

**Teaching Arabic through communicative
language teaching approaches informed
by new understandings of literacy
in primary schools in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia**

Hussain Alsaiari

**A thesis in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



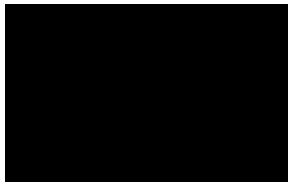
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KEYWORDS

Arabic, case study, communicative language teaching (CLT), contemporary curriculum, new literacy theory (NLT), connectivism, teachers, Saudi Arabia, teachers' perspectives, primary education

LIST OF ARABIC WORDS

Arabic script	English script	English translation
الفصحى	Al fusha	Classical
الله	Allah	God
القواعد	Alqawaed	Grammar
النحو	Annahu	Syntax
عقوق الوالدين	Aukouk al-walidain	The treatment of parents badly
بر الوالدين	Bir al-walidain	Kindness to parents
حلقة	Halaqah	Circle
حلقات التحفيظ	Halaqat al-tahfeezh	Memorising circle
هجاء	Hija	Alphabet
اجماع	Ijma	Consensus
استئذان	Istezan	Seeking permission
محافظ	Mohafezh	Conservative
قياس	Qiyas	The process of deductive analogy
صلة الرحم	Silat alrahem	Honouring kinship and respecting relatives
تفكر	Tafkur	Reflection
توحيد الربوبية	Tawaheed al-rububiyah	Oneness of Allah
السنة	The Sunna	Prophetic Traditions

ABBREVIATIONS

CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning
CCDP	Contemporary Curriculum Development Policy
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CMC	Computer-Mediated Communication
ICDL	International Computing Driving Licence
IT	Information Technology
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
L1	Language 1
L2	Language 2
MSA	Modern Standard Arabic
NLT	New Literacy Theory
PIN	personal identification number
SAR	Saudi Arabian Riyal
SES	Socio-Economic Status
TBT	Theoretical Basis of Task
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
WTO	World Trade Organisation

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the soul of my father (may Allah have mercy on him), who passed away in 1992. My father cultivated me with a love of learning, which instilled a desire for excellence within me. I also dedicate this to the memory of my beloved mother (may Allah have mercy on her), who passed on 30 May 2015. My beloved mother could neither read nor write, and the traditional concept of literacy would have her deemed illiterate. Despite this, she never stopped encouraging me to continue my studies and become a distinguished individual. I would have liked to dedicate a copy of this doctoral thesis to her when she was alive and even though she could not read it, she would have known how valuable it was.

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Also, I would like to thank all those who participated (including teachers, principals and supervisors) for their constructive and active involvement throughout the data collection stage. Furthermore, I would like to thank the administrators from the study's five schools for their patience and hospitality when I visited them. Finally, I would like to thank Lei Cameron who provided competent and excellent proofreading and typesetting support.

CONFERENCES AND PUBLICATIONS

March 2012: Attended the National Curriculum Forum in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia.

September 2012: Presented a paper at the University of Western Sydney HDR Student Conference, titled 'The use of technology in teaching Arabic informed by new understandings of Literacy in primary schools in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia'.

December 2012: Attended the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) Conference at the University of Sydney.

July 2013: Attended the Australian Teachers of Media Queensland Conference at Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane.

September 2013: Presented at the University of Western Sydney HDR Students Conference. Title: 'The relationship between communicative language teaching, multiple literacies and the contemporary curriculum in Saudi Arabia'.

November 2013: Presented at the 'Third Annual Higher Degree Research Student-Led Conference' at University of New South Wales. Title: 'The relationship between communicative language teaching, multiple literacies and the contemporary curriculum in Saudi Arabia'.

May 2014: Attended Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) workshops at the Australian Catholic University, Sydney.

Reid, C., Jones Diaz, C. & Alsaiari, H. (2015 in review). Cosmopolitanism, contemporary communication theory and cultural literacy in the TESOL classroom, TESOL in Context Special Issue.

September 2015: Published a book chapter as a co-writer with Carol Reid and Ila Rosemilawati. Title: 'Cultural translation: the art of cosmopolitan learning as an international student. Australian Academic Press: QLD, Australia.

ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to document the perspectives of 24 male primary educators of the Arabic language on teaching Arabic through communicative language teaching (CLT) approaches informed by the new literacy theory (NLT) in Saudi Arabia (Tabuk). In Saudi Arabia, there is little focus on the importance of communication skills in using Standard Arabic, whether in conversation, listening and speaking. This study aims to fill the gap in the research literature on Arabic language teaching in primary education, drawing on the NLT. Arabic is a global language and this study has international significance as the findings will inform the teaching of Arabic as a first and additional language. Therefore, this study investigates the usage of CLT approaches into the teaching of Arabic through the use of various activities that are contextual and meaningful.

The focus of this study is on language in relation to listening, speaking, viewing, reading, writing, critiquing and creating in purposeful contexts. It utilises a mixed method mainly drawn on qualitative research methods to examine five case study sites (government primary schools in urban Tabuk) to investigate the use of technology in Standard Arabic Teaching using CLT approaches. Furthermore, the study examines the use of a contemporary curriculum in order to contrast it to traditional approaches. Data was initially gathered with a survey to collect demographic data about the study and its subjects. Participants were then interviewed to obtain deeper and more detailed information. The study covered five schools and four supervisors.

Moreover, this study draws on connectivism theory, which presents a concept of information being presented via complex networks that enable the educational process to occur. In the connectivism theory, learning occurs via networks through a mix of technological and social interactions.

The findings indicate that there is a lack of understanding the NLT, and tensions between traditional and contemporary curriculum supporters exist. The professional development and academic preparation (pre-service) received by students in colleges and universities was one of the most prominent findings in this study, because it shows a weakness in the preparation that student teachers receive in educational institutions. In addition, the findings highlight issues in providing information technology (IT), access to the use of technology, leadership and change.

In conclusion, this study revealed that curriculum change in Saudi Arabia is a controversial topic in relation to Saudi societal ideologies. In particular, the study highlighted that curriculum change, leadership, contemporary views of literacy learning and Arabic education are as important as other issues such as religion, Arabic identity, resistance to change and Westernisation. Hence, this study points to the significance of professional development in curriculum change where teachers, principals, educators, curriculum designers, policy makers and parents are involved in the development of curriculum in order to provide high quality education for their children.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In Saudi Arabia, the latest budget allocates 80 billion Saudi Arabian Riyals (SAR) (equates to approximately AUD\$23 billion) to support education, which reflects a prominent example of the determination to move forward in developing education over the next five years (El Gamal, 2014). This thesis investigates the barriers to using communicative language teaching (CLT) approaches in Arabic teaching. Furthermore, the study stresses the importance of using a contemporary curriculum rather than traditional approaches in teaching Arabic. The study investigates the relationship between the new literacy theory (NLT), CLT and the usage of technology in order to enhance the teaching of the Arabic language and improve its use for communicative purposes. The focus is on oral language in relation to listening, speaking, viewing, reading, writing, critiquing and creating in purposeful contexts.

This chapter aims to present the research problems, namely, discrete curricula in Arabic language instruction, the traditional concept of literacy in Arabic, and educators' perspectives of NLT and CLT approaches in a contemporary curriculum. It also provides an initial overview of the methodology used in the study, as well as presents research questions. The chapter then examines the use of Arabic and its importance as a global language, and it also explains the reasons behind its development. For example, Arabic is an important religious language for Muslims, and the existence of Arab communities in different countries around the world increases its significance for Arab identity. This chapter also provides a general

overview of the thesis and results, and it concludes by introducing the focus of each chapter in view of pertinent issues pertaining to them.

In order for new curriculum and contemporary teaching approaches to be applied to Arabic language instructions, which could develop Arabic and bring it in line with a contemporary, international curriculum, it is useful to understand issues involved in teaching Arabic. These issues are present in the traditional curriculum, which revolve around fragmented curriculum and approaches (reading, grammar, spelling, writing and calligraphy).

1.1 The research problem

This research sought to document the perspectives of male primary educators of the Arabic language on the use of technology and CLT informed by new understandings of literacy in Saudi Arabia (Tabuk). The research problem is that education, and specifically, Arabic language teaching and pedagogy, is still influenced by traditional approaches to Arabic literacy pedagogy and language teaching. These approaches are exemplified by curriculum with fragmented approaches. The country is striving to develop education, as indicated by its investment in education, and specifically, Arabic language education. The aim is to have an education system that resembles its counterparts in developed countries by utilising technology and the latest language teaching pedagogy.

As an insider who is interested in education and curriculum-related matters, I witnessed a fragmented approach in the curriculum as problem, particularly through my work at the university in the curriculum and instruction department in the College

of Education. The ministry was on the verge of implementing a new curriculum in 2009, but I could see that schools were not prepared for it because the old curriculum was being taught in schools, colleges and universities. I wanted to understand the perspectives of teachers toward the communicative approach for Arabic language instruction and the extent to which they understand and implement the contemporary curriculum for Arabic language teaching, to analyse the extent to which teachers understand the new curriculum, the NLT was used as the theoretical framework for this study.

In the old curriculum, literacy pedagogy is limited to reading and writing. In first year, students are required to attain a certain level of mastery in reading and writing in order to proceed to the second grade. Meanwhile other skills included in NLT, including image reading, are neglected. This study has relied on the holistic concept presented by the NLT for language and language skills instruction. It is therefore in line with the communicative approach, which is based on, not only speaking and listening skills, but also on writing skills.

This thesis relied on qualitative data and the collection of demographic data via a survey (Appendix A). A case study format was used, allowing each school to be addressed separately and thoroughly. This format helped deepen the understanding of the issue addressed by the research questions. The study examined five primary schools in Tabuk city. In each school, the perspectives of educators (teachers, principals and supervisors) were considered. The interviews (Appendix B) sought to answer the principal research question:

What are the perspectives of male primary educators of Arabic language on the use of technology and CLT informed by new understandings of literacy in the city of Tabuk in Saudi Arabia?

In addition, the following related questions were investigated:

1. *What pedagogical approaches exist in Saudi Arabia in relation to teaching of Arabic?*
2. *How do contemporary curriculum approaches informed by new frameworks of literacy influence the use of communicative language teaching approaches in teaching Arabic?*
3. *How does the use of technology in the classroom enhance and promote students use of Arabic for communicative purposes?*

1.2 Internationality of the Arabic language

The Arabic language has great importance for Saudi Arabia because it is the country's official language, as well as the language of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic education. This is important because Saudi Arabia has an important position in the Islamic world due to the presence of two holy mosques: (i) Holy Mosque in Makkah (Mecca); and (ii) prophet Mohammed's Mosque in Madinah. Therefore, the Saudi Ministry of Education has a responsibility to maintain Arabic as an international language that influences and supports the country's position in the Islamic world and in the world in general. Moreover, the Arabic language is spoken by around 400 million people (UNESCO, 2012). Many more people speak it as a second language, considering Muslims perform their religious rituals, such as prayer, by using Arabic. It is important for every Muslim to learn Arabic so they can read the Qur'an and

understand it without explanation or annotation in their mother tongue. Arabic receives its loftiness from being the language of the Holy Qur'an. However, many Muslims who do not speak Arabic as their first language incorrectly believe the Arabic language is difficult to learn, because they think about this according to traditional approaches for Arabic language instruction (Stevens, 2006). Therefore, this study also offers support for the field of Arabic language instruction for non-Arabic speakers. Additionally, this study will be important for countries where a number of Arab communities reside, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada.

The Arabic language is considered a difficult language for two reasons. The first is that Arabic letters and their inscription are different for speakers of language families, such as Romance, Germanic and Niger-Congo (Crystal, 1997). The second reason is that traditional teaching methodologies are often singularly based on reading and writing which adds to the degree of difficulty for learners of the Arabic language, even for its native speakers. This is also highly dependent on memorisation that is decontextualized from using the language as a medium of social communication.

Due to these reasons, which clarify the importance of Arabic as an international language and a language of religion for over a billion Muslims, it is highly recommended for Arabic to be taught in a contemporary way, which can enhance its significance as a global language. This would also simplify learning for those who want to learn Arabic as an additional language, especially for non-Arab Muslims who want to learn it for religious purposes. Therefore, emulating the development in

English language curricula, learning from their new approaches and importing Western curricula does not diminish the international and regional status of Arabic in any way. Likewise, Western curricula do not affect teachers' fundamental religious, cultural or social beliefs and ideologies.

The principles of CLT are compatible with Language 1 (L1) and Language 2 (L2) learning and there are reasons for drawing on L2 theory for use in L1 learning. Most non-native speakers have a complicated knowledge of L2, the type of knowledge that can be developed by native speakers through situated practice (The New London Group, 1996). Communicative approaches meet many principals of L1 teaching by providing learners with activities that enable them to practise the language for communicating in daily life across a range of language and literacy events.

Therefore, by drawing on CLT, it is possible to deconstruct the binary of L1 and L2 theories through focusing on situated practice. This study applies communicative approaches that inform L2 learning to L1 literacy learning in situated practices where communicative teaching methods provide learners with meaningful learning experiences in a range of social contexts.

Teachers who are native speakers and do not have conscious knowledge of the forms and features of their language have an inability to explain the language points to L1 students. This can often cause confusion to learners trying to compare structures. L2 development can be used in activities like code switching for later real life use rather than L1 creeping in necessary guilt-making that can be systematically and deliberately utilised in the classroom. The links between L1 and L2 can be used to

build knowledge in the students' minds and enhance learning through collaborative dialogue with fellow students (Cope, 2000).

1.3 Thesis overview and findings

The principal argument in this study is that there is a relationship between ideological and pedagogical struggles and the perspectives that teachers develop toward curricula and contemporary curriculum theories. The thesis examines the educators' perspectives, which their ideological and pedagogical backgrounds undoubtedly play a role in forming. The first theme shows differences and variations regarding the contemporary concept of literacy. People of all opinions claimed that literacy is consistent with the methodologies they ascribe to. The second theme clearly shows the struggle between the old and new curriculum. Each side put forth the rationale, reasons and arguments that support it. The third theme shows how important educational leadership and professional development are to the contemporary curriculum's implementation and progress. Finally, the fourth theme discusses technology and shows the role it played in many of this chapter's findings.

In this thesis, there are eight chapters. Chapter 2 provides a background to the most prominent facets of conservative Saudi society. It also points out, from an Islamic perspective, how children are raised in society, and how it compares with the Western point of view. This is done by comparing a child's upbringing from Islamic and Western perspectives by looking at religious, cultural, social, economic and political factors outside the contemporary curriculum in Arabic language teaching. Chapter 2 also provides details about education in Saudi Arabia, as well as an analysis of a future vision for education in the country. Finally, Chapter 2 presents

several issues related to the curriculum, such as curriculum theories and a comparison between the traditional and contemporary curriculum. Finally, it addresses the most prominent issues about teaching Arabic in Saudi Arabia and the literacy rate in the Arab world.

Chapter 3 presents a theoretical framework in the context of the contradictions discussed in Chapter 2. The NLT, which carries a social dimension to language practice, is then addressed in detail. This practice combines with CLT approaches to develop students' communication skills, both spoken and written forms. This chapter also discusses the effects that technology has had in developing the concept of literacy, with particular reference to the Internet. Many educators attribute great importance to constructivism theory and urge teachers to become very familiar with it in order to teach effectively in the classroom.

Meanwhile, the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 3 provides perspectives and opinions that may be relevant to the reality of the new curriculum. Connectivism is a new theory that coincides with the emergence of Web 2.0. This theory is characterised by its presentation of a new concept of learning and knowledge acquisition, which occurs in complex networks in an age of accelerated technological development. Many researchers emphasise that technology has significantly changed the way students learn and made education available to them, both individually and in groups (Downes, 2007; Siemens, 2005; Siemens & Tittenberger, 2009). In addition, Chapter 3 includes details about the different issues related to connectivism theory. Likewise, it also addresses similarities between CLT approaches and the

NLT. Technology is central to how these two theories converge, especially within a social and learning context.

Because the study addresses the Arabic language curriculum, it is necessary to research how communicative approaches to teaching of language are relevant to the contemporary curriculum, because the curriculum was designed to keep up with the latest international curricula for language instruction.

Chapter 4 examines the literature in the field of CLT and the most prominent issues related to it, especially those concerned with teachers' understanding of communicative approaches and how they are applied in the classroom. This chapter presents details and a discussion about a number of issues related to communicative approaches. It presents a historical overview about this pedagogy and continues with information about how this approach has been applied in a number of countries. Given the relationship between communicative approaches and technology in this study, a section has been devoted to this aspect in order to shed light on how technology benefits the development of this approach as educational leadership plays an important role in preparing teachers for a new curriculum. Therefore, this chapter provides several issues related to leadership and change. Finally, Chapter 4 addresses the relationship between communicative approaches and the NLT in the development of Arabic literacy pedagogy and language teaching. This is achieved through the application of these theories to the reality of Arabic language pedagogy.

Chapter 5 presents the methodology of the research. This research utilised a qualitative method and the collection of demographic data through a questionnaire.

Also, it provides a deep analysis for my philosophical stance and epistemology, which helps with understanding the research issues. The sub-research questions contributed greatly towards answering the main research question and the three sub-research questions contained within.

The study's design and methods are also discussed, as well as determining whether these methods were appropriate for the study and the way in which they were useful in answering the research questions. This chapter also provides details about the study's participants, schools and research tools (interviews and questionnaire), as well as various issues related to these tools. It also presents the information-gathering phase and its numerous stages, in addition to details about each stage. Finally, discussed in this chapter are the methods for organising coding and analysing the data.

Chapter 6 provides the main findings of this study, including teachers' perceptions and the lack of understanding regarding the NLT and CLT. These major findings highlight how a lack of understanding regarding the curriculum caused tension between supporters of the traditional curriculum and supporters of the contemporary curriculum. Likewise, the weak preparations for the contemporary curriculum played a large role in the lack of clarity that school teachers and principals had regarding the vision. This led to deficiencies in leadership and education and, in particular, the curriculum. Finally, this chapter presents findings that show there was a lack of technology, which resulted in it being scarcely used in classrooms.

Chapter 7 presents an in-depth analysis and discussions of the study's most significant findings. An investigation of teachers' understanding of the NLT and CLT approaches are provided. There is also an analytical study of the causes of tension between supporters of the traditional curriculum and supporters of the contemporary curriculum, as well as the struggle between the conservative and liberal currents regarding leadership of curricula. The availability of technology is also addressed, as well as its use in light of the schools' capabilities and resources.

Chapter 8 looks further into the thesis argument by presenting a brief overview of the research questions and a summary of the most important aspects of the study's theoretical framework and relevant literature reviews. Additionally, Chapter 8 also summarises the study's chapters and their most prominent issues. The study will also present the most prominent topics that emerged in the findings and discussion chapters. This chapter will also discuss the study's limitations. Moreover, it will address the most important policy-related, theoretical and pedagogical suggestions for education in Saudi Arabia, as well as recommendations for future research.

1.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented an outline of the study's contents, beginning with the research problem. The research problem addresses the traditional curricula for Arabic language pedagogy, which are based on fragmented curriculum. Next, it addressed the study's importance as the study presents a new concept for the teaching of Arabic – a language that is supported by its position as a global language. As mentioned above with regard to the importance of the Arabic language in the Arab world and Islamic world, it is important that the approaches and pedagogies of Arabic be

developed in a way that allows learning and teaching to coordinate with the new methodologies of teaching languages.

The next chapter presents background information on Saudi society, ideologies present in it, and their effect on education and child development. It also addresses the effects of society-related issues and various aspects of the contemporary curriculum.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

The aim of Chapter 2 is to provide a background of Saudi education and to reveal the society's ideology and culture that affect the development of education and teaching of Arabic. The chapter will introduce the context and ideology of the Saudi society and its impact on several controversial issues. In Saudi Arabia, 'change' usually brings numerous discussions and debates in relation to some controversial issues, such as quality of education, Saudi women affairs, the West and employment.

Currently, there is a contentious dispute between liberals and conservatives about religious curricula and how they are being shrunk and trimmed, as religious curricula are undoubtedly important. But students are not limited to learning religion at school. They can also learn religion at home, in mosques, and through various media channels. Other subjects, however, can only be learned at school. These other subjects (such as mathematics, science and language) are important and help students learn different topics. It is best for society to focus on the quality of science, mathematics and language curricula because they help a country to develop in various fields.

Next, the chapter presents the sociology of childhood with comparisons between a child in Islam and one in the West. This comparison shines a light on issues that affect primary education. From both Islam and the West, religion plays a crucial role in the teaching child in the early years. This chapter provides details about curriculum change and the accompanying controversy between different segments of

Saudi society. It also includes an overview of the history of education in Saudi Arabia which covers the last 50 years, beginning with chalkboards in traditional schools and continuing until the age of electronic whiteboards and iPads. The historical overview also addresses the Ministry of Education's relentless efforts to make education meet the needs of a knowledge-based economy so Saudi Arabia can compete globally, as education is vital to economic productivity and competitiveness. There is also information about the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Education Development Project, which includes a curriculum development project (Kamal, 2012; Ministry of Education, 2008). The chapter also presents the Ministry's vision for educational development, as well as a detailed comparison between the contemporary curriculum and the old curriculum, including related curriculum theories. Additionally, background information is discussed about Arabic language instruction in Saudi Arabia, with details about Arabic teaching approaches and the most prominent related issues. Finally, the chapter explains the literacy rates in the Arab world and the most prominent and significant results and statistics related to it.

2.1 Saudi Arabian society

Saudi Arabian society is considered to be conservative in accordance with Islamic rules culture and tradition, known as *محافظ* *Mohafezh* [Conservative]. Therefore, Saudi society is not a secular society and people practice Islam as guidance at work, home and throughout their life (Lacroix, 2011). On the other hand, in most Western democracies, there is a separation of powers between the judicial, political and religious institutions. For example, when there is debate about issues in Saudi Arabia, such as women driving, gender and equality at work, or development, there is a very strong voice that briefly states proudly that Islam is the constitution and our

grandfathers and fathers have given the allegiance to King Abdulaziz, the founder of the country to implement Islam as constitution for the country. Moreover, this voice labels people who derive new concepts about society, seculars or liberals.

