. Beneath the surface of their observed practices, the teachers' narratives exemplified the complex re-construction of their identities as they struggled with their new roles as returnees. These complexities evolved when teachers' expectations and aspirations were not met or recognised, clashing with unexpected realities and demands of their local teaching context. These clashes are explored in detail below, as part of the contextual factors that influence teachers' practices.

Data from the UIV teachers' interviews, observation sessions, the supervisor's interviews and policy documents revealed several contextual factors that returnee teachers deal with when attempting to implement their desired practices. These factors are grouped into three major themes: structure of the EFL program, culture of learning in UIV and the university's professional culture.

4.2.1. Structure of the EFL program

Following their OEEs, all teachers returned to their previous positions in the UIV's EFL program. The interviews revealed several issues in the program design which restricted teachers' ability to implement some of the approaches they had developed overseas. These issues involve classroom arrangements, curriculum design, and standardisation guidelines.

4.2.1.1. Classroom arrangements

A prominent issue is that all UIV teachers reported facing a large number of students in each classroom, which influenced their capacity to implement their desired teaching approaches. Mariam believes that student numbers are constantly increasing: "Before I went overseas, the maximum number of students was 25. Now it starts from 30 to 40,

increasing every year". Their supervisor, Dr. Amira, confirms that university admissions policies require them to accept more students each year: "Each year we have more high school graduates … the pressure is on us to accept as many as possible". She also explains that they are constantly short on staff members, as many teachers are away on overseas scholarships, and hiring part-time teachers is not easily approved by recruitment managers.

Amal explains that large class size negatively affects her ability to implement certain practices: "I want to have a personal relationship with my students … I want them to have a voice in guiding the lesson, share their experiences. But how to do that with each one?" Deema explains that large class size makes it difficult to "read the students' faces" and adjust her teaching based on their expressions. She believes this is important because "it is my responsibility to notice when some don't understand or are not focusing or even sleepy, but it's hard when you have more than 35 students".

Sara's teaching is also restricted by the large numbers, although to a lesser degree than the other teachers. "I learned to adapt … I can't do some things I want, but I compensate with group work activities. Because they [large class sizes] are challenging". Afaf asserts that large numbers negatively influence the development of students' spoken communication skills, which is among the goals of the EFL program, "some of them will never have a chance to speak, there is too many of them".

Another issue found to influence teachers' implementation of their preferred practices is that students are at disparate levels in each classroom, due to the absence of placement tests that allocate students according to their skill levels. None of the teachers reported struggling with this issue during their respective early teaching experiences before OEEs. This could be because they had reportedly taught through lecturing and were unaware of student levels until after exam scores were released. However, the teachers' approaches to practice have developed following their OEEs. They now report implementing student-centred and communicatively oriented approaches that require students' participation in classroom activities. But implementing these approaches with disparate groups proved challenging for Deema, Afaf and Amal. These teachers found it particularly challenging when a classroom contained both beginner and advanced students. Deema exemplifies this disparity by saying, "I have a student with a 5.5 IELTS score, and another that can't use present tense. All in one class".

The disparate groups had reportedly influenced Deema's practices by restricting her capacity to address the needs of individual students. In her opinion, advanced students need activities that challenge them to reach their full potential, while beginner students need basic skills development and individual support. However, she expresses her inability to meet these needs, "I feel like I'm failing both groups, because I cannot give 100% of what they need". Maintaining students' attention in these classroom groups was difficult for Afaf, who reported that the more proficient students quickly lost interest in the lesson content: "Some are *very* skilled, the course level is just too low for them. I feel sorry for them because they seem bored but still have to attend".

Amal highlights how the vast discrepancy in student levels is particularly unfavourable for beginner students. She asserts that some lose their confidence because they compare themselves to more advanced students, while others become unwilling to participate in speaking activities for fear of "losing face". Although Amal tried to overcome this obstacle by pairing stronger students with weaker ones in group activities, she was not always successful: "It only works if a student is one or two levels higher than the other, not when one is very high and the other is very low".

Because the teachers had experienced teaching much smaller groups during the practicum component of their OEEs, they understood the benefits of smaller numbers of students with similar language levels. Their experiences suggest that current classroom arrangements in the local EFL program has negatively influenced their teaching practices and students' learning. It has also limited their capacity to implement practices that correspond with their overseas-developed teaching approaches.

4.2.1.2. Curriculum

The EFL program curriculum had been revised and reformed seven years before, with additional emphasis on developing writing and speaking communication among other skills. However, interviews revealed, with the exception of Deema, that teachers face several difficulties in implementing the curriculum as planned. Among the reported issues is the large number of skills and topics covered at each level.

Afaf explains that the curriculum is "too dense", with too many new skills to introduce in each lesson. She believes the density of the curriculum is making teachers lose track of what is most important, which is supporting students' gradual skills development.

Describing it as "running on a treadmill", Afaf reports that teachers feel pressured to cover all topics and skills within the allocated time frame. Sara similarly believes that the curriculum and syllabus design do not allow adequate time for students to practise previously presented skills "before jumping to the next one". She adds that the curriculum needs to allow time for practise within each lesson, especially given students have minimum opportunities to practise skills outside the classroom.

In Mariam's opinion, the curriculum design expects students to "develop too quickly within one semester", and this causes students to be overwhelmed and drained as the semester progresses. She recalls that several students have come to her office requesting she "slow down", and that the course is "too much" for them. Following their requests, Mariam had made attempts to "skip less important content"; however, she still believes that the curriculum needs revising. Amal presents a similar opinion, suggesting that curriculum content be reduced by "30%".

4.2.1.3. Standardisation

One of the noticeable characteristics of the EFL program in UIV is the measures taken to standardise the content, syllabus and assessment of each course. Teachers are required to adhere to specific guidelines which ensure that each lesson is presented in a similar way to all classrooms within the same level. This includes detailed syllabi for teachers to follow, outlining the order of topics, skills and word lists covered in each lesson and the date for each assessment. The teachers must only use unified assessments pre-approved by the supervisor, including written tests and oral presentations. Dr Amira explains that this standardisation is necessary to ensure all students have similar learning experiences. She adds that standardised assessments also help reduce student demand to be grouped with a specific "lenient teacher", assuming her assessments will be "easy to pass".

The teachers highlighted different reactions towards the standardised syllabus. Some appreciated having a pre-set plan as it helped them get organised during the semester (Mariam, Sara), while others highlighted its negative influence on their development and the development of their students (Deema, Afaf, Amal). Amal believes that the details in the syllabus are "too specific" and having to follow them all limits her creativity. She stresses the importance of "experimenting" in her lessons, as that would help her develop her teaching skills. Deema also believes that the syllabus restricts her ability to try out all the new ideas she has developed overseas. Highlighting its influence on other teachers as

well, Deema explains that a strictly timed syllabus is "unhealthy", because it makes teachers constantly compare their progress with one another, "worrying that they are lagging behind the others". Afaf believes the standardised syllabus should be presented as a general guide. She adds that teachers should be allowed to make amendments in the timeline to suit their students' needs because different groups learn at a different pace.

Standardising the assessments, however, was negatively viewed by all teachers. They particularly objected to unified written final exams, which the supervisor designs and requires teachers to administer without making any adjustments. Mariam explains that because teachers are not consulted when the exams are designed, the exams may not adequately represent the skills taught in class. Afaf, who describes her students as "the weakest of all groups", believes that unifying the final exam may result in many failing the course because it was not customised for their particular level. She explains, "I know my students can pass if the exam was designed for them, not for other average students". Amal and Deema both highlight the influence of these unified tests on their authority. They strongly disagree with the supervisor designing the exams without allowing them to adjust it, asserting that teachers are the only ones qualified to assess their students. Deema explains, "As a teacher, this feels a little insulting, why can't I make changes to it. Don't they trust my judgement?" Amal similarly asserts, "it is outrageous, they can't make a test without really knowing my students and expect me to be happy about it". Sara also expressed her disapproval for the unified final exam. However, she tries to "prepare them [students] for the worst", by reminding them to study everything in their textbooks and not rely on classroom topics.

The analysis suggests that despite the reforms made in the EFL program a few years back, several issues are limiting teachers' ability to practice in a way that aligns with their cognitions. These issues relate to classroom arrangements, curriculum design and standardised guidelines. Although the supervisor is aware of some of these issues, such as the large classroom numbers and standardised assessments, it seems that she is unaware of how they are influencing teachers. Teachers' experiences reveal that in addition to restricting their classroom practices, these constraints have a deeper influence in limiting their authority and restricting their role to mere implementors of guidelines instead of valued contributors and decision makers.

4.2.2. Culture of learning at the UIV

One of the major goals for Saudi educational development had been to move away from the traditional roles of teachers and learners, where teachers held authoritarian roles in the classroom and students passively listened and received information. Instead, the advocated approach had been a student-centered one that fosters learners' autonomy, and requires teachers to acts less as knowledge holders and more as facilitators of learning. Although all five teachers from the UIV had reported developing a learner-centered approach during their OEEs, they reported difficulties in implementing it in their local university context.

Aspects related to the local culture of learning at the UIV limited the teachers' ability to implement learner-centered approaches in a way that aligns with their cognitions. These aspects include the testing-oriented program and students' resistance to learner-centered education, which are unpacked below, followed by their affective influence on teachers.

The EFL program was viewed to be test-oriented by Mariam and Deema, and this seems to be a prominent hindrance to their implementation of learner-centred education. Mariam believes that the test-oriented approach continues to prevail despite the program providing textbooks and technological facilities that support learner-centred education. As a result of the program's insistence on evaluating students solely through written tests that are pre-designed by the supervisor, Deema believes that teachers are forced to limit their capabilities in class. She stresses that "the teaching quality drops drastically, and the outcomes? Maybe good grades but the girls' levels are very low". Deema also believes that the program's focus on testing is hindering students' development because it "produces puppets; you can't teach puppets self-development skills, critical thinking, what matters as learners."

The teachers seem to believe that the supervisor supports this test-oriented approach by how she reacts to students' low grades. Deema explains that if more than a few students get low marks in one classroom, teachers are contacted by the supervisor and urged to "find a solution … do something so they pass. The rumour is you're only allowed to fail three students per course". Afaf further asserts that the supervisor is more concerned with students' marks than their development, sending the implicit message to the teachers that their role is to help students pass exams.

Students' attitudes toward learner-centered approaches also seems to influence teachers' reported ability to implement them in the UIV context. Amal, Deema, Afaf, and Mariam

all reported their students' resistance to this approach and their preference for teacher-centered approaches instead. Afaf believes that students resist activities and assignments that require them to be independent critical thinkers. She explains their preference for a learning structure that gives them immediate and predictable results in written tests, like memorising words and definitions. She adds that students' negative attitude is not due to their low English skills or lack of confidence, because even when she discusses current topics in Arabic, students still demonstrate an unwillingness to participate. Mariam similarly reported struggling to implement a learner-centred approach in her classroom because many students do not understand the meaning or importance of self-development in language learning. She describes most students as, "passive and rely on the few hours they spend in class, and even then, they are not putting in much effort". Amal also explained that her attempts to implement a learner-centered interactive approach had not been successful, finding that students did not appreciate it because it did not match their expectations. She described students' expectations of the English course as being one of spoon-feeding information, seemingly influenced by dominant educational approaches in high schools, "students don't understand that they have to put in the effort and work at home and develop themselves … they weren't cooperating with me, they wanted this to be just like school."

These four teachers all reported their students' preference for teacher-centred approaches and resistance of activities that required them to be responsible learners. However, Sara reports having a positive reaction from her students, describing them as highly responsible learners, open to new techniques, and always impressing her with their creative ways. Sara attributes this to students' progressive way of thinking in a highly technological age. She believes that their exposure to various learning environments through international media outlets has helped them become aware of the benefits of having an active role in the classroom. To encourage her students' active involvement, Sara also intentionally undermines her image as a knowledge keeper by highlighting her limitations and taking on a "teacher but also learner" attitude. She explains that this attitude gives some of the power back to students, helping them grow into their full potential, "I am not shy to tell them that I don't know some answers. I want them to know that I am not an expert in everything, sometimes I need them to teach me."

The extent to which some teachers were able to implement practices that reflect their learner-centered cognitions seems to have had an affective influence on them, as indicated

in the experiences of Amal, Deema and Sara. In Amal's case, implementing a learner-centered approach in a resisting environment brought about an internal struggle. She felt torn between wanting to teach in a way that reflects her ideal teaching cognitions, and her desire to gain students' approval. It is also evident that her students' satisfaction highly influences her view of herself as a competent teacher.

> *In the beginning, I used to say what am I doing wrong? What's wrong with me? I would really beat myself up…my students liked me at first but after the mid-term, they got low grades and they **hated** me. It was really frustrating.*

In an attempt to achieve students' satisfaction and see positive results in their grades, Amal reports reverting to traditional, lecture-like teaching as each semester progressed. She believes that students are more accustomed to traditional approaches and it helps them achieve high grades in final exams. However, Amal is aware that doing so is "not really fair" for the students, as it does not truly help their language development. Constantly going through this struggle has led Amal to develop negative emotions about herself, her students and her context. Although she still loves being a teacher, she is dissatisfied with her teaching and believes she has lost the passion for it. Deema similarly believes that the progress of her students is a representation of her competence as a teacher. Emotionally, she struggles with the idea of being unable to implement an approach that helps her students develop their language despite her advanced teaching skills: "It hurts in my heart, those are my students and I can't help them".

Like Amal and Deema, student reactions had highly influenced Sara's view of her abilities as a teacher. However, her experience exemplifies that in a positive way, showing that students' approval and appreciation had contributed to her view of herself as a competent teacher. During the first interview, Sara proudly pointed to the many letters of gratitude she received from students over the years. She had each of them framed on her back wall, and proudly referred to it as the "Wall of Achievements". She explains that "when I feel down, or forget what it means to be a teacher, this is what brings me up. Every letter I get makes me know that I'm a good teacher."

The contrasting examples of teachers' narratives highlight their different experiences in implementing learner-centered teaching approaches, which they had developed overseas, and are encouraged to adopt in local classrooms. While some have found it more challenging than others, their narratives show that aspects of the learning culture in UIV

can sometimes clash with advocated learner-centered approaches. Students' presumed negative attitudes; the exam-oriented program and minimal support from supervisors are all issues that impede most of their efforts in implementing a learner-centered approach. Helping teachers overcome these obstacles is crucial. Ignoring them, however, may lead teachers down an emotionally negative path where they question their competence as teachers. They may even lose their passion and motivation, as is the case of Amal, and to a lesser extent, Deema.

Supervisors and senior officials at the UIV can help teachers overcome these obstacles by making amendments to the program and ensuring it is focused less on testing and more on students' skills development. They must also take part in advocating an educational environment that supports learners' autonomy and guides students' expectations to be more in line with those of their teachers.

4.2.3. Professional culture in the university

Although the engagement with students in the classroom is primary in teachers' daily interactions, teachers operate within a wider context that encompasses colleagues, supervisors and administrators. How teachers interact with others within their community of practice, the support they receive from their supervisors, and the relationships they form with colleagues are all factors that influence their sense of belonging to that context. This sense of belonging plays a significant role in influencing teachers' affective reactions towards their role within specific contexts (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011).

As participating teachers returned to the UIV context, they had to re-integrate into a professional culture with specific hierarchies and pre-established roles for members of the university. The teachers needed to adopt their assigned roles in ways that met both their own expectations and their seniors. The professional culture has emerged as a significant factor that influences teachers' self-efficacy to implement overseas-developed cognitions and teaching approaches. This section will elaborate on the professional culture at the UIV, including relationships, expectations, and communication among different members of the university. I start by analysing the role of the supervisor, as perceived by the supervisor herself, and participating teachers from the university.

4.2.3.1. Role of the supervisor: Mentor vs. manager

At the UIV, Dr. Amira is assigned the role of teacher supervisor, in charge of overseeing all matters that relate to existing and returning teachers. Dr. Amira oversees more than 35 teachers in the department, and knew most of them before they had left for their OEEs. When discussing her role as supervisor, Dr. Amira describes it as "making sure that teachers do their assigned duties" and "the courses are completed in a smooth, problem-free way". Dr. Amira explains that she is open to giving advice and helping teachers overcome day-to-day obstacles. However, because she oversees many teachers, it is difficult to offer individual support. "My door is open to anyone who needs me … but I always tell them to read the course guidebook first, it has advice on everything. It saves their time and mine". Dr Amira also takes certain measures to ensure that teachers are following the prescribed guidelines. These measures include conducting classroom observations for teachers whose students have made complaints or teachers who are known to steer away from the specified syllabus.

Dr Amira's description of her role implies a managerial more than a supportive, mentoring role, which was found to be incongruent with the expectations and needs of some of the participating teachers. This is highlighted as teachers recalled their experiences during the critical period of initial re-integration into UIV. The teachers' experiences differed when recalling the support they received during their first few months back in the local context, and throughout the periods that have followed.

During their initial re-integration stage, Amal, Afaf and Deema reported receiving no support from their supervisor despite finding themselves in situations that needed it. For example, Amal recalls several failed attempts to meet with the supervisor to ask questions about teaching arrangements. She reports that Dr. Amira was not able to see her, which led her to ask other employees instead.

> I was asking lots of questions; I think everybody got a little fed up with me.
> But I had to, because no one was telling me anything…They just gave me
> the book …Where are my classes? Where is my office, how do I use the
> black- board? No one told me so I had to ask around.

Afaf and Deema also report the supervisor's non-existent role in supporting them during their first few months back at the UIV. Afaf remarks that the supervisory role exists in

theory, not practice. Deema adds that joint meetings with teachers and the supervisor are rare, and individual meetings are only organised when teachers "do something wrong".

It seems that, in addition to the teachers' re-integration period, the supervisor continues to have a minimal role in supporting and guiding these teachers in their everyday practices. Deema describes it as "nothing... nothing till now". However, Deema had never felt the need to seek support from the supervisor because she tries to solve any issues on her own, being a "very capable and independent person". Amal, however, recalls numerous times when she needed her supervisor's support, but she did not feel comfortable asking for advice. This was because she feared that asking the supervisor for help would undermine her knowledge and capabilities in the eyes of her superiors. Afaf recalls approaching the supervisor for advice once before; however, she did not receive the support she expected. She explains that "what I got was an order: do this and don't do that. I didn't feel comfortable, it was not a discussion."

Compared to the previous three teachers, Sara and Mariam had a more positive experience with receiving the support they needed. However, their experiences differ in terms of who the provider of this support was. Mariam had only been back to Saudi Arabia for six months; however, she had not expected to receive any support from the supervisor. "I understand that she is busy, and I didn't want to burden her". Unlike the other teachers, however, Mariam felt welcomed by the Head of the English Department, who "took me under her wing and said 'whatever you need, I'm here.'". In comparing the supportive nature of the Department Head with that of the supervisor, Mariam says:

> Mariam: She [Department Head] is a great person. ... But there are certain people under her... not so much. They give you the impression that you're not welcomed.
>
> Me: Like whom?
>
> Mariam: [Laughs] Maybe the supervisor, that's how I felt. But the Head is kind, supporting.

Sara, on the other hand, reports receiving immense support specifically from the supervisor. During her first few months back, she met with the supervisor several times to discuss her role and clarify some concerns she had. Describing the relationship they have, Sara said, "we are more like friends, and my office is next to her… she is very supportive, helping out with everything".

Except for Sara, returnee teachers at the UIV have expressed limited support from their supervisor in reintegrating into the educational context. This lack of supervisor-initiated support seems to extend throughout their teaching experiences at the UIV, not only during the initial re-integration period, sending an implicit message that teachers are required to manage day-to-day issues in isolation. Some teachers seemed comfortable with this isolation and did not seek support due to intrinsic reasons, such as having low expectations (Mariam) and being independent (Deema). However, Afaf and Amal, who both expected and needed the support of the supervisor, felt the isolation imposed upon them. They reported experiencing feelings of neglect and disappointment, especially when their efforts to seek more guidance were not successful. These teachers who struggled with this imposed isolation (Afaf and Amal) along with Deema who felt more comfortable with it, all seem to have developed negative feelings of resentment towards the supervisor and other higher-level university members. This is exemplified by their comments: "They don't care about us," (Amal); "as long as there are no complaints, nobody cares" (Deema); "I don't think they care at all" (Afaf).

It is clear that several teachers in UIV lack positive and supportive relationships with their seniors and supervisor. The absence of such support seems to have contributed to teachers' negative views of their context. During the initial re-integration period, the teachers needed their seniors' support in introducing and welcoming them back as members of the community and understanding their new roles. As teachers spent more time back in the Saudi context, they no longer needed help re-integrating, but required other forms of support in order to manage their teaching responsibilities.

The managerial role of the supervisor is crucial in ensuring the smooth progression of teaching assignments; however, having a mentoring role is also necessary to enhance teachers' self-efficacy. Members with leading positions play an important part in promoting a positive and productive culture that supports teachers' everyday practices, especially in contexts undergoing educational reform. "It is up to school leaders to help identify, shape, and maintain strong, positive, student-focused cultures. Without these supportive cultures, reforms will wither, and student learning will slip" (Peterson & Deal, 1998, p. 28).

4.2.3.2. Supportive collegial environment

Teachers' reported experience indicates that they lack a supportive collegial environment among faculty members, highlighting the university's minimal efforts to promote collaborative relationships among its different members. This has seemingly contributed to some teachers' limited sense of belonging to their context and overall satisfaction. Overall, the teachers' reported experiences reflect a sense of isolation imposed upon them due to certain arrangements to do with office allocation, workloads, and lack of staff meetings.

The majority of faculty members in the program are assigned individual offices, located on a separate floor away from the classrooms. There is also a single large workspace allocated to seven teachers. Of the participating teachers, only Sara is allocated shared space, and the rest have their own offices. Each teacher has a different teaching schedule, and there is no unified break time. Afaf mentions that the isolated design of workspaces, coupled with high teaching loads, means that teachers do not spend much time in their office and there are limited opportunities for interactions between them. She highlights, "we only see each other when we pass by in the halls, running from one class to the next".

Mariam reports that although she is a social person, she had only formed a relationship with the teacher in the office next door. She reported feeling "left out", as all of her previous colleagues were now on their OEEs, and the department is "full of new faces". However, she is optimistic that she will form more relationships in the future.

Deema mentions that although teaching is usually a "people-friendly profession", she is often working in isolation and only communicating with her students. This does not necessarily bother her, as she is comfortable working alone, but "sometimes it feels good when you talk with peers and share ideas". Amal, on the other hand, seems to be negatively influenced by the limited communication and lack of supportive relationships with other teachers. Describing how she feels about the situation, she says "it's depressing… there is no feeling of a community". Amal reflects on a different relationship she observed in the practicum component of her OEE, where the supportive collegial environment had positively influenced her teaching experience.

> *The [overseas] language centre manager met with us every day, for 10 minutes,*
> *and gave pep talks that energised us. And all the teachers discussed things*

together… it really helped get us excited about teaching… Here we don't have anything like that. It seems like nobody cares.

Amal and Afaf believe that the supervisor and program managers should promote communication between teachers. In Amal's opinion, they need to organise more staff meetings, expressing her frustration that the last meeting was seven months ago, "how come they didn't call for meetings? Not even one, for seven months. It is crazy". Afaf suggests scheduling a unified lunch break for all teachers, "even if it's only twenty minutes, it would really help us see each other and talk".

To compensate for the lack of meetings, Deema and Afaf each initiated a WhatsApp group for teachers of the same course, where they discuss issues dealing with the course, students, and administrators. Deema explains that she developed the WhatsApp group because "it was necessary, emails are too formal, I needed a platform to communicate, our schedules clashed so we couldn't meet easily". Afaf explains that she commonly seeks advice from other teachers through the WhatsApp group as "they have more experience than I, so I feel comfortable asking about anything … its also a great outlet to vent [laugh]".

Sara, on the other hand, had strong relationships with faculty members who share her workspace. She describes them as "like sisters", and highlights the personal and professional support they share, from "covering their classes when they are sick" to "giving advice on managing students". Sara explains that this support is especially why she hasn't requested an individual office, fearing that it would isolate her. "Most [teachers] don't have the chance to form good relationships, schedules are different and offices are far away, so I'm lucky".

Analysis of the teachers' reported experiences highlights the limited collaborative collegial support between most faculty members at the UIV. Except for Sara, they have all had minimal communication with other teachers in the workplace. The teachers responded to the isolated environment differently. Afaf and Deema tried to alleviate the negative influence of this isolation by initiating a group chat through a multimedia application. Amal, however, was not coping well and had slipped into a "depressed" state, and Mariam reported feeling "left out".

Through the analysis of these teachers' experiences, it appears that limited collegial support can have negative influences on returnee teachers' social and professional development within the university. On a social level, it can influence the sense of

community and belonging to that context, which is necessary, especially for returnees who had been away for many years, such as Mariam. Not experiencing a sense of belonging to the context may contribute to low morale among teachers, as seen with Amal who reports losing her passion for teaching. On a professional level, minimal communication between faculty members limits the opportunity to share experiences and exchange ideas among highly qualified teachers, thus limiting their chances for further development.

A comparison of the teachers' different reported experiences provides a better understanding of how two contextual factors in UIV's professional culture (i.e. the role of the supervisor and the supportive collegial environment), may contribute to their overall satisfaction as teachers in that local context. This comparison is summarised in Table 4.1, organised by the most positive to least positive reported experience.

Table 4.1. Teachers' reported experiences of supervisory and collegial support

Teacher	Supervisory support	Collegial support	Reported overall experience
Sara	High	High	- Holds positive overall view of the UIV context - Satisfied with her role as teacher and faculty member - Able to overcome most classroom limitations
Mariam	High	No support	- Partially satisfied with her role as a teacher at UIV - Feels marginalised by the collegial community - Optimistic that feelings of belonging to UIV will increase - Can overcome few, but not all, classroom limitations
Afaf	Minimal	Minimal	- Has negative feelings towards UIV's managing authority - Restricted by roles imposed by UIV, believes she should be contributing more to program development - Actively seeks to find ways to overcome contextual limitations, but not always successful
Deema	Minimal	Minimal	- Her perceived potential to contribute to educational developments is limited by UIV policies - Feels unappreciated by the managing authorities - Actively seeks to find ways to overcome contextual limitations, but not always successful
Amal	No support	No support	- Dissatisfied with current role as a teacher at UIV - Feels isolated and marginalised - Lost her passion for teaching - Negative feelings towards her context and profession - Unable to overcome most contextual limitations

Other factors are bound to play a part in the teachers' different experiences, including their different personalities and dispositions towards working in such an environment. However, this analysis draws a link between the available support from supervisors and colleagues and the teachers' overall satisfaction within their local educational context.

4.2.3.3. Communication between teachers and decision makers

Interviews with teachers and supervisor revealed the complex nature of the communication between teachers and decision makers, include the supervisor, the head of the department, and program designers. The analysis indicates that the quality of communication between university members can influence the teachers' ability to implement change and participate in educational developments in a way that aligns with UIV's goals and visions. The analysis also shows that poor communication between teachers and decision makers can lead to teachers feeling marginalised and undervalued. This section reports on two main directions of communication, from teachers to decision makers and vice versa.

4.2.3.3.1. From teachers to decision makers

Dissatisfaction with the quantity and quality of communication with decision makers is evidenced in Deema, Afaf and Amal's experiences, who struggled with getting their voices heard by decision makers in their university. They reported that their opinions had been usually disregarded when they attempted to make suggestions, enquiries, or request changes. The teachers' experiences highlighted the lack of appropriate communication channels in UIV and the teachers' perceived notions that their input is not welcomed.

Deema recalls attempting to contact the supervisor several times via email requesting changes to the assessment criteria for her course. However, her emails were never replied to: "I sent maybe six emails, and she didn't reply, so either she didn't approve or doesn't open her emails. I think she opens her emails". She also recalls other teachers who met with the head of department and proposed introducing a placement test for all incoming students. However, she reports that their suggestion was eventually not approved. "She didn't give them a real reply, just said I will think about it". Similarly, Afaf mentioned seeking the supervisor's approval to add more relatable topics to students' lists of

presentation activities. She met with the supervisor in person but her suggestions were not considered.

> *I gave the supervisor over 15 suggestions for topics and she said: 'yes, they're good'. But then didn't approve them. She didn't tell me why. What's wrong with my topics? Even if you try to change, they won't allow you.*

Amal believes that although the UIV's vision is to support innovation and development, the restrictions implemented on teachers' practices suggest that decision makers prefer everything to stay the same. This view is based on several experiences where Amal tried to suggest ways to improve the program but was always ignored, because "when you suggest ideas to develop even small things, they just shut you down".

The ways in which teachers' requests and suggestions were rejected or not addressed at all had negatively influenced their view of the context. In Amal's case, she feels unappreciated: "It's like they don't appreciate what you have". Deema explains that she has stopped coming up with ideas to "to make things better", because the effort is "not worth it". Afaf explains feeling "so frustrated" and describes communicating with the decision makers as "like trying to convince a wall".

It is worth mentioning here that the other two teachers did not express the same difficulties in getting their voices heard. Sara had a close relationship with the supervisor and felt that her suggestions were easily accepted. Mariam, however, had not attempted to contact the supervisor with comments or suggestions since she returned to the Saudi context six months ago.

4.2.3.3.2. From decision makers to teachers

The teachers' interviews indicated that they have many questions regarding their roles as returning teachers and how they align with the goals of the program. These questions seem to be primarily fuelled by inconsistencies between the UIV's aim to support development and innovation and the decision makers' rejection of any suggestions for change. The frustration in some teachers' interviews indicate that they had not been provided with clear explanations of what their new roles entail or how they can contribute to the development of the program.

The teachers also raised questions about issues in the program design, such as the lack of placement tests and the increasing class size, which indicates that the decision makers had

not discussed them with the teachers. Regarding the large class size, the supervisor explained that they are facing external pressures to increase the admission numbers. However, it appears that this message had not been conveyed to all teachers, as Mariam, Deema and Afaf believe that it is due to poor institutional management.

A further example of poor communication between decision makers and teachers is that four out of five teachers were not aware of the PD workshops available to them in other colleges. Dr. Amira mentioned that several workshops were organised each semester for the teachers; however, when the teachers were asked about them, all but Sara expressed that they were unaware of them. Teachers also needed clarification regarding the changes that are happening and those that are not. For example, Afaf and Sara mention they were promised changes in the curriculum four semesters ago. However, these have not been implemented and both teachers do not know why. Mariam, in particular, raises many questions regarding teaching guidelines, wondering how much they had changed since she had gone overseas. Amal believes that there is a lack of a clear teaching philosophy, and that communicative teaching is "just implied, but I've never seen specifications about it".

The following quotes exemplify the limited communication and clarification directed from decision makers to teachers:

> *I don't know what they were thinking, this is too difficult for our students ... I think they got a little fed up with my questions. But I had to, because no one was telling me anything. Nothing at all.* (Amal)

> *Rules are not fully explained here. What do they want? I don't understand it.* (Afaf)

> *We're in a guessing game, we just guess about what will happen, but you don't know if they approve it or not.* (Deema)

> *It's hard to figure out how to organise the exam sheets. That's why they get sent back to the teachers to redo them. But I just ask the supervisor and she is really helpful with telling me.* (Sara)

Overall, the analysis of the professional context at the UIV indicates that it has a top-down administrative approach where a system of control is imposed on teachers by decision makers. This approach has negatively influenced their professional practices inside and outside the classroom. Inside the classroom, teachers struggle with their limited control over course design and assessment procedures. Outside the classroom, teachers express

their frustration about not being involved in further developing the EFL program. The analysis identifies the need for building lines of communication between teachers and decision makers which allow information sharing, discussion and debate. Teachers need appropriate channels to contribute their professional knowledge and ideas and express any concerns they may have. Additionally, decision makers should inform teachers of the developments and changes that take place in the program, along with justifying limitations and lack of development in other areas. Teachers should also be guided through the best ways to overcome common contextual constraints, such as class size, in order to eliminate any frustration that may arise. This would also assist in minimising the mismatch of expectations between teachers and decision makers.

4.3. UIV teachers' observed classroom practices following their OEEs

The analysis of the teachers' reported experiences in Chapter 4.1 highlighted their LTC development following their OEEs. Specifically, the analysis highlighted how the OEEs influenced the teachers to adopt different communicatively oriented and student-centred notions as part of their ideal pedagogical cognitions. In Chapter 4.2, the teachers' experiences of returning to work in UIV were explored, highlighting the contextual factors which influence the teachers' ability to implement their overseas-developed LTCs.

This section explores the teachers' observed classroom practices and describes the communicative orientation of their implemented approaches. It highlights how each teacher implements her overseas-developed pedagogical cognitions within local classrooms that advocate communicative teaching. The congruences and incongruences between teachers' overseas-developed pedagogical cognitions and their observed classroom practices will be highlighted, drawing on the teachers' post observation reflections to help make sense of such insights. The presented insights will contribute to answering the third research question: How have experiences in overseas PD programs influenced the teachers' practices after returning to Saudi classrooms?

Each teacher was observed for two lessons, for a combined period of 100 minutes (50 minutes per lesson). Data gathered from observations were analysed based on the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) framework (Appendix 9). As detailed in Chapter 3.3.7, the framework divides observed practices into seven categorises that reflect communicatively oriented content. These categories are group work activities,

meaning-focused activities, the students' contribution in controlling the content, the use of extended texts, material authenticity, skill integration, and the percentage of speaking as a component of activities. The percentage of class time allocated for each of these seven categories is calculated, then converted to scores based on set intervals. These scores are added up to form one overall score for each teacher, and this reflects the Communicative Orientation Score (COS) of her classroom practices. These COSs allow comparisons to be made across several teachers' practices.