This debate has religious, cultural and social dimensions. Changing and developing curricula is an educational issue that is usually of interest to, and debated by, people who are connected to education and curricula, not to mention the religious, cultural, and social elites. In Saudi Arabia, curriculum change was one of many issues that were hotly debated by the conservative and liberal factions. Moreover, the curriculum debate was more acrimonious on each side, as they realised that curriculum and education play a significant role in children's upbringing.

Conservatives allege that the process of change is an American and Western plot for achieving hegemony and carrying out their desires. Meanwhile, the other side views the process of change as an inevitable part of keeping pace with development that is happening in the world.

Within the last 50 years, Saudi society has become more economically, socially and culturally developed (Abanamy, 1985; Abu Nadi, 2012; Almaghlouth, 2008; M. S. Alshahrani & Alsadiq, 2014). As a result, education in Saudi Arabia may also reflect this change (Arabic Curriculum Document, 2007). Hence, education possibly prepares the students for that change and involves them in it. In Saudi Arabia, Arabic as a core subject affects student outcomes in other subjects. Therefore, the learning of Arabic is central to all other aspects of academic success. Within recent years, a movement towards integrated curriculum approaches, such as social, science, religious and Arabic subjects developed.

The Saudi government aims to digitalise education following other developed countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, Japan and Australia. In Arabic literacy of language teaching learning contemporary curriculum, it is argued that the teaching of Arabic needs to be informed by contemporary first and additional language pedagogy. According to several educational researchers in Saudi Arabia, the need for change to the traditional curriculum is apparent (Al-Easa, 2009; Almaghlouth, 2008; Arabic Curriculum Document, 2007; Bin Salamah, 2001; Oyaid, 2009). Moreover, Saudi studies within recent years have examined languages pedagogy and the use of technology in western countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. As result, the Saudi Education system has been increasingly influenced by Western education (Al-Abdulkareem, 2004; Alasmari, 2008; Al-Sadaawi, 2007; Kamal; 2012; Oyaid, 2009). In addition, the contemporary curriculum is informed by research in first and additional language learning theory, such as functional grammar and communicative language teaching (CLT) approaches that focus on the social role of language use. Chapter 4 examines in greater detail the communicative approaches that relate to the development of teaching languages for communicative and social purposes.

2.2 Sociology of childhood

The moral and social qualities that are valued in a society have their roots in religion, philosophy and tradition, and have relatively more enduring facts of human existence (Mayall, 2002). It is essential to keep in mind that religions or regions of upbringing differ in the opportunities they give to children in socialising and interacting with the wider world. The Islamic perspective treats a child as a group member from the time

they are born and society feels obligated to care for that child. The child is also taught about the arrangement of the social order (Weissman & Hendrick, 2013). They depend on kinship relations and consequently accept the obligations associated with their ties. A child is not brought up to be an independent individual, which is in contrast to contemporary Western perspectives of childhood. Very early in life the child is made aware of his or her responsibility towards the group.

In Western cultures, a child is regarded as a human being who deserves the rights accorded to adults. As a result, there is less attachment between the two distinct individuals, as observed in the Islamic perspective. The Western culture, which is highly influenced by Christianity and the Islam culture, provides opportunities for children to attend regular classes in churches and mosques for formal education, religious education and recreation (Landy, 2009). The main reason for sending children to these schools is to learn values that would help them become a 'good child'; which basically means an obedient child. This difference in religious approach to children's involvement continues today and thus results in differential opportunities for participation.

The existence of social classes based on the economic division of a society into occupational categories is another factor that influences opportunities and the construction of childhood (D. Faulkner, Littleton & Woodhead, 1999). Western culture is known to have established better social setups to enable childhood construction due to their well-defined economic and social status. The success of the upper class in dividing the society based on the occupational division resulted in marked variations in the living standards of various groups.

On the other hand, the Islamic culture is more focussed on ‘training’ the child, drawing from religious practices and beliefs, and gender differences in socialisation as prescribed by society. Another factor in the construction of childhood in Saudi Arabia in the Islamic culture is that a girl child is traditionally confined to the house and socialisation is limited to avenues that ensure she becomes a good housewife in the future (Allison James & Allan James, 2012). Nevertheless, in Saudi Arabia, education for girls has increased over the last 50 years. Therefore, there are now better opportunities for women to work in professions, such as the health sector, education and other sectors.

The pinnacles of the Islamic law include the Qur’an, *السنة* The *Sunna* [Prophetic Traditions], *الجماع* the *Ijma* [Consensus] and *قياس* the *Qiyas* [The process of deductive analogy] (Kamali, 2003). These principles place an emphasis on the care, upbringing and rights of the child from the time of his/her procreation, due to the socio-cultural environment in the Islamic world. The Islamic community has always assigned great importance to the family. Consequently, from the very outset, laws and rules of inheritance were enacted to ensure the stability of the family (Black, Esmaili & Hosen, 2013). These sought to establish fair relationships between parents and children by codifying the rights of legitimacy, custody and guardianship. This makes the child a member of society.

In Saudi Arabia, maltreating children is a crime, and therefore strongly condemned. It is said in the Qur’an that they are the greatest losers who out of ignorance and stupidity kill their offspring. The Islamic perspective stipulates that children are expected to be treated with love and kindness and that they must be provided with

the best education and training (Giladi, 1989). The Islamic perspective also requires that there should be no distinction in the treatment of children based on their sex (Balamesh, 2009). Equal affection and material goods such as food, clothing, health, and shelter should be given to both sexes.

Saudi Arabia signed the UNICEF Convention on the Rights of the Child on 26 January 1996, and is also a member of regional, Arab and Islamic organisations. For example, it is a party to the Covenant on the Rights of the Child in Islam, which was issued by the Islamic Conference. Domestically, the national policy undertook to protect the rights of the child with regards to healthcare, social services, education and entertainment. An example of this is the 10-year 2005-2015 Comprehensive National Plan of Action for Children, which is approaching its goals. Previous generations treated children with strictness and severity, based on the assumption that children are successful and influential individuals in society. Through this belief, people may have prevented their children from enjoying childhood and all its stages, instead treating boys like men and girls like housewives (Baki, 2004). The Saudi way of life may have been a factor because, before the discovery of oil, more people lived in the desert and villages than in cultured and sophisticated cities.

As education increased in Saudi Arabia, parents educated their children by sending them to school. However, as time passed, parents' awareness increased and they began focusing on the quality and type of education their child should receive. Because all new curricula raise worry and concern in society, addressing new curricula while looking after children's education is an incredibly important issue (Ministry of Education, 2008). Hence this study is cognisant that curriculum changes

are difficult to accept. Additionally, this study's use of a Western theoretical framework may lead to scrutiny and concern, and it therefore includes a detailed comparison between the construction of children in Islamic and Western cultures.

Technology and the Internet have significantly changed the learning process and its approaches. The role of schools has become more difficult because they have to keep pace with contemporary approaches and rapid technological progress. This study presents the new literacy theory (NLT) (Chapter 3), in addition to the impact of technology and the Internet on language skill acquisition. For example, children are taught how to make use of technology and the Internet (such as with online conversations and discussions) to develop various skills.

Comparing Western and Muslim children presents a clear picture about society and shows that children receive attention in all walks of life in both cultures. It also shows that change which comes from the West is not some frightening object that could threaten a children's identity or change their thoughts in the future. For example, in Western approaches, the rights that children enjoy are not limited to them. Also, the Islamic view regarding children's education encourages teaching them new and useful developments in every discipline.

2.3 Society and education

2.3.1 Factors that affect childhood education from Islamic and Western perspectives

There are several factors affecting childhood education in relation to the view of Islam and Western pedagogy towards childhood. Those factors include religious,

social, cultural, economic and political factors. In this section, the focus will be on factors that affect education from the Islamic and Western perspectives and to understand the sociology of childhood in this research.

2.3.2 Religious factors

In Islam, at the age of seven, children are expected to practice prayer and fast, with guidelines from their parents at home, teachers at school and community prayers in the mosque. More importantly, teaching morals and manners emanate from religion, such as cleaning, respecting the neighbours and helping the weak and disabled people. In other words, the focus is on manners and morals to ensure living inside the community positively. For instance, there is an instruction that comes from the religion to allow living spaces between children (brothers and sisters) at the age of 10. Another example is that children have to knock on the door before they enter their parents' room (Balamesh, 2009). In Islamic culture, this is called *استئذان* / *Istezan* [Seeking permission]. It is part of cultural literacy that aims to educate children and involve them in their societies. For example, in school, children learn how to use polite words and interact with others. Students are trained to say 'thank you' and 'please' and to avoid using insulting words. Therefore, this study is concerned with cultural literacy. In Saudi Arabia cultural literacy is included in *فقه* / *Fiqh* [jurisprudence] courses on jurisprudence and behaviour, which cover many Islamic teachings and manners, such as the rights of parents, how to treat people and etiquette while eating. The last part of these courses covers much of the same material as reading courses. These include life lessons that students learn, such as proper etiquette for dialogues and debates, and what should be said or done in certain situations. In fact, these life lessons should all be included in reading courses, which

aim to prepare individuals to actively participate in society by providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge. These forms of cultural literacy that are embedded in Islam can be effectively integrated while teaching language skills in real-life situations that resemble students' lives.

In addition, pedagogical influences from Islam, known as *حلقات التحفيظ Halaqat alatahfeezh* [Memorising circle], are found in mosques where children can learn the Qur'an, even before they start school. *Halaqat alatahfeezh* is one old teaching approach in Islamic education. *Halaqat alatahfeezh* refers to the way in which children receive instruction from the Quran. For example, children are to sit in a circle with the instructor. This approach supports memorising skills and recitation of the Quran. Competence in the Qur'an helps to develop language competence as the Quran was written in Classical Arabic.

In comparison to *Halaqat alatahfeezh*, in the West, childhood innocence has been appraised and closely associated with Christianity. For instance, Jean-Jacques Rousseau praised what he referred to as 'the natural innocence and goodness of the child' (Robinson, 2013, p. 43). Western society strived to ensure the protection of the child's innocence. In general, this reflected divine purity that was emphasised among Christian conservatives (Robinson, 2013). However, within recent years, there has been increased anxiety and moral panic among Western societies regarding the welfare of children. In this case, child protection has come under threat from paedophiles. The panic has led to calls for enhanced surveillance among children to protect them from 'stranger danger', child abuse and paedophilia.

Around the world, discourses of childhood and childhood innocence have been successfully employed to foster moral panic for political gains by social and moral conservatives. Moral panic operates to maintain social order in societies and in the context of childhood; it has especially been mobilised to perpetuate the control of heteronormative narratives. Started through media and political discourses, moral panic focused on ‘stranger danger’ reinforces myths and stereotypes about children’s public vulnerabilities, often eclipsing their private vulnerabilities in the privileged White middle-class nuclear family. Discourses of childhood innocence and protection have largely rendered children’s sexual subjectivities invisible and have often been the rationale for denying their access to relevant and important knowledge about sexuality and relationships (Robinson, 2013).

As a result, children’s daily lives are subjected to strict surveillance and regulations as a result of the heightened concern, or moral panic, around their potential vulnerability to sexual environments. However, it is misplaced or displaced towards a target that is not the ‘real’ problem. As evidenced, moral panic was used as a political strategy by individuals and governments to manipulate social reaction in favour of their own conservative political agendas. Media outrage redirects social reaction away from critical issues that warrant public debate, such as human rights and citizenship, towards manufactured ‘folk devils’ that become the focus of public scaremongering.

Western civilisation was characterised by the Industrial Revolution that led to an emergence of capitalism and the middle class. During this time, childhood had to change in order to meet the requirements of the time. The middle class enjoyed some

prosperity in economic terms. At this time, the children from the middle class were more protected (MacNaughton & Davis, 2009). Compulsory public education was introduced to capture the demands of the time. This was meant to promote literacy among the population, as well as impart Christian morals among children (Robinson, 2013).

Discourses of childhood innocence are intimately characterised with naivety, purity, selfishness, unknowingness, less worldliness and irrationality, which construct children as vulnerable. These constructions that epitomise childhood innocence have varied significantly across societies. For example, the Greek doctrine of human perfection maintains that a child is innocent. Within the Christian doctrine, the child is positioned in a binary relationship with the adult who is the bearer of the original sin.

Christian conservatives have maintained that all children, including the baby Jesus, were tainted by the original sin based on the narrative of Adam and Eve's fall from grace as a result of giving into the temptation of eating the forbidden fruit of knowledge in the Garden of Eden. In this narrative, the binary of the knowing adult and the innocent unknowing child is constructed. The child represents purity and innocence that existed prior to Adam and Eve's fall, only to be redeemed 'through the inherent virtues of the innocent child and the repenting adult' (J. Faulkner, 2011, cited by Robinson, 2013, p. 43).

According to J. Faulkner (2011), the narrative of the fall of Adam and Eve caused all humans to be sinners. As a result, human beings have been separated from divinity

by this original sin. Newborns represent divinity and constitute in discourses of childhood innocence, therefore, they are regarded as ‘not yet’ capable of engaging in decisions that can lead to sin.

Christians baptise their infants to protect them from the original sin. Baptism ensures that they are protected from any immorality brought about by adults. Anything considered impure by adults is prohibited in the life of a child. Therefore, any form of sexuality that led to the fall of Adam is prohibited from children. The innocence of children is a representation of what God intended humankind to remain pure. This state of purity can only be achieved by creating a perfect life for children through their baptism (J. Faulkner, 2011).

In secular Europe, philosophers such as Jean Jacques Rousseau accounted that a child was innately good from his natural state before being tainted by the evils of this world. A child’s natural goodness and innocence is normally lost as he/she grows to become an adult. This view is reinforced by Adolphe Bouguereau’s painting that presents Jesus as angelic, white and protected from evil and harm. From the 18th century when Europe was being industrialised, wealthy and prosperous families and working classes emerged. Whilst children from prosperous middle and upper classes became more protected and privileged, receiving good education and specialised entrepreneurship training, those from working class became increasingly exploited. Girls were exploited for sexual satisfaction, and boys and some girls were exploited institutionally by being subjected to long working hours, physical abuse and dangerous conditions (Robinson, 2013).

Childhood innocence and sexuality

Discourses of childhood innocence assume that children are incapable of understanding their sexuality, and adults try their best to protect children from this issue. To many, the topic of sexuality can only be comprehended by adults.

However, fetishising children has been criticised by Faulkner as it depicts children as sexually innocent, which is not always the case (J. Faulkner, 2011).

According to Freud's psychoanalytical theory, young children have some sexual attractions, as explained in the Oedipus complex. However, the exposure to sexuality experienced during the Freudian era is highly unacceptable in modern times. The post-Freudian period saw Western society denounce any form of child sexuality (Robinson, 2013). Currently, parents are quick to condemn any sexual activities involving young children. Young boys are dissuaded from acts of masturbation as this is against the innocence associated with children, who are viewed as emblems of downfall and not as people with independent feelings and perspectives. Therefore, their innocence is preserved by their parents and guardians who ensure that their mind is not corrupted before they reach adulthood (Robinson, 2013).

Adults crave for a moral society, which does not include child sexuality. This is mainly due to the increase in child abuse cases encouraged in the Freudian period. Therefore, parents and society at large ensure a controlled childhood for their children. Children are not allowed access to adult material or engage in any activity deemed as sexual. There is always moral panic when adults are faced with social vices surrounding their children. Acts of sexual abuse targeting children, child pornography or any form of sexualising any child under the age of 12 years are

received with great concern by adults. The over-protection of children is portrayed by J. Faulkner (2011) as unrealistic, albeit necessary, in suppressing their sexuality.

No one is willing to acknowledge the sexuality of children, even when it remains one of the most important aspects of human growth. Children are bound to ask questions regarding their sexuality from people around them. However, the adults around these children are unwilling to open such an adult and immoral topic for fear of claims of sexual abuse by adults. Parents and guardians feel powerless regarding the protection of their children, thus, the desire to create fetishising children's innocence through protecting them from sexuality. The idea of staying sexually ignorant is quite appealing to parents who measure their ability to parent on their ability to ensure their children stay sexually ignorant for as long as possible. The portrayal of children as sexual objects is shunned in many cultures because children are regarded as pure and innocent. In order to ensure children are kept ignorant of the topic of sexuality, the censorship of the media has been legalised in many countries (Robinson, 2013; J. Faulkner, 2011).

2.3.3 Cultural factors

The effectiveness of childhood education relies heavily on cultural perspectives that operate in an educational setting. Western cultural perspectives and Islamic culture affect the provision of childhood education in a myriad of ways. In essence, Islamic culture of conformity and originality goes beyond creed recitals and religious practices (Jumani et al., 2013). Children in the East and other Islamic settings have tones of protocols to adhere to and are often required to be perfectionists. Jumani, et al. (2013) note that Western culture also advocates for manners and moral

development that encourage creativity and individualism in learners. Therefore, acquiring literacy in an Islamic setting is accompanied by crammed perfectionism while the Western culture encourages individuals to attain as much as they can naturally achieve (Jumani, et al., 2013).

2.3.4 Social and economical factors shaping childhood

Islam organises the child's rights and duties. Parents have to take responsibility when caring for their children. Children have the right to stay at home and be provided with life's necessities such as food, shelter and clothing. On the other hand, children have an obligation to keep in touch with their parents, which is called *بر الوالدين* *Bir al-walidain* [Kindness to parents]. This kindness is required to be consistent throughout a person's life. From an Islamic perspective, *الله* *Allah* [God] rewards a person who is kind and takes care of his/her parents. Also, from a cultural perspective, it is shameful to place family members with long-term mental and health conditions, including elderly parent/parents, into a sanatorium or infirmary. This is called *عقوق الوالدين* *Aukouk al-walidain* [The treatment of parents badly] which is completely opposite to *Bir al-walidain*. As mentioned in the Quran: {17:23} *بر الوالدين* *Bir alwalidain* is connected with *توحيد الربوبية* *Tawaheed al-rububiyah* [Oneness of Allah]. However, *صلة الرحم* *Silat alrahem* [Honouring kinship and respecting relatives] describes a child's kindness to relatives.

Educationally, the child is taught at home by parents, brothers and sisters. Children receive influences from the social environment inside the family. The number of children in a family has increased due to the economic change in Saudi Arabia, especially after the discovery of oil in 1938 (Abu Nadi, 2012). Prior to 1938, the

typical Saudi family consisted of one or two children due to economic constraints. However, wealthy families would consist of several children. From an Islamic perspective, Muslims are encouraged to have several children and use birth-control in order to stop unwanted births as a certain number of children is prohibited in Islam. From an Islamic perspective, birth control is necessary for legitimate reasons, such as a mother who is weak because of consecutive childbirths and whose doctors have said that any more children may threaten her life or the health of her child, therefore, using birth control is acceptable.

In addition, from a cultural viewpoint, there is pressure on newly married couples to have a child (Fernea, 2002). The number of children in the family is a controversial issue linked to religious, social and cultural perspectives. Therefore, attention to these factors is required when developing childhood education (Killen & Rutland, 2011).

Duties performed by children have changed in Saudi Arabia based on economic and social development in the country. Previously, children helped their parents on the farms, worked as shepherds or continued the work of their father. Girls were required to work with their mothers performing household duties. Literacy levels also improved, especially after the discovery of oil in 1938. In this case, many families were able to send their children to school. In the Muslim world, religion influenced the education setup in a pronounced way. For instance, in Saudi Arabia, segregated schools are common from primary education to higher education, due to religious and social reasons (Fernea, 2002).

Social and economic factors also played a critical role in childhood education among Western societies. As has been indicated, Western society was characterised by the creation of segregated schools. Age segregation was implemented to ensure that children were separated from adults (Robinson & Jones Díaz, 2006). Girls from the upper classes were educated on Christian morals and moulded to become refined society women. They were expected to represent female innocence and virtue. On the other hand, boys from the upper classes were given preferential treatment, in which case they were moulded to become entrepreneurs. This entrenched gender differences in society where males were favoured (Robinson, 2013).

The Ministry of Education plans state that students, specifically high school students, should be prepared for the Saudi labour market, in line with global standards, and ready for a knowledge-based economy. These standards hope to allow students to compete in the labour market in various fields of life.

The middle class moved to urban areas while the lower class remained in rural areas. In this regard, children from the middle class had access to education whereas those from the lower class were subjected to mistreatment where they worked under tough conditions (Robinson & Jones Díaz, 2006). A ban on divorce across major religions throughout the world was meant to ensure the protection of the child. In this regard, the child is well cared for by two parents (Kendrick & Kakuru, 2012). In most cases, due to gender inequality in Western societies in discourse of motherhood ‘the family’, divorce most often results with the mother facing sole responsibility to care for the children. However, as sole mothers are normally not economically empowered, this impacts on their children’s access to quality education (Killen &

Rutland, 2001). In the West, the Industrial Revolution played an essential role to changing the structure of the family. It also led to the need for child labour up until the 20th Century. Notably, the middle class had some privileges where children were taken to school, compared to children from the lower classes being subjected to child labour to survive poverty.

Marxist feminists advocate that women's oppression is tied primarily to the operations of the capitalist system. This perspective upholds that women's oppression and inequality in society are primarily linked to their economic dependence on men as a result of their unpaid role in the home, lack of education and a lack of access to well-paid, full-time employment in the workforce. Thus, the family is generally viewed as an oppressive institution for women. According to Marxist feminists, equality for women can only be achieved through eliminating capitalism.

However, socialist feminists argue that the lives of women in non-capitalist systems are not substantially different or transformed from those under capitalism; that is, they are still oppressed by patriarchy. Thus, socialist feminists uphold that women's liberation must not be analysed solely in terms of capitalism, but must include an analysis of patriarchy, a system of male dominance and power, and how both systems simultaneously oppress women. The patriarchal nuclear family is considered central to the perpetuation of gender and class inequalities (Robinson & Jones Díaz, 2006).

2.3.5 Political factors in children's education

Political factors also influence children's education. In Islam, religion forms the basis of the constitution. For instance, in Saudi Arabia, most provisions in the constitution are informed by the Qur'an (Fernea, 2002). In this case, children are introduced to Islamic teachings from a young age. They are also separated based on gender. The education system in Saudi Arabia is essentially intertwined within Islam. However, due to influences of globalisation, changes have been witnessed in the education sector. Initially, the concept of segregation based on gender had been entrenched in the Saudi educational system.

Globalisation seeks to impose its material culture and abstract ideals on a number of societies and is spread through various channels in order to achieve these ends. In the past, news was conveyed to society by official media, resulting in alternative views about various societal issues not being heard. In the current era of globalisation, due to a more open media and the popularity of social media, Saudi society has become more exposed to world dynamics, which is a welcomed change. In Saudi society, globalisation was spread through a number of means, including American, European, and Arabic media. It was also spread via the Internet, as mentioned previously. The most significant of these Internet sites include *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *YouTube*. Modern sources include cell phones and iPads. Saudi Arabia also joined the World Trade Organisation, which led the country to sign various international and human rights agreements, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (Alwasil, 2010). There is no doubt that this affected Saudi Arabians in many ways.

From the time it was launched in November 1996, Al-Jazeera fundamentally changed the nature of newscasts in the Arab world. Al-Jazeera led the media revolution by breaking many political norms in the media and changing the relationship between media, opinions and contrary views by using participation instead of passive repetition (Al-Mikhlaifi, 2006). Al-Jazeera managed to become a competitive channel in the international media and political stages. This led to the first case of news flowing from the Third World to the First World. Al-Jazeera was able to influence global political and military strategies by impacting international opinion and exposing hidden aspects to wars and military policies.

The decision to put the General Presidency for Girls' Education under the Ministry of Education was controversial, and some people believed it was the first step on a path towards integrating boys and girls (Alsaddahan, 2010). The controversy became even more intense when a woman was appointed as the Deputy Minister of Education for Girls. The integration process is related to religious, cultural and social factors that make it very difficult to achieve integration in the near future. In turn, moderate viewpoints emphasised that the process of integration in education must occur in the early years of childhood, that is, before children reach puberty.

However, some tertiary educational institutions, such as King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, a co-educational university, introduced integration to embrace the concept of globalisation (Elyas & Al-Sadi, 2013). Still, many Islamic countries are quite restrictive on their children, especially in the current age of globalisation. For instance, in Saudi Arabia, a restriction in accessing websites that contain information against religion, or threaten the national unity for the Saudi

government and its citizens may be enforced. Children are under the focus to be protected from the 'ill effects' of globalisation.

While computers and other forms of technology have expanded the available means of teaching children, several challenges arise as a result of rapid technological changes. Mohammad and Lan (2013) note that comprehensive education enhances the body and mind. Children who spend hours surfing the Internet, socialising on social media or playing online video games can drastically affect their physical development. Schools have experienced difficulties in providing effective physical education. The Internet and globalisation has reduced the attention span of children (Barnes, Marateo & Ferris, 2007). With information streaming in fast bursts, it has become easy to digest and understand information (Mohammad & Lan, 2013). For the sake of competition for downloads, even popular video clips have to keep their content short and precise. Additionally, the Internet affects a student's study habits and ethics from early childhood. With instant access to information that a child could need, they expect instant gratification. Most become unable to work for their grades due to a lack of patience and resilience (Mohammad & Lan, 2013).

In the West, secularism has taken centre stage. The West has embraced globalisation, and this has had a great impact on children's education. Children have greater access to information than ever before due to the advent of the Internet (M. Davies, 2008). Nevertheless, there is moral panic about this access and the impact it is having on children's lives (L. Green, Brady, Olafsson, Hartley & Lumby, 2011). In addition, as education is a compulsory requirement for children in the Western society, it is considered a right that children are educated (UNICEF, 2007).

However, several Western surveys have found that hours spent by children on the Internet range from three to several hours a week. Other studies reported that children with the Internet at home spend approximately 30 minutes on it each day. Concerns have arisen regarding the impact on unrestricted Internet use for children. Socially, the Internet has been hailed as an easier and less costly form of communication between children and their parents and friends who may be geographically distanced, but many have raised concerns concerning child abuse and exploitation, as cases involving sexual approaches or solicitations over the Internet have increased (L.A. Jackson, Eye & Biocca, 2003). There are also concerns of children being exposed to explicit sexual content via the Internet. As a result, software programmes are now available to parents to restrict their children's access to such content. Therefore, with proper guidance and protection, the Internet can be a useful educational tool.

Among the most prominent of these issues is the development of curriculum and its accompanying tension between conservative and liberal schools of thought. Contemporary movements believe that the curriculum needs to keep up with the outside world, as the world has become a small village in which it is difficult for any nation to be isolated from the rest of the world. Meanwhile, the conservative movement believes that Saudi curriculum must be protected from calls for Westernisation and the dangers of globalisation.

The example of *حلقه* a *Halaqah* [Circle] might be a surprising middle ground for both sides of West and Islamic societies. The *حلقه* *Halaqah* technique is an old approach used by the first Muslims to teach the sciences. Here, *حلقه* the *Halaqah* begins anew

and is admired by some Western educators, as studies on *هلاله* the *Halaqah* and its educational roots are published in Western journals (Ahmed, 2014). They do not dismiss it by saying that this is a new era and that *هلاله* the *Halaqah* is an ancient and old-fashioned approach. Rather, science and education develop and evolve because people exchange knowledge and ideas with each other. Therefore, what the Muslims took from the Romans, Greeks and Persians in the beginning of the Islamic era formed a literary and scientific renaissance that led to delegations from Europe visiting Baghdad to learn Arabic and drawing from its mathematical, medical and engineering knowledge and sciences (D.E. Jackson, 1987).

All these precepts for the protection of children are similar to Western concepts of education and social development. However, there is a distinguishing difference between the concept of ‘human rights’ as perceived within the Western philosophy and ‘human rights’ as perceived within Islam (Rajabi, 2011). The construction of childhood in Western and Islamic perspectives differ due to social, cultural, economical, political and religious differences of the two societies, although each perspective has its own way of ensuring the well-being of the child in the society.

Understanding the new generation of children from Western and Islamic perspectives is critical. These children live in different worlds and schools, and deal with different Internet home friends. The Western perspective has become secular and easily embraces the concept of globalisation. However, the Islamic perspective has been conservative although there are some traces where the system is moving away from the established tradition (Louv, 2008). Understating these differences is important because when models from one country are taken to another country without

considering the different pedagogical approaches that are based on constructions of childhood they risk being rejected out of hand, rather than being adapted to suit a particular context.

It has become increasingly difficult to distinguish a child's use of the Internet from the Western and Islamic perspectives. In the West, the society is more secular and diverse than religious Middle Eastern Islamic States. The West embraces globalisation, while traditionally Islamic states tend to control Internet content more. For instance, Internet authorities in Western countries are concerned with the availability of sexually explicit content on the Internet, although there is less state control of content compared to traditional Islamic Nations, like Iran where the Internet is controlled and monitored to ensure that there is an adherence to the values of Islam (Miera & Pala, 2009). In this regard, religious offensive content, such as those containing sexual references has been restricted through website controls. Likewise, any information that abuses Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an will be intercepted. However, cases have arisen in the Islamic States whereby individuals, especially youth and the educated, are drifting away from traditional Islamic values (Cottle, 2011). The Pew Survey of 2013 among Muslim Internet users found that the more they used the Internet, the more likely they see the commonality between Christians and themselves. As a current major tool of globalisation, the Internet appears to influence an open attitude towards members of other faiths. However, respondents still maintain that Islam is the only true way for eternal life (Sahgal, 2015).

Reactions to globalisation exist from right wing political parties, such as the British National Party, the National Democratic Party of Germany and the National Front in France. They see that globalisation is a danger for their national economy and identity, and argue that the economy should be dominated by right nationalism, which should also limit migration in order to maintain the British national identity (Fuchs, 1999). The right wing stresses that national identity is against outside influences, and more specifically, globalisation. In addition, the right wing aims to achieve recognisable election success, because it assigns itself as a defender of the European ethnic, cultural and religious uniqueness, and its view of the society through the 'us vs them' binary (Fuchs, 1999).

In the past, it was easy for parents to dictate what they deemed was appropriate for their children in all aspects of life. This was because there were few alternatives, and a child therefore took their ideas from their parents or grandparents. At the present time, however, and with increased sources of knowledge, the number of choices and alternatives has become incalculable. Currently, children wear what they want to, read what they like, and spend time playing and watching cartoons that originate from various places around the world. You can also find them using non-Arabic words such as 'yes', 'no' and 'sorry'. Even food has changed, as the new generation prefer their own taste, which differs from those of the older generation.

Undoubtedly, importing a curriculum from another nation and implementing it will cause difficulties during its implementation. The idea of importing a new curriculum may be rejected from the outset because past experiences related to the issue of curriculum development and change may produce fear in people. However, in Saudi

Arabia, the contemporary curriculum is not an imported one, as it was designed in accordance with Saudi society's ideology and its cultural and social dimensions. Nevertheless, the process of building and designing the curriculum was in line with the latest findings in pedagogy and curriculum sciences. It is natural for people to exchange sciences and knowledge. The movement of knowledge to other societies and cultures is an indication of its quality. It shows the knowledge is applicable to all people as long as one society's ideology is not replaced with that of another. People who are not specialists in curricula development may be confused by this and think that an entire ideology is being imported. We must be wary of this, as it can lead to a resistance towards the benefits of change and new ideas.

2.4 Curriculum change: Contradictions and complexities in relation to the contemporary curriculum in Saudi Arabia

Implementing a new curriculum usually arises as a result of a number of contradictions and complexities in relation to the society and its values, culture and identity. On the one hand, any new curriculum requires at least three to four reviews after its implementation. For this reason, debate about accepting and refusing a new curriculum may take time. For example, when education for girls began in Saudi Arabia and society had yet to accept the concept of female education, Princess Effat opened up her palace to host the first girls' school at that time (Alsaddahan, 2010). Princess Effat did this with the belief that education is important for girls and its role in shaping society. Then in 1959, the Ministry of Education opened the first girls' school (Hamdan, 2005).

The Saudi society is divided into three sections: (i) liberal; (ii) moderate; and (iii) conservative (Lacroix, 2011). There is an insistence that any change cannot be undertaken within itself, preserving the traditions and linking them in terms of preserving the national identity, Islam and Saudi Arabia. For instance, in 2003, 150 Islamic scholars, judges and university professors signed a petition against changing the curriculum in Saudi Arabia. They considered that any change in the curriculum may affect students' learning of the Islamic religion. Here, the perception came from the 'hand' to protect and defend the religion. Sheik Abdullah Bin Jibrin, a known religious scholar in the country, stated that any misrepresentation in textbooks contradicts with the country's constitution which is Islam (Abu Taleb, 2005).

Underlying a conservative concern for religious scholars is the assumption that the country is on the pathway to being westernised and this will result in reduced religious curriculum in education. Social change such as increased demand from women to be able to drive, human rights and freedom for media have occurred or may occur later on the base of religious, cultural and political aspects in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Another example of preparing society for change is sending more than 120,000 students (Hilal & Denman, 2013) to study overseas in different countries around the world. Still, the Saudi government argues that external pressures for change are not the rationale for changes in the curriculum. Rather, it presents reform in Saudi Arabia as being of benefit to the country's development on an economic, educational and cultural level.

In contrast to the conservatives, those holding moderate perspectives believe that it is hard to ignore the need for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) to integrate with the

rest of the world. At the same time, they feel that Islam and the Islam religion can be immersed and flexible within the contemporary world.

Unlike conservatives and moderates, thinkers take up view that individuals have the right to freedom without any enforcement from a religious party. Finally, there is an emerging liberal thought in Saudi society that individuals have the right to freedom without enforcement from Islam. Turki Al-Hamad (2004) is the most famous Saudi liberal in the country who argued for the separation of religion and the state.

Moreover, he stressed that all problematic and controversial issues in the society occur because of the limitation of liberalism in the country and amongst the Saudi society.

Moderates consider curriculum development as inevitable and necessary in light of global and regional changes, as societies can no longer afford to be isolated from the rest of the world. They believe it is acceptable to change curricula as long as certain fundamental principles are not altered. Academic curricula are one of the most important tools for shaping societies' futures and the basis on which their futures are built. They influence how people think, as well as their perceptions, beliefs and behaviours. Moreover, they also impact what knowledge, skills, attitudes and values people acquire. Previous curricula were developed some time ago and were appropriate for the prevalent social conditions at the time, especially with regard to the eradication of *أمية Ummiyyah* [illiteracy]. In the previous two decades, however, huge global developments have taken place with regard to the economy, society, science, technology and culture. International experts have classified these changes into 10 global revolutions, including globalisation and communications, knowledge,

social and the economic revolutions (Jacucci, Olling, Preiss & Wozny, 2013).

Because Saudi Arabia is a part of this system, these developments have impacted Saudi society on cultural, economic and technological levels, and they have also impacted daily life in Saudi Arabia, including livelihoods, production, transportation and communication. These variables surrounding Saudi society thereby caused a parallel change in education. This study aims to support this shift and its goal to develop curricula that aim to provide students with the skills and knowledge needed for the 21st Century.

Some believe that Saudi society developed as a result of technology and the use economic, financial systems and civilianisation (M. S. Alshahrani & Alsadiq, 2014). Nevertheless, the education system in Saudi Arabia may not be developing at the same pace as other sectors in society. Therefore, the Policy of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia from 2000 to 2010 established 17 public universities (25 universities in total) and six private universities (Hamdan, 2013). On the other hand, there is argument that the development does not relate to material civilisation, such as high-rise buildings. In fact, it is more about education, culture and freedom. Al-Jarf (2004) claimed that students in schools or universities have to study about global education. She proposed a model for global education topics for Year 9 and Year 12, and a course for undergraduate students.

In addition, significant advancements have been made in higher education which aims for high-quality education by focusing on quality and academic accreditation (Harvey & Williams, 2010; Onsman, 2010). These developments aim to prepare a

generation of youth for the labour global market, resulting in successful individuals in society who deal with issues in a positive manner.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the impact of a contemporary curriculum which contains modern views on religious and cultural beliefs in terms of tensions between traditional Islamic thought and liberal progressivism; and the impact of the contemporary curriculum on critical thinking in students (Kamal, 2012). For instance, currently, there is a critique for a lesson in the Hadith textbook warning of the negative impact of sending Saudi students overseas to study in Western countries. The lesson highlights the liberal thought that students get from Western societies. On the other hand, this critique for the King Abdullah Scholarship Program (Hamdan, 2013) clashes with the Saudi Higher Education Development Project to which scholarships are integrated it. Also, people can access information about liberal thought in the modern world from anywhere in the world without actually going there.

2.5 Background to the Saudi Education System

Saudi Arabia established its education system when the country was founded in 1932 by using a traditional curriculum during that initial period. Before the foundation of the country, education was offered in *حلقات التحفيظ Halaqat altahfeezh* at the Holy Mosques in Mecca and Medina, as well as *كتاتيب ktakteeb* in cities such as Riyadh, Jeddah and Hafouf. There was a high rate of illiteracy in rural locations. The 'settlement of Bedouins' of this time was meant to discourage their movement in the desert (Al-Ghathami, 2004). Therefore, hundreds of schools were established in different villages in the country (Hakeem, 2012). This was the first national project

to build the country politically and economically. Bedouins were encouraged to leave their nomadic lifestyle to work in agriculture and settle down in villages.

Education participation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been achieved since the first years of its establishment in 1932 (Al-Ajrourh, 1981). Systematically, there are great achievements, and this represents a place of pride for every Saudi citizen. With these important achievements, however, there are contemporary challenges, such as globalisation and its associated issues affecting education and the knowledge revolution that has changed the type of skills required in the labour market and the inclusion of the knowledge economy within traded economies that require a new vision of how the student should be taught in Saudi Arabia.

2.5.1 King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Education Development Project, Saudi Arabia

The King's plan to develop general education in the country is highly significant, and it aims to raise the level of education in Saudi Arabia with a vision that intends to develop the outputs of general education. It aims to accomplish the project by developing teachers, as well as leadership and the school environment, in order to prepare a new generation of students capable of acquiring 21st Century skills (Alsabti, 2012; Kamal, 2012). The reason to do so is for students to become the leaders of the future and active components of a strong Saudi economy, as well as enable awareness that society produces knowledge (Ramady, 2010). For example, approximately 25,000 teachers will be sent abroad to receive professional development courses in developed countries. This provides teachers with the

opportunity to learn about the latest educational and teaching pedagogy and approaches by attending one year programs.

The crucial focus in developing education is developing Arabic language pedagogy and its curricula in order to become up-to-date with the international curriculum, as all Saudi general education curricula are taught in Arabic. Likewise, developing students' language skills, such as research and critical thinking, will promote excellence in other subjects in light of the contemporary curriculum. Significant changes have taken place in society, and society is not the same as it was 50 years ago. The way that society has changed completely has included pedagogies and approaches used to teach children in schools. Society has developed, and education has changed from the way it was taught to previous generations.

Given the technological and global advances of the contemporary world, it may be an appropriate time to re-examine and change the curriculum by which students are taught. Today, students are quite different from those in school 20 years ago, as they interact with the world and think differently. In the past, students finished their learning at school. Today, they return home and turn on their electronic devices and obtain information whenever and however they want by using many and various approaches (Kamal, 2012). Furthermore, learning is now considered a lifelong process. While new generations may have the same interests, from the same society and background as past generations, access to information and communication of ideas have changed due to globalisation and technology. For example, students enjoy social relationships, entertainment and learning through social media, digital technologies and the Internet. Therefore, knowing and discovering the tools that

students use to communicate amongst themselves and with their society is the key to developing their education.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the state would like to stop depending on oil resources and transition towards a knowledge-based economy. In fact, the first step towards building an advanced society is to provide the education necessary for a knowledge-based economy. This education must be appropriate for society and its environment. Section 2.5.2 will detail with the biggest struggles and most important issues accompanying the development of curriculum in line with international standards.

2.5.2 The Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia

The Ministry of Education takes primary responsibility for education in Saudi Arabia. Education is compulsory for all children between the age of six and 15 (Al-Abdulkareem, 2004). Primary education is six years for children age six to 11, intermediate schooling is three years from age 12 to 14, and the secondary stage is three years from age 15 to 17. The Ministry's role is to operate and supervise education in all stages: from designing the curriculum for each phase, appointing teachers, managers and administrative staff in all regions of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; and through the stages of evaluation and education reform that are connected by the educational process.

The Saudi Education Ministry built a vision for the future of education in Saudi Arabia. Systematic policy was introduced to identify the vision of the learner which selected school attributes that can achieve that vision. Based on this analysis were

jobs and tasks that must be carried out by education departments to enable schools to focus on learning and increase levels.

The vision for the future of education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia includes the following points:

1. The learner is at the centre of the educational process.
2. The Ministry of Education concentrates on planning for the education and guidance of scientific instructions and development of standards, fulfilling the requirements and building quality systems and stimulation.
3. The trend towards decentralisation of the management of educational process.
4. Building capacities and fittings in schools on a high level.
5. Building capacities on the human and technical level in the Department of Education to lead the development processes in the educational region in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The contemporary curriculum provides a modern model for Arabic language instruction by focusing on complementary curricula that give students a chance to practice the language and use it in numerous real-life situations. For example, teachers often spend a lot of effort managing classes in order to make students settle down. Students do not need to be quiet, however, the contemporary curriculum includes communicative techniques such as discussion, dialogue, role playing, storytelling, image reading and conversation. Teachers can thereby take advantage of students' rowdiness and activeness by having them talk with each other and engage in organised dialogue that is educationally beneficial for them.

Accordingly, this study aims to focus on curricula and methods that enable students to use language in real-life situations. NLT is also discussed in detail in Chapter 3. This theory's role is not only limited to teaching skills inside the classroom, but extends beyond the classroom by giving students the skills that allow them to interact and become involved in society. Students are then better able to adapt to society in a positive way by giving them a number of skills, including discussion, debate, dialogue, critical thinking and research skills, as well as a willingness to respect the opinions of others.

2.5.3 Arabic language in education policy

Education policy in Saudi Arabia provides three general objectives for Arabic language education: (i) developing reading skills and habits of reading in pursuit of greater knowledge; (ii) acquiring the ability to properly express oneself while speaking with proper language; and (iii) developing orderly thinking. Developing language abilities in different ways that nourish the Arabic language helps students to savour it and understand aspects of its beauty and style. To achieve this in its comprehensive project for developing curriculum, the Ministry of Education adopts educational goals that, in part, focus on training teachers in communication, dialogue, persuasion, critical thinking, self-learning and problem-solving. As these three goals show, the focus is on imparting language skills with their receptive and deductive characteristics. They seek to enable students to practice these skills by speaking and writing with precision and quality (Arabic Curriculum Document, 2007, p. 13).

The Ministry feel that the old curriculum does not achieve their goals and objectives, therefore, the focus shifts to ‘language skills’ where organisation, activities and approaches are concerned with linguistic connections and developing language skills and strategies for receiving and developing these skills. For example, one of the embedded beliefs in the old curriculum asserts that precision leads to fluency, but the opposite is correct. Fluency gradually leads to accuracy (Arabic Curriculum Document, 2007). Finally, it is noted that the NLT and CLT are at the heart of educational policy goals, and explaining them to teachers helps achieve these goals.

Curriculum change is, to an extent, a political decision, because the decision to change curricula is made by the government. Nevertheless, this decision came as a result of recommendations, which since 1991, have pressed for curriculum change and development. This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters 3 and 4. Also, the Ministry of Education supervises the planning and implementation stages. The Arabic language is a source of power for the nation. It must be developed and efforts must be made to spread it globally. Global competition also requires that interest be paid to a country’s language. For example, some people say China is a rising political and economic power. They say it is useful to learn Chinese because it will replace English as a language of economics, power and politics in the future.

2.5.4 The development and future plans

The education system in Saudi Arabia has been discussed in many doctoral theses, books and studies in which many issues associated with the development of education and reform in Saudi Arabia are identified (Al-Ajrourh, 1981; Alasmari, 2008; Bin Salamah 2001; Hakeem, 2012; Oyaid, 2009). From outside the country, an

accusation exists that religious curriculum incites terrorism and hatred for the 'other' (Prokop, 2003). But inside, there are reflections on, and aspirations for, providing an educational level comparable to what is offered in developed countries.