Table 4.2. below provides an analysis of teachers' observed classrooms. It includes a detailed presentation of the different categories of activities implemented in each teacher's lesson, the percentage of class time allocated for each category, and how these percentages reflect different COSs.

Table 4.2. UIV teachers' observed teaching practices

Class description			COLT observation categories													Teacher COS
			Meaning focused		*Group work*		*Integrated skills*		*Speaking component*		*Authentic material*		*Extended material*		*Student content control*		
Teacher	**Class level**	**Class size**	*%	**Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	
Amal	Advanced	34	88%	5	38%	2	64%	4	58%	3	0%	1	73%	4	11%	1	**20**
Mariam	Intermediate	33	39%	2	26%	2	89%	5	56%	3	10%	1	37%	2	12%	1	**16**
Deema	Intermediate	31	73%	4	24%	2	67%	4	31%	2	12%	1	53%	3	9%	1	**17**
Afaf	Beginners	37	37%	2	11%	1	39%	2	12%	1	0%	1	47%	3	0%	1	**11**
Sara	Advanced	35	76%	4	49%	3	71%	4	63%	4	17%	1	69%	4	21%	2	**22**

*The time percentage of the observed lessons during which each COLT category was represented.

**The score is a conversion of the time percentage based on a 5-scale interval, 1: 0-19%, 2: 20-39%, 3: 40-59%, 4: 60-79%, 5: 80-100%.

***Percentages have been rounded off to the nearest whole number.

Analysis of teachers' observed practices highlighted a range of implemented classroom techniques. The teachers were all found to implement varying degrees of communicative practices as exemplified by their COSs in Table 4.2. The classroom practices of Amal and Sara reflected the highest communicative orientation as their COS were 20 and 22 respectively, while Afaf's practices scored the lowest COS (11).

From the analysis provided in Table 4.2, it appears that the variation in teachers' communicative orientation scores was influenced by two observed contextual factors: student levels and class size. Student levels may have influenced teachers' capacity to teach communicatively. The teachers who scored the highest COSs (Sara and Amal) both had advanced level students. Afaf's group, however, were beginner level students, and her classroom practices reflected the lowest communicative orientation. This indicates that the more advanced student levels are, the more the teacher is likely to succeed in implementing a communicatively oriented lesson. In more detail, student levels seemed to specifically influence teachers' implementation of meaning-focused instruction, group work activities, extended material and speaking activities. These categories consistently had a higher lesson percentage as student levels increased.

Table 4.2. also indicates that large class size may have limited teachers' capacity to implement communicatively oriented lessons. This was evident in Afaf's classes, which had the lowest COS and also the highest number of students (37). However, the smallest class size among teachers did not have the highest COS, which indicates that the relationship between class size and communicative orientation is not reflected among all teachers. It is more likely that the two influences, large class size and low student levels, worked together to influence Afaf's overall low COS.

Table 4.2. provided a detailed analysis of teachers' observed practices and highlighted their different communicative orientation. It also indicated the influence of observed contextual factors, i.e. class size and student levels, in influencing teachers' communicative orientation. However, to better understand the factors leading to teachers' varied COS, an exploration of their underlying cognitions is necessary. Therefore, a description of each teacher's pre- and post observation reflections is provided below in addition to a more detailed presentation of associated observed practices. Presenting insights from teachers' data in such a way will provide a basis for teasing out the relationships between teachers' observed practices and ideal teaching cognitions.

4.3.1. Amal

<u>Reported approach</u>

Amal defines her teaching approach as student-centered and focused on developing all skills equally, with specific attention to developing students' critical thinking skills. Although Amal does not associate herself with a sole teaching approach, she believes that many aspects of CLT are beneficial and reflective of her ideal teaching cognitions. Specifically, she identifies CLT's value in increasing students' contribution to the lessons, developing their communication skills, and enhancing learners' autonomy.

<u>Observed practice</u>

Amal's observed teaching practice was found to reflect high communicative content. 72% of her lesson activities focused on both form and function, 12% focused on form, and 16% were general discussion activities that allowed free communication. In her lessons, 64% of all activities focused on two or more skills, and 58% of activities included a speaking component. The majority of activities were led entirely by the text and/or teacher, while students participated in leading 11% of activities. Amal's lessons included a combination of group work/pair work (21%), individual work (30%), and whole class collaborations (17%), while exclusive *T↔S/C* communication accounted for 32% of class time. Amal used some of the activities suggested in the textbook, in addition to others that she had prepared in the form of worksheets. However, the materials were all designed for EFL education and not authentic. Amal used extended material during 73% of the lessons.

<u>Post observation reflection</u>

Amal expresses dissatisfaction towards the teaching practices that she implemented in her observed lessons, and she believes that they do not reflect her ideal perceptions of language teaching. Specifically, she highlights her perceived inability to implement an approach that fosters students' communicative skills as well as their critical thinking skills. Amal believes that, due to her advanced level of professional development, her teaching practices should be more aligned with her cognitions. However, she highlights that the contextual constraints of classroom size, curriculum density, and strict standardisation of assessments designed by the supervisor have all influenced her practices to be more test-oriented and not as learner-centred or communicative as she would have liked.

4.3.2. Mariam

<u>Reported approach</u>

Mariam reports incorporating many communicative activities in her classroom because she believes in the importance of increasing students' communicative competence. However, she does not believe that this can only be done through a "strict CLT method", which she presumes to discourage form-focused activities. Therefore, Mariam does not define her teaching approach as communicative, but rather integrated and "fluid". Mariam reports incorporating technology as a tool for learning, because she believes that it enables students to take control of their development. She reports that her teaching practices also promote proper and accurate pronunciation, stressing that it gives students the confidence to speak publicly, and thus supporting their communicative competence.

<u>Observed practice</u>

Mariam's two observed lessons were quite distinctive in focus and content, so an overview of each lesson will be provided before describing the calculated combined lesson content. The first lesson was conducted in the classroom and had four main activities, which included role-play, reading comprehension and grammar practice. This lesson had a combination of group/pair work and individual work and the textbook was used to guide the activities. The second lesson was conducted in the language lab, where students worked individually using a language acquisition program to practise their pronunciation. The program was used to help students develop and evaluate their pronunciation of chosen words, by listening to models and repeating them, and then conducting self-evaluations of their recorded pronunciations. There was limited interaction between teacher and students, and no interaction among students. The analysis guidelines of the COLT scheme identify this type of activity which has an exclusive focus on pronunciation as form-focused, and thus low in communicative content.

The combined calculated content of both lessons reveals that 22% was spent on *T↔SC* instruction. The rest of the activities included group or pair work (16%), individual work (52%) and student ↔ class interactions (10%), during which six students presented role-plays to their classmates. In Mariam's lessons, 39% of activities focused on both form and function, while 61% focused exclusively on form, mainly pronunciation and grammar. Only 11% of lessons focused on one isolated skill, while the rest focused on a combination of two or more skills (89%), and 56% of activities included a speaking component. 10% of the materials used were student-made, consisting of role-play dialogues, while the rest were pedagogical materials. The

lesson material consisted of 37% extended text, 52% audio and 11% minimal text. Most of the activities were controlled by the teacher/text, while the students played a role in guiding 12% of the activities.

Post observation reflection

Mariam believes that her teaching practices reflect her ideal teaching cognitions, especially concerning encouraging students to take responsibility for their learning. She elaborated on her choice to have students work on individual tasks, and highlighted that she viewed individual learning to be as important as collaborative learning, because they each helped students develop different skills. She explains that she is not yet confident in her choice of materials, and therefore chooses not to supplement the textbook with any external material. However, she believes that her teaching methods and materials will be more creative as she spends more time in UIV and gains more confidence and experience.

4.3.3. Deema

Reported approach

Deema asserts that her teaching practices are driven by the students' needs and lesson goals, not by a specific teaching approach. She believes that all teaching approaches have the potential to be beneficial if integrated properly, even the so called "traditional ones". She believes that her teaching practices incorporate some CLT techniques, but also include some exclusive grammar instruction and error correction to support students' development. She reports applying some of the techniques she had learned abroad, but always adapts them to local students' needs.

Observed practice

Deema's lessons included activities that focused exclusively on form (27%) and function (43%), while the rest of the activities (30%) focused on both form and function. Form-focused activities included explicit presentation of grammar rules and drilling new words, while function-focused activities exemplified how new words and grammatical tenses were used. Exclusive $T{\leftrightarrow}S/C$ communication accounted for 35% of the lesson, 24% included pair/group work activities, while the rest were tasks that students worked on individually (41%). Although the majority of lesson activities were solely controlled by the teacher/text, students participated in guiding the content of 9% of the activities. 67% of all activities in Deema's lessons integrated more than one skill, with a speaking component included in 31% of the activities. The materials

used in the lessons were mostly textbooks, in addition to videos of authentic interactions (advertisements) that exemplified proper pronunciation patterns (12%). The extended texts accounted for 53% of all materials used in both lessons.

Post observation reflection

Deema explains that at this stage of the semester her students are commonly not motivated to participate in classroom activities because they are worried about the upcoming mid-term. To alleviate their worries, she prepares them for the written tests by focusing on form and grammar and by directing them to practice their writing skills through individual tasks. She identifies the examination system as negatively affecting her teaching and her students' skills development, wishing they had an "ongoing evaluation process" instead of exams. Deema conveys that the exam-oriented system restricts her capacity to meet students' developmental needs, and thus limits their potential for development. Deema reports spending considerable lesson time on preparing students for standardised exams. She justifies her decision by explaining that her students are motivated by getting high grades, and she would rather not risk affecting their motivation by implementing an approach that focuses on communication development and neglects test-taking skills.

4.3.4. Afaf

Reported approach

Afaf's reported ideal teaching approach aligns completely with CLT. She views it as the most appropriate for the Saudi EFL context and aspires to implement it solely in all her lessons. She does not consider that her cognitions align with any approach other than CLT. By implementing this approach, Afaf strives to develop students' oral fluency and incorporate cooperative learning strategies that enhance students' contribution to the class. She also views that language instruction in the Saudi EFL context should not incorporate the mother tongue, and instruction should be solely in English to maximise students' exposure to the language. Afaf reports avoiding explicit error correction as much as possible, and prefers that students help each other to identify their mistakes. She also prefers to use her own materials as they better support the aims and objectives of her lessons.

Observed practice

Afaf's observed practices reflect a relatively low communicative content. Her classroom activities focused on language forms (63%), functions (21%), and a combination of both (16%).

Only 39% of the activities focused on two or more skills, and only 12% of the activities incorporated speaking. 31% of classroom communication was through $T{\leftrightarrow}SC$ instruction. Students worked individually on 58% of the activities, while group or pair work was incorporated in 11% of the activities. However, only a few students participated in the pair work, and the majority were either silent throughout the activity or spoke in Arabic. The entire lesson content was controlled by the teacher and the material, while students did not participate in leading or directing the activities. The material used consisted entirely of pedagogical worksheets and the textbook, of which 47% were extended texts.

Compared to other observed classes, the students in Afaf's class had very low language skills which appeared to slow the lesson progress. Several students were observed asking their classmates about what the teacher's instructions meant, even though Afaf presented it in basic English and included Arabic explanations.

Post observation reflection

Afaf explains that she is partially dissatisfied with her own teaching and how she presented the lessons. She believes that her practices did not reflect a "pure CLT approach" due to several constraints. These constraints include large numbers of students in her class whose language levels were too low to align with the prescribed lesson aims. Afaf also explains that despite her belief that classroom interaction should be done in English, she used some Arabic to help her weaker students understand the instructions. Due to her students' beginner levels, she felt the need to deprioritise the development of their communication and speaking skills, and instead focus on their understanding of the lesson content.

4.3.5. Sara

Reported approach

Sara asserts that her teaching is based on constructivist notions; however, she avoids defining it with a specific approach such as communicative language teaching. She believes that doing so would restrict her teaching and limit her classroom practices and she prefers to be flexible in what she implements in class. She reports implementing practices that are interactive, communicative and foster learners' autonomy. However, she also reports using lecturing when needed, but asserts that this does not mean that her teaching reflects a traditional approach.

Observed practice

Sara's observed classroom practices reflect high communicatively oriented content. 24% of classroom activities exclusively focused on form, and 76% focused on form combined with function/sociolinguistics (appropriation of text to different formality levels). 71% of all activities incorporated more than one skill, while 29% focused on writing alone and 63% of activities included a speaking component. Materials used in the lesson included the textbook, YouTube videos, and student-made texts (these refer to parts of a play that students worked on in groups to write) while authentic materials accounted for 17% of those used in the lessons and 69% of all materials were extended texts. The students worked in groups/pairs during 49% of the activities, and these included acting out role-plays in front of the class, while the other groups identified whether their interactions were classified as formal or informal. Exclusive $T{\leftrightarrow}SC$ interaction accounted for 18% of overall classroom communication, while students worked individually during 33% of the activities. The teacher/text controlled the majority of the lesson, while students participated in controlling 21% of the activities.

Post observation reflection

Sara is very satisfied with her teaching in general. She believes that the local context influences the choices she makes in the classroom but does not restrict her teaching in a major way. Sara believes that she had been able to apply most of the teaching techniques that she acquired overseas; however, she adapted them to fit her goals and her students' needs. She reflects on her reliance on group work activities, emphasising that it helps overcome the obstacle of large class size while also maintaining students' collaboration. Sara would like to expand on the curriculum and integrate activities that can challenge her students and elevate their already advanced levels, as she believes that the prescribed activities are not enough to do so.

4.3.6. Insights from teachers' observed practices:

It is important to highlight that the nature of the observed practices was inevitably shaped by the curriculum content designated for the specific observed lessons. This limits the practices that were able to be observed, as two observation sessions cannot provide a generalised representation of a teachers' practices throughout a school year. However, triangulation of data collection sources including pre and post observation interviews, in addition to two classroom observation sessions, provided sufficient insights into the complexity of teachers' practices in context. They also offered an opportunity to understand how the observed practices fit into

teachers' broader teaching approaches, as post observation reflections provided justifications for teachers' practices and the conditions leading to them.

The analysis of teachers' observed classroom practices shows that they all adopted communicative teaching techniques, but to varying degrees. Some teachers also incorporated techniques not associated with a communicative approach, such as drilling and rote learning (Deema, Afaf) and extended, exclusive focus on language forms (Mariam, Deema). The analysis indicates that several factors contributed to the differences in teachers' practices, and the extent to which they were communicatively oriented. As mentioned before, student levels and class size represented the contextual factors that influenced teachers' capacity to implement communicatively oriented lessons. Factors that related to teachers' underlying cognitions were also found to influence the communicative orientation of their practices. These factors specifically relate to teachers' cognitions that represent their ideal teaching approaches, highlighted in pre and post observation reflections. Table 4.3. provides an overview of teachers' reported ideal teaching approaches, to allow for a comparison between the communicative orientation of their cognitions and their observed practices.

Table 4.3. UIV teachers' ideal teaching approaches

Teacher	Reported (ideal) teaching approach	COS of observed practices
Amal	Student-centred, fosters learner-autonomy Not defined as CLT but integrates communicative activities	20
Mariam	Integrated constructivist approach Fosters form accuracy and communicative fluency Values technology in learning	16
Deema	Integrated approach Fosters communication and form accuracy Driven by students' needs and levels	17
Afaf	Aligns solely with communicative approach Values oral fluency and cooperative learning Maximises exposure to L2 by restricting L1 use	11
Sara	Integrated constructivist approach Interactive instruction Fosters learner autonomy Varies between student/teacher centered instruction	22

Teachers' reflections provided insights as to how they each prioritised developing communicative skills differently. All five teachers valued the development of students' communicative competence; however, Afaf was the only one to define her ideal approach as CLT. The rest of the teachers described their ideal approach as an integrated one that incorporates different methods based on their analysis of students' needs. Some methods that they report incorporating are not commonly associated with a communicative approach. For example, Sara reports occasionally relying on lecturing and teacher-centered instruction, while Mariam and Deema sometimes implement exclusive and extended focus on form. The teachers' cognitions influenced them to implement these less communicative practices in their observed lessons, which influenced their COSs. Therefore, the variations in teachers' observed communicative orientation were found to be attributed to contextual influences, which include class size and student levels, in addition to teachers' cognitions regarding ideal teaching approaches.

The previous discussion highlighted how teachers' cognitions influenced them to implement specific practices. However, the analysis also showed that some teachers' practices deviated from their ideal pedagogical cognitions. A discussion of how and why these deviations occurred is presented by highlighting congruences and incongruences between teachers' reported and observed practices. Although identifying the degree of congruence between teachers' reported approaches to classroom practice was not the driving aim behind conducting observations, such congruences provided insights into the reasons why teachers' practices deviate from their perceptions of ideal approaches, and how contextual constraints may play a role in influencing their observed practices.

4.3.7 Congruences and incongruences between reported teaching approaches and observed classroom practices

Evidence of congruence between reported ideal teaching approaches and observed classroom practices was found in the datasets of Sara and Mariam. The teachers' ideal teaching approaches were largely reflected in their observed classrooms, despite both teachers' having different COSs, 22 and 16 respectively. The teachers' post observation reflections further highlighted this congruence and provided insights as to why their respective observed practices reflected non-communicative content. The findings indicate that although both teachers believed in increasing students' communicative skills and incorporating practices to foster that,

they each had other goals that explained their less communicative teaching practices. These goals emerged from their ideal teaching cognitions, presented in more detail below.

The congruence between Mariam's ideal approach and observed practices was highlighted in how she considered her approach to be integrating communicative and form focused activities, while also using technology. These were reflected in her observed practices, as her first lesson had high communicatively oriented content while the second lesson focused exclusively on form and pronunciation accuracy, and she had students using autonomous learning software. However, Mariam's contention that she would have liked to use authentic external material, but was not confident enough to do so, represents how her ideal cognitions were not translated into practices.

Sara's observed lesson was also found to be congruent with her ideal cognitions. Her ideal interactive and communicative approach was represented in the high COS of her practices. The satisfaction that she conveyed in her post-observation reflections indicate that she did not feel inclined to deviate from her ideal cognitions. However, her emphasis on the need to adapt overseas-developed cognitions to local educational conventions highlights her awareness of the local context in influencing, but not limiting, her practices.

Incongruences between ideal teaching approaches and observed practices were evident in the experiences of Deema and Afaf. Both teachers experienced contextual constraints that limited their ability to implement their ideal pedagogical cognitions. However, the post observation reflections highlighted the two teachers' capacity to deprioritise some of their ideal cognitions and consciously establish new teaching aims that could be achieved within the contextual constrains of the context. For example, Deema considered developing students' communicative skills as part of her ideal teaching cognitions. However, she felt restricted by the exam-oriented curriculum, and therefore was unable to implement entirely communicative practices. In response to this constraint, she undermined her ideal cognitions and prioritised maintaining students' motivation and developing their test-taking skills. This was observed in the form and grammar focused components of her lessons. Afaf's practices were similarly constrained by contextual factors, including class size and low student levels. Though Afaf was the only teacher to consider CLT as her ideal teaching approach, she scored the lowest communicative orientation score (11). Her observed practices also included the use of L1, extended form-focused instruction, and minimal speaking activities. This contrasts with her reported ideal cognitions of valuing oral communication, meaning focused instruction and the use of English

only in her instruction. Afaf's post observation reflections highlighted her awareness of the incongruence between her ideal cognitions and observed practices. They also highlighted that despite her ideal CLT cognitions, her awareness of students' needs and their low levels led her to prioritise students' "understanding" over their "speaking".

The relationship between Amal's observed practices and ideal pedagogical cognitions was unique and dissimilar to other participating teachers. Congruences were found between her ideal cognitions, which valued communicatively oriented instruction, and her observed practices, which scored the second highest COS of all the UIV teachers (20). However, Amal's post observation reflections highlight significant incongruences between her observed practices and her perception of those practices. Despite being found to reflect high communicative content, Amal views her practices to be more test-oriented and not as learner-centred or communicative as she would have liked.

Amal's reflections indicate that several of her ideal pedagogical cognitions were not represented in her observed practices, including fostering students' critical thinking skills and customising lesson content to students' needs and levels. Several contextual constraints limited her ability to implement practices that reflect these ideal cognitions. These constraints are the large class size, curriculum density, and the strict standardisation of assessments designed by the supervisor. The reflections also indicate that Amal's inability to recognise the communicative orientation of her observed practices may be due to internal struggles that led her to be critical and disapproving of her own practices. It appears that, during her OEE, Amal had high aspirations of the practices that she would be able to implement when she returned to UIV. However, when some of these aspirations were restricted by contextual constraints, she viewed her entire teaching practice to be less than ideal. Unlike the previous teachers, Amal did not convey the capacity to reprioritise certain cognitions in response to the contextual constraints. Instead, she seemed to have the view that she was either able to implement all her ideal cognitions or none at all.

4.3.8. Summary

This chapter's analysis reveals that UIV teachers all implemented communicative practices in their classes, however to differing degrees. The extent to which their observed lessons reflected communicative content was found to be influenced by various factors. Firstly, the teachers' own ideal pedagogical cognitions influenced the extent to which their observed practices were communicatively oriented. Secondly, the communicative orientation of teachers' practices was

influenced by contextual constraints, including large class size, low student levels, test oriented curriculum and strict standardisation of lesson content. These constraints seem to have limited the teachers' capacity to implement some of their ideal cognitions, including communicatively oriented practices.

Identified congruences and incongruences between teachers' ideal teaching approach and their observed practices highlight the complex ways in which the local teaching context can lead to a reconceptualisation of ideal teaching cognitions. The contextual constraints led some teachers to deprioritise their ideal cognitions on appropriate teaching approaches, such as increasing students' oral communicative competence, in favour of others that may not reflect their ideal teaching cognitions, such as focusing on accuracy of form. These re-conceptualisations occurred as a result of teachers' comprehensive perspective of language teaching; viewed as a process through which they could achieve positive yet realistic results regarding students' development. However, not all UIV teachers conveyed the capacity to reconstruct their ideal cognitions. The incongruence between Amal's observed practices and her reflections represented her cognitions' inability to evolve in response to local constraints and depart from idealistic views in favour of more realistic ones.

The overall findings from UIV teachers' classroom practices support the conclusions regarding their developed cognitions in Chapter 4.1, where teachers were found to move away from behaviourist teacher-centered approaches and appreciate more constructivist, communicatively oriented practices. The observations support these findings, highlighting that their teaching incorporated many communicative techniques and were not dominated by teacher-centered instruction. By reflecting on teachers' reports of their teaching practices before their OEEs, and comparing it with their current observed practices, it can be concluded that the teachers' practices continue to be influenced by their OEEs years after they had returned home. However, the nature of their teaching context and the constraints associated with it were found to also influence teachers' practices and their implementation of overseas- cognitions.

Chapter 5. Second Case study:
University of Traditional Prestige

This chapter analyses the experiences of teachers from the University of Traditional Prestige (UTP). As introduced before, the UTP is one the oldest universities in Saudi Arabia and its vision focuses on advancing educational development while promoting the country's traditional cultural values. This chapter will highlight the experiences of the five participating teachers from UTP - Hadeel, Razan, Salma, Worod, and Mona - in relation to each research question. I begin with an analysis of teachers' LTC development which occurred as a result of their experiences in OEEs. Several themes of cognition development are highlighted, some of which resemble the themes that have emerged from the OEEs of teachers in UIV. However, the resemblance between the two universities diminishes when this chapter highlights the influence of the local educational context and teachers' classroom practice. Unanticipated differences among the experiences of teachers in the two universities are revealed, highlighting how professional cultures within institutions can influence returnee teachers' practices.

5.1 Teachers' cognition development

This section presents UTP teachers' experiences which contribute to answering the first research question: How have teachers' experiences in overseas PD programs influenced their cognitions about EFL teaching approaches?

Teachers' reported experiences highlighted several cognition developments influenced by their OEEs. As mentioned earlier, 'development' will be used instead of 'change' when referring to teachers' modified cognitions, because it gives credit to different levels of modifications, not just those that are significantly transformative. Teachers' OEEs involved being immersed in a foreign context and engaging with a different educational system for several years. This exposed them to different views and perspectives about language teaching and learning, encouraging them to reevaluate previously held perceptions. As a consequence, the teachers adopted new notions, abandoned old ones, and developed their own perspectives about EFL education in the Saudi context. The thematic analysis revealed similarities and differences between teachers' experiences across case studies. The three main themes of cognition development were similar in both cases; however, some subthemes differed. Figure 5.1. provides a thematic summary of the themes that highlight UTP teachers' reported cognition development as a result of OEEs.

Enhanced theoretical understandings	• Key concepts in EFL education • Language teaching approaches
Re-evaluation of self	• Confidence in their knowledge and skills • Role as teachers in the classroom • Responsibility towards local education development
Re-evaluation of local context	• Advantages/limitations of the local context • Teacher/learner relationship within local educational norms

Figure 5.1. Themes of development in UTP teachers' cognitions

5.1.1 Enhanced theoretical understandings

5.1.1.1 Key concepts in EFL education

A prominent development in UTP teachers' cognitions following their OEEs is an expanded understanding of key concepts and theoretical arguments in research surrounding EFL teaching and SLA. These developments primarily resulted from the teachers' engagement with the reading material and the course content of their overseas programs.

During the interviews, the teachers mentioned different theoretical concepts that they were introduced to in their overseas programs. These include general theories of learning such as behaviourism and constructivism, students' learning styles such as verbal and visual styles, and concepts used in language learning such as the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1987). With the exception of Mona and Hadeel, who reported having previous knowledge of learning theories, these concepts were new to these teachers. On reflection, Worod and Salma questioned the quality of their pre-service local education programs, considering the absence of these concepts from program courses as negatively influencing their later teaching practice. Worod asserts, "these things weren't even mentioned when we studied here [Saudi Arabia], no wonder we barely knew anything about teaching". Similarly, Salma comments, "After learning these things, I figured out that the [pre-service] program we did before was not of good standard, it was below standard, because it missed a lot of information".

Teachers' exposure to the theoretical underpinnings and core concepts of their professional practice during their OEEs seem to have influenced their cognition development in several ways.

The first is by increasing their capacity to construct their own approaches and situate themselves within the research. Before the overseas program, Worod mentions, "I didn't have a standpoint really, I couldn't say that I belonged to this school of thought or that one". However, this capacity has now developed following her overseas program, "I can now explain where I stand … what my ideas are and what school of thought they come from". Razan similarly explains, "I understood the history of English teaching and opinions of big names like Chomsky, Vygotsky … it made me understand who I am as a teacher and decide what my approach is and why."

A deeper appreciation of the complexity of SLA and how it is influenced by social, cognitive and affective elements was identified as part of Mona and Hadeel's cognition development. The courses that Mona took during the program helped her view "the bigger picture of English learning" and understand that "there are many social and cultural factors … and they affect how students learn English". The theoretical content of Hadeel's program enabled her to identify personal factors that influence students' language learning. "It helped me understand why students' learn so differently … their abilities are different, their motivation is different, some even have foreign language anxiety".

Some teachers seem to have developed a capacity to make classroom decisions which reflected not only their own learning experience but, more importantly, the research in EFL education. This was evident in the experiences of Razan and Hadeel. Before the overseas programs, both had reportedly depended on their school learning experiences to guide their classroom decisions. Razan remarks that "I taught in the way that my old me would appreciate". Hadeel also explains that "I reflected on myself, the struggles I faced and what helped me, I was my own source of information on how to teach". However, their decision making today has developed to reflect research findings: "How I teach is all based on research, I follow what the education researchers proved to work" (Razan). Similarly, Hadeel's decision making now considers research on students' individual variations: "I try to figure out what their learning styles are and match my teaching with that. If I don't, they can get demotivated and frustrated…there is a lot of evidence about this in research".

Exposure to theoretical concepts during the overseas program seems to have developed Salma's capacity to form plausible arguments based on theoretical evidence, as exemplified in the following narrative. It also highlights an affective dimension in her cognition development, which is the confidence that comes with having an in-depth understanding of core concepts in her profession.

> *When I critique a teacher or supervisor, I do that based on the theories, the research, so I know what I am talking about. That makes it less personal and problematic, because they know I am not critiquing just to be negative; I have evidence that backs me up.* (Salma)

5.1.1.2 Language teaching approaches and methodologies:

During the overseas program, teachers were presented with various language teaching approaches and methodologies and they were expected to implement them in their practicum component. Although the length of the practicum varied in their different programs, they all participated in teaching adult EFL students under the supervision of their instructors. The content of their courses combined with the opportunities for practical teaching experience seems to have assisted teachers' cognitive development in several ways. These include expanding their understanding of language teaching approaches and developing their capacity to choose/construct the approach they believe to be appropriate to their context.

The information about teaching approaches in-context provided Mona and Hadeel with a link that connected the theoretical aspect of language teaching to classroom application. As Mona comments, "I already knew information about the constructivist one, but I learned that to use it in the classroom, I have to follow certain approaches … It doesn't make sense to only lecture if you follow constructivist teaching". Hadeel, similarly, mentions, "we didn't just read about them, in an abstract way ... they [overseas courses] really focused on what it means in the class[room]."

Teachers' exposure to information about language teaching approaches helped them reflect on the instructional practices they encountered as young school learners. It also helped raise teachers' awareness about possible relationships between their early learning experiences and the instructional practices they later adopted as teachers. Salma, Razan, and Worod were able to identify the teaching approaches that were dominant during their school years in relation to those presented in the program content. For example, Worod explains, "they [overseas instructors] told us the negatives of drilling, and grammar-focused teaching, and I remember feeling sad because that's the way we were taught back then". Teachers' experiences in the programs also helped Razan, Mona and Hadeel reflect on their previous teaching practices and how they influenced their students. Mona highlights this influence: "She [overseas instructor] was talking about the disadvantages of grammar translation, and all I could think about was that's me, this is what I do in my class".

A common factor in teachers' cognition development was adopting a learner-centred approach to teaching and thus moving away from notions of teacher-centered learning. The experience of being students in overseas learner-centred education systems helped Salma and Mona understand firsthand the benefits of this approach and fuelled their desire to adopt it as their own. Mona explains, "I could never go back, especially after I noticed, in myself, how teaching in that way helped build me from the inside". Salma similarly observes, "it was challenging for me … but rewarding, and I want my students to benefit the way I did". The positive influence of the practicum experience, which required teachers to implement learner-centred instruction, was evident in the reported experiences of Mona and Razan. Witnessing the result of this approach on their overseas students' development seems to have contributed to their decision to adopt it as their own. Razan exemplifies this influence, "it worked with my students there … and I realised that this is how English should be taught". Mona similarly comments, "I thought it would be a difficult way to teach, but with every class it got easier for me. For them [students], their language became better and they were more confident, that's why I like it".

Teachers' reports about their pre-OEEs teaching practices highlights that they primarily implemented traditional teaching approaches. Teacher-centred instruction was reportedly implemented by Hadeel, Salma, Mona and Worod. Grammar accuracy and translation was a primary focus in Hadeel, Razan and Mona's lessons. Traditional teaching techniques such as drilling and lecturing were reportedly used by Salma, Worod and Razan. However, OEEs seem to have helped teachers understand and articulate the disadvantages of traditional approaches, and enabled them to adopt alternative approaches that led to more positive language learning outcomes. Salma, Hadeel, and Worod, who reported implementing teacher-centred instruction before their OEEs, were able to identify different ways in which this approach was detrimental to Saudi students' learning. For example, Hadeel believes that dominating the classroom intimidates students and decreases their motivation to learn. Salma also believes that limiting students' opportunities to practice increases their fear of making mistakes and their fear of "losing face". Based on their reported experiences, these teachers' cognitions align with a learner-centred approach following their OEEs.

UTP teachers' reflections also indicate that CLT was a highly advocated approach during each of their overseas programs. The similarity in program content is justified, as the programs were all pre-approved by the local scholarship advisors in Saudi Arabia. After completing the overseas programs, the teachers' current reports highlighted that they all appreciate the benefits of CLT and its potential to develop students' oral skills. CLT is considered by Mona and Hadeel as a

better alternative to other approaches that focus on form, such as grammar translation and audio-lingual teaching. Among these five teachers, Worod and Salma both identify their current teaching approaches as reflective of CLT. Salma asserts this by saying, "I represent communicative teaching … it's what works best", while Worod explains that, "CLT is my way of teaching". However, Mona, Hadeel and Razan consider their teaching to integrate methods and practices from different approaches, including CLT. For example, Mona explains that as her final exams approach, her teaching becomes more form-focused, prioritising accuracy over communicative fluency. Razan also mentions occasionally incorporating drilling techniques in her teaching, to maintain proper pronunciation. Hadeel's following expression about teaching approaches adequately captures a common view among these three teachers.

> *I see them as choices, I think we've moved beyond finding that one method that works.*
> *They all can work depending on the students and the focus of the lesson. But generally,*
> *I am against lecturing and too much grammar.*

Overall, teachers' reports highlighted the role of the OEEs in developing their cognitions about teaching approaches, including communicative language teaching. They all demonstrated an advanced capacity to critically evaluate their local context and identify teaching approaches that they view to be suitable for their students' needs. Additionally, the teachers were able to reassess their previous teaching approaches, adopt new educational perspectives and modify previously held contentions.