In contrast, there is criticism that education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia lacks objectivity in some cases. For instance, some pessimistic voices describe education in Saudi Arabia as similar to the Medieval Age in relation to school size and quality of education. This is a harsh critique and injustice towards the education system which is available and free of charge for all (Kamal, 2012).

More recently, Saudi Arabia launched a long-term educational development process called King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Education Development Project to develop general education (Kamal, 2012). This project involves building new schools and implementing modern educational approaches. The demand for quality education is high at all levels (e.g. schools and universities) for subjects such as English and computer competency (Alasmari, 2008).

2.6 Curriculum theories

The curriculum is a key part of the educational system, and many researchers have focused on it. This is evidenced by many studies that research and theorise about curricula (Pinar, 2012). Taba notes that curriculum theory is a way for organising thought about curriculum development-related issues, such as curriculum contents, the most important curriculum components, how to select and organise them, sources for curriculum-related decisions, and how to translate information and standards from these sources in order to make tangible curricular decisions. Ralph Tyler's

(1949) model is one of the oldest models developed for curriculum building. First, it shows five components that form sources from which curriculum goals can be derived: (i) teachers; (ii) society; (iii) specialists; (iv) philosophy; and (v) psychology. Second, it explains that a curriculum is composed of the following four elements: (i) educational goals; (ii) chosen educational experiences; (iii) organisation of these experiences; and (iv) the evaluation process (Taba, 1962). The contemporary curriculum covers all educational experiences a school offers students, both inside and outside the classroom, for the sake of specific goals. The contemporary curriculum relies on sound leadership to help achieve comprehensive growth for students – physically, mentally, socially and psychological.

While defining ‘curriculum theory’ is not simple, various authors have come up with their own definition of the term. The generally agreed argument is that it is basically an academic discipline which is committed to examining and sharing curricula in education. This covers historical analysis and perspectives of viewing the present education curriculum, as well as policy decisions related to education in any society. Forces that come into play when shaping the curriculum in education within society is highlighted in ‘curriculum theory’. Some authors have assumed a more philosophical approach when examining the ideologies related to the curriculum and those that have played a role in influencing the curriculum thought as well as practice in whatever society (Sabah, Fayez, Alshamrani & Mansour, 2014).

The education system in Saudi Arabia has undergone a major change in its curriculum for primary and secondary school with the introduction of new courses mostly focusing on Arabic literacy for native Arabic speakers. Islamic studies have

been the main focus of the change, addressing concerns of the modern era. Similarly, in other countries, curriculum theory highlights major changes that take place as far as the curriculum is concerned (Miller & Pound, 2010).

2.7 Contemporary curriculum and traditional curriculum

Generally, there are several major differences between the contemporary Arabic curriculum and traditional curriculum. Firstly, the content of epistemology in the contemporary curriculum can be obtained through various sources such as books and e-books. On the other hand, traditional curriculum only enables students to use textbooks. Also, the contemporary curriculum places importance on all language competences whereas in the traditional curriculum, grammatical competence is privileged as the most important competency. Therefore, the traditional curriculum encourages teacher-centred pedagogy at the expense student-centred learning. The contemporary curriculum gives learners more opportunities to learn collaboratively with various activities based on group work.

However, numerous differences can be found between the contemporary curriculum and traditional curriculum in relation to pedagogy. The contemporary curriculum attempts to reach a global standard in language education. The traditional curriculum was appropriate for the old Saudi generation for its social conditions which were already apparent, but in the rapid growth of Saudi society today, cultural, economic and technical changes to Saudi education run parallel.

Moreover, the education system in Saudi Arabia has been influenced by the need for change given Saudi's membership to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2005

(Alwasil, 2010; Hertog, 2008). After the incident of 9/11, accusations about the traditional curriculum encouraging terrorism and intolerance towards the West flourished, particularly with regard to the religious areas across five subjects Monotheism, Hadith, Jurisprudence, Qur'an Recitation and interpretation, commentary on the Qur'an (Prokop, 2003, p. 82).

Table 2-1 compares the traditional curriculum with contemporary curriculum highlighting the main elements of both. It is based on the work of Canale and Swain (1980) and the Arabic Curriculum Document (2007). The contemporary curriculum, as opposed to the traditional one, is based on making the student the centre of the educational process¹.

Similarly, contents of the contemporary curriculum are more diverse and include technology curricula, while the traditional curriculum is based on writing alone. Moreover, the contemporary curriculum encourages using a variety of teaching approaches and creating educational atmospheres, which foster educational cooperation between students. And finally, the contemporary curriculum focuses on the diversity in language content in order to cover various language skills. This is at odds with the traditional curriculum, which focuses on grammar, reading and writing.

¹ Features inherent in the contemporary curriculum include the focus on CLT approaches and the use of technology (Chapter 4).

A comparison of the new curriculum and the old one favours the new curriculum because it keeps up with new developments in the world with regard to education and teaching ideology. An important issue, however, is how this change should be lead, especially as stages for implementing the new curriculum have been specified – from the planning stage to final implementation. This is because the currently prevalent ideology regarding literacy in Arabic in Saudi Arabia revolves around a traditional template for literacy instruction. Moreover, there is a pressing need for applications and practices to move literacy instructions from the old approach towards contemporary approaches.

Table 2-1 Comparison between traditional and contemporary curriculum

Traditional Curriculum	Contemporary curriculum
Based on knowledge and acquisition of language.	Based on all language competences integrated with technology
Teacher-centred	Student-centred
Heavy reliance on textbooks	E-book – e-curriculum Extra material CD, DVD
Focuses more on accuracy, particularly in grammar and spelling	Focuses on fluency rather than accuracy Uses language for communicative and interactive purposes Deals with students’ mistakes as part of a normal pathway to language acquisition and learning
Does not prepare students and involve them with society	Social function and language Send emails, writing letters Uses the language in different sectors. Congratulations, giving information Functional grammar genre (Arabic Curriculum Document, 2007)
Focuses on grammatical competence with less attention paid to other competences	Focus on different competences (Canale & Swain, 1980) 1. Lexical competence 2. Social competence 3. Strategic competence

Traditional Curriculum	Contemporary curriculum
Learners work individually Homework focuses on repetition	The structure of syllabus is based on workshops and assignments Emphasis on collaborative learning
The content of the syllabus is based on science, health, Islamic and culture topics Drawing on the classical model	Use of a communicative language approach CLT (Canale & Swain,1980) Implicit approach Fictional approach Integrated approach Communicative approach Dramatic approach
Content of the syllabus is based on science, health, Islamic and culture topics Draws on the classical model Arabic	Content of the syllabus based on students' daily life situations where they use the language for purposeful situation, such as buying, selling, ordering in restaurants, booking a hotel, etc.
Less teacher choice and decision-making of the content, use of teaching materials and pedagogy	Greater teacher choice and decision-making of content, use of teaching materials and pedagogy

2.7.1 Contemporary curriculum development policy

The development of the contemporary curriculum development policy (CCDP) involved six stages: The first stage (1999-2002) involved overall planning of the project, which also included investigating the current educational issues at that time. The second stage (2002-2005) identified learners' competencies and built a plan of study and preparation of documentation for the curriculum. The third stage (2005-2008) prepared and trained authors to write educational materials, characterise and develop materials they were associated with. The fourth stage (2008-2012) involved testing and evaluating the educational materials that were developed and implemented in the field participation that involved all sectors of the Ministry. The fifth stage (2010-2013) established trial basis projects throughout the country. The sixth stage (after 2013) continued the evaluation and development process.

This study will be fitting with the fifth and sixth stages. It will provide the findings that support the evaluation and development process (Arabic Curriculum Document, 2007). Table 2-2 presents the trial movement from Year 1 and Year 4 in 2010 to Year 3 and Year 6 by 2012.

The curriculum was implemented gradually; however, it was not applied to all years. The contemporary curriculum commenced in elementary schools in 2010 when it was applied to Year 2 and Year 4. In the following year, 2011, Year 2 and Year 5 were added, and Year 3 was added in 2012. This gradual adoption undoubtedly helped the transition by preparing students and teachers for the contemporary curriculum.

Table 2-2 Timeline for contemporary curriculum implementation, 2010-2013

2010	2011	2012	2013
Year 1	Year 1	Year 1	Year 1
	Year 2	Year 2	Year 2
		Year 3	Year 3
Year 4	Year 4	Year 4	Year 4
	Year 5	Year 5	Year 5
			Year 6

2.7.2 Curriculum background in Saudi Arabia

Changes in the curriculum of the Saudi Arabian education were based on the need to apply social and religious guidelines that emerged during the Prophet Mohammad era and have continued to the modern-day life (Mackey, 2002). In the past, the

education system in the country was challenged for its primary focus on religion, basically through the memorisation by rote of huge sections of the Qur'an. The reform in the curriculum, as evidenced in the contemporary curriculum, is based on the need to address the criticism of the education system in the country for its rote teaching approaches (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008). While the system of education still adopts the Arabic curriculum, there is evidence of change in that the new system is developed in such a way that it matches global standards.

For Arabic language lessons, primary learning objectives were basically packaged in a language communicative strategy that balanced listening, reading, speaking and writing skills. This is a major contrast compared to the conventional Arabic language fragmented as well as skill-based curriculum with the main focus being memorisation and repetition drills that added a cognitive burden to the students, thus proving to be ineffective. The proposed change is aimed at allowing learners to develop conception, critical thinking, practice and innovation skills, as well as creativity to assist the students in the country to be more competitive with those learning abroad. This contemporary curriculum has assumed the constructionist learning model as the basis for modernising education through processes of discovery, experience, practice and collaboration (Thomas, 2011).

When reflecting on constructivism theory, Piaget (1977) noted that human beings generate meaning and knowledge from interaction between ideas and experiences. Through processes of assimilation and accommodation, people construct novel knowledge from their experiences. Whenever people assimilate, they incorporate new experiences and knowledge into already existing frameworks without alterations

to them. Usually, this occurs when an individual's experiences are in line with his/her pre-set representation of the world (Fosnot, 2004). In essence, this theory is practical for the process of literacy acquisition. Teachers need to take this theory of learning into account when they teach literacy to their students. Further, nature and the rate of learning depend on the level and source for learning motivation. The responsibility of learning needs to reside progressively with the student. For effective literacy, it is essential that the learner remains actively involved.

The contemporary curriculum is aimed at meeting the needs of the students, as well as plans for national development. Ansary (2008) suggested that reforms will reinforce Islamic national principles and values, similar to moderation, loyalty to the homeland, tolerance and preservation of its accomplishments. While curricula in the country contain aspects of curricula used abroad, care has been taken not to compromise Islamic and national identity. However, it has been suggested to be achievable, with less focus on teaching the religion and more focus on teaching Arabic as a language and culture.

While the primary objective of the new education policy in Saudi Arabia is to ensure that education is efficient enough to cater for the economic, social and religious needs of the nation, and to eradicate illiteracy in the country, there is a major focus to align the education system to global standards. Various government agencies are collaborating to ensure that these needs are effectively met and to ensure that the education system in the country does not lag from the changes that affect the modern globalised world. Most promising within the changes in the curriculum is the openness of the education system towards the international community. Thus,

regardless of the fact that the contemporary curriculum should be parallel to the cultural and religious realities of the KSA, there has been a greater level of openness to proposals from global organisations and much influence from overseas. The government in the country has revealed its desire to reform the education system, as evidenced in the new curriculum for primary schools. A greater focus on Arabic religion still maintains its touch with cultural and religious identity, while being receptive to changes in the modern world (Ansary, 2008).

2.8 Teaching Arabic

2.8.1 History of teaching Arabic in Saudi Arabia

Arabic subjects taught separately included reading, grammar, spelling, writing and calligraphy until the implementation of the contemporary curriculum in 2007 (Arabic Curriculum Document, 2007). In the 1960s and 1970s, the focus in teaching was on quantity, not quality. As average rates of illiteracy were high (Section 2.8.5), the common idea of providing students with an abundance of knowledge and information was of great benefit. For example, the curriculum being taught in the elementary school during this era was similar to what is being taught in the secondary schools currently (Al-Ajaroush, 1981).

2.8.2 Teaching grammar approaches: Traditional curriculum

There are many ways to teach the rules of grammar, but two approaches inherent in the traditional curriculum are considered most common: (i) grammar translation (i.e. inductive approach); and (ii) extrapolating approach. The standard approach (inductive approach) begins with examples to introduce the rule, followed by

examples to illustrate the rule. As such, this approach goes from the whole to a part. This approach focuses on measurement in terms of understanding the students' foundation and clarity in their minds. The inductive approach was discontinued after it was scientifically proven that it could not produce proper linguistic behaviour among students (Alsulaiti, 2002). Meanwhile, the extrapolating approach differs from the inductive approach as it is based on explaining and discussing the rules on grammar to students (Al-Rikabi, 1996).

2.8.3 Textbooks and syllabus teaching Arabic materials

Some Arabic teachers do not understand the difference between textbooks and a syllabus. They refer to a textbook as the curriculum of the subject. Therefore, this study investigates the teacher's understanding of syllabus and textbooks in the contemporary curriculum. The new policy in Saudi education required all textbooks to be designed to incorporate science, social studies and Arabic language subjects in order to switch from teaching these subjects separately to using a more integrated curriculum. In the past, teachers of Arabic relied on whatever material was available, however limited. In other words, material that they used was not up-to-date with international language standards and was only suitable for teaching grammar (Al-Rikabi, 1996). As a result, students usually completed the same tasks repeatedly because they did not have access to enriched materials linked to their real lives (Arabic Curriculum Document, 2007). In fact, the Arabic curriculum also lacks critical thinking activities that can make students more active learners in the classroom.

2.8.4 Modern Standard Arabic and Classical Arabic

Classical Arabic *الفصحى* *Al fusha* [Classical] is the language of the Qur'an and Islamic literature (Bateson, 2003), as well as other religious texts belonging to Christianity or Judaism. Modern Standard Arabic was developed from Classical Arabic. Hence, there is little difference between Classical and Standard Arabic. Teaching Classical or formal Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is widely approved by the Saudi Education Ministry, parents and many linguists for several reasons. Firstly, the important reason for widespread approval is a religious one, because the Qur'an is written in Classical Arabic. Also, there exists a desire to protect the identity of the language from being distorted and forgotten by its speakers (Quran, 15:9). Therefore, the Education Ministry attempts to develop and sustain quality Classic Arabic Education in its schools. Wahba (2006) believes that there is no harm in using both Classical and Standard Arabic. As educators, it is important to use informal language in the classroom because it is everyday language that enables students to engage and participate more effectively in the classroom. They can learn more about communication skills on both formal and informal levels.

Saudi students may encounter difficulties when they are forced to practice Classical Arabic in the classroom because Classical Arabic is not used outside the school environment. In fact, students communicate with families and society by using informal Arabic. In addition, some teachers speak in informal Arabic when teaching in the classroom, especially Arabic teachers. In other words, students are taught Classical Arabic in informal Arabic. Contemporary approaches (based on constructivism) view the learner's prior knowledge as important for new knowledge. Building on a student's informal use of Arabic (dialects) to teach Standard Arabic

would serve to benefit their learning as this is considered to be an effective way of adding new knowledge.

In Arabic, the cases are more about difficulties in systematic ways. For example, *hoasa ya thahabu ela almadarasah* هو سيذهب إلى المدرسة [he will go to school] is Classical Arabic, compared with formal Arabic *هو يروح المدرسة* *hoaa berouh almadrash* [he goes school]. In informal Arabic, the preposition *ela* إلى [to] is deleted. Students might be encouraged to use the informal language to develop their communication skills if they are more familiar with it.

Arabic is the fifth largest language in Australia. In this section, a discussion on the learning of the Arabic language in Australia is offered. The study by Cruickshank (2012) showed that learning the Arabic language is related to three issues: (i) relationship between standard and dialect; (ii) what counted as reading, speaking and writing; and (iii) what constituted a good learner.

These issues affect the learners' and teachers' involvement in the classroom. The findings are presented as a personal account from Cruickshank's participants in an Arabic language class. In his study, one notable difference in the Arabic dialect was evident from the first instructor who had grown up with the Syrian dialect but was influenced by the Egyptian dialect. Another instructor, Ali, was convinced that Arabic cannot be learned through dialect but standard written Arabic. The key interest in the classroom was a conflict between learning standard Arabic and dialect (Cruickshank, 2012).

Speaking and writing Arabic is a fundamental part of learning. In the context of learning Arabic, reading forms an integral component of teaching pronunciation and intonation of words in Arabic. Since there are many dialects within the Arabic language, pronunciation may vary from one dialect to another. As a result, there exists variations in lexis, phonology, grammar, cases of intonation for definiteness and so forth (Cruickshank, 2012). Compared to regional dialects, the MSA dialect is more complex and dynamic with the current dynamic trends of technology. Evidently, its evolution is being largely driven by trends in communication, media, regional political union and universal education. Differences in regional standards among dialects have created attitudes whereby learners of such regions do not want to embrace the MSA dialect. For instance, one can note that despite different signs to represent the language, regional dialects tend to have a mixture of Arabic words and words from other languages, such as French and Berber, as it is the case for those who originate from Algeria. However, recognition of the MSA as the most privileged dialect is becoming apparent because of the Arabian League. It has, thus, become the most privileged among variants and local colloquial forms. As most individuals aspire to be professional workers in the future, the desire to learn the MSA is increasingly becoming evident. This is due to the fact that the MSA is a privileged dialect that is preferred in most official documentation and programs (Cruickshank, 2012).

2.8.5 Literacy rates in the Arab world

Today, literacy in the Arabic world is a pressing issue because it does not conform to the new literacy approach of language use and coherent application (Levin, Saiegh-Haddad, Hende & Ziv, 2008). According to Hammoud (2006), much has to be done

to improve the literacy level in the Arabic world. However, literacy levels have improved compared to previous decades. According to the Jomtein Declaration of Education for All (1990), literacy levels in Arab countries were expected to rise to half by the year 2000 (Hammoud, 2006).

The Internet and massive technological advances play a role in technology literacy in Saudi Arabia. Society's tremendous acceptance of new technology and the rapid increase in the number of the Internet and technology users give an indication about literacy in this country, where the illiteracy rate was over 60% 50 years ago. Going forward, literacy will increasingly take on its modern meaning, especially as the today's generation is on the verge of eagerly accepting technology. Therefore, this study aims to present a new model for education and society that can help them benefit from exploiting technology and the Internet in order to develop various tools for modern-day language and literacy learning.

Literacy rates in Saudi Arabia are high; the incidence of illiteracy in the Saudi population is around 12% (UNICEF, 2003-2009). However, Saudi society is improving the literacy rate rapidly with the use of technology (The Kingdom achieved 96% literacy rate in 2013).

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a background about Saudi society and its ideology in order to understand issues related to constructing Arabic teaching and education for children in Saudi Arabia. It also presented an overview of Saudi society and its most prominent social issues, including a comparison between Islamic and Western views

as they relate to the sociology of childhood. It addressed this comparison in detail in order to explain the debate over curriculum change between different segments of Saudi society. Moreover, this chapter has presented background information about education in Saudi Arabia and the Ministry of Education's most prominent plans for advancing it, of which King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Education Development Project is at the forefront. This chapter also presented an educational policy and prominent issues related to Arabic language instructions, including teaching techniques and pedagogy.

In order to develop these approaches and pedagogy, a discussion of the purpose of curriculum and its role in education was provided as a way of understanding the comparisons between the contemporary and old curricula. The contemporary curriculum was designed in accordance with the most contemporary educational theories in use around the world, and the process of implementing it relies on the extent to which society accepts this curriculum and its various facets. Finally, this chapter has provided an overview of the most significant results regarding Arabic teaching and literacy rates in the Arab world. Chapter 3 discusses the study's theoretical framework and how it is used in a way that is consistent with the context of Saudi society and Arabic language teaching.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Chapter 3 addresses issues related to the contemporary concept of literacy. First, it re-defines literacy and its use as a communicative, social tool that increases student-teacher interactions, both inside and outside the classroom, and in society as a whole. Second, it presents the Internet's role in expanding the meaning of literacy to include everyday uses of literacy given the advances in technology and the Internet. Third, it addresses the pedagogy of literacy in the Arabic language and its effects on the contemporary curriculum. Fourth, the New literacy theory (NLT) concept and the extent to which it is related to communicative approaches in language learning and connectivism theory is presented. Finally, Chapter 3 sheds light on the role of educators in developing and changing curricula.

Arabic literacy education in Saudi Arabian primary schools is the main focus of this research, especially in terms of a new definition of literacy and the impact of technology on Arabic literacy pedagogy (Cruickshank, 2006). Increasingly, people rely on technologies, such as mobile phones, computers, social media, iPods, iPhones and GPS. In this generation, children prefer to have access to technology in their daily activities. Given these circumstances, a significant issue is: *How can technology support the development and teaching of Arabic language and literacy to learners?* Moreover, to enable learning to be more enjoyable for children and students, teaching approaches increasingly use digital technology.

Today, children take it for granted that they will have access to technology in their daily activities (Tierney, 2009). For instance, in Saudi Arabia, almost everyone has a mobile phone; and *Playstation* games are very popular amongst children and adults. Indeed, some children know how to use computers before they commence school. In this context, definitions of Arabic literacy need to move forward from the traditional definition of literacy that is based on learning to read and write print to a contemporary understanding of literacy which defines modern literacy as a meaning system presented in many ways, including oral, written, visual and aural (Street, 1984).

According to Street (1995), literacy is a social practice embedded in power relations, not just a set of technical skills. Street believes that literacy is not an autonomous skill that learners can attain outside social context. Oral literacy depends on context and exhibits a power-laden nature. Oral literacy practices depend on the larger societal context within where conversation or communication occur. Likewise, technological literacy of learners depends on the technological advancement of the setting. Children in technologically-advanced nations gain more and faster technological literacy than those in countries deprived of technological development (Street, 1995). Similarly, visual and aural literacy are used in different ways, depending on cultural settings. Whatever is considered appropriate, writing or the spoken language has close ties with underlying assumptions and epistemologies in different disciplines. It is, therefore, imperative for education stakeholders to understand the cultural context of learning before developing any curriculum literacy material. The linking of teaching literacy with contemporary definitions of the NLT as a broad and evolving technology of communicative practices is a priority of this

research. Arabic language teaching requires that literacy is not just about teaching reading and writing only. Students are required to know how to use computers, be able to use some of its applications, send emails, and write their assignments electronically. They also need opportunities to use technology creatively when using Arabic language and literacy through oral, written, visual, critical and aural processes.

The old curriculum was burdened by the fact that, often, the subjects did not catch the students' interest or address the needs they expressed in the classroom. Many teachers would probably agree that students enjoy talking about soccer and their favourite clubs, as they analyse the sport from different perspectives. These kinds of discussions, which some teachers may consider a waste of allotted class time, are actually an opportunity for students to express their opinions and thoughts. The teacher's role is to organise the discussion and direct it in a way that is beneficial from linguistic and educational perspectives.

3.1 Redefining literacy

The Internet has shaped and broadened the definition of literacy. Readers and writers of electronic texts assume different functions from the traditional ways of daily print literacy. Bolter (1998) asserts that there are developments in the field of science and technology in the emergence of new concepts of literacy that go beyond traditional definitions of literacy to the effect that, in some countries, the illiterate person is one who does not know how to use the computer. However, while there is agreement on the importance of literacy, new forms of literacy are required in response to the

numerous changes that technology has brought (Lue, Kinzer, Coiro & Cammack, 2004).

In their four-resource model, Luke and Freebody (1999) and Freebody and Luke (2003) described what is entailed in reading processes, which have contributed to our understanding of the NLT. According to Luke and Freebody (1999) and Freebody and Luke (1990, 2003), there are four families of practice that should be considered in relation to how students approach text. The first family is code breaking. Here, students are taught to recognise the text in terms of its architecture and features, such as sound, patterns, conventions, alphabet and spelling. The second family of practice entails meaning making in which learners are encouraged to participate in learning through communicative language approach, in order to compose meaningful and well written, spoken and visual texts.

The third family of practice is text use where learners are given the opportunity to become conversant with what is happening around them, including social contexts outside school and the changing technology. Text use includes skills that are involved in the text level. For example, if a book is factual, the reading that is involved for information is going to be a focus. On the other hand, if the text is in the form of fiction, then the aim of the reader is to understand the plot and characters of the text (Luke & Freebody, 1999). As a text user, readers decide on the genre or the form in which the text has been written and the manner in which they are going to read it. Additionally, in the case of text use, a teacher's input is still needed to ensure that no problems have arisen. The teacher can prepare the reader to read different types of texts through talking about the form of the book and the manner in which it

has been organised. The teacher will assist the user of the text to differentiate whether the text is fiction or factual. The user is also assisted to understand the manner in which he/she is going to read the book. Additionally, users will be able to identify what the illustrations in the text represent (Cope, 2000).

The fourth family of practice entails text critique. This is concerned with readers/viewers who are able to learn and interpret texts from different perspectives, including the ability to think critically about the information presented, and understand that texts are not neutral as they present particular views about the world (Freebody & Luke, 1990, 2003; Luke & Freebody, 1999). In their capacity as text analysts, readers go beyond reading to obtain accuracy and truth. As beginners, readers have the capacity to act as analysts through the exploration of how the text impacts them. There is also the consideration of the manner in which this can affect the message that has been delivered by the text. This explores the intention and aim of the author, as well as the motivating factor behind a specific work. The text analyst discusses the decisions about the format of the book and the way in which it was designed and presented to be interpreted by the reader. In addition, the text analyst checks for cultural and social fairness with regard to a specific work that has been written (Luke & Freebody). Therefore, there are questions that the text analyst needs to ask regarding the neutrality of the message that the author aims to put across to the reader. There are also questions regarding the author's perspective and motivations for writing about the topic.

In Arabic literary pedagogy, the focus on the traditional curriculum may have centred on the first family of practice, code breaking. As for the contemporary curriculum, it

focuses on teaching students by focusing on meaningful purposes as meaning making practice (second family of practice). The third family of practice is text use that is relevant to the Saudi child. Society's passion for technology in Saudi Arabia exceeds that of other Arab societies. Mobile devices are widely available, even to children. This may be a result of the society's financial state, which allows people to purchase devices for most members of their families.

The latest Saudi Communications and Information Technology Commission reports indicate that there were approximately 50 million subscriptions to mobile communications services in Saudi Arabia at the end of the first quarter of 2014, and the penetration rate had reached 165% of the population. Likewise, the number of the Internet users in Saudi Arabia had reached 16 million. This means that most age groups in the society, including children, use the Internet. The latest Global Web Index report indicates that Saudi Arabia is the fastest growing market for Twitter, and that the Saudi ratio of active Twitter accounts to total Twitter accounts is higher than for any other nation (Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, 2014). El-Ad Social Networking Consultants point out that there are over three million Twitter users in Saudi Arabia who publish more than three million tweets per day. Meanwhile, six million *Facebook* users in Saudi Arabia are among the heaviest users of YouTube (F. Khan, 2014). Also, the heavy demand for iPhone and Samsung devices has prompted Apple and Samsung to open up major stores in Saudi Arabia. The large consumer market extends to mobile phones and tablet devices, such as iPads and other tablets.

Such technology can provide help in the education field. For example, video conferences and Internet discussions can be held between classes. Digital technology can also be used to support activities for communicative approaches and the NLT. For example, Apple offers an app called ‘Social Stories’, a program that presents various stories to teach children about societal matters, such as buying goods from the supermarket, going to the barber, going to the hospital, and other activities. Similar programs help to strengthen the contemporary concept of literacy by providing students with skills that enable them to become active members of society.

3.2 Literacy as a social practice

Street (1995) proposes that students interact with teachers in social action, which is one aspect of literacy as a social practice. In other words, from the beginning the environment for learning needs to be based on literacy in a social manner. In the view of Street (2000, 2008), attention should be placed on literacy as a social practice rather than on the acquisition of skills. In fact, teachers need to be more active with their students in term of participation. Student participation in activities is very important for learning outcomes. Put simply, the individual learner acquires literacy in order to communicate with others. Accordingly, the most important purpose of literacy is to promote communication to ensure better involvement in the community. In these days, people who are considered illiterate, according to the traditional definition of literacy, are using mobile phones and other devices.

There are also apps that help users develop specific skills such as listening, analysis, execution and thinking. For example, an app called ‘Cultivating Children’ helps parents teach their children everyday conduct. The program uses fun, lively, real-life

scenes in addition to real voices. This introduces children to these behaviours in a fun and interesting way. As mentioned earlier, contemporary literacy education aims to prepare children to be active members of society who can participate in all aspects of society in a positive way. Contemporary literacy education achieves this by preparing children from an early age. Another children's app allows children to learn about transportation approaches, presenting most of these by way of an interesting and semi-realistic cartoon. The app is full of excitement, thrills and real-life sound effects that help make children more interested in education and study. In turn, this app helps develop children's knowledge while they enjoy playing with it.

With the aforementioned programs, students can learn visual, motor and listening skills in addition to other skills. The above are Arabic-language apps for smart phones and tablets, which are relevant to contemporary literacy. However, a number of apps still revolve around the old concept of literacy. While they do include audio and visual stimulation, their focus remains centred on memorising the alphabet and vocabulary.

Under the old concept of literacy, high-tech devices used in teaching become little more than old tools for literacy instruction. It is important to use technology in a manner that is consistent with the contemporary concept of literacy. Technology can be used in programs that help children acquire knowledge, skills and experiences that will help them in daily life.

Moreover, language curricula and their pedagogies have developed over the last 50 years due to increased interest in bi/multilingualism, which has arisen because of bi/multilingualism's mental, social, cultural and economic benefits (Heller, 2005).

It has become common for children, including pre-schoolers, to use iPads (Henderson & Yeow, 2012). Children use these devices to play games, surf the Internet and watch YouTube. This is in addition to other uses that adults may not be familiar with and which involve reading and writing skills, for example, applications that help children form words and connect images, words and letters. This can strengthen many skills related to the contemporary concept of literacy (Luke, 2003).

In order to ensure technological success, curricula require that devices and capabilities be present inside the classroom or school. Examples of technologies and capabilities include electronic whiteboards and classroom teaching aids that can help with the learning process and student-teacher interactions. Teacher professional development and the use of these technologies are among the most prominent issues (explored in Chapters 6 & 7). Professional development is very important for educators, especially in today's environment where knowledge is advancing and growing at an accelerated rate, particularly in the fields of technology and education. For example, it is important for teachers to be familiar with new developments instructional approaches in education, as well as new technologies and programs that are used in instruction.

As mentioned earlier, iPads and other devices are widely used in Saudi homes. Of importance is the fact that these devices can be used for education. Children love

playing with games and appealing apps on their parents' smart devices, searching for their favourite video clips and talking with relatives and friends via chat apps. They also enjoy speaking with others and discussing different topics that may not be addressed by their family at home. Apps and programs can also be beneficial in a number of educational situations in schools, thus saving time, effort and money. For example, instead of taking a class on a field trip to a factory, the class can communicate via a program that lets students view the factory and all its sections and machines on a device. They can also speak with someone at the factory who answers students' questions through a telecommunications app such as Skype.

It is widely acknowledged that the use of critical pedagogical methods leads to more collaboration between students, teachers and the community at large (Salika, 2014). Critical pedagogy attempts to build on what learners already know by making opportunities available for them to display their understanding of the actual world. Instructional frameworks that promote critical literacy position students as active participants on their own learning. Critical literacy is not just about learning to read and write, and validating students' experiences, it is also about drawing from their lived experiences and helping them use the tools of literacy to transform society (Bishop, 2014).

3.3 Contemporary views of literacy

Luke, Dooley and Woods (2011) argue that literacy involves closely engaging students in a context that exposes them to a community's knowledge and institutions. That is, exposing students to how literacy works in social institutions and everyday life, and motivating them to engage in substantive intellectual fields is considered

more important than merely focusing on literacy skills. Another study by Luke and Dooley (2011) point out that critical literacy uses texts to help address injustices and inequalities related to social, economic and cultural powers. The main aim is to move literacy from a basic understanding of literary skills to a higher order alteration of knowledge structures and social relations that exist in contemporary society.

The points above are largely supported by Luke (2008) who modelled a pedagogical economy in which literacy education is taken as a cultural gift. According to Luke (2008), there is a need to exercise discipline in literary pedagogy, students and literacy so that these entities become accountable, quantifiable and countable. The principal purpose of doing so is to reframe literacy instruction as a construct of the traditional cultural exchange that encompasses reciprocal gifts. Therefore, there is a need to re-culture literacy instructions so that readers and writers are actively involved as members of a cultural community.

3.4 Critical literacy and critical pedagogy

The goal of critical pedagogy is to develop society via education (Apple, 2012). Freire used it to eradicate illiteracy in Brazil (1987) and Giroux used it to create more equal societies (2011). Critical thinking develops society by providing the tools people need for self-development. Those intellectuals and critics used various philosophies and theories to form critical thought in light of society's philosophy and ideologies, such as Freire's neo-Marxism and anti-colonialism and Apple's critique of neoliberalism and imperialism that influenced Giroux.

Albright (2001) argues that all forms of literacies, including critical literacy, should be used for transforming capital, systems of exchange and social fields for learners. Using a Bourdieusian stance, the scholar creates awareness of the peculiar economy of texts, as well as textual practices that circulate in disciplinary fields. Albright (2001) reiterates the importance of equipping learners with the skills of interpreting, explaining and describing texts. Therefore, literacy is not just about knowing how to read and write, but knowledge passed on to learners should be of social and economic benefit.

According to Luke (2000) and Luke et al. (2011), critical literacy refers to the use of texts in analysis and transformation of relationships, social, political and cultural power. Critical literacy aims at addressing economic, social and political inequalities and injustices. Education stakeholders in the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) have developed and adopted several critical literacy pedagogical approaches (Luke et al., 2011). Such pedagogic approaches argue that language learning and teaching is an act of political and cultural power with social responsibilities and consequences, as well as substantive material for learners and their communities (Luke et al., 2011). The normative premise of the authors' work is that the *telos* of literacy is the will towards equality, freedom and emancipation (Luke et al, 2011). In their view, critical literacy approaches perceive texts in print, multimodal digital and paper-based, as well as their discourses and codes as human technologies meant for reshaping and representing possible worlds.

According to Ong (2013), in a primarily oral culture, thought and expression will always be additive rather than subordinate. In this regard, one thought or expression

will be seen as additive to the earlier expression or thought. Since Islam has had Classic Arabic as its language, it is evident that Arabic language dialects will have more elaborate and fixed grammar to provide linguistic structures that can produce propositions that can be elaborated by subordinate propositions. Ong also notes that in a traditionally oral society, the language will tend to be more aggregative rather than analytic. Oral language tends to include tiresome and cumbersome epithets because of its lack of formulary elements, such as integers, parallel phrases or clauses for analytic purposes (Carter & MacCarthy, 2014). In some cases, oral propositions can be redundant, especially if the orator repeats him/herself. The primary oral culture has a language that is traditionalist or conservative. In the Islamic context, there are those aspects of the Classic Arabic that cannot be changed or innovated (Horwitz, 2012). The verses of the Holy Qur'an cannot be innovated or changed, and must remain in the first language in which they were written. The other aspect of Arabic literature, as already mentioned in the case of MSA, is that it can undergo innovations. As already noted, in the Arabic language, classical language has been close to human life worlds, as one has to memorise the Qur'an verses as they are. However, modernised language is experiencing many abstractions through vehicles of technologies, media and social political events (Ong, 2013).

3.5 The Internet and literacy

Leu and Kinzer (2000) argue that the Internet is now entering classrooms in the form of knowledge that allows students to benefit from Internet technologies. One important component of the source of information made available through the Internet is electronic text as the means through which communications occurs. It has been assumed by several scholars such as Street (2000) that the features and

characteristics of these texts redefine literacy, as well as provide new approaches to giving advice. Street (2001) states that forms and patterns of digital expression are increasingly replacing the shapes and patterns of the printed text. More arguably, the author asserts that there is unanimous agreement in this regard, and that the consequences of this digital transformation and the outcome of the way we exchange and publish information widely, and the approach we take towards the task of teaching literacy, are now visible.

Nowadays, the Internet has increasingly become a resource that both learners and teachers turn to first (Adams & Hamm, 2006). The Internet is quickly reshaping how students learn and is redefining literacy as well. In addition, the Internet has changed the way people communicate. Adams and Hamm (2006) note that the Internet provides students with opportunities for interactive storytelling and allows students to take control, communicate and observe phenomena that would otherwise remain unobservable. Thus, viewing literacy as a social practice allows an individual to see literacy as linked to many other things.

In a number of societies, there is debate about books and their role in this age of accelerating technological advancements, as well as whether e-books and devices have replaced books (Jeong, 2012). There is concern about this topic in Arab societies, and this fuels the fear of those who support the old concept of reading and a focus on reading and writing skills in elementary school classes. This may be an international phenomenon, but in the past, many people read magazines, newspapers, books and stories in their leisure time. Now, things have changed and hand-held devices have, in many cases, replaced books and other materials. In the past,

information was limited to the number of pages in a book that people would hold in their hands. But now hundreds, or even thousands, of pages from a book can be downloaded to a device, and information can be accessed quickly with the press of a button. Moreover, these devices can also hold audio books from the Internet, which can be used for viewing and used in lectures globally.

3.6 Arabic literacy pedagogy that draws on contemporary theory

The contemporary curriculum focuses on skills that include listening and speaking, which are neglected by the traditional curriculum. Also, it focuses on other literacy skills, such as reading, writing, creating, viewing and visualising. Primarily, communicative language teaching (CLT) refers to a meaning-based, student-centred approach to language teaching where an emphasis is placed on the communicative role of language (Sadoughvanini & Shamsudin, 2013). Therefore, language is considered a means to social interaction and a vehicle to interpersonal communion by members of society. From this perspective, language learning is largely understood as communication is driven and socially shaped. This research aims to investigate how CLT, as an approach to teaching Arabic, depends on the understanding of language in its various forms, such as social and cultural aspects. The contemporary curriculum provides students with critical thinking, such as activities based on the visual mode and viewing, use of technology with CDs, DVDs and other skills based on listening, and speaking.

One obstacle that Arabic literacy instruction faces is the reliance on partial and synthetic approaches for teaching literacy *هجاء Hija* [Alphabet] where the student

enters school in Year 1 and begins learning the alphabet before moving on to words. The comprehensive approach was introduced later, relying on teaching words followed by deconstructing them into letters. However, many studies indicate that teaching literacy with traditional approaches slows the process of learning, reading and writing for the Arabic language learner (Saiegh-Haddad & Joshi, 2014). Ibrahim (2013) indicated that there is another obstacle, that is, the difference between the spoken and written languages, in particular, differences that go beyond the simple arrangement of words and learning the vocalisation of letters, as is the case in many European languages. Rather, they include differences related to sentence structure and grammar, as the colloquial language differs from standard Arabic in many of its language structures.

The contemporary curriculum contains numerous contemporary educational curricula. For example, it encourages a student-centred, rather than a teacher-centred approach. The contemporary curriculum also contains e-curriculum and focuses on developing educational skills and building student knowledge instead of relying on memorisation and rote repetition. Likewise, the contemporary curriculum gives students a different perspective from the traditional curriculum by better connecting them to society and its problems.

This study therefore draws on connectivism theory which presents a concept of information being presented via complex networks that enable the educational process to occur. Because this study researches contemporary literacy in the contemporary curriculum for communicative purposes, it emphasises the importance of experiences for students in their daily lives. Moreover, in connectivism theory,

technology plays a large role in the educational process. For example, in this study, technology helps strengthen the process of teaching the Arabic language for communicative purposes.

3.7 Connectivism learning theory

This section will include details about connectivism theory as a new theory of instruction for the current digital age, as many researchers believe this theory is appropriate for today's technology. It has been used in this study because technology has made the concept behind the NLT develop in a contemporary. Likewise, the concept of literacy in the Arabic language must keep up with the global and contemporary concepts of literacy, which is based on a better understanding of social and communicative practices. Here, connectivism theory provides a deeper understanding of education and how it occurs within external networks that surround students. It also addresses the role of technology in the educational process manner.

Connectivism learning theory is one of the learning theories that emerged in this increasingly digital era of computers and networking. In today's world, as contrasted to a few decades ago, people are more able to interact with, and gain influence from, each other. In this theory, each individual is seen as a node, which makes up a network of people within which learning can take place (Duke, Harper & Johnson, 2013). The theory is based on an assumption of the learning process taking place in a social environment that is networked (Duke, et al., 2013; Kop & Hill, 2008). It was observed that in such an environment, knowledge is distributed across a network of connections and as a result, learning consists of the 'ability to construct' and traverse those networks (Downes, 2007; Siemens, 2006, 2008).

As previously discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, among the biggest issues for the contemporary curriculum were the fragmented curriculum and the insistence on using the traditional concept of literacy. And as mentioned earlier, the old curriculum for teaching Arabic is based on the fragmented curriculum, which relies on grammar, writing, reading and spelling for language acquisition and literacy learning. Therefore, it is important to present the reality of language and literacy instruction in order to determine where it stands in relation to contemporary literacy. It is also important to find appropriate ways to keep up with the contemporary concept of literacy. For example, Cruickshank (2008) believes that Arabic teaching and literacy instruction must keep pace with the needs of contemporary society and move beyond the past.

3.7.1 Connectivism theory and technology

Siemens and Tittenberger (2009) note that, in the present day, technology supports the principles of connectivism theory by enabling active participation in the learning process (as opposed to the process being only a manner for conveying information). Likewise, Siemens (2006) argues that previous theories of learning, such as behaviourism, cognitivism and constructivism theories, fail to identify the impact of technological, societal and economic changes on society (Diagram 3-1). Learning no longer happens solely from within, as it did in the past. Rather, it happens from outside. Similarly, learning is distributed across groups, networks and societies, therefore, no longer remaining with the individual only.

Connectivism theory provides an explanation about learning which emphasises the role of social and cultural context (Siemens, 2005). Connectivism is the integration

of principles explored by chaos, network, complexity and self-organisation theories. Learning (defined as ‘actionable knowledge’) can reside outside of ourselves (within an organisation or a database) and is focused on connecting specialised information sets, and the connections that enable us to learn more are more important than our current state of knowing.

3.7.2 Difference between connectivism and connective knowledge

It is difficult to distinguish between connectivism and connective knowledge as two distinctive concepts. In essence, they all lead to one and the same thing. This is because individuals, who are interacting and growing in knowledge, create knowledge that none of them owns but which helps them grow in their areas of interest (Downes, 2005; Siemens, 2005). Unshared knowledge has little value. This is where connectivism and connected knowledge are related to each other. Those individuals who participate in an interaction can be seen as a node making up the larger network. Thus, they actively interact with each other to create the collective knowledge out of which they can all derive value and develop as they influence each other in the process (Ashley, 2013). Therefore, connectivism is the process of an individual participating and being impacted in a learning interaction with others. In this process, collective knowledge, which is dynamic in character, is created. It is dynamic because any new dimension being offered is likely to create new insights for each other.

3.7.3 New literacy theory and connectivism theory

Connectivism theory of learning is unique because unlike behaviourism, constructivism and cognitivism theories, it was formulated in a period when learning

was largely influenced by the use of information technology (IT) (Starkey, 2012). Connectivism is a reflection of a rapidly changing society that is becoming increasingly complex, global, connected socially and moderated by advancements in technology (Duke, et al., 2013). The main idea in connectivism theory of learning is its continual expansion of knowledge as new and novel connections open up new interpretations and understanding to create new knowledge. Similarly, the development of NLT accounts for continuous changes taking place in literacy and the growing multiplicity of perspectives that are emerging. The NLT is based on the theoretical foundations of a critical literacies perspective, a socially situated constructivist framework and a transactional stance (Leu, Kenzer, Coiro & Cammack, 2004).