5.1.2 Re-evaluation of self

5.1.2.1 Increased confidence in knowledge/ teaching skills

This theme highlights how teachers' perceptions of their professional skills and knowledge developed following their extended OEEs. The significance of this theme emerges from representing the affective dimension in teachers' cognition development associated with how they feel about their capabilities as teachers and what they can achieve in their classrooms.

The analysis of teachers' reflections about their teaching, before and after OEEs, helped identify how their confidence had developed. Before the OEEs, teachers' reflections revealed that they had experienced insecurities and self-doubt about various aspects of their practice. These aspects include classroom management, lesson planning and answering students' questions. In comparison, the reflections about their current teaching practices highlight an increased awareness and appreciation of their advanced knowledge and skills following OEEs. Their

reports largely highlighted positive feelings of empowerment and confidence in their ability to teach EFL effectively.

One factor that contributed to some teachers' increased confidence was that they viewed overseas PD programs as being of a higher standard and value than local teacher-education programs. The initial program acceptance letters that Hadeel and Worod received reinforced their personal and professional potential, especially because many of their colleagues had been struggling to receive an offer at the time. The status of overseas universities seemed influential on the two teachers' initial self-belief, as they described being accepted into a "highly ranked university program" (Hadeel), and an "ivy league university" (Worod). Indicating how these experiences influenced their confidence, Worod explains, "when I got accepted, I was surprised, because I didn't think I had a chance … universities here [local] are so easy to get into, but there [overseas] they only accept the best, it was a great boost". Hadeel also explains how being accepted in the overseas university influenced her view of her capabilities, "I knew they wouldn't offer me a place in the program if I wasn't up to their standard, so I always remembered that, to encourage myself". In contrast, Salma's experience highlights the role of the actual learning experience in the overseas program in influencing her developed confidence. She repeatedly compared her overseas program with her local pre-service program, pointing out how her experience in studying overseas provided her with critical information and experiences that developed her teaching skills:

> *The program here [local] didn't help me be a good teacher at all … Now of course I am a much better teacher, especially how I think and what I do and everything … what I learned there [overseas] changed everything. (Salma)*

The affective influence of increasing a teacher's confidence in her professional skills seems to be also influenced by having developed the capacity to meet the needs of diverse groups of students, as indicated by the experiences of Razan and Mona. Both teachers report that they used to struggle when teaching students whose levels or attitudes were unlike others in the classroom. Razan describes these students as "unconventional", recalling her uncertainty as to the best way to deal with them: "I knew how to teach in one way for all … but I didn't know what to do with the weak ones, how to engage them with us and lift them to the course level". Mona recalls struggling to manage students with rebellious attitudes who disrupted the classroom balance. We see this when she states, "they made me anxious. I had a lesson to finish and I didn't know if I should ignore them, talk to them or ask them to leave". However, both teachers now report having the knowledge and skills to deal with students' different levels and

attitudes. Mona's overseas program included courses on student psychology, which she believes helped her become aware of underlying issues that influenced students' attitudes. Her comment highlights her confidence in developed teaching skills: "I can understand them, I can deal with their different personalities in the class, even the big personalities, no problem". Razan's overseas practicum also enabled her to develop those skills needed to teach in diverse classrooms. Her students in the overseas practicum included groups of international students with different backgrounds, ages, gender and language levels. The skills she developed during that period helped her to become more confident in her capacity to teach students at diverse levels when she returned to Saudi Arabia. "Of course, I know more, I picked up many tips and tricks from there [overseas], so I believe I can teach any students, whatever their levels." (Razan).

The previous examples highlight the level of confidence teachers now report enjoying regarding their teaching skills and knowledge, and how they have increased following their OEEs. Perhaps the most powerful expression that describes teachers' increased confidence was given by Salma. When asked about what she gained from her OEE, she said: "confidence. We underestimate what it does to you as a professional teacher. But if I learned nothing else, I am grateful for the confidence it gave me".

5.1.2.2 Role as teachers in the classroom

This subtheme highlights how returnee teachers redefined their roles in the Saudi classroom following their OEEs. Teachers' narratives highlighted how they abandoned old classroom roles and took on new ones that better reflected their developed cognitions. Before their OEEs, four of five teachers reported implementing practices that reflected the role of an authoritarian teacher:

"I demanded complete obedience and silence in the classroom." (Hadeel)

"I felt that I am the teacher, and as students they had to accept everything I say." (Worod)

"I never really asked them what they think or what they want." (Razan)

"I was very strict, there was no room for excuses with me." (Salma)

However, these teachers highlighted that their OEEs influenced them to abandon this authoritarian role. What followed was the establishment of new roles that reflected key developments in their teaching cognitions. Salma describes her current role in the classroom as more of a "facilitator of learning" who encourages students' problem solving and self-development skills. She reflects on her own experience as a learner in the US context, identifying

its influence on her decision to adopt this role: "I saw that firsthand, when they [instructors in the overseas program] helped us to help our self, we learned faster and we felt independent". Similarly, Hadeel believes her current role in the classroom reflects that of "a mentor … a guide". Although this role was influenced by some "exceptional mentoring teachers" overseas, it was also influenced by her observations of students' needs in a digital world where information is easily accessed. "In this day [and age], students can access information at any time. So I need to mentor them and guide them on how to learn, not just what to learn".

The two other teachers, Razan and Worod, replaced their previous authoritarian roles with ones they describe as "inspiring" and "motivational" respectively. Their roles are similar in that they both prioritise encouraging students' intrinsic motivation. Razan explains her current role: "If I can inspire one student to love the language and really want to learn for herself, not for grades or a certificate, that's the teacher that I am". Worod similarly mentions, "so many things can break down our students and make them struggle with learning … my job is about helping them find motivation from the inside" (Worod).

The experience of Mona differs from the other four teachers. Her role before the OEE did not reflect an authoritarian one; however, her reflections indicate that she used to focus primarily on delivering information to the students. She indicates this by saying, "I had a simplistic idea of being a teacher, it was like I had information and I just gave it to them. That's it". Her current role, however, seems to have shifted towards one that values and supports the students' learning process, "my job is to support their learning … focus on *how* to learn English". Mona's reflections indicate that her learning experience in the UK had influenced the role she adopts today. Her current adopted role of supporting students' learning process appears to resemble the roles of her overseas instructors, which she describes as positively benefited her learning experience, "I will never forget how they [overseas instructors] helped me, they taught me how to learn by myself, not depend on them forever".

5.1.2.3 Responsibility towards local educational development

A prominent development in UTP teachers' cognitions following their OEEs was highlighted in how they viewed their roles within the wider Saudi educational context. The teachers' interviews highlighted a shared sense of responsibility towards their context and the contributions they feel they need to make in developing EFL education in Saudi Arabia. This sense of responsibility seemed to be linked to their appreciation of the educational opportunities that they had during the OEEs. They also felt indebted towards their country for providing them with advanced

professional development. Worod mentions, "I owe my country… I would never reach this stage without the scholarship they gave me … now I have a duty to give back what I learned and what I know". Razan also expresses her desire to contribute to the local educational development, highlighting the responsibility she now feels towards her local context. "They paid so much for us, now is the time to pay back our country with our actions… make our education better."

The teachers express different views regarding what their responsibility towards their local context entails. For Worod and Mona, this responsibility is primarily enacted through implementing their overseas-developed teaching skills into their Saudi classrooms. Worod asserts this by saying, "we cannot forget anything, it is our responsibility to make sure we put it [teaching skills] all into practice". Mona also mentions that, "Practising what we learned is the most important thing, so it doesn't go to waste". For Hadeel, Salma, and Razan, this sense of responsibility goes beyond the implementation of overseas-developed skills. These three teachers highlight the need for returnees to actively investigate local educational issues and take initiatives towards solving them. Hadeel believes that conducting research studies is one way to do so, "research is our tool, it is important to use it and find out how to solve our own problems; that is our obligation now". Salma's following view highlights a shift towards an active role that takes initiative by suggesting educational developments, in contrast with a previous passive role that expected developments to be administered from higher authorities. This view also highlights a sense of professional agency that developed as a consequence of participating in the overseas programs. It reflects a mind shift towards contributing to innovation and progress, rather than being directed to do so by higher level officials who may be slower to act:

> *We can't wait for them to tell us what needs to be done … We used to do that before and the progress was so slow, but now we are responsible too … We must give them our suggestions and make a difference now that we are home again.*

The teachers' experiences highlight a developed view following the OEEs which redefines their roles as teachers in the Saudi educational context. It represents a sense of responsibility to implement overseas-developed skills in local classrooms. It also highlights some teachers' sense of responsibility towards the wider educational context and the contributions they can make towards its development.

5.1.3. Re-evaluation of the local context

5.1.3.1. Advantages/limitations of the local context

The extended OEEs seem to have influenced teachers' views about their local context and its role in defining language teaching and learning. While interacting with overseas educational contexts, the teachers re-evaluated previously held assumptions about contextual limitations associated with the Saudi educational context. Influenced by their OEEs, they realised that certain limitations were more assumed than established. As part of their new holistic outlooks, some teachers recognised certain advantages regarding their local context which they had not considered before, making them appreciate how the local context facilitates language learning. These are further explored below.

Some teachers' narratives highlighted that, before their OEEs, they held negative assumptions about the local context, where English is taught as a foreign language. For example, Worod explains that she used to deeply regret limited exposure to native English speakers in Saudi Arabia, viewing this lack of exposure as the reason why Saudis spoke English in a "Saudi accent, not [a] native accent". Her preference of American and British accents had also led her to constantly correct students' pronunciation, urging them to practise sounding "more native". However, her OEE helped her acquire a different perspective on accents and "ownership of English". In one course, Worod had several discussions with the instructor and other students regarding the classifications of a native speaker vs non-native speaker. These discussions helped her realise possible negative influences of her previous practices on students. In retrospect, she describes her insistence on students to sound native-like as, "It wasn't good, because it was bad for their self-esteem and they probably hated being Saudi speakers of English". Now, Worod views the Saudi foreign language context in a more positive way, and that it provides students with the chance to "own the language, their own version of English". Additionally, she now has an increased appreciation of the Saudi English accent, viewing it as integral to Saudi speakers' identity. "I don't try to change mine. And I explain that to my students. I say, 'native is not our goal, be proud of your own accent'".

The experience of teaching in a diverse educational context overseas provided Razan with an appreciation of Saudi classrooms and led her to change some previously held negative views. During her practicum, Razan taught groups from diverse cultural backgrounds, ages, religious beliefs and genders. Although Razan believes that this diversity enriched her lessons, she struggled to find topics that engaged all students. She also found class discussions to be 'tricky',

as she had to ensure that students do not mistakenly offend each other's backgrounds. Her experience made her more appreciative of the homogeneity of local classrooms whose students share the same culture, religion, age range and gender: "I never knew how easy it was to prepare lessons for our students until I went and taught there". However, teaching in culturally diverse classrooms also helped her identify limitations of homogenous Saudi classrooms, which she believes restricts students' exposure to foreign cultures. To overcome this, Razan presents local students with culturally diverse topics to develop their intercultural awareness: "I have to bring up ideas that open their minds to the outside world and help them have intercultural awareness".

5.1.3.2. Teacher/learner relationships within Saudi educational norms

In the interviews, teachers commonly reflected on their relationships with their students and how these had changed following their OEEs. Before their overseas education, four of five teachers described their relationships with Saudi students as being highly formal and necessitating students' utmost respect. Mona was the only teacher who reported having a "close" relationship with her students. However, teachers' OEEs and associated relationships with their foreign instructors influenced them to re-evaluate preconceived notions about teacher/learner relationships, specifically within the Saudi context.

During their OEEs, teachers were invited to engage with instructors in ways they had not experienced before. These teachers appreciated the approachability of their instructors and their relaxed and informal attitudes, comparing it with common formal and rigid attitudes of instructors in the Saudi context. Overseas instructors' attitudes seem to have had positive influences on teachers' learning experiences. Salma describes this influence on the classroom environment as a whole, "It made me feel relaxed, usually our classes here [local] are very tense, but there [overseas] it was comfortable". Other advantages reported by teachers include helping them overcome the fear of making mistakes (Razan, Mona), promoting honesty and trust between students and teachers (Hadeel, Razan), and participating in classroom discussions without worrying about undermining the instructors' authority (Worod).

As teachers returned to their Saudi educational context, they brought with them developed notions about positive teacher/student relationships. These notions include the need for Saudi teachers to be more approachable, and establish authentic and supportive relationships with their students. Hadeel calls for breaking down "the invisible walls between teachers and the girls", explaining that it is common among Saudi teachers: "A lot of teachers are like that, I would say it was the norm, but now hopefully it's changing a little". Razan and Worod both highlight the

element of fear associated with highly formal teacher/student relationships, identifying it as detrimental to students' development. Razan explains, "students are afraid of formal teachers … if they have problems, they can't say I don't understand this or that, because they are afraid that the teachers will mark them down."

Teachers' reports about their current relationships with students indicate their attempts to implement their developed cognitions. They all report currently having a positive relationship with their students; however, they had different ways of perceiving how this relationship was established. Hadeel and Salma explain that such relationships are maintained through mutual respect without intimidation. Worod highlights that she tries to always be approachable and understanding. Similarly, Razan and Mona, believe they have positive relationships with students because they are supportive of students in both educational and personal matters. Teachers' reflections highlight their developed understandings of the value in creating a constructive educational environment and how it promotes student development.

Overall, the previous analysis of teachers' experiences indicates that their cognitions underwent several developments which were influenced by their OEEs. Some cognition developments were transformative, as teachers abandoned old perspectives and adopted completely new and opposing ones. Other developments were more subtle, expanding previously held perspectives to provide a more holistic outlook of EFL education. Another significant influence is teachers' capacity to further develop their cognitions after returning to the local context. The teachers demonstrate an awareness of the need to further expand their current perspectives on language teaching and continue to consult available research on EFL education. Importantly, their OEEs provided them with a critical analytical perspective through which they continue to re-evaluate the local context and identify ways to meet contextual needs.

5.2 Influence of the local context

This section presents UTP teachers' experiences that contribute to answering the second research question: In what ways do contextual factors influence the translation of teachers' overseas-developed teaching approaches into classroom practices? To provide a holistic presentation of these factors, a background description of the English program is presented first.

5.2.1. Background of EFL program at the UTP

The English program is a compulsory component for all incoming students at the university. It is composed of four levels: beginner, elementary, intermediate, and advanced. All incoming students are directly enrolled at beginner level, and there is no placement test that groups students by their level. However, the UTP implements strict admission guidelines which include a minimum achievement score in students' English high school completion exams. These admission guidelines aim to ensure that all incoming students have similar minimum English levels. During the program, students learn different general academic skills including speaking, listening, grammar, reading, writing, and translation. The program uses the Interactions textbooks designed by the McGraw Hill Education group for international students. Teachers are encouraged to supplement prescribed textbooks with their own materials, but they must use these textbooks as main material. The curriculum in UTP is routinely evaluated every three years and updated based on the input of the course manager, supervisor and teachers (policy documents).

A wide range of facilities are available for students, including classrooms with smartboards and built-in sound systems, a library with computers and printers, a language lab with language development software, and academic counselling and tutoring services that offer students individual support. Online Learning Management Systems (LMS) are used to post course material and facilitate communication between teachers and students.

Faculty members working in the program include more than 35 EFL teachers. At the time of this study, 7 of these teachers were away for their OEEs, and 3 were in the process of applying. Overseeing all the teachers is one supervisor, Dr Rania. She has worked at the UTP for more than 15 years, starting her career as an EFL teacher. She completed a PhD in Applied Linguistics as part of the overseas scholarship program. A few years later, she was appointed as a teacher supervisor after being nominated for the role by her colleagues and elected by the majority of faculty members. She has been a supervisor for more than 5 years.

5.2.2. Contextual influences on teachers' professional practices

Teachers' narratives highlighted their complex experiences of returning to their local workplace after years of studying overseas, exemplified by their distinctive, respective struggles as they re-established their roles as teachers and faculty members. Upon their return, the teachers were all provided with various forms of instrumental and emotional support from

their colleagues and supervisor. However, some teachers seemed to easily reintegrate into their roles as returnees, while others struggled to find a role that met both their expectations and the institution's. These teachers were seemingly challenged by the unexpected realities and demands of their local context, and their continuous struggle to fit their progressive aspirations within a more traditional teaching context. Analysis of the collected data revealed various contextual factors, both within classrooms and the wider university context, that influenced teachers' capacity to implement their overseas-developed cognitions. These factors are grouped into three major themes: organisation of the EFL program, professional culture among faculty members and institutional leaders, and the culture of learning at the UTP.

5.2.2.1. Organisation of the EFL program

This theme highlights factors pertaining to the structure and implementation of the EFL program that influenced teachers' reported professional practices. These factors refer to class size, curriculum design, and teaching allocations.

5.2.2.1.1. Class size

At the UTP, the maximum number of students in one classroom, both prescribed in the program guidelines and observed, is 35. With the exception of Salma, the teachers all highlight their preference for smaller classes, particularly when recalling working with smaller classes during the practicum component of the overseas program. Among the reported benefits of teaching smaller groups was that they were easier to manage (Worod, Mona), allowed for more engaging activities (Hadeel), made physical activities possible (Razan), and enabled building rapport with individual students (Worod).

As they returned to teach larger class numbers, the teachers' reported practices underwent different adjustments to manage the class sizes in the Saudi educational context. For example, Mona found it challenging to provide in-depth feedback for students' speaking tasks, "grading their speaking takes a long time, I like to give specific feedback to each girl but with their numbers it is hard … so I try to give overall feedback". The effect of class size on assessment procedures is also highlighted in Hadeel's experience: "I have to avoid assessments that are individual and take time, like presentations, it's just not possible with how many students are in class". Razan's choice of classroom activities was also influenced by class size, leading her to avoid activities that required physical movement, "here [locally] it is different from abroad

… students have to stay in their seats because there is too many of them, the activities can't involve jumping or moving a lot".

However, not all teachers reported a restricting influence of class size on their teaching. Salma provided a more positive perspective, explaining that class size should not be considered an obstacle to communicative teaching. She also warns against using class size as a "hanger" to justify implementing traditional teaching approaches. She asserts that "35 students are not impossible to work with. We can still teach them communicatively, just like any other class". Likewise, Worod mentions that she has become accustomed to the class size, "the number is not an issue, I'm used to teaching 30 students now". Salma also highlights that comparing class sizes in Saudi Arabia with overseas is "not fair" because each context is subject to its own unique conditions, adding "we will never have 15 students in a class. It is just not possible".

Teachers' reflections reveal that some of them had to adjust their classroom practices to better serve the current class sizes in the UTP context, while others did not find class size to have any negative influence on their instructional practices. Despite restricting some teachers' choice of activities, class size did not emerge as hindering any of UTP teachers' reported implementation of effective communicative practices. The limitations of larger class sizes were seen in the time-consuming assessment of spoken activities and restricting physical activities. Teachers' perspectives highlighted their different views of class sizes and teaching. As some preferred smaller sizes, others embraced their current class size, recognising it as the norm in the Saudi context and warning against using it to justify implementing traditional teacher-centred practices.

5.2.2.1.2. Curriculum content and implementation

During the interviews, the teachers all conveyed their approval of the current curriculum content and its appropriateness for student levels. An element that appears to contribute to their approval is the generally conveyed sense of flexibility when implementing the curriculum. Although there was a recommended syllabus for teachers to follow, the teachers did not feel that they had to adhere to it entirely. Mona and Razan personally preferred to follow the suggested syllabus timeline for different reasons. Mona viewed it as beneficial for students: "I generally like to stick to it … I think it was set this way for the students' benefit". Razan viewed it as beneficial for maintaining her progress throughout the term: "I like to follow it, it keeps me focused and I make sure I cover all the skills". Other teachers, however, take a more fluid approach when implementing the curriculum. Worod and Hadeel report being led by student

levels and their progress, using the curriculum as a general guide rather than a target to cover. Worod explains that "[the curriculum] guides my lessons, but not in an obsessive way, it is not my major concern, I mainly think about the students and if they are ready for it". Hadeel similarly asserts, "I won't push through the lessons just to say I finished the curriculum. I will just take it easy for the sake of my girls".

Teachers' approval of the curriculum seems to be influenced by their ability to participate in the curriculum design and development. Every three years, the department conducts a review of the curriculum, during which changes or developments are decided jointly by both teachers and supervisors. Salma indicates that having a role in the curriculum design has influenced the way she engages with and implements it. "I don't stress about the curriculum. I know I can finish it at a good pace… If I thought covering the whole thing was difficult, I would've said that before we all approved it."

Although teachers presented different approaches to following the prescribed curriculum, these approaches reflected an underlying notion of using the curriculum to guide their students' development. None of the teachers viewed completing the curriculum on time as an aim in and of itself, signalling their awareness of the role of the curriculum in facilitating the teaching experience. Importantly, it also indicates a lack of external pressure that compels teachers to prioritise covering the curriculum on time. This lack of pressure seems to support UTP teachers' autonomy to engage with the curriculum in a way that reflects their developed cognitions.

5.2.2.1.3. Teaching allocations and workloads

The ways in which teaching allocations and workloads are distributed among faculty members at UTP is highlighted as a prominent influence on teachers' reported practices. Although these influences will be unpacked separately, they were both associated with having a negative effect on teachers' reported classroom practices.

The negative effect of teaching allocations seems to be largely due to UTP's implementation of a course rotation procedure, which prevents teachers from teaching the same course in two consecutive semesters. This procedure necessitates that teachers are always assigned a course which they had not taught in the previous two semesters. Because several teachers leave for their OEEs each year, the supervisor explained that this procedure ensures that those remaining can step in and take on any course at any time.

The course rotations were found to negatively influence teachers' reported practices, especially because courses undergo routine updates which often results in introducing new skillsets and new textbooks. Preparing for these courses each semester was a significant time constraint for Mona, Razan, and Worod. They report being unfamiliar with the courses, either because new content was introduced in the previous two years or because they forgot the content. Hadeel believed that the rotations limited her chance to develop her practices through reflections on past courses because, "the next time I teach the course, it's usually two years later … I don't benefit from my reflections and I start again from zero". Salma and Mona highlighted that these rotations restricted their creativity during the lesson planning. Salma explained feeling unable to try out creative techniques because she lacked familiarity with the course. Similarly, Mona believes that the confidence to engage creatively with a course emerges from her prolonged experience with teaching it. She asserts that "when I teach something new, I'm generally not confident to try creative things, I just avoid mistakes. If I teach it a second time, I'm more confident, because I know what works".

Teaching loads were also identified to negatively influence teachers' professional practices. Although the maximum teaching load for all teachers is 20 classroom hours per week, this is usually spread across different courses. Teachers are additionally required to participate in college committees and respond to administrative demands. Teachers' narratives indicate that the demanding workloads are restricting their ability to seek professional development, either through keeping up with the latest research in their field (Hadeel, Mona, Worod) or attending university organised teaching workshops (Salma, Razan, Mona).

5.2.2.2. Professional culture among university members

As teachers returned home following extended years of OEEs, they went through a critical period of re-integrating into the professional UTP context. This period highlighted the importance of returnee teachers' relationships with their seniors and colleagues within the university, indicating that these relationships can influence teachers' professional practices.

5.2.2.2.1. Role of the supervisor

Supporting returnee teachers

Among the different tasks undertaken by the supervisor, Dr. Rania's narratives and teachers' narratives indicate that she pays special attention to returnee teachers. The support she provides

to returnees seems to positively influence their re-integration experiences by enhancing their sense of belonging in their local professional community.

Reflecting on her role in supporting returnee teachers, Dr. Rania highlights the need to help them overcome any "reverse culture shock" in order to achieve their potential. She believes that one way to do so is through the welcoming ceremonies which she organises at the beginning of each year. During the ceremony, recent returnees are introduced to changes that happened in the department while they were overseas, and they are encouraged to speak about their educational achievements while away. Dr. Rania believes that this ceremony is important to "break the ice and welcome them back to the family".

Teachers' reports provided examples that highlighted how the supervisor supported them at emotional, social and practical levels during their initial re-integration period.

"We had many one-on-one meetings, to make sure I'm up to date." (Hadeel)

"She gave me a tour around the new campus, showed me how to use the smartboard, how to access the LMS." (Mona)

"She introduced me to the teachers who joined the faculty while I was away." (Razan)

"She was very nice and welcoming." (Salma)

"She was supportive to me in that critical time." (Worod)

These experiences were expressed similarly by teachers who reported having a positive relationship with the supervisor (Worod, Razan, Salma, Mona), and who believed they had a "tense" relationship with her due to personal differences and past altercations (Hadeel).

Another element that seemed to influence teachers' re-integration experiences was their different expectations of their upcoming roles as returnees. This is especially so regarding how they expected to enrich educational development in UTP with their overseas-developed cognitions and skills. The teachers seem to have had two contrasting expectations. The first group, comprising of Hadeel and Salma, expected roles that enabled them to participate in making decisions not only for their own classrooms, but the wider institutional context as well. Hadeel expected to be appointed to a high-ranking position, where she could help develop education for "the whole university". Salma similarly expected her contributions to "improve learning activities" in the institution. Salma made several suggestions to her supervisor which included organising university-wide speaking activities for students, and arranging debates between male and female student departments. However, both teachers were disappointed that

they were not awarded the roles they had expected. Salma particularly believed that the department had not been "thankful" for her suggestions because they were not approved.

The other group of teachers, Worod, Razan and Mona, had almost contrasting expectations. Before they returned home, they were mainly anxious about the department's expectations of them and any added responsibilities they would be required to take on. For example, Worod preferred not to be "put under the spotlight right away", Razan worried that the supervisor would have "too high" expectations of her as a teacher with overseas qualifications, and Mona reported avoiding leadership roles shortly after she had returned to UTP, because "I needed time to be comfortable in this place again … figure out where I stand."

The supervisor revealed that her approach towards recent returnees included encouraging them to share their "creative ideas", whether on the level of teaching practices, student facilities or organisation of the department. She believes that recent returnees are "the best to spot what needs to be improved … they can easily compare between here and abroad; it is still fresh in their minds". However, Dr. Rania does not encourage returnees to implement "extreme changes" or put their "creative ideas" into practice until they have had time to re-familiarise themselves with the unique context of the UTP. Based on her experience with supervising returnees, and her own experience following her OEE, she explains her point of view:

> *I understand. It is exciting to come back home and you want to use every idea you have…But I saw it with many [returnees], they do changes too fast forgetting that we are a different from abroad. We shouldn't make change for the sake of change…What works for us? What do our students need? It's important to give [returnees] a semester or two to think about this before planning changes.*

The supervisor's attempt to allow teachers to re-familiarise themselves with their local context before encouraging their contributions was viewed differently among teachers, seemingly influenced by their pre-established expectations mentioned above. Mona, Razan and Worod, who preferred to postpone their developmental contributions until they adjusted to their positions had positive views of the supervisor's role. They perceived her as considerate of their need to re-adjust to their teaching responsibilities and their context. However, both Hadeel and Salma, who expected to be highly involved in the institutional developmental plans, were disappointed to not be given the roles they expected. They believed that the supervisor did not appreciate the skills and knowledge they brought back with them. They also believed that during their first year back, they were deprived of the opportunity to make developmental contributions to the language program. Hadeel conveyed negative feelings toward the

supervisor as exemplified in her quote: "I was disappointed … my suggestions were ignored for a whole year". Salma similarly asserts, "I thought she would be thankful that I was trying to help, but she didn't appreciate my ideas back then".

This section highlighted the important role of the supervisor in the re-integration experiences of returnee teachers. On one hand, it shows how her role was positively perceived by teachers as supporting their feelings of belonging in their local professional community. On the other hand, it represents how teachers' different expectations can influence them to view the supervisor as occasionally restricting their professional practices. This is especially the case when a teacher's expectations of the roles she will play in the institution are unmet. In UTP, the supervisor demonstrated a holistic perspective of what is beneficial for both returnees and the institution. However, her view about their involvement in making institutional decisions soon after their return home did not seem to be clearly conveyed to teachers. Some teachers did not understand her reaction towards their eagerness to be more involved, influencing them to view her role as occasionally more limiting than supportive.

Overseeing teachers' practice

Based on the interviews with Dr. Rania and the teachers, the supervisory role at the UTP was identified as one of support and guidance, while also maintaining managerial oversight of teachers' performance to ensure that institutional standards were met. Dr. Rania describes her ultimate role as "guiding the teachers so that we can all reach the [institutional] goals together and uplift our students".

Although part of her role is overseeing teachers' performance, Dr. Rania reports avoiding intrusive actions that undermine teachers' authority in the classroom, stressing that her role is not "to tell teachers what to do". Her interview indicated that the authority given to teachers at the university emerges from the department's collective trust in teachers' knowledge and skills. She describes teachers in the department as the "best of the best", highlighting the strict recruitment process they went through before being employed, and the role of the overseas program in refining their skills and knowledge. However, Dr. Rania believes that some teachers in the department do not appreciate the "privilege" of their awarded authority. She refers to teachers who are unwilling to create assessments materials and instead use readymade tests that may not be suitable for their students' specific levels. She highlights this practice as one reason that "breaks our trust in the teacher … forces me to intervene".

Teachers' reports indicate that they have authority over their classrooms, as they enjoy designing their own lesson plans and materials without the external pressure of strict guidelines. However, some instances were highlighted in which teachers felt their authority was undermined by the supervisor. For example, Hadeel believes that creating her own assessment materials is "a big burden", considering the supervisor's request to do so as "interfering on my class decisions". Mona believes that most of the supervisor's requests for teachers to change their assessments is due to students' complaints, which she believes is indicative of the supervisor "standing with the students against us". Her main concern regarding the supervisor's intervention is that it will undermine her authority as a teacher in the eyes of the students, "it will make students lose respect for me".

The different responses proposed by the supervisor and the teachers represent their different understandings of the concept of authority. The supervisor believes that it entails the freedom to design the lessons but also necessitates certain guidelines for assessment materials. This idea seems to be well accepted by some teachers and not others. While Razan, Worod and Salma share the supervisor's view and seem to understand the value of these guidelines, Mona and Hadeel viewed them as a burden instead of a privilege. Instead of enhancing their authority, they both believed that these guidelines were actually undermining their authority.

5.2.2.2.2. Collaborative collegial environment

The collaborative and collegial environment among teachers at the UTP is reported to be strong and supportive. It seems to positively influence teachers' re-integration experiences and also their perceived ability to implement their overseas-developed cognitions. Although there were reported differences in character traits which resulted in disagreeing views, these did not seem to disrupt the overall harmony among teachers.

One of the most prominent facilitators of UTP's supportive collegial environment was found to be the bi-monthly faculty meetings which are organised and led by the supervisor. Dr. Rania explained that during these meetings, faculty members are encouraged to exchange both positive and negative teaching experiences, which Dr Rania believes helps "to encourage each other with the positives and also advise them to avoid the negatives". In addition, a departmental staff meeting is held at the beginning of each semester to discuss program developments with all members of the faculty and administration body present.

The regular opportunities for teachers to meet had a positive influence on the experiences of recent returnees in particular, and faculty members in general. These meetings allowed recent

returnees to share the ideas they had acquired overseas with other faculty members. The meetings also provided teachers with the opportunity to ask for support and advice from their colleagues. Razan's experience exemplified the collegial support extended to recent returnees, as she had only completed her OEE six months ago. She expressed gratitude for the guidance and help she received from her colleagues, both during official meetings and on other occasions: "I'm grateful … they've all been very helpful and supportive. If I ask anything … there are always two or three [teachers] that offer to help me".

These regular meetings also represented a developmental opportunity for all faculty members. Hadeel and Worod reported using this platform to discuss solutions for common classroom issues such as failing students and large classes. Salma remarked that these meetings allowed teachers who had returned to Saudi Arabia years ago to offer their wisdom on how to implement change in the local educational system. Mona provided an example that illustrates how teachers use meetings to share ideas that enrich each other's experiences. Being fond of using technology in teaching, Mona usually presents her findings on the latest teaching program or software. "I showed them how to use the auto-correcting features online, how to take attendance online … I found a feature that helps assess students' writing, I showed that too".

In addition to meetings, informal peer observation sessions emerged as a prominent influence on the professional development and re-integration experiences of Worod, Mona and Salma. These observations were not considered a part of their official duties, but rather common practice among teachers at the university, although peer observations were not reported by the other two teachers, Razan and Hadeel.

In identifying the influence of peer observations on these three teachers, a common finding was that they helped them reflect on their own teaching. Classroom observations also served as an opportunity for them to identify ways to enhance their classroom practice by drawing on other teachers' practices. Salma's experience presented a further positive influence, in that it reassured her of the quality of her teaching by "benchmarking" it against that of other teachers. The following quote exemplifies the benefits of the observation sessions as experienced by Salma: "I know my teaching is not perfect, there are always other teachers who are more creative and successful in getting the lesson across, so why not benefit from them?"

The informal nature of these observations and the fact that it was common practice among faculty members seemed to alleviate Worod's initial hesitation to partake in them. She had worried about being judged by other teachers; however, she now reports feeling equally

comfortable in observing and being observed. Highlighting some of the benefits of classroom observations, she considers them as "a chance to compare and take ideas, it's good to see what I am doing better and what she is doing better".