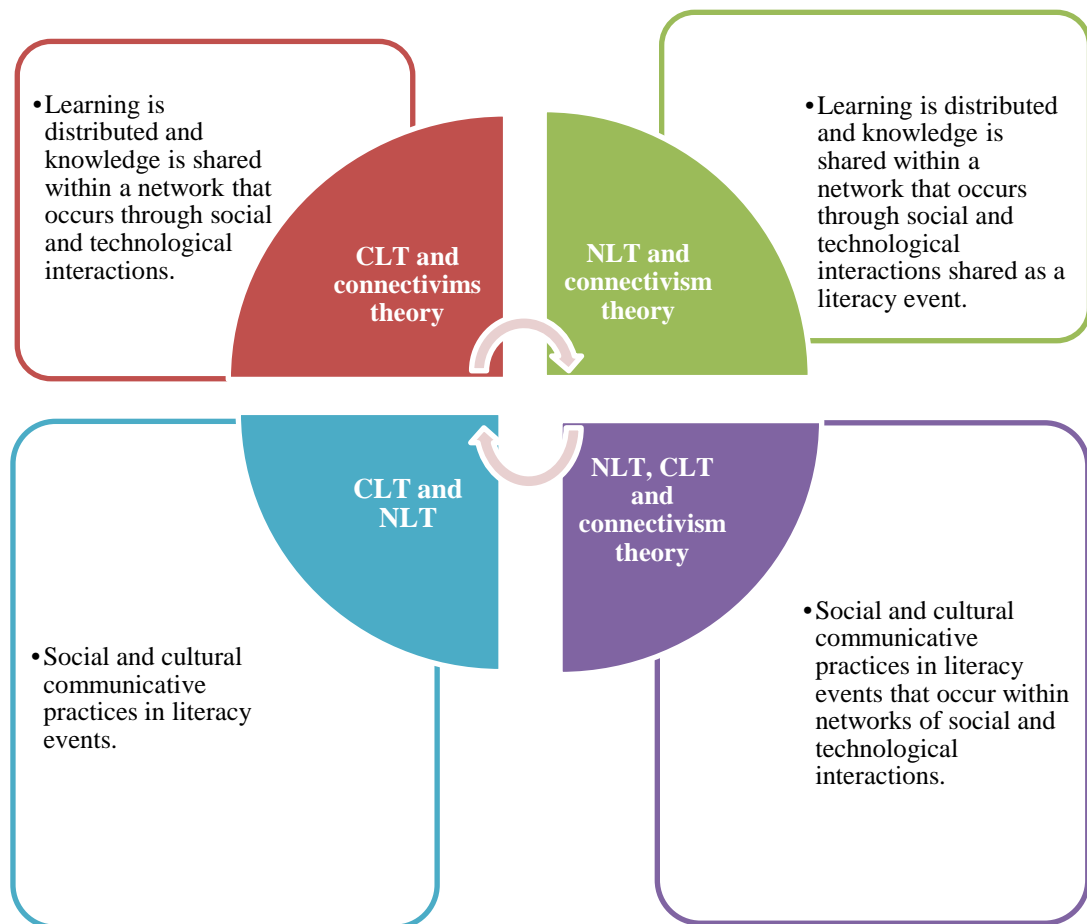
In connectivism, learning is distributed within a network and occurs through social and technological interaction (Siemens, 2006). According to Duke, et al. (2013), networks allow students to gain a viewpoint and diversity of opinion for crucial decision-making. Taking into account that learners cannot experience everything, connectivism allows them to share and learn through collaboration. The theory presents learning as a process and a substance. As a substance, learning relies on diversity that may exist outside of the individual and as a process; Siemens states that 'learning is no longer an internal individualistic activity' (2005, p. 5).

3.7.4 Relevance of connectivism to communicative language teaching and the new literacy theory

CLT approaches enable learners to use a particular language in real life situations. With connectivism, learning rests in the capabilities of forming connections to other

networks. Learners as well as other information sources and the ability to create information patterns that are useful are of paramount importance (Siemens, 2005). Thus, one major component that is critical to connectivism and CLT approaches is social interaction (Diagram 3-1). Social interaction among learners promotes acquisition of language, as well as communication through active negotiation of meaning and semantics (Myles & Marsden, 2013). Moreover, negotiations that take place during interactions enable learners to acquire effective communication skills.

Diagram 3-1 Relationship between NLT, CLT and connectivism theory



In communicative language teaching and connectivism theory, there is a distribution of learning and a sharing of knowledge within a network that occurs through technological and social interactions. This leads to NLT and connectivism theory where learning distribution and knowledge sharing networks happen through technological and social interactions that are shared as literacy events. Here social and cultural communicative practices in literacy events happen within networks of social and technological interactions. Finally, CLT and NLT occurs. This involves social and cultural communicative practices in literacy events. This forms a cycle, as illustrated in Diagram 3-1, that indicates how three distinct theoretical perspectives are used to map the way CLT, NLT and connectivism have been used in combination to inform this study.

The contemporary curriculum presents a number of contemporary curricula and pedagogical approaches in order to develop a contemporary concept of education in Saudi Arabia. This can progress education from the traditional to up-to-date concept, such as student-based curricula and e-curricula. Innovation, modernisation and modernity are all terms that are harmonious with the connectivism theory. Likewise, the contemporary curriculum strives to connect students with their external surroundings and make education more comprehensive so it can extend beyond their surroundings. This is the opposite to the traditional curriculum, as the learning process is centred on the student so he/she can be a vessel for knowledge and the outcome is a fragmentation of knowledge, rather than knowledge connection. This contemporary concept of education presented by connectivism theory reinforces communicative approaches to Arabic language instruction, which work via external networks that help educators use when teaching social and communicative practices.

There are points of intersection between connectivism theory, which delivers education via external networks and the NLT that emphasises the role of social and communicative practices. As mentioned earlier, technology plays a large role in the educational process because it has fundamentally changed the way we think and communicate with each other.

As Table 3.1 indicates, this process begins with communicative activities, discussion and dialogue that takes place via forms of media that facilitate these activities, including messages and video conferences (or web conferences). In order for these activities to be successful and actively support education, people must learn how to use these tools. It is therefore possible to learn how to use different technologies inside and outside the classroom. YouTube can be used to teach language in an educational way. For example, videos are prepared in advance (inside and outside the classroom) to present examples for discussions or develop communication skills (Dooley, 2009).

Table 3-1 Learning activities matched to ‘sense making and knowledge expansion’ tools.

Type of activity	Media forms	Techniques (how)	Technologies	Tools
Communicative discussion and dialogue	Asynchronous or synchronous discussions; chats; text messages	Reasoning; arguing; coaching; debating; discussing; negotiating	Electronic whiteboards; Email; Discussion boards; Chat; (VoIP); Video and Web-conferencing; Web 2.0 and other social software technologies	Skype; <i>Facebook</i> ; MySpace; Social blogs; Wikis; Podcasts

(Adapted from Siemens & Tittenberger, 2009, pp. 32-33)

Millions of videos are uploaded on YouTube for informational purposes, such as how to format your laptop, and advice about health, sports and language learning. Videos also develop students' skills, for example, a video of a person travelling from Medina to Riyadh who encounters a number of real-life airport situations, from airport procedures to arriving in Riyadh. In the video, the traveller uses expressions and skills that are useful for students to learn.

When children watch video clips on YouTube, a number of skills can be developed. These are not limited to viewing and listening skills, but rather include skills such as quickly reading what is written, and discussing and commenting on the video's contents. Children can even develop literacy skills by watching entertaining video clips that include songs, images, sounds and shapes that are appealing. For example, one video for teaching colours on YouTube has received more than 231 million views.

On the other hand, Apple (1991) asserts that the computerisation of schools will have the same deskilling and depowering effects on teachers. A lack of technical proficiency will reduce autonomy, because without the technical knowledge to work around it, teachers will become reliant on pre-packaged software for curriculum planning, teaching and evaluation practices. As a result, their skills and practices will atrophy. Apple sees the expense of implementing technology into schools as having two effects, neither one being beneficial to the majority of students. Apple assumes that funding for technology will come at the expense of sacrificing existing school programs, especially educative YouTube videos. However, as social media websites, such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter gain popularity, they are becoming

increasingly dangerous as they create a reason for students to procrastinate when they should be completing their homework.

Technology rapidly and continuously grows as technology advances. New social practices for literacy also emerge. Mohamed (2013) reiterates that orientation towards the new evolving literacies is largely psycholinguistic. It is also important to consider the social and cultural orientations of new literacies as they are practised and utilised across diverse contexts. Irrespective of the orientation taken, it is imperative to prepare learners to use the right media forms, techniques, technologies and tools to improve their communication in the dynamic world. Learners should be able to argue, reason, debate, discuss and negotiate well using the available communication media in a manner that takes note of their settings and audience (Mohamed, 2013).

Cruickshank (2008) argues that what is considered as language in English and Arabic is differentiated by complex set of reasons: Cultural, socio-linguistic and ideological. This is because teachers and students carry personal experiences which are embedded in cultural, social and socio-linguistic ideologies. Essentially, language and literacy learning is a cultural and social process. For example, as Myles and Marsden (2013) reveal, in the early stages of learning, children are taught language through meaning-making processes in collaborative activities with other people of a certain culture. Similarly, learners of language have the opportunity to formulate new ways of meaning-making through collaborative activities with other learners speaking the target language. This argument is in line with Cruickshank's (2008) findings: cultural, historical and social factors are often perceived and constructed in

classroom exercises which become open to negotiation, challenge and exploration. In short, students' opportunities to learn language in classrooms and their following success are closely connected with how language is utilised as a tool for learning.

3.7.5 Curriculum theory and curriculum development and change

As suggested by Glatthorn, F. A. Boschee, Whitehead and B. F. Boschee (2012), no society can refuse the demand for change in the curriculum and education system in response to the current changes in the world. In their book, the authors suggest that curriculum change is a necessary response to the needs of the connected classrooms in the globalised world. According to the authors, contemporary society has, to a great extent, been affected by technology. Technological developments have changed the way people think, act, learn and live. Information communication technologies have altered the way people view and perceive the world around them and how knowledge is constructed, reconstructed and shared. These technological advancements have eradicated the limitation of time and place. Just like many other elements of education, the curriculum has to keep pace with these developments. Creative and up-to-date curriculum strategies, approaches and ideas are required to remain at par with changes in the modern world. Technology is changing at a high rate, resulting in the need for the curriculum to keep up with changes so that it remains relevant.

In a research work concentrating on the study of the Arabic community in Australia, Cruickshank noted that the Australian government played a role in slowing down the language acquisition of languages other than English by ignoring the vast lingual resources available. While teachers support the introduction of teaching other idioms

in addition to English, there is a feeling that the curriculum is too crowded for learning languages other than English (Cruickshank, 2006). Cruickshank (2006) believes that literacy acquisition is subject to language. The learning of other languages in Australian schools will not slow down the process of learning other curriculum subjects. He notes that an uptake or non-uptake of languages transforms outcomes of informing policies and program. Some teachers feel a need to incorporate the learning of other languages into the Australian syllabus, enhance understanding and tolerance, develop global citizens and promote intercultural skills (Cruickshank, 2006).

Ideologies play an important role in the curriculum because it informs the way schools ought to teach (Apple, 2004). In Saudi Arabia, apart from technology, ideology is another important factor that has necessitated changes in the curriculum in Saudi Arabia, as explained in aspects such as culture, society and religion. Weis, McCarthy and Dimitriadis (2006) suggested the need to match the curriculum to ideologies or philosophies that are inherent in society. Looking from the viewpoint of Islamic countries, such as Saudi Arabia, ideology continues to play an important role in influencing the education system of the country. Commitment to values and beliefs inherent in Islam has remained the basis for the education system in the country. While proposed reforms are suggested to address problems with the rote manner of teaching religion, the practice may not change.

The emphasis of the ideology is to teach the religion in Classical Arabic to native Arab students in order to understand the religion. The focus will remain on the value system of the society (Apple, 2004). It remains important that students in the country

continue to learn values such as obedience, forgiveness, care, respect and truthfulness among others. Education in the country, regardless of the changes, should remain in such a way that it caters for the development of humans in all areas: intellectual, spiritual, imaginative, scientific, physical, linguistic, individually and collectively (Kohli, 2002). Therefore, it is suggested that the curriculum will remain related to the ideology and the aim of education will remain so that it offers an environment that makes it possible for the learner to develop the important ideals and gain education that is aimed towards this end.

Explaining the need for change in the Saudi Arabian curriculum, policy makers have suggested the need to align the education system in the country to global needs of the networked world. The challenges that are facing youth in the modern globalised world are based on the need to adapt, according to experts in the country. Glatthorn, et al. (2012) suggest that the developments that are taking place in the modern era should be taken into consideration in the updated curriculum. During the modern era of economic, as well as technological development, competitiveness and proliferation of information, the current change is relevant.

3.7.6 Curriculum change, ideology and critical pedagogy

As previously discussed, critical literacy and critical pedagogy are two most important helpful ways to improving education, in particular curricula (Albright, 2001; Luke & Dooley 2011; Luke, 2000). Criticism helps identify the changes society wants, as well as society's expectations with regards to education (Pavan, 2013). In this study, disagreements may emerge regarding critical pedagogy and critical literacy. As Chapter 2 explains, with regard to the differences between

Islamic and Western ideologies, the West ascribes to a number of theories that immerse students in society and its issues. For example, capitalism, socialism, liberalism and neoliberalism present abstract ideals from which critical pedagogy and critical literacy can take place in these societies. In contrast, in Islamic societies, criticism of education begins from an Islamic perspective and is connected to society with Islamic concepts for relationships in society and individuals' relationships with society.

Because Arabic is the official language for public education, all criticism about education and literacy takes place in Arabic. The curricula and pedagogical approaches through which Arabic is taught have a strong influence on criticism about education and literacy, and therefore, on society's development. By keeping up with contemporary concepts, the Arabic language curricula helps develop critical pedagogy.

The literacy initiatives in Saudi Arabia hint at a great developed future that will progress towards the contemporary concept of literacy. As mentioned previously, society is affected by new technology and greater availability of knowledge about the outside world. This contrasts with the situation in the past when knowledge of, and access to, a number of theories and ideas that were banned under the pretext that they violated society's ideology were limited. The widespread availability of technology in Saudi Arabia and its ease of access has made it easier to explore various cultures, ideas and ideologies. These technologies also helped individuals express their ideas and views freely and without restraint. In the past, criticisms of a number of social behaviours were banned, for example, it was difficult to direct criticism towards the

conservative movement and politicians, because the official media had full control over what was expressed. After political changes that took place in the last two decades, however, the nation's views have changed. The country has become open to criticism and individual freedom has increased.

After relying on oil for many years as the main resource for the nation's economy, and because of a number of regional and international factors, Saudi Arabia has changed its strategy. Instead of totally relying on oil, it intends to transition to a knowledge economy. Knowledge economies are based on three principal elements: (i) expand on development, production and innovation; (ii) redirect education and curricula to keep pace with contemporary literacy and technology; and (iii) develop IT infrastructure to ensure that communicating, conveying and distributing information meets the demands of the nation's society. This is an important point; it must meet the demands of domestic society as societal needs change. What is important for one society may be less significant for another.

As noted earlier, technology has significantly changed the concept of literacy. Children learn many things outside of school, and these are often related to technology. Children learn how to use iPads, computers, televisions and computer games. In contrast, in the past, there were no means for learning outside school and people interacted with each other differently. Technology has changed the way they communicate. For example, family members and classmates now form WhatsApp groups. In these groups, people communicate and discuss various topics, and exchange audio clips, images and videos. This technology brings people together and

makes communication easier, even if people are far apart from each other (i.e. in different cities or nations).

One of the most important stages in curriculum development is when teacher capability and preparation for a new curriculum are determined. Of equal importance are teacher expectations, desires and ability to implement a curriculum in accordance with the teacher's present capabilities and his/her ability to carry out the new curriculum. Additionally, the tools available to teachers in schools and infrastructure necessary to implement the new curriculum are important.

3.7.7 Educators' role in curriculum development and change

Educators play an important role in the development and implementation of a new curriculum. The change has focused on the idea that teachers are not the sole source of information for learners. There has been a major change in the old image of the teacher in the classroom which has led to adopting a new role of the teacher in the development and implementation of the new curriculum, that is, the teacher is the facilitator of the learning process. Thus, the role of students in the process has become more pronounced as they take part in more collaborative learning where textbooks are one of the sources of knowledge, along with additional sources being introduced (Al Shannag, Tairab, Dodeen & Abdel-Fattah, 2013).

Effective development and implementation of the new curriculum depend on ownership consensus among important holders within the education system. The new curriculum cannot be effectively implemented without rethinking the role of the educators (teachers and school leaders) because the role they play will determine the

success or failure of the reform. Teachers and leaders in primary schools will have an important role in curriculum design and development, measurement and evaluation. Planning for improvement and change in a school will start by identifying the vision and objectives, working towards their achievement and inducing commitment and enthusiasm. The next step is to identify the changes required, whether to take place immediately or necessary later. This means coming up with a suitable plan of action. Supervision is required in the entire process to ensure that procedures are implemented correctly.

Teachers and school leaders are not simply overseers of the teaching and learning process, but can be active participants. They may be aware of what is happening in terms of the proposed reforms and the programs are important at the institutional level to enforce change. Being involved in the curriculum and successfully implementing curriculum change at the school level will bring about relevant and contemporary pedagogy. The development effective teaching strategies and approaches are important because some of the previous approaches and strategies may not work well with the new curriculum. A strong understanding of the philosophies, knowledge area, division, sources of the curriculum and differences and its evaluation and improvement will enhance effective implementation of a new curriculum. Conventionally, the role of the school leader includes curriculum management but not involvement in its design and development. For the success of any new curriculum, the roles of the teacher and leader include deeper and broader involvement in all the instruments of teaching and learning such as a curriculum (Palaiologou, 2013).

The development of a curriculum begins with successful implementation of curriculum change, however, the role of teachers and education leaders in the teaching and learning process extends beyond its development. Once a curriculum is developed, teachers and education leaders need to ensure that it is effectively and adequately implemented in the teaching and learning process (in the pedagogy). A good curriculum is very crucial to the teaching and learning process, but only when it is implemented effectively. Educational leaders, in collaboration with teachers, take the responsibility of ensuring there are standards for measuring the performance of students. Teachers have the responsibility of developing the standards so that learners gain the skills and acquire the knowledge required for academic achievement. This is an effective way to determine what works and whether changes to the curriculum and teaching strategies are required (Al Shannag, et al., 2013).

3.7.8 Communicative approaches in the contemporary curriculum

In Saudi Arabia, there is a traditional preference for process oriented theories which emphasise 'habit formation, induction, inferencing, hypothesis testing and generalisation' (J. C. Richards & Rogers, 2001, p. 22). The communicative approaches, on the other hand, place more emphasis on the context of language and its function (Breen & Candlin, 1980). In the communicative approaches, teachers have to engineer a so-called 'information gap' (Harmer, 2001, p. 70) which requires students to use an additional language in order to complete specific tasks. In effect, this sets up goals for students in the classroom that differ from rote learning or drill repetitions. Pair work and group work are therefore encouraged, and related approaches such as task-based learning can also be used to complement the communicative approaches (Harmer, 2001, pp. 71-73). Further barriers to reform

exist in Saudi Arabia, such as the failure to allow teachers sufficient freedom in using authentic materials, and the passive response of learners who complete routine exercises that are focused on examination rather than skill (I.A. Khan, 2011).

It is important that any new curriculum is relevant to the social and cultural context since problems can arise when newly introduced materials or approaches are unfamiliar to teachers who have to use them. In Saudi Arabia, comprehensive reforms to the teaching of Arabic language curriculum have been introduced (Arabic Curriculum Document, 2007). But there is still inconsistency in the approaches used to deliver them. Higher level English is often taught by expatriate teachers through communicative approaches while the primary and lower secondary levels are taught by local Arabic speaking teachers who struggle with this approach. Therefore, a fundamental lack of consistency in the theoretical training that teachers have and a huge gap between early and later learning styles is problematic (Syed, 2003). A need for better initial teacher education training in Saudi Arabia is recognised, along with practising teachers to be updated in areas like IT and communicative teaching approaches (Al-Hazmi, 2003).

As mentioned earlier, these theories could cause much debate in Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, familiarity with them and what they aim to achieve (including their ideas and values) are helpful, and even necessary, in developing critical pedagogy in Saudi Arabia. Next, everything that conforms to the society's ideology and values should be extracted from them for use in Saudi Arabia. These theories include a number of concepts regarding freedom, social justice and equality. Society is calling for discussion on these concepts, and they are present in Islamic thought today.

Keeping up with modern philosophies reinforces them, however, conservative believers completely reject everything in these Western theories, which causes a problem. They believe they violate Islam without even familiarising themselves with the content and essence of these Western theories.

Critical literacy grew out of textual criticism and progressed to include disapproval of new modes of literacy and means of expression, such as television, films, web pages, music and art (Luke & Dooley, 2011). Nowadays, in particular, children obtain information and knowledge from the Internet. It is therefore important to teach them the methods for criticism, regardless of whether this is done with written texts or via television or the Internet. This is where the NLT and connectivism theory have a role to play in education.

YouTube scenes and Internet images are criticised and discussed online in Saudi Arabia, and people express their opinions about them. In contrast, in the past, meanwhile, there was no way to know whether the contents of texts, audio clips, and videos were being criticised or discussed, because the official media controlled the dialogue, resulting in no freedom to contradict its opinions. Currently, however, much debate is directed towards politicians and decision-makers when they fail to do what is asked of them. Receivers of information no longer listen or watch while accepting everything the official media tells them. Rather, the Internet and its various channels have turned people into critics of everything presented to them.

3.8 Conclusion

This study's theoretical framework has presented new understandings of the Arabic language and Arabic literacy in the light of the NLT and CLT approaches. This chapter reviewed the contemporary concept of literacy and other related issues in detail. It has also presented details about critical pedagogy and critical literacy, as well as their roles in developing educational curricula and addressing various societal, political, economic and cultural issues. The concept of literacy was redefined as a tool for social communication that enables individuals to communicate with and become conditioned to their societies. The Internet has helped broaden the contemporary concept of literacy. This chapter also examined literacy in the Arab world where the traditional concept has persisted despite a gigantic technological revolution in many Arab societies that requires development of the concept of literacy and in particular, contemporary critical pedagogy.