The regular meetings among faculty members and the peer observations offered returnee teachers extensive support during their re-integration period. They also provided them with the opportunity to develop their professional practices with the collaborative support of their colleagues. Although there seems to be a prevalent professional culture that encourages the sharing of experiences and ideas, the teachers' narratives did not indicate that they felt any pressure to replicate others' practices in their classrooms. On the contrary, there seems to be a common acknowledgement of teachers' differing teaching practices and an appreciation of how these differences can enrich the educational development at the UTP. Mona's following expression exemplifies the teachers' differences as she describes other teachers' use of technology.

> *I share because I love to use technology in teaching. Some teachers don't ... I understand we have different preferences… if they don't want to use it, it is of course completely up to them … I think my way is better for me, but I can never say that it will be better for everyone, because we are all different.*

Dr. Rania also highlighted her view regarding the differences among teachers' practices and attitudes, indicating that these differences are necessary to enriching students' educational experiences.

> *We want students to have fair learning experiences, but not necessarily identical. They need to be exposed to teachers with different styles ... some are lenient, some are tough … having different teachers is good … [students] will later have jobs and they need to deal with different people.*

The overseas educational program is also viewed to have played a role in maintaining the diversity among faculty members. Worod highlights that it exposes teachers to different educational systems in different countries. "We have teachers here who studied in America, UK, Canada, Australia, and of course, here in Saudi Arabia. So, you can imagine how rich this environment is with so many different backgrounds in education".

5.2.2.2.3 Professional development

The UTP administration has several initiatives in place to support the professional development of new, existing and returnee teachers. They include PD workshops organised throughout the year by the Department of Education. The workshops target different professional skills

including teaching practices and research skills. In addition, orientation sessions are held for teachers who have recently returned from OEEs. Dr. Rania explains that during the two-day orientation sessions, teachers are re-introduced to the UTP educational aims and guided towards using their skills and knowledge to help achieve these aims.

The available PD opportunities for UTP teachers seemed to be very promising. However, teachers reported that the benefits were disappointingly limited. The orientation sessions were not attended by Razan, Salma, and Worod because they had been scheduled during their teaching hours. Hadeel was only made aware of these sessions when asked about them during the interview, "Orientation sessions? You mean for those returning back here? I didn't know they even existed". Among the five teachers, only Mona attended the orientation sessions for returnee teachers. Apparently, she was able to attend them without interrupting her teaching hours because she was assigned only two courses during her first semester back to UTP.

The PD workshops were also rarely attended by teachers, due to time allocations clashing with teachers' lessons. This was reported by Hadeel, Worod, and Salma. Mona, however, was able to attend one workshop in the past year by swapping her class hours with another teacher. She recalled, it "reminded us of how to create communicative tasks for many students … working on making a fun lesson … using mind maps". Reflecting on how the content of the workshop influenced her, she mentioned, "I loved it because it was refreshing my teaching ideas". Razan, however, explained that she had not considered these workshops yet: "I just got back to UTP, so it is too soon for me". Interestingly, Dr. Rania displayed an awareness of the inconvenient scheduling of workshops for interested faculty members, including herself. She explained that because these workshops are organised by another department in UTP, she is unable to influence their timetable.

The existing opportunities for PD highlight UTP's awareness of their importance in advancing the skills of faculty members. However, despite UTP's efforts, these official workshops and orientation sessions were not reported to be beneficial for the majority of interviewed teachers, nor were they viewed to be supporting returnees' re-integration experiences. An exception was Mona, who was able to attend these workshops and reported their positive influences on her teaching practices and professional development. The main source of support, which proved fruitful in aiding all teachers' re-integration to their local context, related to the nature of social interactions among members of the university. The teachers found support in a collaborative collegial environment, through regular opportunities for staff meetings and peer observations.

Additionally, the teachers benefited from one-on-one support with the supervisor, who practiced her managerial role over teachers' duties while also acknowledging their individuality and without imposing on their classroom authority.

5.2.2.3. Culture of learning at UTP: Teacher/learner roles and expectations

The culture of learning refers here to common interactions among teachers and learners at the UTP, and different expectations of each other's roles and responsibilities. This section elaborates on the prevalent culture of learning in UTP and how this may have influenced teachers' professional practices following their OEEs.

An important factor in this culture of learning is students' understanding of the roles they play in their own learning and their roles in the classroom. Students join the university with different preconceived notions of these roles, including teacher's responsibility in their language development and in helping them pass the courses. These different understandings may influence how well they cope with the university's learner-centred environment. Several teachers (Mona, Hadeel, Razan) believe that students' expectations are influenced by their experiences in high school, and whether a learner-centred or teacher-centred approach to education was dominant. They explained that students who came from a learner-centred system that values learner autonomy can easily acquire the skills of self-directed learners when they come to UTP. They also highlighted that students who came from a teacher-centred system tend to have an increased dependence on their teachers, at least during their initial stages at the university. Dr. Rania highlights the influence of some students' experiences in teacher-centred high schools in limiting their engagement with the student-centred university context.

> *Some students are used to produce written homework and sit exams and get high marks. Class interaction is strange to them ... they think learning depends on what teachers give them in class. When they come here, they think we are being too hard and they don't cooperate.*

The feedback from teachers indicate that students display different reactions toward learner-centred teaching approaches. These reactions can be grouped into three categories. The first are students who respond well, participating in classroom activities and developing what their teachers regard as independent learning skills. These were experienced by Mona, Razan and Salma. The second group are students that struggled with becoming autonomous learners and were viewed by their teachers as requiring additional encouragement and support, as reported by Mona and Worod. The third group, who were reported in all the teachers' experiences, were

students that resisted learner-centred approaches and displayed negative reactions toward them despite their teachers' encouraging efforts. Examples of these negative reactions include avoiding active classroom participation and taking on a passive listening role despite teachers' frequent encouragement (Worod, Razan, Hadeel), resisting self-monitoring and peer assessment tasks (Mona), constantly expressing dissatisfaction with different assessment modules, arguing with teachers about their marks and requesting bonus points (Hadeel, Mona, Salma).

How students react to their teachers' learner-centred classrooms emerged as a prominent factor in influencing teachers' practices. The students' negative reactions were found to have a demotivating influence that can lead teachers to implement practices which contradict their cognitions. This was found in the narrated experiences of Worod, Hadeel and Mona. Hadeel and Worod reported their experiences with groups that were predominantly resistant to student-centred approaches, explaining how they have influenced their teaching practices.

> *Groups that are just passive and refuse to engage with me … I try to do things that they prefer, even if I don't prefer it. Like I'm not as active and engaged as in other groups. (Hadeel)*

> *You try and try but then it takes a toll on you … sometimes I think if they give me a tough time, why should I bother? It is easier for me to just read the grammar rules for them … and save my energy for groups that appreciate it. (Worod)*

These previous examples indicated how teachers' practices can be negatively influenced at the level of entire class groups. An example from Mona's interview demonstrates how teaching practices can also be influenced on the level of specific students.

> *You can tell, after a few weeks, the girls that just stare at you with the bored look, looking at their watch and waiting for class to end. If I see the same pattern with them each class, I just shift my attention to students who really want to be there and learn. (Mona)*

On the other hand, students' positive reactions and engagement with class activities can be motivational and encouraging for their teachers, influencing them on an affective level. This is exemplified by the following example from Salma's experience, which represents one of several positive reactions she has had from her students.

> *Group B is my favourite; they make me want to go above and beyond to make the lesson fun and creative … They make my heart soar … Did you see their little role-play? I didn't ask them to do it. They came up with the idea themselves. (Salma)*

The analysis of teachers' reported experiences indicates that their perceived ability to implement a learner-centred approach to language teaching is influenced by the students' reactions and attitudes to this approach. Additionally, increasing students' responsibility towards their educational development, and enabling them to develop self-directed learning skills seem to be essential in facilitating teachers' implementation of their ideal cognitions. Although various efforts have been made by the UTP to foster a learner-centred environment, a hindrance to their success seems to be the teacher-centred approaches reportedly dominant in public schools. Students who spend years mastering their roles as dependent learners in these contexts may struggle in UTP's learner-centred context. Some students may also display negative and resistant attitudes toward developing autonomous learning skills, thus hindering their teachers' attempts to help them develop such skills.

It is clear that the UTP needs to exert additional efforts to prepare incoming students for their respective roles as learners in the university context. This may help students' expectations to be in line with what their teachers are offering. It may also facilitate the development of more positive student attitudes towards a learner-centred education system. Most importantly, teachers need to be more aware of positive ways to deal with students' expectations, and not allow students' resisting attitudes to negatively influence their teaching practices. Developing teachers' awareness in such a way can be part of the re-integration support that UTP offers to returnee teachers, or through PD workshops which need to be scheduled at times that do not clash with teachers' schedules.

5.3. Observed classroom practices of UTP teachers

Analysis of UTP teachers' reported experiences in Chapter 5.1 demonstrated their cognition developments following OEEs. It highlighted a common rejection of behaviourist teacher-centred approaches in favour of a constructivist learner-centred approach to language teaching. It also highlighted their different conceptualisations of communicative teaching and the extent to which their teaching approaches aligned with it. Chapter 5.2 highlighted contextual factors that influenced teachers' re-integration into the local university, and how these factors influenced teachers' capacity to implement overseas-developed cognitions into their Saudi classrooms.

This section analyses UTP teachers' observed practices in regards to the third research question: How have experiences in overseas PD programs influenced teachers' classroom practices after returning to Saudi Arabia? The teachers' observed classroom practices are explored and compared with their reported practices, in addition to exploring associated post observation reflections about their practices.

Each teacher was observed for two lessons, for a combined period of 100 minutes (50 minutes per lesson). Data gathered from observation sessions were analysed based on the COLT scheme framework (Appendix 9), which categorises classroom content and calculates the time allocated for communicatively oriented content. As detailed in Chapter 3, seven categories of classroom content are considered when examining a lessons' communicative orientation. These categories are group work activities, meaning-focused activities, students' contribution in controlling the content, the use of extended texts, material authenticity, skills integration, and the percentage of speaking as a component of activities. The percentage of class time allocated to each of these categories is calculated, then converted to scores based on set intervals. These scores are added up to form one overall Communicative Orientation Score (COS) for each teacher. COSs represent the extent to which a teachers' practice is communicative, and allows comparisons to be made across several teachers' practices.

Table 5.1. below provides an analysis of teachers' observed classrooms. It includes a detailed presentation of different categories of activities implemented in each teacher's lesson, the percentage of class time allocated for each category, and how these percentages reflect different COSs.

Table 5.1. UTP teachers' observed practices

Class description			COLT observation categories													COS
			Meaning focused		*Group work*		*Integrated skills*		*Speaking component*		*Authentic material*		*Extended material*		*Student content control*		
Teacher	**Class level**	**Class size**	*%	**Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	
Hadeel	Elementary	29	77%	4	43%	3	52%	3	67%	4	27%	2	68%	4	26%	2	**22**
Razan	Advanced	32	79%	5	51%	3	86%	5	53%	3	58%	3	79%	4	31%	2	**25**
Salma	Intermediate	33	86%	5	42%	3	82%	5	51%	3	22%	2	71%	4	20%	2	**24**
Worod	Beginner	28	66%	4	26%	2	61%	4	37%	2	7%	1	52%	3	11%	1	**17**
Mona	Intermediate	31	57%	3	31%	2	53%	3	32%	2	17%	1	61%	4	21%	2	**17**

*The class time percentage during which each COLT category was represented.

**The score is a conversion of the time percentage based on a five-scale interval: 1: 0-19%, 2: 20-39%, 3: 40-59%, 4: 60-79%, 5: 80-100%

*** Percentages have been rounded off to the nearest whole number.

Analysis of UTP teachers' observed practices highlights a range of implemented classroom techniques. Teachers were all found to implement varying degrees of communicative practices as exemplified by their COSs in the previous Table 5.1.

The classroom practices of Razan, Salma and Hadeel reflected the highest communicative orientation as their COS ranged from 22-25. Similarly, the classroom practices of Mona and Worod also included a range of communicative activities; however, their identical scores (17), were on the lower end of the spectrum compared to other teachers at this university.

In exploring the factors that may have influenced this variation in teachers' COS, the contextual influences of class size and student levels were considered. Students' advanced levels seem to have facilitated more communicatively oriented lessons. The most advanced students were in Razan's lesson, and her classroom practices scored the highest COS (25). The least advanced students were in Worod's lesson, and her classroom practices scored one of the lowest COS (17). This indicates there may be a relationship between student levels and teachers' communicatively oriented practices. However, a closer inspection of student levels and COS across all teachers indicates that this relationship is not straightforward. For example, both Worod and Mona's lessons scored the lowest COS (17); however, their students' levels were very different. Mona's students were two levels more advanced than Worod's. Additionally, despite Worod's beginner level students, the percentage of some of her communicative categories were higher than Mona's. Worod's practices specifically had more focus on meaning, more integration of skills, and more speaking components than Mona's. A comparison between Hadeel and Mona also indicates that student levels are not a decisive factor in teachers' communicative orientation. Hadeel scored 22 despite her students being at a lower level than Mona's, who scored 17. Teachers' scores indicated that students' advanced levels may have facilitated the implementation of communicatively oriented lessons. However, the data across all teachers highlighted that an increase in student levels did not necessitate an increase in teachers' observed communicative orientation. Therefore, student levels were not found to be a decisive influence on teachers' communicative practices at this university. Table 5.1. also shows that class size of observed classrooms ranged from 28-33 students. However, there does not seem to be a clear relationship between class size and teachers' communicative orientation.

Table 5.1. provided a detailed analysis of teachers' observed practices and highlighted their different communicative orientation. It also helped explore whether or not the contextual

factors of class size and student levels influenced teachers' implemented practices. Because the influence of these two factors was not clearly highlighted, an in-depth analysis of teachers' underlying cognitions is necessary to understand teachers' varied COSs. Therefore, a description of each teacher's pre- and post observation reflections is provided below in addition to a more detailed presentation of her associated observed practices. Presenting insights from teachers' data in such a way will provide a basis for teasing out the relationships between teachers' observed practices and ideal pedagogical cognitions.

5.3.1 Hadeel

<u>Reported practice</u>

Hadeel does not align her teaching practices with a specific approach, but instead describes her teaching as "made up of different approaches" including communicative teaching. She reports implementing several communicative activities in her daily lessons, and avoids traditional approaches such as excessive grammar instruction and teaching through lecturing. Her teaching is reportedly student-based and considers students' individual skills and differences throughout the planning and implementation of the lesson. Hadeel is also considerate of students' "obsession" with high grades. Therefore, she reports her teaching to be sometimes test-driven to ensure it meets their motivational needs.

<u>Observed practice</u>

Hadeel's observed lessons included activities that focused exclusively on form (23%), form and function (65%), and a combined focus on form, function and sociolinguistic use (12%). In her lessons, 52% of activities focused on two or more skills and 67% of overall activities incorporated a speaking component presented in combination with reading or listening skills. The majority of the lesson was led by the teacher/texts, while students participated in leading and controlling 26% of activities by suggesting topics and changing the requirements of group activities. 24% of classroom interactions focused on $T \leftrightarrow S/C$ instruction. The rest included individual student work (33%), and either pair work or group work (31%). For the remaining activities (12%), Hadeel assigned some students to work individually while others worked in pairs to complete the same task. Textbooks were used as the main material while authentic audio and visual materials were used during 27% of the lessons.

Post observation reflection

Hadeel's reflections explain her choice of classroom practices based on lesson objectives and students' skills levels. She believes that students' development requires sometimes incorporating form-focused activities in the lesson, and does not believe that all activities should necessarily have a speaking component. She also regularly assesses her students' skills levels and decides whether they need to work individually or with others, because some students tend to be overpowered by their peers. Hadeel prefers to use videos from YouTube in the lesson because it is easy to find authentic material that is level appropriate. She also values students' contributions to the lesson with their personal experiences and learning preferences, highlighting that it greatly enriches their educational experience.

5.3.2 Razan

Reported practice

Razan's teaching integrates several teaching approaches but is mainly "inspired" by a communicative approach. She believes that her teaching is not entirely in line with CLT because she values accuracy as well as fluency, as she assumes CLT to value language fluency more. Razan reports occasionally incorporating drilling techniques in her teaching, in order to maintain proper pronunciation. In addition to developing students' linguistic and communicative competencies, Razan's teaching aims to promote intercultural awareness. She views intercultural awareness as integral to learning English; therefore, she reports her teaching topics and practices reflect that.

Observed practice

In Razan's observed lessons, only 21% of class activities focused exclusively on forms (pronunciation or spelling), while 18% included free classroom discussions that allowed unstructured communication (other topics). The majority of activities however focused on both forms and functions (61%). Both of Razan's lessons had no exclusive grammar instruction. Razan integrated different skills in 86% of activities, and speaking which was found to be incorporated in 53% of activities. Razan used the prescribed textbook to guide 42% of activities. Remaining activities (58%) were guided by authentic materials in the form of international newspapers and the BBC online website. The students participated in controlling 31% of the activities. Her lessons included a combination of group work (36%), individual work (22%), and whole class collaboration (15%), while exclusive $T \leftrightarrow S/C$ instructions

accounted for only 27% of combined lesson time. 79% of all materials used in lessons were extended texts.

<u>Post observation reflection</u>

Razan, who is the most recent returnee, expresses her overall satisfaction with her teaching practices at this stage of her career, but aspires to develop further as she spends more time in the Saudi context. Reflecting on observed lessons, she explains that her classroom practice promoted her students' intercultural awareness by discussing international topics and incorporating opinion sharing activities. However, she concludes that this was easily achievable due to her students' advanced levels. Her practice also reflects her understanding that integrating several skills in each activity is more beneficial for student development than presenting skills in isolation. However, she aspires to increase the alignment between her ideal pedagogical cognitions and classroom practices by designing more physically active lessons.

5.3.3 Salma

<u>Reported practice</u>

Salma reports her teaching practices as representing a "communicative approach". She focuses on students' oral communication and incorporates activities that facilitate this approach, such as information gap, role-plays and group work. One of her main goals is to build students' confidence to use English outside the classroom. Salma also aspires to develop her students' learning autonomy through her teaching practices. She reports avoiding "spoonfeeding information" and welcomes the students' contribution in guiding and developing the lesson.

<u>Observed practice</u>

In Salma's observed teaching practices, exclusive $T \leftrightarrow S/C$ instruction accounted for only 21% of lesson time. During the rest of the time, students participated in group/pair work (29%) and individual work (37%). Two groups of students also presented role-plays for their classmates, which is identified as student $\leftrightarrow$ class interactions (13%). In both of her lessons, Salma encouraged students to participate in guiding some activities, and these were found to account for 20% of the lessons. The combined content of the lessons included a 14% exclusive focus on form (grammar), 73% forms and functions, and 13% on functions. 82% of activities incorporated two or more skills, and speaking was incorporated in 51% of activities. The

materials used included the prescribed textbook (88%) and authentic posts from social media accounts (22%). Of all these materials, 71% were extended texts.

Post observation reflection

Salma's reflections about her observed lesson indicate that she is not completely satisfied with her teaching practice. She believes that her practice largely reflects her ideal pedagogical cognitions, in that it is learner-centred and promotes students' communicative competence. However, she identifies another need of her students, which she was not able to "properly" address in her lesson. She explains that her students commonly have "weak" critical thinking skills, but she has not yet identified the best way to address this issue in her classroom. Therefore, she aspires to develop her approaches further and identify ways to develop students' critical thinking skills.

5.3.4 Worod

Reported practice

Worod reports CLT to be her chosen teaching approach. She values its contribution to developing students' oral communicative skills and helping them to use English in real-life situations outside the classroom. Worod tries to use authentic texts in her lessons as much as she can and reports avoiding drilling and grammar-focused teaching. She tries to promote students' autonomy, but she also gives more attention to speaking and listening than reading and writing.

Observed practice

In Worod's observed classes, $T{\leftrightarrow}S/C$ interaction accounted for 42% of lesson time, during which she repeated all instructions in English and Arabic. During the rest of the lesson interactions, students worked individually (32%) and in pairs (26%). The content of the lesson included a 34% exclusive focus on forms (spelling/pronunciation/grammar), 41% forms and functions, and 25% on functions. 61% of all the activities in the lessons incorporated more than one skill, and 37% of activities included a speaking component. The materials used in the lesson included the textbook, audio from authentic (7%) and pedagogical (9%) sources. Of these materials, 52% were extended texts. In her lessons, the students were encouraged to participate in guiding 11% of activities.

Post observation reflection

Worod's reflection highlights the influence of student levels on her teaching practice. She explained feeling restricted in the type of activities she can implement. She aspires to use more communicative activities than observed, but she was aware that activities that demand too much oral production can intimidate her beginner-level students. She also reflected on her use of L1 (Arabic) in the classroom. She believes that it was necessary because it helps maintain her beginner students' motivation to learn English, "even though using Arabic doesn't correspond with CLT". Overall, Worod reports her ideal pedagogical cognitions to align with communicative teaching; however, she believes that her observed teaching reflected what is best for her students, even if it was not as communicative as she would prefer.

5.3.5 Mona

Reported practice

Mona describes her teaching approach as a learner-centred, constructivist approach. She considers her classroom practice to integrate methods from different approaches, including communicative language teaching. She believes that because her teaching includes form-focused activities that prioritise accuracy over communicative fluency, she is not implementing "100% CLT". Mona mainly avoids lecturing, viewing it as detrimental to students' learning. She highly values using technology in language teaching and reports encouraging Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL).

Observed practice

Mona teaches intermediate level students and her class has 31 students. Her first lesson was conducted in the classroom and contained several activities. The second lesson was conducted in the writing studio where students worked individually, then in pairs to complete a single writing task by following instructions displayed on their computers. In these lessons, the students had a role in guiding the content of 21% of activities. The combined activities of both lessons highlighted a 43% focus on forms, while activities that had a combined focus on forms and functions/sociolinguistics accounted for 57% of activities. Mona spent 27% of the lessons communicating through $T{\leftrightarrow}S/C$ instruction, while the rest of activities included group/pair work (31%) individual work (42%). The majority of lesson activities (53%) combined two or more skills. The rest (47%) focused on one isolated skill (reading or writing), and 32% of activities included a speaking component. Most of the materials used during the lessons were

text-based, of which 61% were extended. However, Mona also used authentic audio material to introduce students to different pronunciation standards and authentic excerpts from song lyrics (17%).

Post observation reflection

Mona's reflections about her classroom activities highlight her views about students' group versus individual work. She values group work for its positive influence on students' communicative competence; however, she also emphasises the role of individual tasks in promoting students' development and learning autonomy. She maintains that most students are more accustomed to individual work due to the common educational styles in their previous. Therefore, she believes that it is important to maintain that learning style in the university and not replace it completely with group/pair activities. She also believes that assigning individual tasks allows students to work at their own pace and minimises their anxiety.

5.3.6 Insights from teachers' observed practices

Analysis of teachers' observed practices highlights that they all implemented communicative practices but to varying degrees. Some teachers also implemented practices not associated with communicative instruction, such as extended form-focused activities (Worod, Mona) and presenting language skills in isolation (Mona). Teachers' pre and post observation reflections indicate that the difference in their underlying cognitions contributed to differences in their practices. Teachers' cognitions of ideal pedagogies, and the extent to which these cognitions align with communicative notions, influenced the observed communicative orientation of their practices. Table 5.2 highlights these ideal cognitions for each teacher, followed by a discussion of how these cognitions were implemented, and the relationship between UTP teachers' observed practices and their ideal, overseas-developed cognitions.

Table 5.2. UTP teachers' ideal teaching approach

Teacher	Reported Ideal Teaching Approach	COS of observed practices
Hadeel	Student-based, integrated teaching approach Incorporates communicative practice Occasionally test-oriented and form focused	22
Razan	Integrated approach that includes "some" communicative teaching Fosters oral fluency and form accuracy Promotes intercultural awareness	25
Salma	Aligns with communicative approach Fosters oral fluency and learning autonomy	24
Worod	Aligns with communicative language teaching approach Promotes learner autonomy Avoids drilling and grammar focused teaching	17
Mona	Constructivist learner-centered approach Promotes Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) Occasionally prioritising accuracy over fluency	17

Table 5.2. highlights differences in teachers' ideal approach and the extent to which teachers associate themselves with the communicative approach. While Worod and Salma reported their ideal teaching approach to be aligned with the communicative approach; Hadeel, Mona and Razan asserted their aversion to be solely associated with the communicative approach. A further analysis of these three teachers' positions highlighted their views on assumed limitations of the communicative teaching approach and how it overlooks some needs of English learners in the local context. These assumed limitations include:

- It prioritises fluency over accuracy of form (grammar, pronunciation) [Razan, Mona, Hadeel]

- It prioritises group work skills over individual learning, which undermines students' past individual learning experiences in school [Mona]

- It is not effective in preparing students for written examinations, therefore neglecting a major motivational factor that drives students' language learning [Hadeel]

- It necessitates that most classroom activities include a speaking component [Hadeel]

It is insightful to mention that even Worod, who associated herself with CLT, highlighted a further assumed limitation of CLT, which was its restricted use of the mother tongue in the classroom. This assumed limitation led her to describe her observed teaching practices as not completely communicative, because she had used Arabic to clarify instructions for her beginner level students.

Teachers who reported their ideal approaches as integrating different methods prioritised some practices that do not contribute to communicatively oriented instruction. For example, Mona prioritised form accuracy and individual learning skills, and used classroom activities considered to have low communicative content (based on the COLT scheme). This indicates that Mona's low COS was influenced by her underlying cognitions, which did not prioritise communicatively oriented instruction. Similarly, Hadeel's cognitions prioritised occasional form-focused instruction and students' test-taking skills. Although her COS was considered high in comparison to the other teachers, her cognitions justify the non-communicative content of her lessons, such as the 23% focus on form, and focusing on individual student work during 33% of the lesson activities. Therefore, variations in the communicative orientation of teachers' practices were influenced by their underlying cognitions of ideal instructional approaches.

To better understand the relationship between teachers' observed practices and underlying cognitions, a discussion of the congruences between the two is needed. Congruences between teachers' observed practices and pre observation reports were highlighted in the experiences of Hadeel, Razan, Salma, and Mona. These four teachers explained different priorities in their teaching, which were subsequently observed in their practices and justified variations in their COS. However, Worod's data highlighted some incongruences between her ideal cognitions and observed practices. Her ideal cognitions highly supported a communicative teaching approach and avoided form-focused instruction. However, her practices scored one of the lowest communicative content among UTP teachers and 34% of her lesson time was found to focus exclusively on forms. Worod's reflections highlighted that the contextual influence of students' beginner levels prompted her to prioritise their understanding of the material over their communicative production, and therefore use fewer communicative activities than she would have preferred. The contextual constraint of students' low levels influenced her decision making, as it led her to consciously deviate from her ideal teaching approach and display an awareness of how it may not meet the needs of her beginner level students. Instead, she prioritised less ideal cognitions that she believed were more appropriate for her students' needs. This discussion of congruences and incongruences between teachers' cognitions and practices further highlights that teachers' practices are guided by underlying cognitions. However, it also highlights that contextual factors within the classroom can influence a change in teachers' cognitions of ideal pedagogies.

5.3.7. Summary

This section highlighted that teachers at the UTP implemented communicatively oriented practices to differing degrees. Teachers' cognitions on ideal teaching approaches influenced variations in observed communicative orientation. Local contextual factors were found to be influential on teachers' cognitions. This is evident in how teachers analysed student needs and preferences, and implemented practices which they believed to better meet their students' needs. However, data from teachers' reflections and observations did not highlight significant contextual constraints on their classroom practices, apart from one group's low levels of language proficiency. Generally, teachers' observed classroom practices were found to reflect their cognitions about ideal pedagogies and their perceptions of students' needs. Another indication of teachers' capacity to implement their cognitions is evident in how all five teachers did not rely solely on prescribed textbooks during their lessons. They complimented the textbooks with authentic audios, videos and texts to support their lesson objectives. Teachers' ability to depart from prescribed textbooks and utilise their own materials highlighted their capacity to make classroom decisions that reflected their own cognitions without being constrained by contextual restrictions such as standardised tests and materials.

Findings from Chapter 5.1 indicated that teachers' cognitions were evidently influenced by their OEEs, as they reflected a move away from behaviourist teacher-centred approaches and an adoption of constructivist, communicatively oriented and learner-centred teaching approaches. This chapter further supports these findings, as teachers' observed practices were found to be highly reflective of their reported cognitions. The influence of the OEEs was evident on the teachers' observed classroom practices, as their classroom practices were found to reflect many of their overseas-developed cognitions. However, the observed practices were also found to reflect cognitions which the teachers developed while engaging with the contextual influences within their local classrooms.

Chapter 6.
Cross-Case Analysis

This chapter presents a cross-case analysis that contrasts and builds on the insights presented from each of the two case studies. It serves three aims, the *first* is to examine teachers' LTC developments during their OEEs, by a) exploring the nature and trends of these developments across all 10 participating teachers from both cases, and b) uncovering personal and educational factors which contributed to their LTC development during their OEEs. The *second* aim is to investigate the influence of the local context on returnee teacher's practices and cognitions, including their emotions. It draws special attention to the nature of local constraints and differentiates between the influences of two kinds of constraints, the instrumental and the operational constraints. The *third* aim is to compare the classroom practices of teachers in both universities as represented through the COLT observation scheme and resulting Communicative Orientation Score (COS).

6.1. Teachers' Overseas Educational Experiences

6.1.1. Trends in cognition development

The reports of all teachers who participated in this study demonstrated that their LTCs had undergone multifaceted development as a result of their extended OEEs. Several trends emerged that highlight different types of LTC developments. These emerged by comparing teachers' reported pre and post OEEs cognitions, and by analysing their experiences of learning and training overseas. The first trend was the emergence of *transformed cognitions*, which resulted from integral changes in the way teachers viewed aspects of EFL instruction. The second trend that emerged was *expanded cognitions*. An expanded cognition is a more subtle representation of development, where teachers build on already existing cognitions and broaden their understanding of language teaching and learning.

6.1.1.1. Transformed cognitions: The abandoned, the adopted and the modified

Transformed cognitions is used in this study to refer to developments that occurred in teachers' views of language learning and teaching, which resulted from a substantial shift in educational and personal perspectives. These cognitions are entirely different from the cognitions that teachers used to hold prior to their OEEs. This form of cognition development is similar to what is commonly referred to as teachers' conceptual change (Kubanyiova, 2012)*,* through which teachers' cognitions fundamentally change to become aligned with notions presented in

their educational programs. In this study, transformation in teachers' cognitions was demonstrated in three distinct ways: by completely abandoning previously held notions of EFL teaching, by adopting new notions, or by modifying inaccurate assumptions.

Abandoned notions include some of the teachers' traditional understandings of their role in the classroom, such as previously held authoritarian roles and regarding themselves as knowledge keepers and transmitters. Some notions that were abandoned also include specific pedagogical preferences, such as predominantly teacher-centred and behaviourist approaches, form-focused instruction, and concentrating on students' grades. Teachers' reports indicate that many of these notions had been formed during their early experiences as language learners, and they continued to be strongly held even after completing pre-service education and teaching for extended periods. The transformative influence of teachers' OEEs is evident in its ability to help teachers abandon cognitions that had been formed during the early stages of their lives and had been part of their cognitive repertoire for many years.

Adopted notions refer to those teachers had never considered as part of their cognitive repertoire before enrolling in their OEEs, but now view them as integral to their teaching philosophies. Some of these are notions teachers were exposed to for the first time overseas, such as Computer Assisted Language Learning, intercultural awareness and learner autonomy. Other adopted notions include those that teachers were aware of before their OEEs, but had never considered them relevant or significant to their own teaching. These include adopting student-centred teaching or CLT as their main teaching approach. Teachers' OEEs helped them to understand the significance of such notions and consequently now view them as integral to their teaching cognitions.

Modified assumptions are those teachers held throughout their early experiences of teaching in Saudi classrooms. However, their later OEEs helped them to realise that these assumptions were inaccurate. Some prior inaccurate assumptions include the notion that CLT is an approach that revolves around games (Mariam), CLT only works in the Western context (Sara), that native English pronunciation is the ideal (Mariam) and that Saudi students are innately weak speakers (Deema). The transformative influence of OEEs is evident in its ability to modify teachers' inaccurate assumptions and develop their cognitions so they reflect more refined and research based views. Mariam and Sara's inaccurate assumptions have now transformed into more developed understandings of CLT: an approach that can be modified to serve any context (Sara), and one that employs entertaining and collaborative activities to promote students'

cooperative engagement with lesson content (Mariam). Deema's inaccurate assumption about Saudi students' weak speaking skills was modified to reflect an awareness of how learning is influenced by local educational norms. She now identifies these norms as contributing to students' limited speaking skills by not encouraging students' expression of opinions from an early age. Detailed examples of teachers' cognition development are presented within each case study (Chapters 4 & 5). However, the examples mentioned here highlight how teachers' OEEs had a transformative influence on their cognitions, by helping them abandon previously held notions, adopt new ones and modify inaccurate assumptions. However, not all influences were considered to be transformative. OEEs also expanded teachers' existing cognitions as explained in the following section.

6.1.1.2. Expanded cognitions

Although OEEs exposed teachers to new educational concepts, the teachers were also presented with concepts they had had previous knowledge of. The OEEs helped expand the teachers' pre-existing cognitions, offered them in-depth understandings of notions they carry and equipped them with the critical awareness to extend these notions on their own. The first means by which expanded cognitions evolved was by building on teachers' pre-existing cognitions by offering in-depth explanations of core educational concepts. For example, teachers were able to form a comprehensive understanding of language learning theories and teaching approaches and their underlying assumptions. This is distinguishable from teachers' prior knowledge of these concepts, which they perceived to be minimal and superficial.