Likewise, this chapter discussed the importance of communicative and social aspects to literacy in the digital technology age, as well as their influence on the development of Arabic language pedagogy and criticism with regards to the formation of meaning. Further, this chapter has also outlined the role that new technology plays in the NLT, which presented a new concept for literacy, and in connectivism theory, which expanded the theory of learning to include external networks. Connectivism theory can make communicative approaches and NLT more effective by making the learning process more organised when it occurs in interactions with others and in student external networks. Moreover, because the study investigates the contemporary curriculum and explores the role that educators play in the process of changing, developing and implementing the curriculum, this chapter examined the

role that curriculum theory plays in the curriculum change processes and its relationship to the ideologies present in society. Finally, the chapter has offered an analysis of critical pedagogy and critical literacy while showing the relationship between education and society. A number of examples relevant to the Saudi context were also presented. These examples aid in understanding critical pedagogy and critical literacy in light of the ideologies present in Saudi society.

Furthermore, this chapter presented a new concept of literacy as informed by the NLT. This theory is considered instrumental to the connectivism theory and CLT approaches, and it takes into account how language is used in society. Because societal ideology and general principles are important in this context, the NLT is not limited to teaching skills that are fundamental to literacy inside the classroom. Rather, it provides students with skills that enable them to mix with society and interact with it in a positive way. The next chapter will present a more detailed analysis of the literature in view of CLT, technology, literacy and leadership.

CHAPTER 4: LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the development of communicative language teaching (CLT) approaches. It examines linguistic competence and communicative competence and inquiries into which one comes first. Likewise, Chapter 4 also examines the efforts that Canale and Swain (1980) made regarding communicative approaches. Because the study focuses on social communication, this issue is explored in detail. The chapter also presents a number of issues related to communicative approaches, one of which is the popular notion that communicative approaches only develop speaking and listening skills. Moreover, it explores whether communicative approaches are pedagogy or theory and whether the communicative approach is a social or psychological issue, such as isolation, embarrassment, self-confidence, social interactions, presentation and conversation skills.

Because Arabic is a diglossia, one of the biggest difficulties it faces concerns children acquiring their first language at home. They later learn the Classical, standard Arabic in school. In other words, children learn the spoken language first, followed by learning to write a different variety of the language in school. As Chapter 3 discussed the role that technology plays in new literacy theory (NLT) and connectivism theory, this chapter will introduce technology's role in the communicative approaches. To do this, it will present tools that help and support interaction with others inside and outside the classroom in order to achieve communicative and social practices.

This chapter also presents an overview of the international uses of the communicative approach, with a focus on teachers and their understanding of CLT approaches. This is done to support a theoretical facet with a focus on pedagogy, as many studies have shown that teachers' lack of understanding of the communicative approach causes them to use traditional approaches in teaching. Moreover, Chapter 4 also provides ways in which technology enhances the teaching of Arabic through communicative approaches. This chapter also presents the reality of the Arabic language and literacy pedagogy, as well the most prominent curricula that are used to teach them. These will be introduced in order to understand the current pedagogy and its transition with contemporary curricula.

Finally, Chapter 4 will present details about the most prominent gaps in the literature associated with the relationship between CLT, NLT and the contemporary curriculum. As mentioned in the Chapters 2 and 3, Saudi Arabia is aiming to transition towards a knowledge-based economy as an alternative to relying on its oil production. In order for educational development to occur, leadership plays an important role in leading change. Therefore, this chapter will present details about educational leadership and effecting change.

4.1 Communicative language teaching approaches

The advent of CLT can be traced back to the beginning of the European Common Market, which had its subsequent influence in America (Rutherford, 2014). It was a response from various disgruntled stakeholders that the then teaching methods, such as grammar translation methods, were inadequate to meet the language communication needs of learners, especially in learning that involved short periods

of time. Notably, the teaching had a more cognitive focus than social endeavours (Zang, 2010). Other approaches that were found insufficient were situational language teaching approaches that could not enhance the student's creativity and innovations in a variety of communications. Linguists such as Widdowson and Candlin identified that a focus on language structure and lexis alone could not help people to communicate (Wakefield, Warren & Alsobrook, 2011). Therefore, in addition to a lexis and language structure, there was a need to add communicative competencies. It was the anthropologist and linguist Hymes who developed the framework of communicative competence, as influenced by Chomsky's concept of linguistic competence for a native speaker (Bygate, Swain & Skehan, 2013). However, an influential syllabus to teach the language by involving role-play, interviews, games, information gap, surveys, language exchanges, pair work and learning by teaching originated from the Council of Europe. The preparation of the syllabus involved philosophical and educational inputs of Habermas. Therefore, learners were encouraged to take risks when communicating by making mistakes without referring to memorised patterns (Laurillard, 2013).

4.1.1 Communicative competence

Toaima and Alnaqah (2006) stress the difference between two important terms in language proficiency: (i) linguistic competence; and (ii) communicative competence. Linguistic competence is the ability to understand the rules of a language and to apply them without attention or forethought. Also, it is the ability to capture the linguistic, mental, emotional and cultural meanings of the language in different situations while communicative competence focuses on the learner's ability to use language spontaneously by distinguishing between the different functions of

language in actual use. However, Savignon (2007) states that CLT makes it possible for learners and teachers to realise the goals of their learning environments.

Generally, as a learning process, CLT is focused on learners. Furthermore, Savignon (2007) expresses that the basic aim of language is to facilitate communication. When it comes to communicative competence, it is not acceptable to highlight and identify learners based on their ability to communicate effectively. In fact, the author argues that it ought to be applied relatively. Also, Savignon is of the opinion that the CLT approach promotes and appreciates diversity.

Many scholars, including Bialystok (1981), believe that it is only through functional use that any language will develop and students will make improvements in performance, arguing that the learning of grammar alone will not help students to achieve either grammatical or communicative competence. Hymes (1972) describes communicative competence as the acquisition of grammar for better understanding the language in its social and referential meaning, with practitioners needing to instil in the learner, not only an appreciation of how to build sentences, but also the function that those sentences fulfil with regard to communication. To that end, language lessons designed to provide structural, functional and socio-cultural elements offer students the opportunity to immerse (Stern, 1981) themselves in the language that they are learning in order to gain personal experience of it.

Canale and Swain (1980) distinguished among four types of communicative competence. Firstly, grammatical competence refers to language proficiency, knowledge of any language system, and sufficient capacity to use both the knowledge and competence. Secondly, sociolinguistic competence refers to an

individual's ability to understand the social context of communication, including the relationships between the different social roles and, more importantly, the ability to exchange information and engage in social participation. Thirdly, adequacy of discourse analysis and discourse competence refers to an individual's ability to analyse the forms of talk and communication through understanding the structure of speech, the individual's awareness of the relationship between the elements and approaches of expressing the meaning, and the relationship of this text as a whole. Fourthly, strategic competence refers to an individual's ability to choose the approaches and strategies appropriate to beginning a discourse or closing it, and the ability to keep the attention of others. Therefore, communicative competence is not just the ability to absorb the language system, or even to use it; it is an individual social process that deals with the individual learner's personal usage of the language during situations she/he faces. It is also social because it relates to the context in which the communication happens (Canale, 1983).

CLT moves beyond traditional grammar-based approaches to one that emphasises fluency; this allows acquisition to take place in a less anxious or stressful environment, with one that is task-based and contextual rather than teacher-centred and decontextualised. Through using activities that focus on the functional use of language, such as crosswords, language games, music and drama, students are engaged in learning without realising it (Al Shabbi, 1994). Kukhun and Hania (2008) argue that drama facilitates communicative use of Arabic grammar, and is more effective than using traditional approaches. It draws on CLT approaches, as it requires the use of many language skills such as speaking, improvisation, listening, critical thinking, writing, reading, projecting an idea, body language, self-confidence

and motivation (Arabic Curriculum Document, 2007). For example, Schejbal (2006) claims that drama enhances reading comprehension through the use of CLT. There is a relationship between CLT (drama) and literacies via reading comprehension or critical thinking parts. Moreover, as discussed by Qarnah (2005), the use of drama in teaching can enhance critical thinking.

Therefore, this research investigates how teachers can make use of such approaches when developing the use of the target language for communicative purposes.

Literacy can increase student understanding and learning outcomes. Therefore, this study builds on the literature to increase student learning outcomes and improve their skills of CLT as informed by the NLT. According to Heller, literacy can be highlighted in terms of social and communicative practices (Heller, 2008). Heller (2008) documents that the sole purpose of the CLT approach is to promote interactions that are communicative within a social context. Moreover, CLT serves to push for the utilisation of reliable learning resources in the learning environment. For this reason, Heller (2008) alleges that the ability to identify and interpret issues that are boosted by literacy influences CLT practices. In addition, Heller (2008) highlights that in order to understand the significance of literacy, it is important to view it from a communicative and social perspective (Heller, 2008). In the former case, it can be used to enhance the desires of learning environments (Silver, Goh & Alsagoff, 2009). On the other hand, in the latter instance, it is utilised to actuate the relationship amid different persons.

As mentioned previously, several Arab studies have focused on how the communicative approach is used in grammar instruction (Arabic Curriculum

Document, 2007; Kukhun & Hania, 2008; Qarnah, 2005). In contrast, this study emphasises the use of CLT and the NLT in holistic language instruction. For example, we can look at how drama is used in teaching. The dramatic scene is used to teach skills such as listening, dialogue, criticism, discussion and writing.

Canale and Swain (1980) argue that in language learning a key element is enjoyment. Teachers and learners will find that learning for the purpose of communication is better than depending on grammatical functions. Communicative approaches then allow students to experience a holistic approach to language which affords them the opportunity to learn to communicate using expressions and gestures within the social and cultural context of the language that they are learning: real communication is facilitated through structuring lessons to include interactive elements that provide authentic functional language exchanges for the students (Berns, 1984). Within the communicative language setting, the practitioner sets up situations that simulate real life, as opposed to relying on the old approach of repeating and drilling grammatical concepts. The students have to find their way through the situation, not knowing the outcome of the scenario as these will vary depending on the responses and interaction that takes place. Each lesson brings with it a new situation to which they have to respond to, that is set up in such a way that they do not feel threatened but motivated to converse and talk about different topics meaningfully through active participation with each other. This concurs with the views of Berns (1984) explaining Firth's view that language and subsequently learning language is an interpersonal activity that has a clear social aspect which has to have functional context as well as reference to the situation in which it is being used (Berns, 1984). A point is echoed by Bax (2003) who insists that context is a key element in learning languages

successfully. This is not to suggest that grammar is not essential to the teaching of Arabic. Rather, the acquisition of grammar ought to be acquired by the processes of learning grammatical rules and conventions in contextual and communicative pedagogies.

4.2 Global applications of communicative language teaching to the teaching of languages

Results emerging from a Malaysian study (Raissi, Nor, Aziz, Saleh & Zainal 2013) focused on students and their understanding of the approaches, and students thought there was a discrepancy between what is taught in Malaysian schools and what they should be doing. The results noted an improvement in skills that relied on reception such as reading and listening, as opposed to production skills such as writing and speaking. These findings suggest that it is time for teachers to focus on reading skills rather than communication.

However, in Indonesia, communicative approaches are used by working collectively to improve English language instruction at the elementary stage. Results of the study showed that most students improved their speaking skills by increasing interaction and use of the communicative approaches (Sutiah, 2011). Similarly, the communicative approach strengthens vocal precision and fluency in the English language. Similar results were seen in a Thai study conducted by Likitrattanaporn (2014) that looked at 96 secondary school teachers. Although the study was not conducted on a large enough sample of teachers to conform to worldwide standards of quantitative studies, it did provide an analytical description of the teachers' opinions, and findings offered educational applications that can help instructors teach

students, as the teachers are familiar with the communicative approaches from a theoretical perspective and they have a desire to improve their teaching skills by using this approach.

Kavanagh (2012) affirmed that the Ministry of Education and Instruction in Japan initially attempted to improve English language instruction by training teachers how to use the communicative approach in 1984-1985. Strategic plans for English language instruction in Japan were developed by implementing the communicative curriculum until reading, writing, communication and grammar skills were integrated in the lessons. Kavanagh (2012) noted that issues related to cultural, social and educational factors emerged and affected instructions undertaken with this approach. One example was difficulty in communicating outside the classroom, or more precisely, communicating in the English language. Other issues concerned the teaching environment, teachers' and students' cultural and educational backgrounds, and systems for evaluation and examinations (Ju, 2013).

There is evidence to suggest that there are barriers that hinder the implementation of CLT. For example, Taguchi (2005) indicated that the influence that examinations have on teaching and teachers' use of, and focus on, activities strengthen the students' grasp of grammar rules. Despite teacher professional development provided by the Japanese Ministry of Education, which lasts between six months and one year, there were some obstacles to achieving the communicative approach's goals. The most significant obstacles were teachers abandoning the communicative approach for grammar translation and their lack of confidence in the ability to use this approach inside the classroom.

In Iran, Sobhani and Bagheri's study (2014) documented the perspectives of 40 teachers and 40 students about the use of amusing and communicative games and activities in English language teaching. These activities and games help to motivate students by making tasks easier to understand. Lately, there has been a focus on the use of electronic games as a fundamental tool for learning rather than entertainment (Gee, 2007). Wong (2012) found that most teachers do not fully understand the communicative approach, but there was a strong theme that teachers emphasise the importance of CLT in learning. However, Batawi (2006) pointed out that teachers in admitted they still use traditional approaches while using CLT. Meanwhile, Savignon (1983) indicated that grammar instructions must be coupled with meaning in order to achieve communicative ability.

As Pan (2013) argued, it is significant that the basic components of CLT approaches are being understood and thoroughly studied. Pan elaborated on the foundation and characteristics of CLT approaches, such as structural, notional-functional and situational (Pan, 2013, p. 40). The most common criticism directed at CLT is its focus on speaking skills and fluency, which causes many educators to believe that the approach neglects precision. However, fluency increases when CLT is supported by a theoretical basis of task (TBT), which increases student interaction with the language (Qian, 2013). CLT grammar is still an essential part of a system that helps and directs the strengthening of comprehensiveness, reception and communication (Pan, 2013). In Saudi Arabia, the traditional curriculum demanded grammar and a way to translate it and cling to it, although students are not fully proficient in grammar and do not achieve fluency (Stringer, 1998). Even when a student grasps grammar at a high level, this comes at the expense of other language skills. Students

may not be able to use the range of grammar that they have learned while speaking, that is, the exceptional grammar that they use in writing assignments and grammar quizzes. Actually, most students are not fully proficient in grammar and do not achieve fluency (Housen, Kuiken & Vedder, 2012). However, in the event of a student grasping grammar at a high level, this comes at the expense of other language skills. For example, a student with a good understanding of grammar may be poor or below average in communication or conversation (Byram, 2004).

Eloquence and fluency are among the most prominent and important issues that people focus on when discussing the status of the Arabic language. The old curriculum focuses on achieving fluency and eloquence, but it does so by using traditional approaches that stress grammar, memorisation and rote learning. Complicating matters further, the old curriculum (especially reading curricula) includes a number of rhetorical texts and articulate speeches from ancient times. Together, these texts are difficult for students to comprehend because they contain old language which is not consistent with the environment and society familiar to students. Accordingly, this study encourages the use of language in real-life situations, as fluency does not come by itself, but results from the integration of all different language skills.

In Saudi Arabia, Batawi (2006) attempted to devise appropriate applications for CLT approaches. In this study, more than 100 female teachers' understanding of CLT approaches was investigated. This study was conducted due to limitations of previous studies on English instruction in the communicative curriculum in Saudi Arabia. The most important result of the study was that teachers combined CLT with

traditional approaches. Therefore, Batawi (2006) emphasises that success in CLT approaches depends on three main factors: (i) educators (teachers, principals, supervisors and curriculum designers); (ii) professional development programs (insufficient availability of which led teachers to mix communicative approaches with traditional approaches); and (iii) the extent to which CLT is compatible with society. In Chapters 6 and 7, these factors are analysed and discussed from the perspective of educators working with the contemporary curriculum.

4.3 Communicative language teaching: How does theory inform practice?

The CLT approach depends on understanding language in its various social and cultural aspects. According to first acquisition language theory, students should already understand these aspects and rules (Al shabbi, 1994). Thus, the question is: How does the understanding of social and cultural uses relate to CLT in order to make this approach more effective? Al shabbi (1994) also argued that the structure of the CLT approach is designed primarily for group work, which is a key reason for implementation.

Communicative learning is the act of applying learning to an actual situation.

Learning Arabic in a communicative form would imply that competency is based on the individual's ability to use Arabic in everyday situations, such as booking a doctor's appointment or communicating over the telephone. Communicative Arabic is a concept that falls around fundamental human communicative functions, such as 'socialising, establishing closer relationships, giving and responding to feedback, arguing, requesting, reporting and receiving, and processing information' (Wilmsen,

2006, p. 126). As discussed in Chapter 2, communicative learning is the act of applying learning to an actual situation. Learning Arabic in a communicative form would imply that competency is based on the individual's ability to use Arabic in everyday situations, such as purchasing from the shops or asking for directions. For Ditters (2006), the teaching of Arabic begins at home, as well as through exposure to everyday conversation with family members and the community. However, conflict may arise when the 'communicative' meets the academic, in particular, the written form is taught through decontextualised traditional pedagogies that are teacher-based and deductive. In addition, as dialect acquisition through communicative and social practices (inside and outside of the home) is also significant, communicative approaches will very likely succeed if care is taken to implement the concept and its social and communicative purposes.

4.3.1 Communicative competence: Pedagogy or theory?

'Communicative competence' is a term that may be used to refer to knowledge of language in terms of syntax, phonology and morphology. It is therefore a way in which one uses language in its proper sense and may be used to distinguish different levels of understanding of a given language. The debate of whether communicative competence is a theory or pedagogy is an interesting one. Stroud and Heugh (2011) observe that this is a concept that links pedagogy and theory, and that one cannot be viewed in isolation from another. Besides, we need to be familiar with the usage of different words of any language so that we know the context under which each word may be used properly (Alptekin, 2002). This is because the wrong word or its usage in the wrong context may infuriate our listeners, cause embarrassment or produce

unnecessary miscommunication. This information can be gleaned from acquainting ourselves with the right theory of a language so that we apply the words properly.

Based on Canale and Swain's work (1980), communicative competence, which is practically actuated by CRT, entails sociolinguistic competence (Celce-Murcia, Dornyei & Thurrell, 1995). From a theoretical perspective, it is expressed as the 'art of being able to speak in prevailing conditions'. When viewed from a practical point of view, sociolinguistic competence is mostly manifested by native speakers (Ashafei, 2011). In this case, Canale and Swain (1980) denote that based on a framework of sociolinguistics, second language students are likely to face challenges when trying to speak a foreign language. According to Canale, communicative competence includes the capacity of a person to be able to pronounce words effectively (D. Hall & Hewings, 2013). In this regard, it is evident that Canale advances for grammatical competence. In this case, the rules that apply to pronunciation of words are to be appreciated. Furthermore, sociolinguistic competence cannot be delinked from communicative competence. Canale reinforces that it is the building block for communications that are focused to improve and proliferate academic undertakings. Moreover, Canale documents that for persons to attain threshold levels that are highlighted by the concept of communicative competence, they are required to come up with strategies that can be used to boost the same. Canale asserts that grammatical and lexical competence is pertinent when determining proliferation of communicative competence. Also, his publication denotes that coherence is part of communicative competency (Freidin, 2012). Furthermore, Canale's literature reinstates that communicative language and teaching schemes are practical applications of the communicative competency model. In this

case, he argues that it is the most desirable technique to be used by tutors and teachers in all learning environments. Generally, Canale tends to criticise systems whereby students are evaluated and rated based on their abilities and capacities to come up with grammatically correct statements and sentences. Moreover, the author states that CLT focuses on achieving pragmatic goals that are targeted by various institutions. In addition, he expresses that one of the objectives of the CLT model is to link class work to external environments, because the practical application of what is learned in the classroom is influenced by language proficiency. Based on this position, Canale argues that communicative learning and CLT have an interdependent kind of relationship (Canale, 1983).

4.3.2 Communicative competence as a social and psychological issue

Communicative competence is a social and psychological concept. According to G. W. Blood and I. M. Blood (2004), a lack of communicative competence may lead to an individual isolating himself/herself because either they will be shunned or feel inadequate, therefore, avoiding situations where they may come into contact with colleagues or groups. It becomes imperative that the pursuit of communicative competence is one that is done with the intention of fitting into or being accepted in a certain group. It suffices to say that even without communicative competence, we may be unable to know how and when to use certain words, which can result in embarrassment for ourselves or infuriating others because of our ignorance of their language (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995). Such a scenario may cause a strain in our interactions and/or some level of hatred towards ourselves, however psychological it may be. The need to pursue communicative competence may also be a mark of achievement through the capacity to converse effectively in a language and to enjoy

interacting with people from backgrounds other than our own. In other words, self-esteem derived out of such an experience is purely psychological and it enhances our social interactions with others (Rickheit, Strohner & Vorweg, 2010).

Therefore, communicative competence is influenced by social elements, psychological factors and social norms (Elwell, 2011). To begin with, CLT is more desirable for students and learners who possess a high proficiency in English. This is expounded by the fact that its approaches and techniques are primarily based on the language. Furthermore, for individuals to effectively take part in the interactions and discussions, which entail CLT, they are expected to engage their fellow students and teachers in conversations, which are believed to reinforce the targets of education. It is significant to note that this problem, not only affects learners, but also teachers find it hard to coordinate with students who have weaknesses in sentence structuring and grammar, resulting in difficulty for the respective parties to understand each other (Savignon, 2007). Generally, most students are likely to be faced with inadequacy or unreliability, which is actuated by the CLT model requiring them to be given significant and adequate guidance through one on one conversation. In this case, it is possible that some of the weaker students may not be provided with enough assistance. When viewed from a psychological perspective, it is pertinent to note that shy students and those not as proficient in the command of the language are likely to be discouraged by rather rigorous processes and undertakings, which are entailed in CLT (Rock, Pavesi & Forchini, 2013). Also, social norms may act as limitations to achieving the targets of CLT.

4.4 Technology and communicative language teaching approaches

Newrozi (2011) suggests that Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) programs strengthens student linguistic and computer competencies. He also believes that CMC the programs increase exposure to the use of the target language, especially outside the classroom. CMC programs have educational benefits that take the learning process beyond the classroom and extend it throughout the day. This occurs with the help of computer programs for communication between students who use messages, discussion boards and other programs that help develop their communicative abilities.