A second means by which OEEs expanded teachers' cognitions was that these experiences enabled them to link the theoretical aspect of language teaching to instructional practices. Indeed, one of the prominent limitations of local pre-service educational programs, as indicated by the teachers' reports, was that the two dimensions of theory and practice were presented to them in isolation. In contrast, OEEs helped teachers to not only explore different learning theories, but also enabled them to identify practices and techniques that aligned with the theories and approaches that they adopted.

A further means by which teachers' cognitions expanded was enhancing their capacity to construct and articulate their own teaching philosophies. This capacity is particularly significant as it helped teachers to evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to their own local context. It empowered them to work through and resolve tensions that arose from them feeling caught between two powerful influences, the influence of the OEEs and the

influence of the local context of practice. Both local teaching context and overseas educational context advocated similar notions of communicative and learner-centred instructional practices. However, conflicts developed between what teachers were encouraged to adopt, and what they deemed to be appropriate and applicable to the local teaching context. These conflicts meant that some advocated instructional practices were adopted whilst others were rejected.

Teachers' reported cognitions displayed their capacity to construct and articulate personal teaching philosophies that, at times, did not align with those advocated in either the local teaching context or overseas educational contexts. These include continuing to value traditional teaching techniques such as drilling (Razan), explicit error correction, and adopting integrated approaches (Mona, Sara, Razan, Amal, Deema, Mariam, Hadeel) instead of aligning solely with the advocated communicative approach. These deviations from advocated approaches seem to have emerged from teachers' evaluation of their students' needs, contextual limitations, their understanding of effective teaching practices and their own experiences of learning EFL.

6.1.2. LTC development channels during OEEs

Analysis of individual case studies in Chapters 4 and 5 highlighted teachers' themes of LTC developments during their OEEs. In cross-case analysis, teachers' reported OEEs were further analysed to explore how their LTC developments occurred and what channels facilitated such developments. Highlighting these aspects is beneficial for both teachers and designers of educational programs, as it helps them to identify ways of supporting teachers' LTC development and consequently enriching their educational experience. To this end, the data from each participating teacher were revisited, and comparisons across datasets revealed different factors in their OEEs that worked together to influence developments in teachers' LTC. These collective factors worked as channels that influenced teachers' LTC developments and they are highlighted in Figure 6.1.
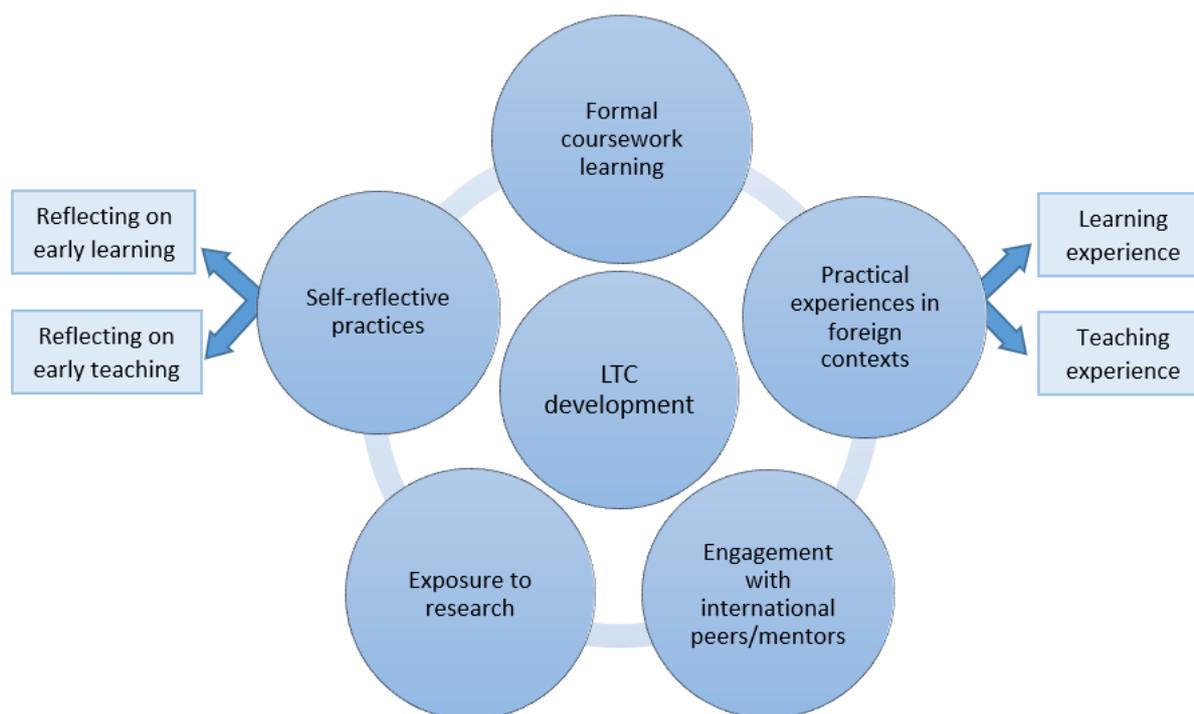
Figure 6.1. LTC development channels during teachers' OEEs

A prominent element that expanded and developed each teacher's LTC was her program's formal coursework. This consisted of learning that took place in formal classrooms, including core and supplementary reading requirements. It also included classroom discussions among teachers and their instructors. The role of this element was practically evident in how teachers' theoretical understandings developed.

The second element was teachers' practical experience in different foreign contexts: experience of being both learners (during courses) and teachers (during the practicum). As learners, teachers experienced firsthand the benefits of being active participants in a student-centred environment that fostered their autonomy as learners. They also experienced, some for the first time, the benefits of having a positive and supportive relationship with their instructors, and its influence on their own development as learners. As reported by the teachers, such experiences influenced them to adopt similar attitudes and practices which aimed at enabling their students to experience similar positive experiences. During the practicum period, teachers also experienced how to put new theories, approaches and methods into practice. This practical teaching experience helped some teachers believe in their skills, as they saw the results in their students' development. The positive outcomes of their teaching experiences also supported their decision to adopt similar approaches once they returned to Saudi classrooms.

The third element that contributed to teachers' LTC development was self-reflective practices that they took part in during their overseas educational programs. Through reflective journals, classroom discussions, or personal reflections, the teachers were encouraged to reflect on both their early learning experiences and early teaching practices. Reflections on their early learning experiences helped them revisit struggles they had faced in learning English as a foreign language and identify the reasons behind them. These reflections also helped some teachers understand how both their apprenticeship of observation and experience as students had influenced them to later imitate their own teachers' practices. Reflections on early teaching experiences helped them identify what they did wrong and better understand their students' reactions and learning outcomes. The influence of self-reflective practices continued for some teachers long after they completed the programs. This is evident through the experiences of Deema, Sara, Razan, Salma and Hadeel, who report continuing to incorporate self-reflective practices as part of their current teaching routines.

The fourth element of OEEs which supported teachers' LTC development was their exposure to research. The programs enabled teachers to develop the skills to read and critically analyse research articles in EFL education. This was a new experience for some teachers, who reported rarely reading any research articles before enrolling in their overseas programs (Afaf, Amal, Worod). Developing these skills enhanced their capacity to continue on the path of professional development by keeping up with the latest findings in EFL education research. An example from Afaf's experience exemplified how exposure to research influenced her LTC development, as she described it as an "open door to the world", which enabled her to understand the struggles of EFL education worldwide, and how different contexts proposed different solutions.

Teachers' LTC development was also aided through their participation in a community of practice that involved experienced peers and mentors from international EFL contexts. The overseas programs included teacher learners from all over the world. Therefore, participants were offered the chance to form relationships and exchange ideas with EFL teachers and mentors from different cultural and educational contexts. This variation of experiences exposed participants to different perspectives and encouraged them to seek guidance from a wider circle of culturally diverse colleagues. Teachers' various experiences highlighted the pivotal role of social participation and collaborations with peers in maximising the benefits of overseas education in their LTC development.

The elements presented above describe the means through which development in teachers' LTC seems to have occurred. These elements relate to the nature of OEEs common in all or several of teachers' narratives. However, there were other factors that influenced teachers' LTC development, and these were of a more personal nature and specific to each teacher's individual experience. In an attempt to provide a comprehensive analysis in this qualitative study, it was important to highlight both the common patterns and unique features in teachers' experiences. Therefore, the following section reports on personal factors that influenced teachers' overseas LTC development.

6.1.3. Personal factors influencing overseas LTC development
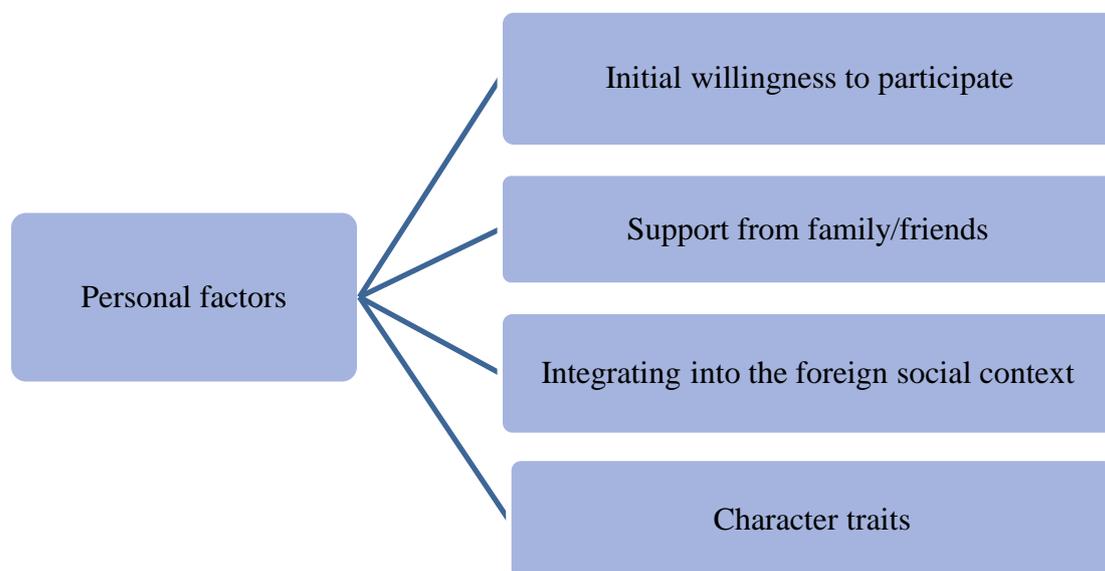
Figure 6.2. Personal factors influencing teachers' LTC development during OEEs

One of the main personal factors that contributed to teachers' LTC development was their initial willingness to embark on OEEs. Overseas scholarships, as explained in Chapter 1, are compulsory for all teachers employed in Saudi universities. The teachers were all aware of the obligatory nature of these scholarships when they signed their employment contracts. However, not all undertook the program willingly. Teachers' reports highlighted various degrees of initial willingness to participate in OEEs. At one end of the spectrum were those who were completely unwilling to embrace OEEs. These included Amal and Hadeel. Amal described feeling "forced" to go abroad and blamed UIV's recruitment policies for the hardships she faced when she left her family and moved overseas alone. At the other end of the spectrum were teachers who were highly intrinsically motivated to enrol in these programs. These included Deema,

Sara, Salma and Mona, who viewed OEEs as a lifetime opportunity that could help them develop on a professional and personal level. The remaining teachers (Worod, Razan, Afaf, Mariam) reported different doubts and fears that limited their initial willingness to leave their home country, but they enrolled in the program and eventually overcame them.

A comparison between teachers' different experiences highlights that those who were initially motivated to participate in OEEs later sought numerous ways to maximise the benefits from the experience. They took advantage of several professional and personal development opportunities on offer. Examples include enrolling in additional elective courses, volunteering to teach EFL to refugees, participating in student conferences, taking on new hobbies and pursuing non-educational interests. This contrasts with teachers who were initially unwilling to embark on OEEs. Their reports indicated they were eager to finish the program requirements and return home as soon as possible and were overwhelmed by their studies throughout their OEEs. They also reported struggling to become accustomed to the foreign educational context and faced educational obstacles, much more so than their more positively motivated peers. Examples of these obstacles include facing numerous difficulties in understanding the foreign education system and expectations of the instructors, getting unexpectedly low assignment scores, and struggling with time management.

The next personal factor that influenced teachers' development during their OEEs was the ability to integrate into the foreign social context. The majority of teachers felt quite comfortable in their new contexts and did not report any issues during their entire overseas study period. However, Deema, Amal, Afaf, and Hadeel had various negative personal reactions in relation to the overseas social context. Deema felt "not welcome" in the city she lived in, describing its community as "implicitly racist" and constantly reminding her that she was a foreigner. Amal reported feeling isolated and lonely during her entire OEE. She had made efforts to socialise in several events; however, she believed that being a Saudi woman attracts negative attention. She recalls receiving negative remarks once people realised she was Saudi, as they commented on Saudi Arabian policies and women's rights. "I had the imposed role as spokeswoman for Saudi policies…and I hated it. I felt I was always defending my country and that became exhausting" (Amal). Afaf and Hadeel, however, both reported feeling unsafe in the community they lived in, due to several attacks that had been directed towards the Muslim community. Hadeel had also been the target of racial slurs while she was with her children, so she "couldn't wait till I returned home". Teachers' ability to integrate into the new context and the degree of social acceptance and security they felt seems to have influenced

their view of OEEs in general, namely whether or not they were "worth the risks," as expressed by Afaf. Describing their feelings of completing their OEEs, Hadeel and Amal expressed similar notions of surviving it despite the limited social acceptance and safety they felt. For example, Hadeel mentions "I was relieved, that my children and I went through it and came back home safe and sound". It seems that feeling unaccepted or unsafe due to their religious and cultural backgrounds also limited some teachers' potential for LTC development during their overseas experiences. This is because these teachers refrained from participating in promising developmental opportunities because they felt that their safety and acceptance was not assured. For example, Afaf did not attend several workshops that were held off campus, because she was afraid to go alone. Deema also passed on the opportunity to do her practicum in a prominent local institution, choosing instead a small institution located in another city, because she wanted to be in a "place that is not so racist".

Another personal influence on teachers' development during OEEs was the support they reported receiving from family and/or friends. This support was essential as it helped some teachers overcome obstacles they faced in completing program requirements and adjusting to educational demands. Afaf, Sara, Razan and Mariam were all lucky to have felt the support of their husbands and Saudi friends, which helped them overcome insecurities during difficult periods including the first few months of the program, the practicum and final exams. Deema, Mona and Salma did not have family with them abroad but formed supportive friendships with other local and international students. However, Amal, Worod and Hadeel lacked the support they needed from family and/or friends during their OEEs. Amal reported feelings of extreme loneliness, as she lived alone and struggled to make meaningful friendships: "I had nobody to tell me good morning, or good night. Sometimes I forgot what my voice sounded like at home". Hadeel similarly lacked support from family and friends and indicated that it escalated her depression during her OEE, "I thought I was too busy to have friends … I think I was depressed … Let's just say it wasn't easy". Worod also felt isolated as she did not have any family with her and struggled to find the time to make friends.

It is necessary to discuss several character traits associated with teachers' development during their OEEs. The first trait is having a resilient mindset in the face of educational and personal challenges. This mindset reflects the ways in which teachers thrived during different stages of their PD experience as opposed to merely surviving them. A clear reflection of this resilient mindset is highlighted by Amal, in her recollection of a particularly challenging experience during her practicum. "I realised that, wow, I'm good at this… I almost gave up, but I didn't.

And I'm so proud of myself because I kept trying until I succeeded". This indicates that resilience in the face of challenges and struggles during PD experiences may lead to cognitive development. In Amal's case, such development manifested in an increased awareness and confidence in her own capabilities and potential. It is important to stress here that resilience was not highlighted as a consistent mindset in any of the participating teachers. Indeed, each of the teachers' experiences demonstrated instances in which they reflected resilient attitudes, and other instances in which they were overcome by the challenges and pressures associated with living and studying overseas. However, resilience as a character trait can help us understand the personal factors contributing to a teacher's persistence when facing challenges. Through such resilience and persistence emerges the opportunity for personal and professional growth to take place.

Another character trait that emerged as integral to teachers' LTC growth and overall PD is having a view of oneself as a lifelong learner. In order to achieve expansive and transformative developments in their LTC, teachers need to recognize that becoming an effective EFL teacher involves much more than acquiring the content knowledge of a PD course. It involves growth in instructional skills, pedagogical cognitions, professional identity and much more. Such an understanding of the different dimensions and layers involved in professional development is highlighted in Afaf's perception of her own growth following her OEE: "I'm not just a teacher, I'm a thinker, a researcher, a problem solver … I am an excellent team player". Understanding the different roles of an effective teacher requires a view of PD as a continuous life cycle rather than a fixed position that can be achieved by completing a specific PD program. Such a perception of oneself as a lifelong learner was reflected among different teachers in different ways during their OEEs. Some demonstrated an intrinsic drive to take advantage of every opportunity for development and actively sought ways to engage in PD experiences both inside and outside their program requirements (Deema, Sara, Salma, Mona). Perceiving oneself as a lifelong learner was also reflected in the way Afaf, Deema and Sara viewed mistakes they made during their respective PD experiences as opportunities for development, as opposed to failed attempts to excel. This perception aided them in overcoming feelings of disappointment associated with not meeting their own expectations or those of others.

Analysis of teachers' experiences has highlighted the influence of these personal factors on their LTC development during OEEs. An interesting insight which particularly emerged from Amal's interviews indicates that these personal factors may have also influenced her perceived professional development following the OEEs. Amal had low initial willingness to participate

in the OEE, she reported her inability to integrate in the overseas social context, and she had limited support from family and friends. Analysis highlighted that Amal's perceived cognition development was very limited compared to other participants. She even states that despite enrolling in an "Ivy league university" whose program seemed initially very promising to her, she did not believe that she benefited from the experience "at all". Amal's perception contrasts with numerous reflections she made which highlight how her cognitions had indeed developed during and following the overseas program. However, the negative view held of her own development, and her perception of the OEE's limited role in promoting such development, can be attributed to personal factors that negatively influenced her OEE.

In considering the personal challenges that teachers faced during their OEEs, it appears that some challenges may have influenced them to grow professionally and personally. Such growth was especially highlighted with regards to an increased awareness of various social, educational and personal challenges that many of their own students face. For example, teachers who had struggled to integrate in the overseas social context (Deema, Hadeel and Afaf) developed an awareness of the learners' need to belong to social communities. As they returned to teach in Saudi classrooms, these teachers took different measures to ensure these needs were met. For example, Afaf teaches freshmen students and her description of her role as a teacher includes encouraging supportive relationships among students. This role highlights her awareness of students' non-academic needs in a new educational context, and seems to be influenced by her own experience as a learner in a foreign context. We can see this when she says, "I want them [students] to feel that they fit in … as freshmen. I know it can be so hard to try to find your place in a new university … and study at the same time". A further example of teachers' ability to relate to students' needs is highlighted in Hadeel's developed approach to teaching following her OEE. She constantly modifies her teaching approaches to ensure that all students feel included, and shows great consideration for students who may feel marginalised by their limited language skills. Such a consideration may have developed following her own struggles to integrate into her surrounding context during the OEE.

The influence of personal challenges which teachers faced overseas on their long-term development is also evident in the roles they later played as community members within their respective local universities. This is mostly evident in the experiences of Afaf and Deema, who actively sought to establish a means of communication between UIV faculty members after realising that teachers are mostly working in isolation. Deema initiated a communication platform through the WhatsApp application to enable herself and other teachers to connect and

share experiences and advice. Her initiation may have been influenced by her own experience of feeling isolated and rejected in the foreign social context, which helped her to be more intuitive regarding the ways in which isolation can impact negatively on teachers' wellbeing in an educational context.

This section concludes the first aim of cross-case analysis which has been to explore the nature of teachers' LTC development during overseas PD programs. It highlighted developmental trends through transformed and expanded cognitions. It also presented the means through which teachers' LTC development occurred, highlighting five main elements that worked together to influence long-term professional and personal growth. These elements are teachers' formal coursework learning, practical teaching and learning experiences in foreign contexts, exposure to research, participation in a community of practice, and constant self-reflective practice. Cross-case analysis also highlighted the role of personal factors in influencing teachers' development during PD programs. The unique challenges and personal struggles that each teacher faced during the years of OEEs were also found to influence growth and development in LTC.

Although highlighting teachers' personal experiences was not an initial aim in this study, they surfaced spontaneously through the interviews. Therefore, it seemed important to bring forth the personal factors which influenced teachers' growth in order to better understand their complex cognition developments. This analysis has shown that it is imperative to recognise that teachers' pedagogical cognitions do not develop in isolation from their personal everyday struggles. On the contrary, these struggles had helped shape and mold teachers' cognitions to reflect who they are today, both as teachers and individuals. This was particularly evident in the way personal challenges had influenced positive, long-term developments on their professional and personal development. These challenges helped them understand and address social, personal and educational challenges that many of their students encounter, while also being more attuned to the needs of their colleagues as members of a community of practice.

6.2. The local context: Influences on cognitions and practices

This section serves the second aim of the cross-case analysis chapter. It examines the influence of two different local contexts, UIV and UTP, on returnee teacher's practices and cognitions, including their emotions. It will first highlight different cognition developments that relate to teachers' perceived roles and identities within the local professional context. Then it will draw

special attention to the nature of local constraints and differentiates between instrumental and operational constraints.

6.2.1. Perceived role of returnees: Entitlement vs responsibility

An insightful difference in the LTC development of teachers across both case studies was highlighted in their re-evaluation of self, particularly, how they currently view their roles within their university context. The reported experiences of teachers in both universities highlighted that their OEEs contributed to the development of their unique professional identity. This development manifested through teachers' appreciation for their advanced professional expertise and recognition of the value they could bring to the Saudi educational context. However, teachers' experiences as returnees to the two different universities seemed to have shaped their perceived role to reflect two different notions. Among the majority of teachers at the UIV, this perceived role seemed to grow into a sense of entitlement, focusing on what their current teaching context owes them in terms of authority and recognition. In contrast, teachers at the UTP seemed to perceive their role to be one of responsibility towards the local educational context, as they demonstrate their desire to give back with their developed skills and knowledge. These influences are further unpacked below.

At the UIV, the majority of teachers perceived their role as returnees as defined by their entitled right to have authority over their classrooms, and for their opinions about curriculum developments to be considered by decision makers. However, the teachers' need to be appreciated in their context was unacknowledged by the supervisor and managing authorities. In fact, institutional restrictions were imposed that confined their role to following prescribed regulations which aimed to strictly standardise their lessons and assessments. Teachers' restricted classroom authority, and their preoccupation with their inability to fulfil aspects of their desired classroom roles, seem to have limited their capacity to consider how they can potentially contribute to developments in the wider Saudi educational context. As a result, most UIV teachers' narratives regarding their role as returnees were focused on their entitlement to participate in decision making in their classrooms.

In contrast, UTP teachers' perceptions of their role within the local context differed considerably from that of UIV teachers. Their perceived role reflected a sense of responsibility towards their local context, which included their immediate classrooms, the EFL program in the institution, and wider Saudi educational context. In their classrooms, teachers asserted this

responsible role by making exerted efforts to translate their developed cognitions into practice. In the EFL program, their sense of responsibility manifested in their efforts to exchange experiences with their peers and actively participate in developing the curriculum. Teachers' sense of responsibility towards the wider educational context was evidenced by their endeavours to actively investigate local educational issues by conducting research. Through different approaches, these teachers strove to give back to their local context by utilising their advanced skills and knowledge to develop EFL education.

UTP teachers' perceptions of their role as responsible contributors seems to have been initially sparked by an immense gratitude towards their country for investing the time and resources in their professional growth. However, the supportive professional environment at the UTP influenced them to develop more sophisticated roles as responsible contributors. These teachers were given authority over their lessons and classrooms, were invited to contribute to curriculum development and had the chance to communicate their ideas and aspirations through various channels. The supportive environment which values their contributions seems to have encouraged teachers' perceived responsibility to give back to the local context.

The discussion above highlights different ways in which teachers viewed their roles as professionals returning from OEEs. Importantly, it also highlights the influence of the local context on further shaping teachers' views regarding their role. The difference between supervisors in both universities was quite clear. At the UTP, teachers were encouraged to share their ideas and their contributions were welcomed, even if they were not always approved of in the way teachers had hoped. As a result, returnees viewed their role as responsible contributors to institutional and national educational development. At the UIV, however, teachers' efforts to actively contribute to shaping content and structure in their lessons was viewed by the supervisor as problematic and disrupting to the status quo. The rejection from UIV seniors influenced feelings of entitlement among teachers which defined their perceived role as returnees. This section highlighted how teachers' re-evaluation of their role was shaped by their experience as returnees in two different university contexts. The following section will highlight the influence of two different university contexts on teachers' professional practices.

6.2.2. The nature of contextual limitations

Analysis of the two cases indicated that each university had several contextual limitations on returnee teachers' professional practices, which restricted their capacity to implement their developed teaching cognitions. None of these limitations related to financial resources, as both

universities had an abundance of advanced learning facilities and teaching materials. However, the existing limitations were categorised into *instrumental* and *operational* limitations. Instrumental limitations included classroom size, students' disparate language levels in each group, lack of placement tests that evaluate students' initial language levels, heavy teaching loads and course rotations. Such limitations had a practical influence by restricting teachers' capacity to implement their ideal teaching practices and activities. Although some instrumental limitations were experienced by teachers in both university contexts, the teachers' capacity to overcome them differed considerably in each case, due to factors further discussed below. Operational limitations included policies that restricted teachers' classroom authority and limited their opportunity to participate in making decisions for the development of the institutional EFL program. These operational limitations had an impact on teachers' classroom practices, however, they were also found to influence teachers' underlying affective and cognitive dimensions.

6.2.2.1. Instrumental limitations

Instrumental limitations influenced the reported and observed practices of some teachers in each university. Particularly, these limitations influenced the extent to which teachers implemented their ideal teaching cognitions or felt compelled by contextual limitations to implement practices that did not completely reflect their ideal cognitions. An example of an identical limitation reported in both universities is lack of placement tests, which resulted in students having disparate language levels in each classroom. Another limitation is large classroom sizes, reported by several teachers at each university. At the UIV, the majority of teachers viewed these limitations as insurmountable obstacles to effective classroom practices, limiting their capacity to implement their ideal teaching cognitions. In comparison, these limitations were found to be less influential at the UTP, as indicated by the analysis of teachers' reported and observed practices. Some UTP teachers were able to implement their ideal teaching cognitions despite these limitations. Other UTP teachers responded to the limitations by reprioritising their cognitions and implementing practices that suited both students' needs and the limitations of their classroom context.

An apparent factor that aided UTP teachers in overcoming the instrumental limitations was the supportive professional culture in the university, consisting of collaborative collegiality among faculty members and the supervisor's continuous support for teachers. The collaborative collegial environment was represented by regular staff meetings and the common practice of

peer observations. These two channels enabled teachers to interact regularly and share their ideas and expertise with their peers, thus developing common understandings of contextual limitations and ways to overcome them. Teachers also seemed to have developed a common understanding of their institution's educational aims and ways to attain them, further supporting their endeavours to overcome instrumental limitations. The supervisor's proactive support for UTP teachers, both in their early re-integration and periods that followed, also played a significant role in enabling teachers to overcome these limitations. The supervisor's supportive and approachable nature encouraged teachers to express their struggles and seek her advice without fearing that it would undermine their professional expertise in the eyes of their seniors. In contrast, this supportive professional culture seems to have been largely absent at the UIV, based on reported experiences of all but one participating teacher (Sara). Some UIV teachers had made individual efforts to form their own small-scale networks of supportive peers. Despite these individual efforts, teachers seemed to be mostly working in isolation within their university context, struggling and often failing in their attempts to overcome daily instrumental limitations.

The influence of the supportive professional culture within the institution extends to more than helping teachers to overcome contextual obstacles. Indeed, this supportive culture was found to influence teachers' development at an affective level. In both universities, teachers who enjoyed this support identified themselves as valued faculty members whose contributions to the local context were appreciated by peers and decision makers. This also influenced the UTP teachers' sense of belonging to the university context and Saudi educational context as a whole. In exploring the consequences of teachers feeling undervalued by their supervisors and peers, as was the case for four teachers at the UIV, teachers who spent numerous years in such a context (Deema, Amal, Afaf) no longer saw themselves as continuing to work at the university in the future. Amal even considered leaving the teaching profession altogether.

6.2.2.2. Operational limitations

Operational limitations were more prominent in the experiences of teachers at the UIV than the UTP. These limitations included restrictions on UIV teachers' contribution to program design. Such restrictions were represented by decision makers' rejection or disregard of teachers' suggestions to amend the curriculum, change compulsory textbooks and introduce placement tests that would group incoming students according to their language levels. These limitations also included restrictions on teachers' classroom authority through the imposition of

standardised syllabi and assessment guidelines. These imposed an immediate limitation on classroom practices, as teachers were unable to implement their desired teaching approaches. Additionally, teachers' rejected attempts to amend assessment guidelines, and the limited communication between teachers and decision makers seemed to fuel teachers' frustration and confusion, as they could not understand why the institution demanded conformity. At the UIV, most teachers perceived their role as being restricted to guideline implementers rather than valued professional contributors. This imposed role clashed with UIV teachers' expectations and aspirations as returnees. Such aspirations had been influenced by their OEEs and evolved from a sophisticated, more critical and proactive understanding of the teacher's role in educational development. A consequence of experiencing these operational limitations at the UIV was that some teachers seem to have had their professional autonomy weakened. They had yielded to prescribed guidelines and showed limited willingness to contradict them in order to implement their ideal teaching cognitions. This is in contrast to the situation at the UTP, where teachers experienced much less operational limitations. The reports from UTP teachers highlight their determination to overcome contextual limitations and implement their ideal cognitions, or substitute them for others after thoughtful analysis of students' needs. An additional influence that seemed to result from operational limitations at the UIV was teachers' limited interest and investment in attaining further professional development. The majority of UIV teachers did not believe that their university context sufficiently recognised their current skills and knowledge, despite them having completed intensive PD programs overseas. Therefore, they do not see the value of further professional development at this stage.

In summary, cross-case analysis of these two universities indicates that instrumental contextual limitations can negatively influence teachers' immediate classroom practices, however, these can be overcome with the help of a supportive professional culture. To achieve the desired outcomes, a supportive culture must be initiated and encouraged by decision makers and supervisors. This is critical, because teachers' individual attempts to initiate small-scale collegial support among peers (at the UIV) provided limited benefits. Operational limitations at the UIV, together with lack of supervisory and collegial support, highlight the negative affective influences that a local context can have on returnee teachers. Four out of five teachers reported feeling one or several of the following emotions: marginalised and unappreciated by superiors, isolated from peers, unmotivated to pursue further development, and disappointed and resentful towards their local institutional context. These negative feelings seem to have influenced some teachers to consider leaving the teaching profession altogether. The striking

comparison of teachers' experiences at the UIV and UTP also indicates that social and institutional marginalisation of highly professional EFL teachers is detrimental to their capacity to implement their advanced skills and cognitions in the local context. It also influences their positionality as professionals and members of that context, and the extent to which they are willing to contribute to its development.

6.3. Teachers' observed practices

The previous sections provided cross-case analysis of teachers' cognition development and different influences from two university contexts on teachers' practice and cognition. All 10 participating teachers seemed to have developed similar understandings of EFL education following their OEEs, mainly by adopting learner-centered notions and rejecting predominantly teacher-centred approaches. Communicative teaching was found to be commonly valued by all teachers, but to different extents. While three teachers considered their cognitions to be aligned completely and solely with the communicative approach, the other seven teachers considered communicative teaching as a valuable, yet partial component of their more integrated approaches to language teaching.

In light of teachers' alignment with communicative notions of language teaching, and considering both universities' adoption of communicative teaching as a recommended approach, this section will provide cross-case analysis of teachers' observed classroom practices as reflected by the COLT observation scheme (Appendix 9). It will compare the communicative orientation of teachers' practices across universities and will highlight contextual factors in each university which facilitate and/or hinder teachers' implementation of communicative teaching.

Tables 6.1 and 6.2 provide a detailed presentation of how different communicative orientation categories from the COLT observation framework were represented in teachers' lessons. This data has been previously presented in the analysis of teachers' observed practices at each university. However, it is beneficial to revisit them here to allow comparison of teachers' practices across the two universities. To facilitate this comparative analysis, the tables below also include average percentages of teachers' COS in each case and percentages of communicative orientation in each of the seven categories.

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Table 6.1. Observed teaching practice: Case 1 (UIV)

Class description			COLT observation categories													Teacher's COS
			Meaning focused		*Group work*		*Integrated Skills*		*Speaking component*		*Authentic Material*		*Extended material*		*Student Content control*		
Teacher	**Class level**	**Class size**	*%	**Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	
Amal	Advanced	34	88%	5	38%	2	64%	4	58%	3	0%	1	73%	4	11%	1	**20**
Mariam	Intermediate	33	39%	2	26%	2	89%	5	56%	3	10%	1	37%	2	12%	1	**16**
Deema	Intermediate	31	73%	4	24%	2	67%	4	31%	2	12%	1	53%	3	9%	1	**17**
Afaf	Beginners	37	37%	2	11%	1	39%	2	12%	1	0%	1	47%	3	0%	1	**11**
Sara	Advanced	35	76%	4	49%	3	71%	4	63%	4	17%	1	69%	4	21%	2	**22**
AVERAGE OF CATEGORY PERCENTAGE			**62%**		**30%**		**66%**		**44%**		**8%**		**56%**		**11%**		**Average Score 17**

*The time percentage of the observed lessons during which each COLT category was represented.

**The score is a conversion of the time percentage based on a five-scale interval, 1: 0-19%, 2: 20-39%, 3: 40-59%, 4: 60-79%, 5: 80-100%

*** Percentages have been rounded off to the nearest whole number

Table 6.2. Observed teaching practices: Case 2 (UTP)

Class description			COLT observation categories												Teacher's COS
			Meaning focused		Group work		Integrated Skills		Speaking component		Authentic Material		Extended material		Student Content control		
Teacher	**Class level**	**Class size**	*%	**Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	
Hadeel	Elementary	29	77%	4	43%	3	52%	3	67%	4	27%	2	68%	4	26%	2	**22**
Razan	Advanced	32	79%	5	51%	3	86%	5	53%	3	58%	3	79%	4	31%	2	**25**
Salma	Intermediate	33	86%	5	42%	3	82%	5	51%	3	22%	2	71%	4	20%	2	**24**
Worod	Beginner	28	66%	4	26%	2	61%	4	37%	2	7%	1	52%	3	11%	1	**17**
Mona	Intermediate	31	57%	3	31%	2	53%	3	32%	2	17%	1	61%	4	21%	2	**17**
AVERAGE OF CATEGORY PERCENTAGE			**73%**		**39%**		**67%**		**48%**		**26%**		**66%**		**22%**		**Average Score 21**

**The time percentage of the observed lessons during which each COLT category was represented.
**The score is a conversion of the time percentage based on a five-scale interval, 1: 0-19%, 2: 20-39%, 3: 40-59%, 4: 60-79%, 5: 80-100%
*** Percentages have been rounded off to the nearest whole number

At first glance, a comparison between teachers' COSs across the two universities clearly highlights that UTP teachers' classes have higher communicative content than UIV teachers. While UIV teachers' COSs ranged from 11-22, with an average score of 17, UTP teachers' scores ranged from 17-25, with an average score of 21. An overview across the two universities indicates that student levels may be an important factor in facilitating the implementation of a communicatively oriented lesson. Teachers with the highest scores in both universities were assigned to advanced students, while teachers with the lowest scores in both universities were assigned beginner students. However, average percentages for all categories among UIV teachers are consistently lower than average percentages for all categories among UTP teachers. This suggests that student levels may not be the only factor influencing low COSs. Other factors are explored next.

A closer inspection of Tables 6.1 and 6.2 shows that an apparent difference between the communicative orientation of UTP teachers and UIV teachers is reflected in two specific categories. These categories are material authenticity and student content control, and each will be separately unpacked. UIV teachers' use of non-pedagogic materials that represent authentic English usage averaged at 8% and is significantly lower than that of UTP teachers, who on average used authentic material during 26% of their lessons. In fact, two UIV teachers, Afaf and Amal, did not use any authentic materials. In Afaf's case, the lack of authentic material could have been influenced by low student levels, as she was assigned to beginners. In her interviews, she indicated that students' low levels influenced her ability to conduct a communicatively oriented lesson. However, authentic materials were also absent from both of Amal's observed lessons, despite her students being an advanced group. This indicates that, in addition to student levels, the use of authentic material may have been influenced by other factors in relation to context. When exploring UIV teachers' reports, one of the main reported constraints was the supervisor's standardisation of lessons content and the institutional requirement that they strictly adhere to prescribed textbooks. As indicated by teachers' observed use of classroom materials, strict standardisation at UIV seems to limit teachers' ability to integrate authentic materials that reflect a communicative approach to language teaching, despite it being an integral part of their cognitive repertoire. Because teachers are required to adhere to specific pre-approved material, their capacity to depart from these requirements and use external authentic material seems to be consequently limited.

The reports and observed practices of UTP teachers further highlight the role of institutional teaching guidelines in influencing the material used in teachers' classrooms. UTP teachers were found to use significantly more authentic materials in their lessons, with the highest percentage being Razan's lessons at 58% and the lowest being Worod at 7%. Their reports highlighted that they enjoyed a great deal of autonomy over their lesson content and the material they used. Although UTP teachers were required to follow one unified textbook, they were allowed, and even encouraged by the supervisor, to customise the content and use external materials to better suit their students' needs. This seemed to be a crucial factor in influencing UTP teachers' capacity to make classroom decisions that reflect their own cognitions and incorporate more authentic materials than their UIV peers.

Student content control in the COLT scheme represents the extent to which students are involved in determining the content of lesson activities. This could be achieved through many ways, including offering students the choice between two activities, allowing students' comments and contributions to steer certain activities and involving students in the decision making of assessments or lesson content. Communicative classrooms commonly advocate the benefits of involving students by negotiating tasks, materials and content, and this is considered to be among the core notions of student-centred learning (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995). In examining observed practices of UTP teachers, their lessons seem to give students much more content control than the UIV cohort. While the average percentage of students' content control in UTP's lessons was 22%, the average percentage in UIV's was 11%.

Considering UIV teachers' reports about their university context, explained in detail in Chapter 4, two reported factors seem to limit teachers' capacity to facilitate students' contribution to class content. The first factor was curriculum design, which teachers found to be dense, with too much content and materials to be completed within one semester. The second factor was class size. Teachers were strictly required to cover the entire curriculum within a specific timeline, and giving students control over classroom content could steer the lesson away from the prescribed curriculum, thus influencing teachers' ability to adhere to the strict timelines. When dealing with large classes, this risk is increased as more students contribute to decision making. In contrast, UTP teachers reported they were not under pressure to cover the curriculum, and that, although they preferred smaller classes, they did not view the current class size as a limitation to effective teaching practices. Based on the COSs and teachers' reports in both universities, it can be assumed that these two factors contributed to UIV teachers' limited capacity to allow student control over lesson content.

In all the other categories, UTP teachers' average percentages were higher than those of UIV teachers; however, that difference was not as large as those in the categories of student content control and material authenticity. Nevertheless, UIV teachers' consistently lower scores and averages further affirms that the contextual limitations seem to have limited teachers' potential to implement a more communicatively oriented approach, which they had collectively considered to be part of their respective cognitions.

A comparison of teacher's observed practices also affirms that even when a teacher reports firmly aligning with a certain teaching approach, this may not be translated in observed teaching practices. Contextual influences can play an important role in facilitating or hindering her implementation of such an approach. Afaf, Salma and Worod's cognitions were reportedly aligned firmly with the communicative teaching approach. This orientation was highly represented in Salma's lessons for intermediate students, during which she scored the second highest COS (24). However, this was not the case with Afaf and Worod, who scored the lowest COS of all observed lessons. As previously discussed, Afaf's low COS (11) could have been influenced by her students' low beginner levels. However, Worod was also assigned beginners, but her observed practices reflected a higher COS at 17. The disparity between these two teachers' observed communicative orientations, despite having similar cognitions and student levels, further indicates that contextual limitations at the UIV, in which Afaf teaches, limited her capacity to implement her cognitions.

6.4 Summary

This chapter provided cross-case analysis of the insights which emerged from the two universities. It began with highlighting trends of teachers' LTC developments during OEEs, and the personal and educational factors that influenced these developments. The role of the local institutional context in influencing teachers' cognitive and affective dimensions was also highlighted, including their perceived roles as members of the universities. Analysis concluded by comparing the communicative orientation of teachers' practices across both universities, and discussed contextual factors that may have influenced teachers' observed practices. The following chapter will discuss how the analysed themes reflect the study's underlying theoretical framework and guiding conceptual frameworks. It will consider and interpret the significance of the findings and how they contribute to current understandings in the field.

Chapter 7.
Discussion

This study has sought to bring together and further explore dimensions that are often investigated separately in the literature. These dimensions are: EFL teachers' cognition development during OEEs; translation of these cognitions into local classroom practices; and the influence of the contexts in which EFL teachers practise. The relationship between the three dimensions of cognition, practice and context have long been recognised to be interrelated (Johnson, 1999). However, this study has provided an in-depth investigation into how each dimension affects and is affected by the other. Such a nuanced understanding of the relationship between teachers' cognitions, practices, and contexts is especially necessary for educational institutions undergoing change and reform, including schools, universities and language centres. Despite vast financial investments in educational development, overlooking one of these dimensions may be detrimental to the vision and implementation of national educational reforms (Brezicha, Bergmark, & Mitra, 2015; Underwood, 2012).

This discussion chapter is organised into two sections. The first section will discuss insights gained from exploring the experiences of 10 teachers during their overseas PD programs. In particular, it will explore the findings of the first research question. Q1: How have experiences in overseas PD experiences influenced teachers' cognitions regarding EFL teaching approaches? The second section of the discussion chapter will focus on teachers' experiences of returning home to the local context, in which I highlight the findings of the second and third research questions. Q2: In what ways do contextual factors influence the translation of teachers' overseas-developed teaching approaches into classroom practices? Q3: How have experiences in overseas PD programs influenced teachers' classroom practices after returning to Saudi Arabia?

7.1. LTC development during overseas PD experiences

Teachers' PD experiences in their overseas programs facilitated long lasting developments in their LTCs. This is highlighted by transformative and expanded growth in cognitive and affective dimensions of teachers' unobserved constructs. The following section will highlight teachers' LTC development, focusing on the interrelated nature of cognitive and affective dimensions. The positioning of teachers' PD in an overseas context will also be explored, with a specific focus on the advantages and limitations that overseas experiences present for

potential LTC development. The socially constructed nature of the overseas learning experiences has also emerged as a significant influence on teachers' development, and this aspect will be thoroughly explored below. Overall insights pertaining to teachers' professional development will be discussed against the adopted theoretical and conceptual framework of this study. These frameworks (previously outlined in Chapter 2) are Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning, and Borg's LTC model.

7.1.1. The interrelated nature of teachers' cognitive and affective dimensions

The experiences of participating EFL teachers in overseas PD programs resulted in diverse transformations and expansions in their LTCs. As defined in Chapter 2, LTC in this study is used to refer to both cognitive and affective dimensions of language teachers' unobserved constructs. The complex and interrelated relationship between cognitive constructs, traditionally identified in the literature as knowledge and beliefs (Borg, 2006), and affective constructs, which include identity, agency and emotions, is a seminal insight that emerged in this study.

One way in which the relationship between cognitive and affective dimensions has been highlighted is through mutually informed growth of teachers' pedagogical cognitions and professional identity. A teacher's professional identity is related to his or her overall personal reflection of the role he or she plays within the dynamic educational and professional context (Kaplan & Garner, 2018). The research findings highlight that development in teachers' instructional approaches during OEEs was accompanied by shifts in how they viewed themselves in the education process. For example, the shift in perceived roles from authoritarian knowledge holder to facilitator of learning was integral to their adoption of communicative, learner-centred approaches. This negotiation of professional identity was not limited to roles they assumed in the classroom; it was also a reflection of growth in their agency as professionals.

Agency refers to an individual's capacity to independently make decisions and take actions amidst social and cultural influences that can limit this ability (Alsup, 2018). In this study, the development in teachers' agency following PD programs was highlighted through their recognition of themselves as active agents in their own professional development, as decision makers in their classrooms, and as contributors to educational advancements in the local Saudi context. Teachers' learning experiences prior to their OEE were largely restricted to being

passive recipients of knowledge. This was highlighted in their collective reflections of their learning roles in Saudi schools and pre-service programs. This passive role continued during their early experiences of teaching, as highlighted by the narratives of Sara, Amal, Afaf and Mariam. These four teachers reported implementing classroom policies mandated by external agents and rarely questioned them, reflecting their limited agency to partake in making decisions for their own classrooms. However, OEEs helped the teachers to grow and become active agents who recognise their professional development and personal capacities that position them as responsible and capable classroom decision makers. For some teachers, especially those in the UTP, their active professional agency was further extended to recognise their potential contribution and value to the educational development of the wider institutional and national context.

The development of teachers' professional agency was facilitated through their extended engagement with overseas education systems. These systems fostered teachers' capacity to reflect on their personal perspectives, evaluate proposed notions, experiment with different practices, and be accountable for their pedagogical decisions. The programs did not position teachers as empty vessels upon whom knowledge could be bestowed. Instead, these programs recognised the wealth that lay in teachers' past experiences as language learners and instructors, and encouraged them to recognise their value as well. In doing so, teachers developed an increased awareness of the cognitions they chose to adopt and why. An example of this awareness is highlighted in the way that seven out of ten teachers demonstrated the capacity to critically evaluate and disagree with different educational notions advocated in the overseas programs. Amal and Deema, for example, disagreed with the portrayal of traditional teaching approaches as detrimental to language learning. Instead, they viewed some traditional teaching techniques as beneficial for Saudi students. Similarly, Razan continued to value drilling as an important teaching technique, despite it being strongly discouraged during her overseas program. Overall, teachers' narratives highlighted how they differed in the extent to which they agreed with the proposed pedagogical notions in their programs. However, they all exemplified the ability to justify their pedagogical choices and make informed decisions to maintain, adopt or abandon certain perspectives. In their review of the literature on teacher's professional agency, Toom, Pyhältö, and Rust (2015) note that these qualities represent agentic teachers, because they highlight teachers' ability to resist external norms and develop unique cognitions that represent their own professional values.

The affective nature of teachers' development was further highlighted through the powerful role of emotional dissonance in developing teachers' pedagogical cognitions, professional identity and agency. Each of the teachers experienced different emotional struggles during her OEE. Overseas learning experiences often presented teachers with perspectives that opposed what they had known and practised before, resulting in emotions of frustration, confusion and self-doubt as teachers questioned their long-held convictions against those proposed to be more beneficial. These instances of emotional dissonance paved the way for ineffective cognitions to be critiqued and later abandoned. It also facilitated the adoption of reframed cognitions, as teachers witnessed firsthand the power of alternative teaching approaches in influencing positive learning outcomes. The emotional struggles that teachers experienced during their extended OEEs played a fundamental role in facilitating growth in their pedagogical cognitions, professional identity and agency as language teachers, and importantly, growth in their personal capabilities as individuals.

At a personal level, the struggles and challenges some teachers experienced while living in foreign contexts were important in generating emotional dissonance. These struggles included learning to live in culturally diverse contexts and finding a way to fit in without relinquishing their identity as Saudi Muslim women. The dissonance associated with these challenges paved the way for more tolerance and understanding of diversity. Dissonance at the personal level complemented the dissonance that emerged through their educational experiences.

The power of emotional dissonance is commonly associated with instances of personal conflict and contradictions that trigger negative emotions (Kubanyiova, 2012). However, positive emotions also emerged as influential to teachers' professional development. For example, teachers' experience as learners within the overseas learner-centred educational system, and the emotions they felt in being supported, understood and valued, helped them reflect on their previous teaching approaches. What evolved was a re-envisioning of the practices they aspired to implement in order to evoke similar emotions from their own students.

The research findings also contribute valuable insights in understanding the persistence of LTC developments following overseas PD programs. The extent to which cognition development persists after teachers return to practice in their home contexts is a main concern identified in research on overseas teacher education (Cook, 2010; Cook & Gulliver, 2014; Macalister, 2016; Nguyen & Walkinshaw, 2018). This concern is raised because cognitive development during PD programs is at risk of being "washed out" when teachers return to their classroom

environments (Yazan, 2014). Contexts of practice play a powerful role in shaping teachers' pedagogical cognitions, and teachers may eventually consider their newly developed cognitions to be unrealistic or impractical for local classrooms. In this study, eight out of 10 teachers had returned to their respective Saudi institutions for several years; however, their narratives highlighted sustained LTC development. This is not to say that teachers' cognitions had not been further shaped by their experiences as returnees. Indeed, the analysis highlighted how some pedagogical cognitions were reprioritised and appropriated to better meet students' needs in the local context, and not all ideal pedagogical cognitions could be translated into practice. However, the influence of OEEs on teachers' LTC development was clearly evident. A main contributor to this long lasting development in teachers' LTC is the highly affective nature of the influence of OEEs, which targeted their professional identity and agency, not just their pedagogical cognitions and teaching skills. OEEs provided teachers with experiences and challenges that in turn influenced growth in their professional identity and agency. Thus, it facilitated the internalisation of pedagogical notions that persisted years after completing overseas training programs. In this sense, the research findings support the argument that introducing teachers to new pedagogies is more likely to influence lasting change in practices if these notions are internalised and made compatible with teachers' affective dimensions (Moodie, 2015; Nugrahenny, 2010).

The insights discussed above contribute to understanding the relationship between the cognitive and affective dimensions of LTC development. These two constructs are identified in this study as inseparable and mutually influential, and emotional dissonance is recognised as a catalyst for sustainable LTC development. The mutual development that has been highlighted between teachers' agency, professional identity, and pedagogical cognitions reflects the highly affective nature of teachers' professional development. Through its findings, this study supports the call to broaden current understandings of LTC. LTC should encompass more than traditional cognitive constructs of knowledge, thoughts and beliefs, and include teachers' affective constructs such as emotions, identities, and agency (Crookes, 2015; Golombek & Doran, 2014; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015; Li, 2019).

Although cognitive development has been increasingly recognised in research as a main contributor to teacher change, the affective dimension of teachers' lives is comparatively downplayed (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). The affective dimension is particularly overlooked in Borg's (2006) widely adopted LTC framework (Figure 2.1), which assumes LTC to be represented by "beliefs, knowledge, theories and thinking" (p. 284). Borg's framework

continues to be a seminal guide for emerging studies in LTC, and it has certainly advanced the field by highlighting the influence of different life experiences on language teachers' development. However, due to advancements in research, including those contributed in this study, it is timely to revisit and revise the framework and the definition of LTC to better recognise teachers' affective dimension, including emotions, identity and agency. A revision of this sort is especially relevant given that Borg's more recent work has identified emotions (2012) and affective dimension (2018b) as important in teachers' professional development. An LTC framework that explicitly recognises teachers' affective dimension would provide clarity about the current advancements in the field and serve as a more comprehensive guide for future research.

The limited recognition of teachers' affective dimension in LTC research reflects a trend in the broader field of teachers' professional development. As highlighted in recent research (Alzaanin, 2014; Llovet Vilà, 2016; Santos & Miguel, 2019), professional development continues to be viewed as mainly contributing to cognitive growth in teachers' knowledge and beliefs. Affective dimension, although increasingly recognized for its influence on teachers' development, is viewed as subordinate to cognitive growth. This study has highlighted that for EFL teachers, such as those in the two Saudi universities, the affective dimensions of identity, agency and emotions are not subordinate to cognitive growth. This research aligns with other recent studies that argue that emotions are at the core of LTC development (Golombek, 2015; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015), professional identity (Barcelos, 2015; Schutz, Hong, & Francis, 2018; Song, 2016) and agency (Miller & Gkonou, 2018; Toom et al., 2015). Through its findings, this study affirms that raw emotions "orient, inform, and define the formation of teacher development" (Yazan, 2014, p. 57).

7.1.2. Personal influences on LTC development

The importance of personal motivational factors in facilitating LTC growth during PD programs have emerged as another significant research finding. From a sociocultural perspective, teachers are viewed as active participants in the process of developing their cognitions and skills (Vygotsky, 1978). They are not passive recipients of knowledge, as presumed by acquisitionist models of learning that view "knowledge as a kind of material, human mind as a container, and the learner as becoming an owner of the material stored in the container" (Sfard, 2008, p. 49). This active participation necessitates a view of oneself as a lifelong learner with a personal drive to learn, develop and adopt different ways of teaching

(Nguyen, 2019; Wlodkowski, 2003). The experiences of participating teachers affirm that when this intrinsic drive is jeopardised, the chance for deep, long-lasting developments to occur is limited.

The Saudi overseas scholarship program is mandatory for university academics: a choice not all participating teachers willingly made. Teachers' willingness, commitment and motivation to fully engage with their programs varied substantially due to personal, social and contextual reasons. This variation in motivation influenced how teachers engaged with the presented learning opportunities, and subsequently, the degree of professional development that resulted from the experience. During the initial period of their overseas education journey, six out of 10 teachers could not justify the social and emotional burden associated with uprooting themselves and their families for the sake of overseas professional development. This burden was further escalated by different personal and educational challenges that some teachers faced while trying to integrate into contexts that were not always accepting of their cultural and religious backgrounds. These teachers displayed different capacities to overcome such challenges, as some seemed to be more resilient than others. Three of the participating teachers particularly struggled to overcome the personal and educational challenges they faced (Afaf, Amal, Hadeel). As a consequence, completing the program with the least effort and time became a goal in itself, and opportunities for cognitive growth and skills development were not fully taken advantage of.

The intrinsic motivation for change and its influence on the benefits gained from PD programs emphasises the human nature of learning. As humans, we are constantly subjected to internal and external influences that shape the potential for growth that can be achieved from any experience. As highlighted by Wlodkowski (2003), "engagement in learning is the visible outcome of motivation, the natural capacity to direct energy in the pursuit of a goal" (p. 39). The opportunities for professional development were maximised when participating teachers adopted a growth mindset (Dweck, 2008) (i.e. when they viewed challenges as being part of the learning experience instead of insurmountable obstacles). This mindset enabled teachers to view challenges faced during overseas education, such as increased responsibility of becoming self-learners, unfamiliarity with the foreign education context, and the requirement to implement different teaching approaches during the practicum, as opportunities to challenge themselves to reach their full potential. This study does not attempt to label the teachers as those with fixed mindsets vs growth mindsets, or those who were intrinsically motivated or not. Doing so would be problematic, because the dynamic nature of humans does not allow

them to assume an exclusive state of mind (Dweck, 2016). Indeed, the narratives of each participating teacher has highlighted how she experienced instances of motivation and demotivation to engage in PD activities. However, intrinsic motivation and a positive attitude was found to play a positive role in maximising teachers' benefit from PD programs. In the instances that teachers fully embraced the overseas experience, with its challenges and opportunities, they actively sought ways to grow as individuals both inside and outside classroom settings, which increased the chance of cognitive and affective growth to occur. This discussion clearly demonstrates the power of teachers' personal factors and their influence on LTC growth during PD programs.

7.1.3. The socially constructed nature of LTC development

A main contributor to teachers' LTC transformations and expansions while overseas was their engagement with international peers and supervisors, and their participation in the practicum. During negotiations and collaborations with peers from international EFL contexts, the teachers found a platform through which their individual teaching concerns were acknowledged and analysed against the combined experiences of diverse peers and more experienced professionals. This engagement with peers who shared similar PD goals was a powerful source for developing teachers' cognitions. It especially helped them to re-evaluate their views regarding the local Saudi educational context. An example of this was highlighted in Mariam's experience. Her negative view about the Saudi educational context being "lacking" was reviewed due to her exposure to her colleagues' experiences in different EFL contexts and realising similar struggles they each faced. Engaging in dialogic negotiations is an essential skill that teachers developed during their participating in communities of practice. As highlighted by Burns and Richards (2009), participation in communities of practice necessitates learning to share ideas with peers and listening without judgment. Such a development was reflected in teachers' experiences, especially as they engaged with peers who had conflicting educational notions due to their different backgrounds. This study also highlights the power of discussions and collaborations with peers in validating teachers' identities as EFL instructors and negotiating concepts advocated during the PD program. As argued by Kabilan (2013) "discussions that transpire during the sharing sessions are ideal for the teachers to gain new ideas, refine and reconstruct existing knowledge and practices, and construct new knowledge and practices related to teaching and learning" (p. 199).

Participation in overseas practicum also emerged as an opportunity for teachers to achieve substantial professional development. They were able to test out the practicality of their newly formed cognitions in real-life classrooms, and they did so with the guidance of professional teacher-instructors. Drawing on sociocultural theory, this implementation process under the supervision of "more knowledgeable others" (Vygotsky, 1978) mediated the translation of adopted theories into practice. The practicum experience enabled teachers to witness firsthand how alternative pedagogical models can be effective in producing positive student learning outcomes, thus further cementing newly adopted approaches to become part of their long-term teaching philosophies.

Teachers' success in implementing their newly adopted teaching approaches during the overseas practicum also proved to be a main contributor to their increased self-confidence and self-reliance as practitioners. It served as personal evidence and a reminder of their capacity to cope with challenging practices in unfamiliar classroom contexts. The highlighted role of the practicum experience corresponds with other research on teachers' experiences in international practicums, which highlights this as a substantial contributor to developing teachers' identities and classroom skills (Kabilan, 2013; Rodriguez, 2011). The influence of the practicum on teachers' PD also reflects the mutually informing relationship between classroom experiences and LTC development (Borg, 2006; Buehl & Beck, 2015). As highlighted in Borg's framework, cognitions guide what is implemented in the classroom, and practical classroom experience informs the further development of cognitions.

The highlighted role of peer discussions and collaborations, and guided practicum practices, in mediating teachers' cognition development substantiates sociocultural notions of learning. The sociocultural perspective views human mental development as rooted in the individual's participation in social interaction and practice (Lantolf, 2004; Vygotsky, 1978). A decade ago, Johnson (2009) called for a social shift for teacher education and development. She theorised that communal forms of learning can help develop teachers' professional views and perspectives. This call for a social ontology to understand language teacher development continues to be echoed by more recent researchers (Li, 2019; Nguyen, 2019). This study has demonstrated that not only is this socially situated form of learning beneficial for teachers' evolving pedagogical perspectives, but that it has been a critical contributor to lasting developments in their professional identity, agency and emotions.

7.1.4. Overseas professional development: advantages and limitations

7.1.4.1. Advantages

As discussed previously, emotional dissonance has been found to play a vital role in triggering development in teachers' cognitions and professional identity. This study highlights that an advantage of OEEs, especially if they are extended rather than short-term, is that they offer massive opportunities for emotional dissonance to occur.

Teachers and learners in local educational settings tend to share similar notions that are implicit and deeply ingrained about the value of knowledge, how it is attained, and what roles individuals plays in the learning process (Macalister, 2016). Teachers in this study were immersed in a foreign cultural and educational context which presented them with alternative ways of living, learning and engaging with others. These experiences led teachers to constantly engage in guided and individual self-reflective practices that helped them analyse what they knew about teaching and learning. Teekens (2000) affirmed that engaging in "different value systems can deeply upset notions of personal and professional identity" (p. 33). This offers an opportunity for self-revaluation, abandoning of old notions and acquisition of new ones. Such emotional and cognitive engagement with different value systems ultimately results in transformations and expansions in teachers' LTC, as reflected in the narratives of 10 participating teachers.

Due to the nature of collected data in this study, I am unable to make any claims about whether the cognitive development of locally trained teachers is less substantial than that of overseas trained teachers. However, insights gained in this thesis support Macalister's (2016) assertion that "time spent in a different learning-teaching environment may be more effective at creating 'dissonance' [than local learning]" (p. 61). The findings in this study affirm the power of OEEs in creating dissonance, which can lead to LTC development (Lundy, 2011; Macalister, 2016). Such LTC development is substantial and long lasting, as represented by teachers' reports after years of completing overseas education programs. This long-term influence is supported by findings from other research on Saudi academics studying abroad, which has also asserted that personal and professional development gained during OEEs persists for many years after university academics have returned home (Pikos-Sallie, 2018). Dwyer (2004) similarly concluded that experiences of study abroad can serve as a catalyst for personal and professional developments that can persist for as long as 50 years.

The duration of the OEE is highlighted as influential on the sustainability of gained professional and personal developments. The participating teachers spent a minimum of two years overseas. Such extended immersion allowed ample time for them to be exposed to a wide range of meaningful educational experiences both inside and outside formal courses. It also allowed teachers to negotiate their cognitions within themselves and with others, and experience applying these cognitions in the practicum, all the while overcoming numerous social, personal and educational challenges that helped reshape their cognitions. The duration of overseas study experiences has been established by Dwyer (2004) as influential on the sustainability of developmental outcomes. In her longitudinal study of 3723 participants, Dwyer found that on average, overseas experiences of one year or more have more long-term influences on participants' personal and professional development than those of shorter duration.

7.1.4.2. Limitations

Although the foreign learning context was found to be facilitative of teachers' development, an apparent drawback was that these learning experiences had not been framed by program designers against the backdrop of the teachers' Saudi contexts. During OEEs, some teachers, such as Hadeel and Afaf, struggled to envision how the advocated approaches would fit into their Saudi classrooms. Others, such as Razan and Salma, however, adopted certain teaching notions only to be disappointed when they were not applicable once they returned home. Researchers in second language teacher education (Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2018) and LTC (Borg, 2015a; Kubanyiova, 2012) have argued the necessity of framing PD programs around the realities of teachers' classrooms, because such framing allows them to develop a critical and realistic approach to the cognitions and skills they choose to adopt. This study contributes insights that explain how missing this contextually situated element can reduce the benefits of in-service PD programs.

The detachment from the local context and extended immersion in a foreign context also presented several limitations to professional development. Despite the practices of reflection and self-enquiry that were part of the overseas programs, several teachers' reports indicated that they had become detached from the Saudi educational context during the extended OEEs. Teachers' critical awareness of the needs and conditions of local classrooms dwindled at various times, as teachers were engulfed with the more immediate overseas context. The UTP supervisor highlighted that some teachers returned with overseas-developed approaches that

she considered to be inappropriate for the Saudi culture of learning. This inappropriateness was exemplified by Salma's attempt to initiate debate competitions between male and female students in a local educational context that implements strict gender segregation.

Another identified limitation of OEEs was that they had not always "guided teachers into internationalisation" (Greenholtz, 2003). Some teachers in this study struggled to implement theories and approaches generated from Western philosophy, including CLT and learner-centred approaches into traditional Saudi classrooms. They were not guided on how to manoeuvre sociocultural and political complexities in their unique local contexts of practice. For some, these struggles fostered feelings of defeat and failure, which made the process of re-integration back home even more challenging. In his recent work, Farrell (2019) examined the "inconvenient truths" (p. 1) about EFL teachers' professional development in Western contexts. Similar to my findings, Farrell highlighted de-contextualised learning environments as a main contributor to why "teachers' training fails them" (p. 2) once they return to teach in a different educational context.

This discussion highlights the need for PD programs to constantly situate teachers' education against the backdrop of their local context of practice. It corresponds with the sociocultural perspective which views teachers' professional development as a form of learning that is mediated by culturally-constructed tools and emerges as they participate in contextualised social practices (Johnson & Golombek, 2018; Nguyen, 2019). Therefore, for the teachers in this study, who trained overseas and returned to practice in local contexts, situational learning would provide them with the necessary tools that mediate the adoption of notions which are beneficial and appropriate for their local contexts: "Without the benefits of mediation, teachers are left without a full set of tools to effect a critical examination not only of the relative merit of alternative educational models in the abstract, but where and how it can be applied to their context" (Greenholtz, 2003, p. 129).

This study offers recommendations that can limit the negative influences of OEEs on Saudi EFL teachers, without jeopardising the evident advantages of such OEE experiences for teachers' professional development. It is suggested that Saudi educational authorities consider initiating joint collaborations with overseas PD programs to ensure they are specifically designed for Saudi EFL teachers. It would be beneficial for program designers to be aware of the needs and conditions of EFL education in Saudi Arabia and the national vision of educational reform. This would assist in designing programs that develop skills and cognitions

that teachers need to manoeuvre Saudi contextual conditions and achieve national educational aims, instead of adopting a generic approach to PD content offered to teachers who enrol in these programs. Saudi Arabia can benefit from the Japanese model that adopted a similar PD approach for their EFL teachers (Cook, 2010; Cook & Gulliver, 2014). Joint collaboration is in effect between Japanese educational authorities and Canadian-based PD programs, resulting in customised PD programs for Japanese EFL teachers. Such collaborations provided local Japanese officials with access to program content, enabling them to conduct evaluation studies when teachers return home. The evaluation of PD programs led to revisions being made in program design to ensure maximum benefits for Japanese teachers. However, program designers should take care that customising PD programs for Saudi teachers does not result in isolating them from their international peers, as this would minimise benefits gained from OEEs. The programs should maintain collaboration and interaction between Saudi teachers and diverse cohorts of international teachers. As highlighted by my findings and further discussed in the previous section, such interactions with international peers offer extensive intercultural opportunities for the professional development of EFL teachers during OEEs.

A further recommendation for Saudi educational authorities would be to support Saudi teachers' implementation of their developed cognitions once they have returned home. One way of doing so is by training institutional supervisors to support returnees' transition and re-integration into the local context of practice.

7.2. Coming home: Teachers' professional practices in the local context

The discussion of teachers' practices is inseparable from the discussion of contexts in which they operate. Therefore, this section will discuss the findings related to the second and third research questions in this study, and present insights that relate to returnee teachers' negotiation of respective cognitions and practices within their local instructional contexts.

The second research question is concerned with understanding teachers' classroom practices after they had returned home with developed LTCs. The findings identified teachers' varied capacity to implement communicatively oriented practices in both university contexts. On the surface, this variation was partially due to some teachers experiencing classroom limitations, such as low student levels and large class sizes, more than others. However, a deeper investigation highlighted that teachers' varied practices were largely influenced by personal factors relating to their diverse teaching cognitions, and their diverse capacities to re-prioritise ideal cognitions to meet the immediate needs of their students.

The third research question focused on uncovering how the local context influences teachers' translation of their overseas-developed cognitions into classroom practices. The findings highlighted that the teaching context plays a multidimensional role in influencing returnees' capacity to implement their ideal cognitions and overcome everyday classroom limitations while doing so. In LTC research, the context has often been considered crucial to the interpretation of teachers' cognitions and pedagogical practices. However, as argued by Li (2012), existing context structures in the relevant literature are often too ambiguous or too broadly defined to be explored in small-scale studies. Alternatively, the teaching context may be described physically or geographically as "around and inside the classroom" (Borg, 2006, p. 283), which is too limited in scope to uncover complex relationships among diverse contextual components (Li, 2012). This study presents a comprehensive understanding of contextual influences on teaching practices by highlighting factors that relate to power dynamics among members of higher education institutions.

The triangulated data sources and tools in this qualitative study have helped identify factors in the wider institutional context that influence the implementation of teachers' overseas-developed cognitions into classroom practice. The implementation process has been found to be influenced by factors related to the teacher as an individual, the community of practice and leadership culture within the institution. In this sense, this study dissociates itself from traditional cognitivist epistemologies that view teachers' practices as spaces in which fixed and reified cognitions may or may not be applied (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015).

Guided by a sociocultural perspective, my findings support the value of a social participatory approach to understanding the relationship between teachers' cognitions and classroom practices. Through a social participatory lens, cognitions are considered to be dynamic and context-sensitive constructs that are constantly formed and reformed through individual and social sense-making practices (Cross, 2010; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015; Skott, 2014). Social sense-making in the teaching profession commonly refers to teachers' participation in communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In this study, teachers' active engagement with members of their community of practice has indeed been highlighted as an important factor that, along with teachers' individual sense making, greatly influences returnees' practices. This study extends the understanding of social sense-making by recognising institutional leadership as another socially constructed factor that influences teachers' practices following their return from OEEs.
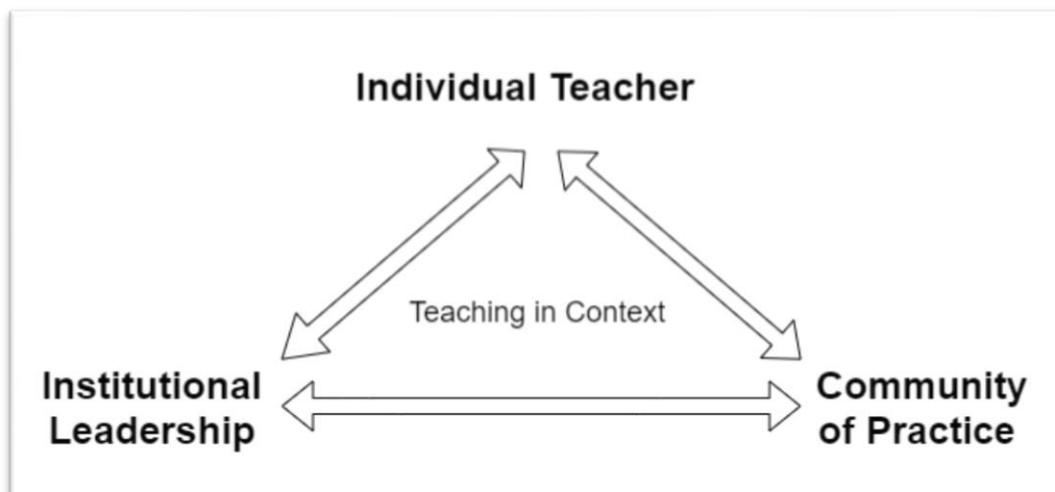
Figure 7.1. Factors influencing the implementation of overseas-developed cognitions into local educational institutions

7.2.1. Individual teacher

7.2.1.1. Diverse ideal cognitions

Teachers' pedagogical cognitions and unique teaching philosophies emerged among apparent influences on their observed classroom practice. Specifically, the extent to which each teacher adopted communicative notions as part of her cognitive repertoire influenced the classroom practices she chose to implement. As mentioned earlier, teachers' OEEs enhanced their professional agency to construct unique and individual teaching philosophies. Each teacher's philosophy was shaped by her individual experience as a learner and teacher in both local and overseas educational contexts. As a result of these diverse experiences, the majority of teachers (seven out of 10) adopted what can be described as hybrid teaching approaches. The hybrid approaches included communicatively oriented notions of teaching (advocated by local and overseas contexts). However, these approaches also reflected an appreciation for more traditional notions of EFL teaching, such as exclusive focus on language forms and the use of drilling as a tool for learning.

The diversity in teachers' observed practices, and the fact that traditional teaching techniques were identified, may come as a disappointment to Saudi policy makers who expect EFL teachers to return from OEEs with completely transformed practices. Indeed, teachers' use of traditional instructional approaches following in-service training is often viewed as an indicator of a deficiency in teachers' skills and/or knowledge, or a fault in their training programs (Cook,

2010; Cook & Gulliver, 2014). This is because the underlying goal of teachers' in-service training in many EFL contexts is to help teachers master specific pedagogies then apply them in local classrooms. This contention is rooted in a common view shared by researchers and policymakers alike which considers effective PD experiences to fundamentally result in teachers' adoption of pre-set instructional approaches (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Such a contention reflects deficit-training-mastery models of teachers' education, which assume that change is a process that is externally imposed on teachers (Borg, 2015a; Johnson, 2009). The efficacy of such models has been increasingly questioned because it overlooks the power of teachers' agency in constructing their own unique cognitions and associated practices (Borg, 2015a; Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002).

A more critical view is offered through this study for understanding diversity in teachers' practices following PD programs. Its findings represent teachers as agentic professionals who construct personally and experientially informed teaching approaches. Such constructs may not always align with approaches advocated in the local context. However, teachers' capacity to engage in autonomous decision making, their critical awareness of their cognitions, their ability to justify them with experiential or scholarly arguments, and subsequently translate them into classroom practice is representative of expert teachers (Tsui, 2009) and agentic professional teachers (Toom et al., 2015), not deficient teachers. Such an outlook contributes to better understanding the personal cognitive influence on "why teachers implement new pedagogical practices provided during professional development opportunities with extreme variability" (Longhurst, Jones, & Campbell, 2017, p. 365).

The influential role of teachers' diverse cognitions on their classroom practices demonstrates the methodological value of exploring teachers' observed instructional practices against the backdrop of their expressed cognitions and reflections (Borg, 2015b). If this study only relied on observations to report the influence of OEEs on teachers' practices, a different picture would have emerged. Teachers' implementation of non-communicative practices may have been deemed unfavourable, and thus the benefits of OEEs in developing teachers would be questioned. However, the multiple data collection tools and the comprehensive analysis of research data allowed the issue to be viewed from different angles, mostly highlighting the role of cognitions in influencing classroom practices.

7.2.1.2. Appropriation of ideal cognitions

The personal capacity to engage in agentive appropriation and adaptation of ideal cognitions emerges as an important factor that influences how individual teachers translate cognitions into classroom practices. Most of the teachers' ideal cognitions were formed or reinforced in the overseas educational context. This often results in tensions arising between teachers' ideals and contextual realities when they return home, as found in this study and that of Yeh (2011). However, engagement in agentive appropriation of ideal pedagogical cognitions (Nguyen, 2019), which involves situating, adapting and modifying them to fit the needs and realities of the local context, was found to help teachers overcome these tensions. As a consequence of teachers' cognitive adaptation, observed practices were found to largely reflect teachers' reported cognitions, and they expressed high satisfaction levels regarding their teaching. On the other hand, teachers who remained 'fixed' in their ideals had apparent incongruences between their reported and observed cognitions, which ultimately generated negative feelings of defeat and failure. This aligns with negative emotions attributed to fixed mindsets, which according to Dweck (2008), relate to how a person views success and failure in both professional contexts and personal relationships.

Teachers' feelings of guilt, failure, and defeat regarding their classroom practices develop as a consequence of setting strict ideals and then not being able to meet them for various reasons, including institutional, social or personal limitations (Copland & Neokleous, 2010; Macaro, 2008). This study suggests that one way to guard against these negative feelings is for teachers to realise the dynamic and ever-changing contextual realities of EFL classrooms, and the need to be flexible and adapt to them (Cooke, 2014). It is important to highlight that tensions between ideal cognitions and contextual realities are not always negative. They can be potential sources of professional growth, as reflected in the previously highlighted role of emotional dissonance. However, the findings of this study suggest that for such growth to occur, teachers must have the capacity to navigate their own cognitions and reshape them to be more situated in local realities than overseas-shaped ideals. This is particularly relevant for all EFL teachers in the post methods and neoliberal era, highlighted by the need for teachers to draw on local tools to guide their implementation of context-appropriate teaching approaches (Nguyen, 2019). Lack of such a capacity runs the risk of teachers experiencing persistent and increased feelings of defeat and failure, which may lead to decisions to leave the profession (Schutz et al., 2018), as exemplified by Amal's experience in this study.

7.2.2. Participation in a Community of Practice

The sociocultural lens used in this study helped recognize the context not as a space in which sets of cognitions are translated into practice, but as an influencer on teachers' everyday sense making. Such sense making is deeply embedded in a larger phenomenon of social participation, which goes beyond the traditional focus of LTC research viewed from the cognitive acquisition perspective (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). Certainly, the value of active participation in a community of practice has been a recurring theme throughout the findings of this study. It was highlighted as a significant contributor to teachers' LTC development during OEEs. Additionally, this comparative case study has also highlighted the pivotal role of social participation and collaboration in maximising the benefits of overseas education, both for returnee teachers and local educational institutions. These benefits are multidimensional, influencing teachers' cognitive and affective development, their classroom practices and the roles they assumed in the wider institutional and national context of education.

At an affective level, teachers' participation in social acts (regular meetings, work collaborations, peer observation sessions) helped reshape their professional identities to be better situated within the local social and professional context (Tsui, 2011; Yazan, 2014). Returning home required teachers to forge identities that can thrive in the local context's institutional expectations, and the hierarchies and codes of conduct within the community of practice. Regular engagements with peers emerged as a powerful source that helped guide teachers in this journey of self-identification (Wenger, 1998), as teachers dialogically negotiated who they are, what they can achieve, and what their future professional aspirations are. Engagements with their community of practice also provided teachers with clarity regarding their roles as returnees and their responsibilities in contributing to local educational development.

Returnees also reflected a common need for recognition and validation from their community of practice for their advanced professional skills and knowledge. Regular social engagements provided returnees with the opportunity to showcase their skills and knowledge and share them with their peers, thus allowing collegial recognition and support to be provided. Shared visions and aspirations among faculty members also fostered returnee's feelings of belonging to a community in which they are valued members. This affective collegial support personally motivated teachers to further contribute to educational development of their institution and enacted their active agency as professionals (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). As exemplified in

this study, teachers who enjoyed collegial support formed professional identities that reflected an intrinsic responsibility to give back in their local context. This was identified particularly among UTP teachers.

These findings further demonstrate that teachers' identity development and participation in communities of practice are interrelated, or more specifically, "are inevitably and inseparably yoked" (Mantero, 2004, p. 24). They support contentions about the benefits of membership in communities of practice for increasing language teachers' self-efficacy, professional agency and situated identity development (Strahan, 2003; Yazan, 2014).

A further advantage of social participation was that it served as a mediational learning tool for returnees (Brezicha et al., 2015). It guided their identification of locally appropriate ways to translate their overseas-developed educational concepts into practices. Mediation is a key notion of Vygotsky that represents a collaborative and social approach to learning. It presents a view of learning and development as occurring through collaborations in social practices with mentors and peers, which leads to constructing new forms of thinking (Vygotsky, 1978). Forms of scaffolding were made available to returnees as they participated in collegial negotiations of common educational issues within their institutions. Teachers also learned from observing previous returnees' demonstration of effective teaching models. Mediational learning was also represented by the disseminated institutional knowledge, which was developed through teachers' collective experiences of trial and error and shared with recent returnees. Such sharing of experiences helped returnees to form sophisticated understandings of the advantages and needs of the local context and to avoid mistakes made by previous returnees. Teachers' membership and participation in communities of practice allowed them to reconstruct their professional reasoning using local educational resources (Yazan, 2014), which eventually led to forming more contextually and culturally appropriate teaching cognitions (Yeh, 2011).

This study's findings on the importance of social participation for returnee language teachers resonate with Yeh (2011) and Kabilan (2013). Their studies similarly demonstrate the power of social dialogic negotiations in reconstructing returnees' professional identity and teaching cognition. The early work of Wlodkowski (2003) provided a particularly relevant description of the importance of this social dimension for developing teachers' professional practices.

> *Let us look at participation, learning, and transfer as a logical triangle. Unless adults participate, they cannot learn, and without learning there is no possibility for transfer. Insufficient support for any of these three elements is largely responsible for the exasperated refrain "Why don't they change?" that is heard commonly among*

professional developers and administrators (p. 41).

Despite the recognised value of social participation in research, the weight of implementing and transferring successful teaching approaches remains mostly on the shoulders of individual teachers in the real world (Farrell, 2019). As Farrell mentions, the limited contact and isolation from peers who have walked similar paths is among the "inconvenient truths" about teachers' experiences following PD programs. These inconvenient truths have been represented clearly through teachers' experiences at the UIV. An insightful contribution of this study is its representation of how the professional development of returnees thrives in a socially supportive environment (as at UTP), and also how it deteriorates in a socially fragmented environment (as at UIV). These findings support the contention that collegial support and collaboration promote returnees' affective and cognitive development which translates to more effective, locally relevant teaching practices. The absence of such social interaction, however, leads to difficulties in adapting cognitions and implementing them in local classrooms, low agency to actively participate in institutional and educational developments, and struggles to overcome everyday classroom limitations. As suggested by Shah (2012), such a socially fragmented environment is in danger of eventually becoming an unproductive and toxic workplace that slowly diminishes teachers' spirits and motivation to perform well. This was certainly the case for all but one teacher in the first case study at the UIV.

7.2.3. Inclusive institutional leadership

The goals of Saudi national educational reform are broadly stated by the Ministry of Education. One important goal is to transform dominant traditional teaching approaches to become communicatively oriented and learner-centred, to better develop students' communicative and linguistic skills. However, each university is awarded autonomy over the specific guidelines it sets to meet this goal. This comparative study of two universities has highlighted the seminal role of institutional leadership in ensuring the foundations of success for educational reform. Both university contexts followed the same national vision of EFL development, and their teachers underwent similar OEEs to enable them to implement such a vision. However, teachers' experiences and observed practices indicated that UTP was more successful in achieving educational goals than UIV. UTP teachers were more able to implement practices that reflected their communicatively oriented cognitions. They were also more satisfied with their classroom practices than their UIV peers. Such success was facilitated through UTP's adoption of an inclusive leadership style that maintained three seminal factors: clarity of reform

vision, flexibility in implementing its guidelines, and recognition of the wealth and diversity of teachers' cognitions and their capacity to contribute to institutional development.

The necessity for educational leaders to ensure clarity of the national vision of reform and justify its institutional guidelines proved necessary for promoting teachers' personal investment and motivation to implement it. Teachers in this study returned from OEEs with critical stances and developed professional identities that were no longer passive in following institutional mandates. In both universities, teachers' intrinsic investment in implementing instructional recommendations was highly contingent on the extent to which they understood and agreed with the rationale behind reform and its specific institutional guidelines, including the teaching recommendations, curriculum content and evaluation guidelines. Confusion about reform aims and guidelines, however, is more likely to lead to different forms of intrinsic resistance from teachers, which ultimately limits the implementation of reform in their classrooms (Clement, 2014; Skott, 2014). At the UIV, limited channels of communication between teachers and decision makers, and among teachers themselves, led to evident confusion about teaching aims and guidelines. This confusion was evident in the experiences of all but one of the UIV teachers, Sara. Indeed, the supervisor reported that returnees tended to dismiss guidelines. However, the analysis of UIV teacher' narratives has found that the lack of clarity regarding the rationale for the institutional guidelines is a prominent contextual contributor to their resistance to such guidelines. This finding further highlights the necessity for educational decision makers to recognise the power of teachers' cognition in influencing the success of educational development. As summarised by Bryan (2012), "the implementation of reform initiatives is compromised when teachers' beliefs are not in line with the philosophical underpinnings of the reform" (p. 483).

In addition to clarity, flexibility in the implementation of institutional policies is necessary to maintain teachers' endorsement for educational reform and facilitate its translation into instructional practices. Setting broad institutional recommendations for development instead of detailed instructions also allows teachers' different cognitions to intersect with the reform vision. This in turn contributes to a more sustainable and long-term implementation of recommended institutional practices (Brezicha et al., 2015). The findings from this study highlight the importance of institutional leaders realising that effective educational development cannot be mandated through strict standardisation of teachers' classroom practice. On the contrary, as highlighted in the findings from UIV, strict enforcement of

policies increases teachers' resistance to reform initiatives, even if teachers agree with the broad national vision of educational development. Such resistance escalates due to tensions that arise between mandated policies and the ever-changing nature of teachers' classrooms (Clement, 2014; Underwood, 2012). Teachers constantly face contextual factors that restrict their implementation of strict reform policies. The dynamic nature of classrooms necessitates flexible teaching guidelines that can be reframed and amended to fit each specific group of students. Mandating strict policies, however, goes against the very nature of teaching, a nature best described by McDonald (1992) as "not like building bridges between stable points, but like building flexible webs among constantly moving points" (p. 20). Strict standardisation also distracts EFL teachers from the overall educational goal of developing students' skills, directing their focus instead towards adhering to policies regardless of students' needs. This negative result has been evident at the UIV, where rushing to finish the curriculum on time and preparing students for the standardised system of testing were a priority that was reported by Sara, Afaf and Deema and Mariam as jeopardising students' understanding of the content. By highlighting these findings, this study contributes to growing evidence on the negative influences of strictly standardised instructional guidelines on educational development in Saudi EFL institutions (Alshahrani & Storch, 2014; Assalahi, 2015).

Flexible teaching guidelines represent an institutional recognition of teachers' authority over their classroom decision making, and convey a message of trust from leaders towards faculty members (Brezicha et al., 2015). For universities in the Saudi context, this trust is extended to returnee teachers' ability to contribute to advancing education in their local institutions with their developed professional skills and knowledge. However, giving teachers authority through flexible guidelines may be difficult in hierarchical educational contexts where a centralised organisation distributes policies from the top down (Clement, 2014). This was the case at the UIV, and also seems to be prominent in many other Saudi universities (Alseghayer, 2017; Alshahrani & Storch, 2014; Assalahi, 2015). By comparing the two university contexts that constitute the focus in this study, the findings indicate that the UTP experienced more success than the UIV in achieving educational developments that reflect the aspirations of teachers as well as the aspirations of the supervisor. UIV's limited success appears to be rooted in the institutional leaders' fear of losing control by relinquishing classroom decision making to teachers. Such fears are understandable, considering that the traditional hierarchical culture of authority in Saudi institutions gives individual leaders credit for successful outcomes, but also holds them accountable for failed ones. It also explains why educational leaders seek to

standardise teachers' practices; to minimise the chance of individual human error that would eventually reflect their failure as leaders.

There is an unresolved dichotomy overshadowing the existence of a top down, authoritarian educational leadership in a country that aims to achieve educational development by empowering and professionally developing its teachers. The traditional notion of hierarchical control requires teachers to be passive implementers of guidelines. However, the initiation of the overseas scholarship program reflects the government's recognition of teachers' agentic role in supporting effective educational development. The overseas program encourages teachers to learn about innovative teaching and learning practices and critique behaviourist models of learning. However, when teachers return home, they may face university leaders that hold behaviourist ideologies and lead through didactic approaches. It is highly unlikely that returnee teachers in the Saudi context would willingly resolve to be passive, especially not after PD experiences that enabled them to identify a teacher's true role as a classroom decision maker. On the contrary, as highlighted in the findings of the UIV case, authoritarian leadership fuelled returnee teachers' sense of self-entitlement as decision makers, developed tensions between teachers and leaders, and limited leaders' capacity to work collaboratively and effectively with teachers. In order to resolve this dichotomy, institutions need to adopt a leadership style that is more inclusive of their teachers' diverse agencies.

The unresolved dichotomy between the aims of educational development and the actual implementation of such aims is clearly represented in this cross-case analysis. At the University of Innovative Vision (UIV), whose institutional vision strongly calls for adopting an innovative approach for education and development, teachers were found to struggle with a didactic and authoritarian approach to leadership that eventually minimised their ability to implement innovative professional practices. In contrast, at the University of Traditional Prestige (UTP), whose vision aimed at educational development but also placed emphasis on promoting local cultural traditions, was found to be much more progressive in its leadership style. UTP's inclusive leadership eventually enabled teachers to implement contemporary pedagogies and practices that supported EFL educational development. The difference between the two universities clearly highlights the detrimental influence of authoritarian leadership styles, in that they can prevent an entire institution from moving forward towards its goals and aspirations.

7.2.3. Summary

The findings from this study have highlighted that an inclusive leadership style is essential for ensuring the foundations of success for EFL educational development in Saudi universities. The inclusive leadership in UTP allowed and even encouraged teachers' contribution to the decision making. Doing so had not jeopardised the quality of teachers' practices and educational outcomes. On the contrary, it maximised on the wealth and diversity of teachers' cognitions and professional expertise, which led to a more refined, context-specific sense making of the broad national vision of reform. As argued by Clement (2014) and Skott (2014), including teachers in decision making increases their investment in educational development plans, thereby intrinsically motivating them to follow the associated guidelines and encouraging self-evaluation of their own practice. All these positive outcomes have been identified in the UTP case. For example, teachers' involvement in the curriculum design motivated them to use the curriculum framework as a guide for their lessons, and they were more inclined to adopt instructional practices that communicated its content.

Adopting an inclusive leadership style does not imply that all tensions between teachers and leaders will be eliminated. As highlighted by the experiences of Hadeel and Salma in UTP, disagreements with authority figures may persist regardless. However, an inclusive leadership style fosters mutual respect, trust and recognition of each member's agency within the professional context. By comparing teachers' attitudes at the UTP with those at the UIV, it is highlighted that a positive professional environment led by inclusive leaders can guard against teachers feeling marginalised and resentful toward institutional authorities, and can help them recognise that their leaders aim for the greater good, even if they do not always see eye to eye. The power of an inclusive leadership style in advancing EFL educational development lies in its recognition of teachers' agency and expertise. Inclusive leadership critically involves clearly communicating the vision of reform, involving teachers in the decision making, and guiding them towards effective instructional practices without imposing on their classroom authority. In approaching leadership in this way, institutional leaders and supervisors are better positioned to reflect the vision of the Ministry of Education by recognising the powerful contribution teachers make to national educational development, and maximising the benefits gained from cognitions and skills they developed while overseas.

Chapter 8.
Concluding Remarks

The seminal focus of this study has been to explore how the cognitions and practices of 10 Saudi EFL teachers had developed as a result of extended overseas PD experiences. The findings have highlighted that these experiences influenced cognitive and affective growth along with various developments in teachers' instructional approaches. A number of factors relating to the OEEs and teachers' personal lives were found to have contributed to such multidimensional developments.

Teachers' different journeys in returning home to work in two Saudi universities have been highlighted along with their attempts to translate their overseas developed cognitions into classroom practices. Through analysis of two case studies, the local institutional context was found to be highly influential on returnee teachers' practices and decision making. The teachers' experiences as returnees uncovered personal, social, and institutional factors which have significantly influenced how overseas-developed cognitions were implemented. These factors played an important role in maximising the benefits of overseas education for returnee teachers and local institutions.

The multiple data collection tools and sources employed in this qualitative study have generated insights that contribute to current knowledge in the field of LTC and overseas education literature. For the field of LTC, this study has offered insights that can expand current understandings of what LTC entails, how it develops, and how such developments can be recognised. The findings also shed light on unique factors associated with overseas learning that can facilitate and maintain teachers' professional development. Furthermore, the sociocultural lens used to explore teachers' experiences has generated new insights that expand the notion of context, and emphasise its role in influencing and shaping teachers' professional and personal development.

This concluding chapter will reiterate the core insights emerging from this comparative case study, along with their theoretical contributions and practical implications for researchers, teachers and educational decision makers in both the Saudi and international contexts. The limitations associated with this research are also discussed, along with suggestions for future research that would extend the contributions of this study. Finally, I conclude this chapter and

thesis with reflections on how this research has shaped my own professional development as an EFL teacher who has undergone an OEE.

8.1. Theoretical contributions

The development of LTC has been highlighted in this study as a process that involves complex and mutually informed growth in EFL teachers' affective and cognitive dimensions. During overseas PD experiences, the development of teachers' pedagogical cognitions was associated with growth on several affective levels, including in their sense of identity and agency as professionals. By providing empirical evidence that highlights the interdependent relationship between cognitive and affective dimensions, this study contributes to broadening current understandings of what LTC entails. The presented insights challenge the traditional separation of cognitive and affective dimensions in LTC research, and reinforce the call for models that reflect the interrelated relationship between these two dimensions (Crookes, 2015; Golombek & Doran, 2014; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015; Li, 2019). By adopting an expanded view of LTC which recognises teachers' affective dimensions, the field of LTC can be better positioned to align with notions that have long been established in educational psychology. These notions specifically caution that overlooking affect in cognitive models leads to an increased risk of losing dynamic, energising aspects of human functioning (Snow et al., 1996). This research demonstrates the value in adopting an expanded view of LTC which recognises both cognitive and affective constructs as "mutually influential and distinguishable but not dissociable" (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015, p. 436).

By highlighting the power of affective dimensions in influencing and maintaining development in teachers' LTC, this research provides a contribution to knowledge in its extension of the LTC framework (Borg, 2006) (Figure 2.1). Despite Borgs' recent work which acknowledges the power of teachers' affective dimensions (2018b) and emotions (Borg, 2012), these notions have not been incorporated into his LTC framework. As it stands, the framework overlooks the affective dimension of teachers' unobserved constructs and assumes LTC to be restricted to cognitive dimensions. However, the empirical findings of this study have highlighted the seminal and multilayered role of affective dimensions and emotions in influencing and shaping LTC development. Development in teachers' professional identity and agency, which are core elements of teachers' affective dimension, facilitated growth in teachers' pedagogical cognitions. Additionally, emotional dissonance was highlighted as an important affective influence on teachers' overall development. This particular finding on emotional dissonance

emphasises contributions made by previous researchers regarding how dissonance can impact teacher change (Kubanyiova, 2012; Macalister, 2016). However, this study further extends the contributions of previous researchers by highlighting that emotional dissonance can act as a catalyst for long lasting growth in EFL teachers' pedagogical cognitions, classroom practices, identity and agency as professionals, and personal growth.

The highly personal nature of LTC development during PD programs has been highlighted as a fundamental insight in this study. The growth of each teacher in this study during their OEEs was influenced by unique past learning/teaching experiences. Their growth was also influenced by individual dispositions, such as the motivation to partake in professional development programs and the resilience to overcome emerging challenges. The individual and personal nature of LTC development has contributed to there being a diversity in the ideal cognitions that teachers returned home with. By highlighting the power of personal influences on LTC growth and development, this study extends the understanding of LTC development as reflected in Borg's (2006) LTC framework. The framework assumes teachers' cognition development to be influenced solely by past and present experiences of engaging with extrinsic factors. These factors include early school learning, pre-service and in-service training, classroom experiences and contextual factors surrounding and within the classroom. Borg's framework, however, does not incorporate personal intrinsic factors that can facilitate or hinder a teacher's LTC development. This study has shown that personal influences such as the willingness and motivation to develop, the resilience to overcome challenges and personal insecurities, and the view of oneself as a lifelong learner, all play important roles in the extent to which a teacher's LTC develops. By highlighting the role of these intrinsic factors in LTC development, this study contributes knowledge that can extend Borg's framework to incorporate the personal, non-educational, influences on teachers' cognition development.

A critical view of what constitutes LTC development, and how developments in teachers' cognitions are identified is also offered in this study. The cross case analysis of teachers' experiences in Chapter 6.1.1 has highlighted that LTC growth is multidimensional, involving both cognitive and affective development. The analysis has also shown that LTC growth can occur at different levels, which include a level of transformative change and a level of expanded LTC growth. The transformations in cognitions were identified as those that are fairly recognisable, such as the abandoning of prior notions and adopting completely opposite ones. The expansions in LTC, however, occur in more subtle ways as they are built on already existent cognitions. These subtle developments were not as easily identified as the

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transformative ones; however, they proved to be as significant especially in highlighting the affective dimension of teachers' growth. Through its representation of different levels of development in teachers' cognitive and affective dimensions, this study challenges traditional conceptualisations which view development as restricted to transformative change. Examples of this traditional view of development is evident in the work of Hardy (2010) and Boyle, While, & Boyle (2004). Such conceptualisations represent a restricted view of developments which overlooks substantial growth that is not necessarily transformative (Borg, 2015a, 2018a; Kubanyiova, 2012; Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Our ability as researchers to recognise and report LTC development is heavily influenced by our view of what counts as evidence and how it can be obtained. This study offers an expanded conceptualisation of development that recognises various forms and levels of growth in teachers' cognitive and affective dimensions. By adopting this conceptualisation, researchers can be more attuned to subtle expansions in teachers' LTC and they can be more positioned to provide a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the ways in which PD experiences can develop teachers.

A further contribution of this study is its illustration of the influence of extended OEEs on the development of in-service EFL teachers. The ways in which extended overseas PD experiences can influence EFL teachers' growth as professionals have been largely underexplored. This is despite overseas training for EFL teachers being increasingly encouraged by many countries as part of nationwide educational reforms. However, the findings here offer valuable insights on how such experiences can be expected to professionally and personally develop teachers who undertake them. Returnee teachers' narratives have identified several advantages in undertaking PD experiences overseas. These advantages include influencing cognitive and affective transformations and expansions along with developing teachers' instructional skills. Such developments occurred due to the extended opportunities for reassessing deeply held cognitions as they engage with different educational notions and teacher/learner roles. Teachers' LTC also developed through active participation in socially situated learning and teaching practices which involved a cohort of international peers and more knowledgeable others. The developments that occurred on a professional and educational level were reinforced with developments on the personal level as well. Living in overseas contexts for extended periods was found to give teachers expanded cross-cultural awareness and a critical understanding of their own capabilities as individuals. The challenges faced while engaging with the overseas context and the different education system created the opportunity for emotional dissonance to arise. This study has highlighted that emotional dissonance can be a

seed for further cognitive and affective development when dealt with appropriately through personal awareness and supportive social networks of family, friends, colleagues and/or mentors. Some studies on overseas learning have highlighted the immediate benefits of short-term overseas PD for teachers, such as the three weeks overseas program in Cook (2009) and the six months overseas program in Cook (2010). However, this study extends the available knowledge by highlighting the long-term benefits of extended OEEs for the professional development of in-service EFL teachers.

This study addresses a gap in overseas education literature which is the limited understanding of how teachers maintain the positive outcomes of their PD experiences after returning home. Several researchers have questioned whether initial cognitive developments following OEEs can be sustained and translated into practices after teachers return to their local contexts (Cook, 2010; Macalister, 2016). The findings of this study offer valuable insights that contribute to redressing this gap and conceptually advancing the current state of knowledge. The insights gained from the experiences of teachers who participated in this study have shown that their capacity to translate their developed cognitions into practice and persist in doing so, is influenced by factors relating to the individual teacher and the professional context to which they return to work. As teachers with advanced professional training, it is necessary for returnees to be aware that their ideal, overseas-acquired cognitions may not always be applicable in their local classrooms. To maximise the value of the OEE, returnees must be able to identify when it is best to reprioritise their ideal cognitions and appropriate them for their students' immediate learning needs. Having a flexible and realistic approach to the practices they choose to implement also helps maintain the teachers' positive outlook towards their skills and their context. It can limit the negative feelings of defeat and failure in the process of re-integration, which can lead to decisions for some to leave the teaching profession.

Additionally, the local institutional context and the professional culture among peers and leaders were identified as important contextual factors that influence returnees' ability to translate their cognitions into practice. Specifically, participation in communities of practice and working with inclusive leaders provides teachers with the support and guidance needed to orient their practices with the wider institutional aims for educational development. By highlighting personal, social and contextual factors that help maintain the positive outcomes of overseas PD experiences; this study addresses the concerns raised by researchers regarding whether or not such developments can be sustained after teachers return home to their local contexts (Cook, 2010; Macalister, 2016; Nguyen & Walkinshaw, 2018; Yazan, 2014).

Exploring the contextual dimension as an integral element in this research has contributed greatly to understanding the development and implementation of teachers' LTC. The adopted sociocultural lens has highlighted that teachers' affective and cognitive dimensions develop in response to social interactions and practical applications within specific contexts. An example is teachers' cognition developments which occurred due to their engagement with international peers and mentors during the OEEs and also during the overseas practicum experiences. Another example is how teachers' collaboration with peers in the second case study (the UTP) has helped shape and extend their professional identity and agency after they had returned home. This study has highlighted the role of active participation within a specific context in influencing cognitive and affective growth. In reflecting on the current trends in LTC research, it appears that the field continues to be dominated by the traditional cognitivist approach to exploring teachers' development (Borg, 2018b). The cognitivist approach focuses on eliciting and identifying discrete components of teachers' cognitive dimensions, mainly knowledge and beliefs, without situating these within the broader context of teachers' everyday work. A major limitation of this approach is that it does not shed light on social and contextual factors that play an important role in influencing teachers' growth (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015; Skott, 2014). However, this study has exemplified the potential for a sociocultural perspective to uncover significant contextual influences on teachers' LTC development, and also on their instructional practices. The context is highlighted as much more than a concrete location in which cognitions may or may not be translated into practice. It comprises of historical, institutional, social and cultural influences which work together to shape teachers' unobserved internal dimensions, including their pedagogical cognitions, professional identity and agency, as well as teachers' practices. Viewing the context as an integral contributor to teachers' cognitive and affective growth is an important extension to the current literature on LTC development. This study compliments the very recent conceptual contributions of Nguyen (2019) and Li (2019) who have highlighted the value of a sociocultural perspective in addressing the limitations of cognitivist approaches and extending the current knowledge about LTC development.

The different contributions of this study have been facilitated by adopting a holistic approach in exploring LTC development, which transcends mere elicitations of teachers' reported cognitions. By gaining insights from different sources and through multiple data collection tools, and by exploring past and present influences on teachers' professional lives, this approach helped provide a comprehensive view of LTC development and implementation. The

contributions of this holistic approach extends beyond what can be provided through individualist approaches, which explore cognition development solely through individual, self-reported data collection tools such as questionnaires (Borg, 2018b; Burns et al., 2015). Although individualist approaches are widely adopted in LTC research, these are often unable to represent the role of contexts in shaping teachers' LTC (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). This study has demonstrated the value of adopting a holistic approach to LTC research, particularly in highlighting how past educational experiences, personal influences, daily classroom interactions and contextual factors within educational institutions can influence the development and implementation of LTC.

8.2. Implications of the study

Arising from the theoretical insights presented above are implications for the Saudi context and similar international contexts undergoing reforms and developments in EFL education. The first of these implications is advancing how national educational officials and university leaders view professional development and what it offers for in-service teachers. PD programs have the potential to develop teachers' pedagogical cognitions. They also have the potential to influence how teachers view themselves in the profession. However, as has been highlighted, the process of professional development is a complex and multidimensional one, highly influenced by each teacher's past experiences and individual dispositions. Therefore, PD programs should not be viewed as a way to change teachers in predefined ways, whether this change entails the adoption of specific pedagogical notions or implementation of specific teaching practices. It certainly should not be viewed as a way to replicate Western models of teaching into the Saudi context. Furthermore, it is important for local decision makers and initiators of the overseas scholarship program to recognise that diversity in pedagogical cognitions and practices is an essential attribute of returnees. This recognition would help minimise expectations of teachers to conform to specific classroom practices or educational ideals. It would also minimise the view that diversity among teachers' practices and instructional approaches is an indication of the PD programs' limited influence, or an indication of teachers' resistance to change and development. Such a shift can help redirect any persistent calls for additional PD programs to maximise the benefits gained from current development programs.

Another important consideration is how overseas scholarship experiences for teachers can be enhanced in various international contexts. OEEs have been highlighted as highly beneficial

for teachers' professional development. However, several limitations associated with these experiences have been identified and were discussed in the previous chapter. These limitations need to be addressed through the joint efforts of local scholarship sponsors and designers of overseas programs in order to fully enable a productive educational experience for participating teachers. Such joint efforts are needed to provide necessary support for teachers before, during and after their OEEs. Pre-departure and before enrolling in OEEs, teachers need to be prepared by raising their awareness of the value of the overseas experiences for their own personal and professional development. Such an awareness should impact positively on their motivation to partake in professional development experiences and encourage them to fully take advantage of the opportunities offered to them. Teachers must also be made aware of the demands of foreign education systems, how they are different from the local education system, and the expected challenges of living and immersing oneself in a foreign context. Once teachers embark on their OEEs, scholarship officials must also create systems of support to guide teachers and their families during their vulnerable educational journeys overseas. Support during OEEs is especially necessary for teachers who undertake their studies in contexts that may not be tolerant or inclusive of their cultural or religious beliefs, such as the Saudi Muslim women in this study. After teachers return home, their institutions need to ensure that they receive mentoring to support their re-integration in the Saudi professional context. Such support is vital given the lengthy period of overseas programs. Re-integration support can involve highlighting teachers' expected roles as returnees and introducing them to any institutional changes that occurred while they were away. The recommended support for teachers before, during and after their OEEs is not only beneficial for the Saudi educational context, but can also be of value for any context that has initiated overseas scholarship programs for teachers.

The contributions of this study regarding instructional practices in Saudi classrooms are valuable for highlighting the current state of EFL education in Saudi Arabia's higher education sector. Insights gained by triangulating the data collection tools and including multiple observations and interviews have specifically reflected the quality of instructional practices in these two universities. Each of the case studies have illustrated their teachers' collective move away from predominantly teacher-centred and form-focused instructional approaches, such as grammar translation. Additionally, the participating teachers were all found to implement different degrees of communicatively oriented practices. Based on these two case studies, it can be concluded that returnees from OEEs are striving to shift EFL classrooms in Saudi

universities towards more communicative and learner-centred educational approaches. This insight reflects a more positive outlook than what is commonly portrayed in Saudi educational literature. In much of the published Saudi literature, EFL instruction in higher education is highlighted as lecture-based and teacher-centred, indicating the limited influence of the governments' continuous efforts for educational development (Alhawsawi, 2014; Alseghayer, 2017; Farooq, 2015; Moskovsky, 2018). However, the findings of this study indicate a changing landscape of EFL education in Saudi higher education. In this landscape, returnee teachers are making efforts to adopt learner-centred approaches and incorporate communicative practices based on their students' needs and language levels. The country's efforts in professionally developing in-service teachers seems to be aiding this positive shift in EFL teaching approaches. However, this study argues that the pace and scope of development in this changing landscape is dependent on the interaction of all parties involved in the educational development process, including individual teachers, communities of practice and institutional leaders and policy makers. Individual teachers, even if well trained and skilled, can only achieve so much on their own. The entire institutional context must align with the same vision in order to enable teachers to be successful.

The research findings offer suggestions that can help fully realise educational reforms in the Saudi EFL context, and indeed other international EFL contexts that are undergoing curriculum change. Analysis of both case studies has clearly highlighted the need to view teachers as active participants and valued contributors to the design and implementation of the vision of reform. Though national educational goals are understandably authorised by senior educational officials, clear and direct lines of communication between decision makers and teachers need to be established. Communication is necessary to clarify the rationale for such reform and to empower teachers by encouraging them to ask questions and make suggestions that can enhance the educational development based on their experiences in the field. Communication and clarity can increase alignment between teachers' own cognitions and that of the national vision. In cases such as Saudi, where universities have autonomy over the implementation of the educational reform vision, it is necessary that each university engages its teachers in the plans for implementing the educational goals. As national experts with international experiences and expertise, returnees have the potential to shape educational development in a way that is based on the needs of local students and also in line with research based advancements in the field of EFL education. Educational officials should be encouraged to recognise the wealth that lies in the contributions of returnees. Such recognition is necessary

for institutions to fully capitalise on the professional expertise of returnees from OEEs. Successful educational development is also highlighted as dependent on establishing supportive and collaborative workplaces for teachers. Therefore, leaders of educational institutions need to establish collaborative environments through which knowledge and experience is shared and collegial support is provided among teachers. Such an environment should be viewed as a critical contributor to realising whole-of-community educational development.

8.3. Research limitations

As in all research processes, there are limitations in scope and focus that may restrict the relevance of this study's insights to other studies and/or the applicability of such insights to other contexts. In this section I shall discuss several methodological and theoretical limitations that may have influenced that overall outcomes of the research.

The first of the methodological limitations involves the sampling criteria of the participants. The experiences explored were limited to those of Saudi female teachers, while male participants were excluded due to cultural and institutional restrictions. As a Saudi female researcher, I was also unable to enter men's university campuses because Saudi educational institutions are strictly gender segregated. The cultural norms and boundaries between men and women in the Saudi context meant that I was also unable to engage in in-depth conversations with male Saudi teachers. Including the experiences of male participants would have provided a richer reflection on the experiences of Saudi teachers and would have highlighted important gender differences that were not possible in this study.

The small number of participants and cases in this study limits the generalisability of results to all Saudi EFL teachers and universities. Small sample size is not a limitation in and of itself in qualitative studies, as the depth of insights is prioritised over the breadth. However, it must be highlighted to readers that this limits the generalisability that can be attained from the research findings.

A further limitation is evedint in the adopted methodology and the tools used to collect the necessary data. The analysis of teachers' LTC development in this study was based on their own reflections which were collected at one point in time during in-depth interviews. The majority of teachers had completed their OEEs several years prior to their participation in this research. Due to people's different capacities to recall details about past events, and because of

possible incongruences between their assumed vs. their actual development, all valuable insights about teachers' cognitions and experiences prior to and during OEEs may not have been captured. A longitudinal study which follows teachers' experiences before, during and after their OEE may have better been able to accurately track the extent of teachers' development and change across each stage. However, a longitudinal research design was not possible due to its time-consuming nature and impracticality for this specific research. Furthermore, the conclusions about the nature of the overseas programs had to be made based on the teachers' reports only. The lack of documents about each teacher's specific overseas program, including the names of the courses and the content of each course, made it difficult to make comparisons about the quality of teachers' programs and the extent to which they align with the Saudi educational vision for change. This also may have limited the potential of a full investigation into teachers' diverse overseas educational experiences.

The conclusions made about each teacher's classroom practices were primarily made based on the observation data, collected and analysed through the COLT tool. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, the tool itself has several conceptual and instrumental limitations. These limitations were minimised by modifying the tool and by employing several data collection tools to support the final conclusions made. The use of a structured observation tool during these sessions was particularly convenient because it allowed the coding to be conducted by one researcher, which was necessary to limit the chance of exposing participants' identities to more individuals. A further benefit of COLT was that it allowed the collection of a large amount of data within a limited timeframe. This was necessary for this study because the data collection period was limited to three months as per the sponsor's requirements. However, it is believed that the use of COLT may have restricted the type of data that was gathered from the observations. Particularly, it highlighted the teachers' use of communicative vs. non communicative practices, and it is possible that other forms of practices may have been overlooked. A longer data collection period would have allowed for more unstructured observation sessions to be conducted, and this may have presented further insights regarding the teachers' decision making in practice.

Another limitation of this study is concerned with its representation of contextual factors that influence EFL classrooms in Saudi universities. The two university cases, although diverse in their background, history, and educational aims, may not reflect the state of all Saudi universities. Both of these universities were located in urban areas in Saudi Arabia. Institutions in rural areas may have different contextual factors that influence returnee teachers'

experiences and classroom practices. This is especially so regarding the availability of tools and educational resources, technologically advanced classrooms that are supported with computers and the internet, and the ratio of teachers to students.

This study also has a theoretical limitation that may have influenced its quest to move away from a cognitivist ontology towards a more social one. Although the study was designed to be imbedded within a social participatory paradigm, it was rather difficult to attain a complete departure from cognitivist views that are deeply ingrained in the LTC field. This rather young field has yet to establish unified understandings of how cognitions are defined and how they are shaped and influenced, and the prevailing notions that are available today are largely cognitivist in nature. Therefore, it had been difficult to conduct an LTC research without being influenced by such cognitivist views. The cognitivist influence is evident in this study through the inclusion of Borg's (2006) LTC model as one of the adopted guiding frameworks. Indeed, this study has sought to expand the cognitivist boundaries by adopting other frameworks that focus on the social, contextual and practical influences of LTC, and also looking into the affective dimensions of emotion, identity and agency. However, some notions may have been overlooked due to the nature of current LTC constructs and the limitations of the adopted methods.

8.4. Future research

The overseas scholarship program was initiated for Saudi EFL teachers due to its expected value to the national educational development. However, whilst the findings from this research support the benefits of the program for the nature and quality of teaching, not all teachers benefitted uniformly. The benefit and impact of the program need to be comprehensively researched. Considering the significant financial investments in the scholarships every year, and the time and effort invested by participating teachers, there would be enormous value in conducting a wide-scale study that investigates the extent to which overseas scholarships have advanced the aspired to national educational outcomes for ELT. To achieve comprehensive results, the plans for such future research should include the experiences of both male and female EFL teachers, based across universities in urban and rural regions of the country. Such a large-scale research project would require the support of the Ministry of Education and the collaborative efforts of a team of researchers with expertise in both qualitative and quantitative research. However, these efforts could be justified by the insights that such a research project

would be expected to yield, and the value it would carry for current and future national educational development plans.

Future studies to compare the professional development of teachers who had undergone educational experiences in local institutions with those who had enrolled in overseas programs could also be valuable. Such comparative studies would be decisive in establishing the extent to which overseas programs are more beneficial and offer more sustainable and lasting development for participating teachers. Insights from such studies are needed to establish a strong argument for maintaining future overseas scholarships for teachers. The suggested future research would also extend the contributions made in this study by identifying how immersions in different cultural and educational contexts influence the professional development of language teachers with different personal attributes, professional interests and motivation.

8.5. Final personal reflections

My research journey started with me trying to make sense of my personal experience in an overseas education program and how it shaped my professional development as an EFL teacher. Throughout the different stages of this research, I engaged in conscious reflection about how the insights gained from this study fit with my own experience. This study has provided me with a theoretical understanding of the cognitive development of language teachers, and how this has been influenced by past and present experiences, and internal and external factors. It has helped me to view my professional development not as a linear process, but as a lifelong progressive cycle. This means that my growth as a teacher is not only defined by what I learn in a course or in a professional development program, but is the combined outcome of personal and professional experiences that started out very early in my life. It also means that my future experiences will continue to shape what I know, what I feel and what I do in the EFL classroom. Recognising the everchanging and dynamic nature of professional growth is among the important lessons that I take from this research.

The experiences shared by my participants have been personally valuable for me, as they reflected my own experience of living and learning in foreign contexts. They have helped me revisit and reassess certain events during which my cognitive and affective dispositions were tested. The highlighted emotional dissonance and its role in facilitating growth has certainly changed how I view the challenges that I faced during my own OEE. Where I once viewed

these challenges as disadvantages of overseas learning, I have come to realise that they contributed to shaping my personal and professional development in many ways.

The experiences of returnees have also helped me anticipate the realities of returning home and how best to overcome the challenges that I may face as a returnee. The insights gained will guide me as I identify the roles I play as a language teacher and faculty member. I am also mindful that although the participants' experiences have been insightful, mine will be different due to my own personal dispositions and the specific contextual influences I will encounter. I am certain, however, that seeking the support of my seniors and the companionship and professional exchange with my colleagues will greatly enrich my experience as a returnee teacher. The development of educational practices in our Saudi institutions will occur when highly experienced and driven teachers come together to implement their combined expertise and knowledge. This awareness has definitely fuelled my desire to share the contribution of this study with other teachers and prospective returnees. It is my hope that findings of this study will contribute to Saudi EFL returnees being viewed and valued as powerful agents for local educational development.

Esraa Saad Alhuwaydi

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Letter of approval from Case 1 university

أقسام العلوم الإنسانية

المكرمة الأستاذة إسراء الهويدي سلمها الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

بناء على الإيميل المرسل منك في الأول من مايو 2017 والمتضمن طلب السماح لك بجمع البيانات من أستاذات كلية اللغات والترجمة لغرض القيام بدراسة تؤهلك للحصول على درجة الدكتوراه، نفيدك بأنه لا مانع لدينا من القيام بجمع البيانات على النحو الموصوف في رسالتك.

نرجو لك التوفيق والسداد وتقبلي فائق التقدير.

وكيلة كلية اللغات والترجمة

د.

Appendix 2. Letter of approval from Case 2 university

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المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التعليم

عمادة البحث العلمي
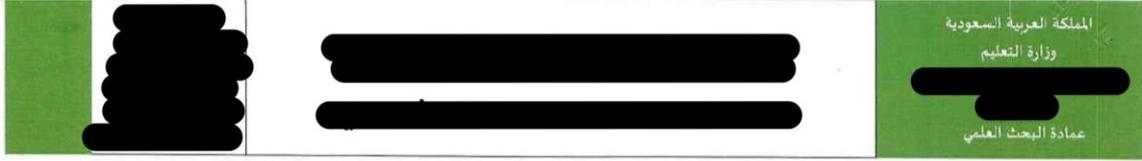
الرقـم : ▇▇▇▇▇
التاريخ : ١٤٤٠/٩/١٨هـ
الموضوع: بشأن تسهيل مهمة الباحثة إسراء سعد الهويدي.

سعادة عميدة كلية اللغات.   حفظها الله.

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته، وبعد:

نفيد سعادتكم بأن الباحثة /إسراء بنت سعد الهويدي، طالبة دكتوراه مبتعثه في جامعة فيكتوريا بأستراليا. وبصدد إعداد بحث بعنوان: (أثر تجارب الابتعاث الخارجي على معارف ومهارات أستاذات اللغة الإنجليزية السعوديات)

نأمل مـن سعادتكم التكرم بتسهيل مهمة الباحثة أعلاه والسماح لها بإجراء مقابلات مـع خمس أستاذات ممن شاركن في برنامج الابتعاث لدراسة الماجستير أو الدكتوراه في تخصصات اللغة الانجليزية. حيث سيتم جمع المعلومات منهن عن طريق إجراء مقابلتين شخصيتين وحضور محاضرتين لكل أستاذة. بالإضافة إلى إجراء مقابلة مع إحدى الأستاذات التي لها دور إشرافي في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية.

ولسعادتكم فائق الشكر وبالغ التقدير.

نموذج خطاب – رقم (012508-F66)

</div>

Esraa Saad Alhuwaydi

Appendix 3. Guide for teachers' first interview

General introductory questions:

Can you tell me how you became an English teacher in this university?

How long have you been teaching in this university?

Theme 1: The influence of OEEs on teachers' cognitions and reported practices:

1.1 Tell me a little about how you came to be in the scholarship program?

1.2 How was your experience of adjusting to the overseas educational system / society?

1.3 Were there any courses or experiences that you found particularly beneficial to you as a teacher? How so?

1.4 Did you have the chance to observe teaching examples or practise teaching? Expand

1.5 Were you introduced to particular learning theories or teaching methodologies? Can you tell me about them?

   Prompt: What did you think about them? Are there any that you particularly liked?

1.6 At the time, did you feel that they were applicable to your local context? How so?

Theme 2: Re-integrating into the local context and implementing overseas-developed cognitions

2.1 Tell me about the first few months as a teacher after you came back to Saudi Arabia
   How did it feel to be back teaching again?

2.2 Did you find the education context in Saudi Arabia to be different from that which you have seen abroad? In what ways?

2.3 Did that affect what you can and cannot do in the classroom? How?

2.4 How was your experience of re-integrating back to your role? Did you feel supported by the people around you in the university?

2.5 How is your relationship with other faculty members? Do you feel supported by them?

2.6 How about the supervisors? What is their role in your re-integration experience?

(*If not previously answered):*

2.4 Did you feel you were able to use the skills that you gained overseas? How so?

2.8 Were there any obstacles that stood in your way of doing so?

2.9 How would you compare the teacher you were before the program to the teacher you became after the program? (In terms of teaching views/practices)?

Theme 3: the role of the institutional policies in influencing teachers' practice

The goal of questions under this theme is to find out how well teachers are aware of the policies prescribed in the institutional documents, including those that recommend CLT. I also wish to find out teachers' attitudes towards the policies, whether they are in line with teachers' cognitions, and how flexible these policies are.

3.1 Can you tell me about the teaching policies that you have in your department?

3.2 Are there any policies that regulate what approach teachers should adopt? Please expand

3.3 What about Communicative Language Teaching? Is it one of these recommended approaches?

3.4 Can you tell me your understanding of what CLT is?

3.5 How do you feel about it? (Agree/disagree?) Do you adopt it personally?

3.6 To what extent do you feel that you have to follow the prescribed teaching policies?

3.7 Are there any teaching policies that you particularly agree or disagree with? Expand

3.8 How do you deal with the ones that you don't agree with?

Theme 4: Info about their teaching now: (to reflect on before the observations)

4.1 How would you describe your teaching approach these days?

4.2 What are some of the most notable characteristics of you as a teacher?

4.2 Are there any teaching approaches that you associate yourself with? Expand

4.3 Are there any day-to-day obstacles that you feel you are struggling to overcome? Expand

Esraa Saad Alhuwaydi

Appendix 4. Guide for teachers' post observation interview

General questions:

1- How did the lessons go?

2- How would you describe your teaching approach today?

3- How would you describe your students' level of participation in class? Was it as you expected?

4- Was there anything that you planned on doing but couldn't/didn't? Why?

5- Is there anything that you think would support you better in implementing what you planned?

6- What were some of the ideas that guided your planning for today's lesson? e.g.: Policy guidelines? Textbook?

8- To what extent was your lesson today inspired / influenced by what you experienced in the overseas PD program?

Specific questions about things that occurred during the class observations:

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

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Appendix 5. Guide for supervisor interview questions

1) Can you tell me how you came to be a supervisor?

2) What does your role as a supervisor entail?

3) What are some teaching guidelines / policies that are set for teachers to follow?

4) Is there a specific teaching approach or method that is preferred in the university?

5) Can teachers make any modifications or changes in regards to certain policies? How so?

6) What degree of autonomy are the teachers given? In terms of
   - Choice of textbooks
   - Choice of topics
   - Teaching practices
   - Student Assessments

7) What are some PD opportunities available for faculty members (including yourself)?

8) What do you think of the overseas scholarship program? (Advantages/ Disadvantages)

9) What effect has the program had on the educational development in your institution?
   - Teachers' skills?

10) How would you describe the teachers before and after the programs?

11) What is the influence of the overseas programs on the teachers?
   - Their attitudes?
   - Professional practices?
   - Teaching skills?

12) Do you think the overseas programs have met the aims that were set for them?

13) What do you think should be done to benefit more from the programs?

Appendix 6. Information sheet for participants

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

You are invited to participate

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled: The Influence of Offshore Professional Development Experiences on the Cognitions and Practices of Saudi EFL Teachers.

This project is being conducted by a student researcher Ms Esraa Saad Alhuwaydi as part of a PhD study at Victoria University under the supervision of Professor Helen Borland and Associate Professor Marcelle Cacciattolo from the College of Arts and Education.

Project explanation

The project aims to understand the perceptions of Saudi English teachers and supervisors regarding the value of the offshore scholarship program and its influence on their professional beliefs and practices after returning to Saudi classrooms. It also aims to understand the role of contextual factors, and whether or how they influence the translation of skills which teachers acquired abroad.

What will I be asked to do?

Teachers will participate in two separate one-hour-long interviews, and allow the researcher to observe two of their classes. During the first interview, teachers will be asked about their perceptions of appropriate teaching approaches in Saudi EFL classrooms, with reflections on how such perceptions have been influenced by previous and current experiences. This will then be followed by two classroom observations. The aim of the observations is to better understand the contextual dynamics and the various factors that play a role in influencing how teaching approaches are implemented. A second interview will be conducted following the observations, which will focus on how your classroom practices reflect institutional expectations, and your experiences of factors that affect how you implement classroom practices.

The audio of the interviews will be recorded and later transcribed and analysed to identify common and unique themes across the teachers who are participating.

What will I gain from participating?

This study offers you the opportunity to reflect on your classroom practices and better identify the theories and beliefs that guide you. Research on the effect of critical reflection on teachers' development has shown that it helps teachers adapt to the changing needs of their students and identify the steps that need to be taken in order to help students advance in their learning.

How will the information I give be used?

The information you provide will be used to identify factors that have a significant impact on the development of language teachers' beliefs and knowledge. It will also help understand how to best support teachers in implementing their beliefs and translating them into practices. The outcomes of the analysis will be written up in a PhD thesis and will contribute to developing an overall understanding of the role of offshore development programs in developing Saudi language teachers' beliefs and professional practices.

The data from your interviews and observation sessions will be stored anonymously (using a pseudonym and without your name or personal details) and only the student researcher will be able to connect the data to you.

The data that will be collected during the study will be used as part of a PhD research study, and may be published in peer-reviewed journals and conference presentations. No personal identifying details will be revealed without your written consent.

What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

This study poses no risk for your physical safety, as it will be conducted in your workplace and during a time that suits you best. Some questions may require deep reflection and it may be challenging for you to give immediate answers, however, you may take as much time as you need and there are no right or wrong answers. Whatever you perceive to be true is considered valid.

To minimise the risk of sensitive information being made public, we ask that you do not disclose any personal information that is not related to the topic. However, please be assured that your identity will be kept confidential and every effort will be made to ensure that participating in this study has minimal risk.

How will this project be conducted?

The project will rely on your perceptions as a female EFL teacher working in a Saudi university, which will be obtained through the two semi-structured interviews. The study will also rely on data gathered during two observation sessions of your classes. We will also be collecting documents about your university's policies and curriculum for teaching English.

Who is conducting the study?

This study is conducted by the College of Arts and Education at Victoria University.

Researcher:

Mrs. Esraa Saad Alhuwaydi   Mobile: 0449101002   Email: esraa.alhuwyadi@live.vu.edu.au

Primary Supervisor:

Professor Helen Borland   Phone: +61 399194587   Email: helen.borland@vu.edu.au

Associate Supervisor:

Assoc. Profess. Marcelle Cacciattalo   Phone: +61 3 99195903   Email: marcelle.cacciattolo@vu.edu.au

In the event that research participants become concerned with any aspect of the research, they will be able to consult with the research support center in PNU at +966-11-8243038, who will provide internal and/or external services as appropriate.

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Chief Investigator listed above.
If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Appendix 7. Consent form for participating teachers

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:

We would like to invite you to be a part of a study that aims to explore how Saudi EFL teachers' experiences in the offshore scholarship program have impacted their beliefs and practices about language teaching and learning. The nature of the research requires you to reflect on your practices in the classroom and your beliefs about teaching approaches, and how these beliefs and practices are influenced by both your scholarship experience and the surrounding contextual factors of the situation in which you teach. You will take part in two semi-structured interviews, in addition to allowing the researcher to observe two classrooms of your choice. Apart from taking up a few hours of your time and the mild discomfort of answering interview questions that require a reflection on past experiences and current practices, the research poses no potential risks to you as a participant. The identities of all participants will be concealed and personal information will be kept confidential and secure.

CERTIFICATION BY PARTICIPANT

I,

Certify that I am at least 18 years old and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study: "The Influence of Offshore Professional Development Experiences on the Cognitions and Practices of Saudi EFL Teachers" conducted at Victoria University by: Professor Helen Borland, Dr Marcelle Cacciattolo and Ms Esraa Saad Alhuwaydi
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: Esraa Saad Alhuwaydi and that I freely consent to participation involving the below mentioned procedures:
- Two research project interviews
- Observation of two separate classes

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered.
I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way. I understand that withdrawing from the study necessitates that I inform the researcher within two weeks of conducting the interview so that my data can also be removed from study.
I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.
I agree to have the interviews tape recorded by the researcher.   ☐ Yes ☐ No

Signed:

Date:

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to Chief Investigator:
Professor Helen Borland
+61 3 417 394082

Or Associate Investigator:
Associate Professor Marcelle Cacciattolo
+61 3 9919 5903

Or student researcher
Esraa Saad Alhuwaydi
+61 4 4910 1002
+966 554 141 002
If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email Researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Appendix 8. Consent form for participating supervisors

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
M E L B O U R N E   A U S T R A L I A

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:

We would like to invite you to be a part of a study that aims to explore how Saudi EFL teachers' experiences in the offshore scholarship program have impacted their professional development and classroom practices.

The nature of the research requires you to share your perceptions regarding how the offshore program shaped and influenced teachers' attitudes towards English teaching in Saudi classrooms, and how it has influenced their professional practices. Additionally, we would like you to elaborate on your role as a teacher-supervisor, and how you work to assist teachers after they complete their offshore scholarship and return to work under your supervision.

Participants will take part in a one hour semi-structured interview.

Apart from taking up an hour of your time and the mild discomfort of answering interview questions that require a reflection on experiences and practices, the research poses no potential physical risks to you as a participant. All efforts will be made to conceal the identities of participants and all personal information will be kept confidential and secure.

CERTIFICATION BY PARTICIPANT

I,

Certify that I am at least 18 years old and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study: "The Influence of Offshore Professional Development Experiences on the Cognitions and Practices of Saudi EFL Teachers" conducted at Victoria University by: Professor Helen Borland, Dr Marcelle Cacciattolo and Ms Esraa Alhuwaydi

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: Esraa Saad Alhuwaydi and that I freely consent to participation involving the below mentioned procedures:

- One research project interview

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered.

I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way. I understand that withdrawing from the study necessitates that I inform the researcher within two weeks of conducting the interview so that my data can also be removed from study.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.
I agree to have the interviews tape recorded by the researcher. ☐ Yes ☐ No

Signed:
Date:

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to

Chief Investigator:
Professor Helen Borland
+61 3 417 394082

Or Associate Investigator:
Associate Professor Marcelle Cacciattolo
+61 3 9919 5903

Or student researcher
Esraa Saad Alhuwaydi
+61 4 4910 1002
+966 554 141 002
If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email Researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Appendix 9. COLT observation scheme

COLT PART A

Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching Observation Scheme

© Spada & Fröhlich 1995

School ....
Teacher ....
Subject ....

Grade(s) ....
Lesson (min.) ....
Date ....

Observer ....
Visit No ....
Page ....

TIME	ACTIVITIES & EPISODES				
1					
2					

Category			No.	Feature	
PARTICIPANT ORGANISATION	Class		3	T↔S/C	
			4	S↔S/C	
			5	Choral	
	Group		6	Same task	
			7	Different tasks	
	Indiv.		8	Same task	
			9	Different tasks	
CONTENT	Manag.		10	Procedure	
			11	Discipline	
	Language		12	Form	
			13	Function	
			14	Discourse	
			15	Socioling.	
	Other topics		16	Narrow	
			17	Broad	
CONTENT CONTROL			18	Teacher/Text	
			19	Teacher/Text/Stud.	
			20	Student	
STUDENT MODALITY			21	Listening	
			22	Speaking	
			23	Reading	
			24	Writing	
			25	Other	
MATERIALS	Type	Text	26	Minimal	
			27	Extended	
			28	Audio	
			29	Visual	
	Source		30	L2-NNS	
			31	L2-NS	
			32	L2-NSA	
			33	Student -made	

Appendix 10. Example of structured and unstructured observation data

COLT PART A
Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching Observation Scheme
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Week 13

School
Subject: Unit 3 ... Graphs part 2
Teacher

Grade(s) ..... Level 3
Lesson (min.) ..... 50 Min
Date: 5 December, Sunday

Observer ..... 3rd Period, 10 AM
Visit No. 1
Page 67 (students book)

Participant Organisation — Class: 3 T↔S/C, 4 S↔S/C, 5 Choral; Group: 6 Same task, 7 Different tasks; Indiv.: 8 Same task, 9 Different tasks

Content — Manag.: 10 Procedure, 11 Discipline; Language: 12 Form, 13 Function, 14 Discourse, 15 Socioling.; Other topics: 16 Narrow, 17 Broad

Content Control — 18 Teacher/Text, 19 Teacher/Text/Stud., 20 Student

Student Modality — 21 Listening, 22 Speaking, 23 Reading, 24 Writing, 25 Other

Materials — Type: 26 Minimal, 27 Extended; Text: 28 Audio, 29 Visual; Source: 30 L2-NNS, 31 L2-NS, 32 L2-NSA, 33 Student-made

TIME — ACTIVITIES & EPISODES

Esraa Saad Alhuwaydi

Appendix 11. Example of reflection memos from Nvivo

Format   Styles

Memos

- Name
- Amal UIV
- Deema UI
- Hadeel UT
- Mariam UI
- Mona UTP
- razan UTP
- Salma UTP
- Sara UIV
- UIV superv

Sara UIV ✖

Sara is a positive teacher who deals with some of the same constraints that other teachers have, however, she doesnt see them as constrains, just things that she has to adjust her teaching ways in order to deal with them. she also has a positive view of saudi students today, that they are bright, open to creative ways of teaching, they impress her alot and she feels lucky to be their teacher.

Her students love her, she showed me many emails that she received from students all praising her and telling her how grateful they are for her as a teacher. Some majored in English because of her. This makes her very proud. Her comparision between her old English teachers and her current colleagues seems fair and not too negative, she reflects alot on the postive changes happening in the saudi education system and the saudi studenst as a whole.

When discussing her teaching philosophy, she constantly goes back to either what she needed as a BA student and didnt get, (and therefore she would try to provide it to her students) or she would refer to how she was taught in the offshore program, and how that helped her shape her teaching philosophy by wanting to be like the overseas instructors.

Through her examples, it is clear that she believes it is important to give students individual personal attention, to make them feel important, and she does that by making sure she memorized their names. Even if students have similar first and last names, she would memorize their fathers names. This indicates to me how much individual attention she likes to give students.

Esraa Saad Alhuwaydi

Appendix 12. Example of a Nvivo tree node

Name	Files	References	Created On	Created By
Overseas experience	0	0	28/02/2018 5:45 AM	ESH
early feelings towards OEE	5	8	28/02/2018 5:44 AM	ESH
education life	6	34	28/02/2018 6:22 AM	ESH
enrolement process	3	3	28/02/2018 5:46 AM	ESH
Influence of OEE	0	0	28/02/2018 6:02 AM	ESH
on others	4	5	20/03/2018 12:53 AM	ESH
personally	6	13	1/03/2018 3:24 AM	ESH
professionally	0	0	28/02/2018 6:02 AM	ESH
negative	2	5	28/03/2018 3:05 AM	ESH
Positive	5	28	28/03/2018 3:04 AM	ESH
practice	5	22	30/03/2018 3:43 AM	ESH
thinking	5	13	30/03/2018 3:42 AM	ESH

UIV T — Search Project