Nowrozi (2011) emphasises that computer media such as chat rooms, videoconferences and the use of international email replace communicative aspects inside classrooms. Haider and Chowdhury (2012) argue that computer use needs to help the learning process and language instruction, as the success of technology and its programs depend largely on the availability of an educational groundwork that encourages the use of electronic programs and makes them more useful. Their study concluded that learners must have independence either inside or outside the classroom to find better uses for computer programs. Nevertheless, Al-Mulhim (2014) found that the implementation of technology inside the classroom is influenced by a number of factors, including time, a lack of understanding of the approach and a lack of practice using the approaches.

Baker and Kinzer (1998) propose that students can learn with the use of the Internet and technology, for example, they can access information easily and quickly at

school or outside school. The use of technology in education is a worldwide area of growth, as can be seen in classrooms today that are connected to a wide range of inclusive technology. For example, classrooms have interactive whiteboards, computers, audio and visual equipment, and most importantly, Internet connection. In some areas, social networking is finding its way into the classroom to enhance learning (Arabic Curriculum Document, 2007). However, in Saudi Arabia, some parents are concerned about Internet technology, that the trend is a waste of time and may lead to deviations, particularly with websites that encourage their children to interact with strangers. However, in Australia, parents have insisted on including social networking procedures in the curriculum to assist their children in dealing with cyber bullying (Mason, 2008).

The inclusion of various forms of technology in the teaching of Arabic not only changes the role and perspective of the teacher, but also has a fundamental impact on the pedagogy, resulting in shifts across teaching and learning styles. With technological advances, the learner now has access to learning resources from outside the Arabic world. As Ditters (2006) argues, technology should not be a barrier to learning, especially in language teaching. Technology opens up learning channels and opportunities. For example, the introduction of technology would allow resources for different ages to be created to aid learning. The fact that the use of technology allows access to a much richer and more enhanced stream of resources for learning using the World Wide Web makes change inevitable.

The advantage of an ever-changing world of modern technology is that advances and new applications are consistently being found. Computer Assisted Language

Learning (CALL) programs provide learners with instant feedback on their efforts and provide a dual motivation for pupils in that not only are their language skills being developed but their competence with new technology is also enhanced, which is particularly important where technology communication is highly interlinked (Barton, 2001). There is huge potential in using the Internet to enhance learning through email, bulletin boards, synchronous chat and digital video. Students are exposed to cultural contexts where they can respond to speaking and writing skills in the language that is being learnt. These forms of media enable students to be immersed in the language and culture of the target language without having to physically be in the country to which the language belongs (Liu, Moore, Graham & S. Lee, 2002).

It is important to stress that not all information about the use of technology in the classroom is positive. Wiebe and Kabata (2010) point out that without synchronous thinking and working, using CALL between the practitioner and students, there is no advantage to its use. According to Zhou (2011), the advent of information technologies has affected the manner in which educational practices are expected to be conducted and appreciated. In this case, the author highlights that online lessons and teaching platforms have made it difficult for students to receive adequate skills and techniques, which are best expressed through face-to-face communications. Even though it is argued that they serve to increase and improve levels of education, the writer claims that the negative effects accrued from the development of technology systems outweigh the benefits. Previously, students visited their tutors and lecturers in their offices whenever they had issues. As a result, their concerns were addressed in a timely manner. However, with the advent of email, assignments are submitted

electronically. In this regard, it can be stated that the links and interactions between students and teachers have been limited.

D'Angelo and Woosley's (2007) study identified students with mixed opinions about the legitimacy and effectiveness of using computer technology in their learning, and Salaberry (2001) noted that there were grounds for considerable scepticism about the efficacy of using modern technology in the classroom. There are also questions about teacher competency in using technology in teaching languages, as well as the expense of introducing it effectively for schools in the current difficult economic climate (Lin, 2009). These factors all centre on the essence of education and the use of technology. The teacher's role is to encourage students to reach the point where they can teach themselves. Information about finding appropriate programs for developing language skills and learning how to use computers and the Internet correctly can be researched on the Internet. These programs can help students and teachers save effort and time so they can achieve their goals (e.g. information and guides for shopping, entertainment and enjoying hobbies).

This section analyses recent research papers that criticised Apple's position on the role of IT in the education system. Apple is a popular educationist who has written influential works in the field of education. He has also done extensive work to advance our knowledge of education and the curriculum. Apple's notable work revolves around neo-liberal and neo-conservative views on education, research on economic and political factors surrounding education, and most recently, his view on the role of IT on education (Ward, 2013). Apple has often tried to make suggestions that are aimed at improving the curriculum as a means of improving learning.

Despite his respected reputation in the field of education, his opinion on the topic of technology in education has attracted criticism from stakeholders in the education field. The majority of Apple's critics believe that he is mistaken to suggest that IT does more harm than good to the education system (Ward, 2013).

Technology has given school administrators an opportunity to maximise on their income while reducing their expenditure. With IT, school administrators are able to attend to large numbers of students without the need to recruit more staff (Kovalchick & Dowson, 2004). Technology, therefore, is deemed to be less costly and more efficient than replacing university teachers. Apple's concern is that technology reduces teacher-student interaction, which he believes is an essential component of the learning process. Bromley and Apple (1998) insist on face-to-face learning as the best approach of passing information from teachers to students. A good teaching practice is one that encourages a partnership between teachers and students, creating student-centred learning. The teacher's role, therefore, becomes less central, but cannot be dismissed.

However, Apple's opinion on the role of IT has also received equal measures of criticism from those who believe that IT is the new trend that should be completely embraced in the education system. Proponents of technological applications in education believe that learning becomes convenient and easy for students when technology is fully implemented. In an article published in the *ERT* magazine, Lokesh talks about technology and its role in 21st Century education. According to Lokesh, technology is not as bad as Apple would want us to believe (Lokesh, 2013). Instead, it offers students new skills, such as research skills, ability to share

information and the ability to verify the viability of online content. Additionally, technology improves the creativity of learners by giving them the opportunity to modify online content before they submit the information in the classroom (Lokesh, 2013).

Differences in awareness about technology emerged from reports about student and teacher viewpoints. Teachers and students do have different viewpoints, which is not surprising in the classroom environment. Alhawiti (2013) argues that teachers are not always aware of how students use technology within the classroom. Also, students are aware of the teacher's objectives when they use technology inside the classroom. Therefore, a point of intersection is that teachers can direct students to use technology in a better way while learning more about the importance of technology in education. As mentioned earlier, they can also present websites and programs in an educational way. Before doing so, it is best for teachers to explain their objectives in using technology in classrooms. They should also talk about technology with their students and discuss their viewpoints and opinions, as students may prefer certain things about technology that teachers may not have been aware of. Also, some teachers do not consider technology to be appropriate educational tools.

One important issue is the increased cost of using electronic devices, many of which are useful from a technical and educational perspective. For example, modern whiteboards that connect with computers and presentation devices are efficient and effective in the teaching environment. This is an important factor related to using and employing these devices in beneficial ways to promote curricula, language pedagogy and literacy.

In the pursuit of profit, some companies entice consumers to buy their products, even if the consumers do not need them or already own similar products. This is where the role of literacy education comes in. It regulates the students' relationship with technology and technology products so they can use them in various aspects of life.

4.5 Teaching Arabic in the Arab world and globally

Several barriers face Arabic language teaching in the Arab world. First, the teacher-centred approach to education gives students fewer opportunities to learn because strategies rely on memory. Such deductive repetition is devoid of real life experiences (Al-Rajhi, 2006). Therefore, student-centred approaches are encouraged in the contemporary curriculum, such as active learning and context embedded experiences (Arabic Document Curriculum, 2007).

Al-Rajhi (2006) believes that Arabic is currently failing to keep up with developments that are occurring in language instruction and pedagogy. Therefore, he diagnosed the most prominent issues faced by teachers of Arabic today, which include an absence of academic studies about Arabic language instruction, particularly non-governmental studies. Moreover, there is a lack of professional development programs, which teachers view as professional and academic preparation for keeping pace with the latest developments in language pedagogy and education. Another issue is a lack of policies for evaluation and development programs.

Taha-Thomure (2008, p. 187) believes that 'at this very moment the teaching of the Arabic language needs immediate overhauling that is carefully thought through,

professionally done and comprehensively evaluated'. She contends that this is because there is a lack of standards and guidelines that are available to teachers with regard to the teaching of Arabic and to schools around the world being allowed to formulate their own teaching guidelines (echoed by Al-Rajhi, 2006); this leads to varying standards available to the teaching of Arabic in the classroom, as well as in the design and delivery of the curriculum. Taha-Thomure observes that many schools rely on a teacher-centred approach when teaching the Arabic language. Student-centred approaches should be implemented through acknowledging the curriculum, assessment and instruction through the use of technology. In addition (Terrell, 1991) indicates that practice within schools is didactic in nature, with the teacher very much at the centre of attention. In this approach, behaviourist principles are applied to the curriculum in that students are very much dictated to with regard to classroom teaching. Taha-Thmure (2008, p. 188) stated:

The teaching of Arabic as is the case with teaching any language ought to be governed by 1 – the teachers' mastery and in-depth knowledge of the subject matter or the language and 2 – the teachers' knowledge of pedagogical principles including classroom management skills, curriculum, various teaching and learning methodologies and child development and psychology.

Taha Thmure (2008) summarised the functions of colleges of education and institutes of higher education that prepare teachers. Everything mentioned above is related to content that students learn, teachers, the relationship between theory and practice, and the most pressing issues for those interested in Arabic language instruction. Clearly, curricula and teaching methods lay the groundwork for the future. In the Arab world, there is no lack of content in curricula at colleges of education. Rather, they comprehensively cover the Arabic language and related issues. They also

include other education-related content, such as child education and educational psychology. However, the issue lies in their reliance on old curricula that depend on memorisation and testing, and there is little room for research in these curricula.

Traditional approaches to language teaching prioritise language proficiency as syntactic and grammatical competence where language learning is understood to necessitate the accumulation of sentences and learning to achieve accuracy (J. C. Richards & Schmidt 2002). These traditional approaches allow students to sit back and use an input strategy to learn Arabic which legitimates (in their mind) the idea of limited participation or interaction with the language as opposed to an output strategy in which they actively seek interface with the language and try to use it (Terrell, 1991).

Studies from the literature point to a text-based educative approach that may produce excellent grammar and vocabulary but do not inspire the pupils or enable them to grasp the true communicative nature of the Arabic language. Students do not find grammar translation approaches allow them to communicate by using the target language. In CLT approaches, students can use the language in social situations. For instance, students can communicate about an interesting topic from their life, rather than complete a set of exercises that have little relevance to their everyday social experiences.

Wahba (2006) argues that Arabic is a diglossic language with three divisions: (i) classical language, which is the highest form of the language; (ii) middle language, which is the language of education; and (iii) the lowest form, which includes the

local dialects. Wahba (2006) therefore believes that students must experience interactions with higher-level languages in order to achieve communicative objectives in accordance with modern curricula. It is possible to combine the classical language and local dialects together through a number of different activities. For example, students can borrow a book from the library, reserve a hotel room, or express their opinion about a particular topic. They can also use activities that reinforce reading, writing and listening. Such activities can include reading newspaper articles, writing personal letters and watching television. Wahba (2006) emphasises the importance of teaching Arabic with the communicative approach while using each of the four skills together. This occurs by using two languages. Ditters (2006) believes that localisation is an important issue related to technology and the Arabic language. Much effort is needed to help Arabic keep up with the technology age. Many programs, websites and modern software applications are in English. In order to keep pace with new developments, it is important that they be localised into Arabic, and this localisation must constantly be up-to-date.

As mentioned previously, the communicative approach is linked to a number of important issues related to education and teaching approaches. These include communicative competency, details about the communicative approach and its theoretical and practical dimensions, and other related issues such as psychology and sociology, and using technology to support communicative objectives while teaching. Because this study focuses on teaching Arabic with the communicative approach, it was necessary to discuss Arabic language instructions in Arab countries and around the world. Section 4.6 discusses the most prominent gaps in the literature about Arabic language instruction and literacy, as traditional curricula and discrete

topic-curricula are better-covered. The relationship between communicative approaches and the NLT will also be discussed, as well as the effects of technology on the system. Finally, the section will address educational leadership and its role in the issues mentioned in Chapter 4.

4.6 Current gaps in the literature

This section will show the most prominent gaps in the literature. Efforts are being made to transition Arabic language and literacy instruction from traditional approaches used in the previous curriculum and based on reading, writing and discrete curricula to using language as a communicative and social tool. In making this transition, teachers request students to use language in real-life situations. The communicative approach is based on the contemporary curriculum, which covers the acquisition of all language skills. Despite what many believe, it does not focus on ‘speaking’ skills. This is one of the most prominent gaps in the literature amongst Arab studies. Practice, conversation and vocalisation are important elements of language acquisition, and they are among the elements of the communicative approaches.

As mentioned in Section 4.5, eloquence and rhetoric are a part of the Arab identity and a source of pride for speakers of Arabic. In general, Saudi studies and research about communicative approaches focus on the teaching of English as an additional language. Therefore, this study is focused on using communicative approaches for a first language (Arabic), as informed by the NLT and connectivism theory, which help to present a contemporary concept of Arabic language instruction and literacy learning. Because of its significant role in, and influence on, different areas of life,

and on education in particular, technology is a fulcrum for the study's methods and theories.

4.6.1 Relationship between communicative language teaching approaches and the new literacy theory

The NLT has been influenced by the proliferation of the current information and communication technologies, which has extensively revolutionised the way we use language. This is partially because the same technologies have opened up new possibilities for using language and what is acceptable under different settings. Alvermann (2002) also notes that, as a result of the same, even the definition of literacy has changed over time. Thus, people considered to be illiterate may not be the same because even those who are semi-literate (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003), at least at the standards of the past, can effectively communicate today over the technologies as the demands it of are not as rigorous.

As more individuals use technological gadgets to communicate, linguistic activities around literacy is also impacted. This extends to the classroom. Teaching new literacies based on the realities of technologies has come a long way in impacting CLT in most classrooms (Crystal, 2001; Kinzer & Leander, 2003). For instance, as students journey through education, they are bound to meet countless possibilities in communication, the unimaginable at the beginning of their schooling. The result is that additional words and new forms of words creep into normal language usage (Lawless, Mills & Brown, 2002) and even the meaning of words can change. It is thus important that the NLT be inculcated in CLT so that students can remain current and comfortable with what is being taught in the classroom and the language they

use to communicate in their daily lives. Therefore, to bring familiarity into the classrooms will allow students to be keen on what is going on during the lesson.

4.6.2 Relationship between communicative language teaching, multiple literacies and the contemporary curriculum

In the contemporary curriculum, students should be taught how to use new literacies, such as how to send emails, as this process will draw on skills of reading and writing.

In fact, replacing the traditional system in the teaching literacy by using new ways that link technologies into classroom is increasingly necessary. Currently, old literacy tools such as books, pins, blackboards and notebooks are being outmoded by innovative and useful tools such as the mobile phone, iPod, iPhone and computer.

For example, a student taking a photograph of the teacher's whiteboard notes is more time efficient than writing down notes into an exercise book. This study is cognisant of the need to teach Arabic with the implementation of these new literacy tools in Arabic classrooms in terms of developing effective communication and expression across all language and literacy practices such as reading, writing, speaking, listening, critiquing and viewing.

The communicative approach is conceptualised as the use of language as a set of social behavioural habits, expressed through social meaning systems that develop and grow in society with its members. This approach emphasises language and literacy as a social practice. The curriculum policy highlights the different ways in which we make use of communicative intelligence. For instance, learners gain knowledge on how to associate with others in different situations, relating to other people's characters, trends and attitudes in forming relationships with them (Arabic

Curriculum Document, 2007). Developing reading skills is necessary for today's student because of the increase in knowledge; perhaps more important is the need to link these skills with the modern, technological definition of literacy. Literacy in the contemporary curriculum consists of acquiring communication skills, writing skills, critical thinking skills, visual literacy, oral literacy and emotional literacy.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, implementing the NLT, CLT and contemporary curricula requires much effort and work to implement these theories and link them with training programs, in addition to implementing educational curricula and policies. In order for the aforementioned approaches to be applied, educational leaders must play a significant role in their implementation (Section 4.7). Likewise, Chapters 6 and 7 will examine educational leadership and its role in implementing the contemporary curriculum in Saudi Arabia.

4.7 Leadership and education in Saudi Arabia

In every country, there are social and political factors that influence the culture of schools and leadership expectations that are placed on head teachers and principals. For example, in the United Kingdom, Grace (1995) traced a shift in the 1970s from the expectation that school principals should be moral leaders to an expectation that they should bring about radical new curriculum and teaching reforms. There was another ideological change in the 1990s with the introduction of a much more standardised assessment system and increased government control in the curriculum. In Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, government control is similarly strong, but there has been a move towards greater internationalisation leading to curriculum reform, particularly in the teaching of the English language (Syed, 2003).

According to Thomson (2009), the outcome of an education regime that is fixated on league tables and test scores creates a tendency to appoint head teachers who are good at particular kinds of performance management rather than knowledgeable about pedagogy and curriculum. This can change schools in ways that makes them more similar to business organisations; therefore, the ethos and day-to-day interactions within the school community is lost. Gunter (2001, p. 105) is also critical of the effects of recent developments in the United Kingdom, concluding that ‘the drive to position head teachers as leaders and managers of a system rather than learning is having a detrimental impact on the identity and work of role incumbents in senior and middle management, teachers and students’. In Saudi Arabia, the focus has traditionally been more on inputs than on outputs, managed through tight control of the textbooks and syllabus, but since 2007, with change, the Ministry is beginning to follow the output driven model of the United Kingdom (Al Shaer, 2007; Barber, Mourshed & Whelan, 2007).

Although educational institutions within a country could institute excellent literacy curricula, school leadership is an imperative function in ensuring that curricula are implemented and their goals are reached. School principals have the core responsibility of supervising teaching staff to cover the designed syllabi (Phakiti, Hirsh & Woodrow, 2013). They also have the responsibility of creating high-performance professionals from the teachers available in schools. Principals stimulate the culture of excellence and effectively ascertain professional development. The education of teacher themselves should not stop when a trained teacher obtains his/her first job.

Strong-willed teachers are essential for the attainment of literacy levels required of children (Phakiti et al., 2013). Principals are tasked with employing suitable staff into their schools and guiding them through the improvement of their profession.

Together, with the education department, the principal has a duty of providing strong direction and support to all teaching staff. For example, in the decentralised and autonomous school system in Australia, it is imperative that education departments and principals drive sustainable performance improvement programs (Johansson, Moos, Drysdale, Goode & Gurr 2009). Education department needs to ensure that the suitable people ascend to the position of school principals and that the right balance between support, autonomy, accountability and incentives towards literacy is achieved.

Two key aspects of leadership that head teachers need to master are: (i) building a united school team of staff; and (ii) dealing with negative feelings and reactions that may arise when curriculum changes are implemented. In the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia, many of the changes implemented at a national level have not been fully discussed with practising teachers, resulting in teachers having to use a new curriculum even if they do not like it, and do not think that it uses the best approach for their particular subject (Troudi & Alwan, 2010). Head teachers play a very important role in such a situation because they stand between the regulations decided by the government and the implementation of curriculum change within the school.

One solution to the problem of central and bureaucratic dominance is proposed by Smyth (1989, p. 125), who supports an alternative kind of school leadership based on 'reclaiming of control through reflection based upon rationally informed discourse

that represents the major point of departure between the educative and corporatist models of leadership'. Discussions between teachers on ideas such as critical pedagogy (Giroux, 2001) for example, can lay the foundation of better awareness of the hidden curriculum that school structures and systems produce and in turn this is the basis for a construction of a better experience for all concerned. This would open up the possibility for more dialogue with managers, teachers and students about what, why, and how they are teaching and learning in school (Akbari, 2008). Reform therefore begins with a collective re-assessment of pedagogy and practice by teaching professionals themselves.

Without a doubt, the decision to reform and develop curricula is one of the wisest steps the Saudi government has taken. It is doing this so the country can transition to a knowledge-based economy, as explained in the previous two chapters. The government also wants to provide contemporary education that is consistent with international standards. As mentioned earlier, educational leaders have a large role to play here. The governmental and national curriculum systems created by Saudi Arabia require extra effort from those responsible for curricula and the leaders responsible for change. And, as mentioned previously in this section, one of the biggest challenges that schools face is bureaucracy. Therefore, giving more power to education departments, and to school administrators in particular, will contribute to successful implementation of the curricula. It will also lead to general education reform. These powers will help school administrators directly oversee the implementation of the curriculum and issue immediate decisions, without having to consult the bureaucracy. Rather, they would be able to consult education departments and the Ministry of Education.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has presented several issues in relation to CLT approaches and provides the link between CLT and the NLT in order to enhance Arabic teaching. It also presented the global application of CLT to the teaching of languages. Furthermore, this chapter discussed issues in relation to theory, pedagogy and social and psychological aspects of communicative competency. Technology and CLT approaches were discussed. It provided a critique of technology, highlighting its benefits and drawbacks in today's technological age where it is difficult to control everything that reaches our children. Also, current gaps in the literature were discussed in depth. Moreover, the chapter presented several issues related to leadership in Saudi Arabia and globally.

This chapter also has provided new concepts related to Arabic language instruction and literacy, followed by presenting a new concept for Arabic literacy that is consistent with contemporary literacy. It also offered an overview of the reality of Arabic language instruction, its pedagogy, and the biggest issues and obstacles facing language development and literacy. It also showed that the communicative approach is not limited to developing listening and conversation skills, as many believe. Rather, it offers real-life situations so that students can practice language in a social and communicative way. Because Saudi teachers, principals, supervisors and education officials are all preoccupied with educational development, its success depends on the work of education leaders who are capable of leading change by involving all relevant personnel in the educational process.

In order to better understand the research questions and answer a number of questions related to the study, next chapter presents the study's methodology. Specific details about the study's environment and philosophy will thereby be introduced. There will also be more details about the participants, the data-gathering stage, research methods and other issues.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter 5 discusses the design of the research, which includes various data gathering methods. First, it demonstrates the philosophical stance and epistemology, followed by addressing the research questions and presenting the research paradigm. It also explains in detail how the research was designed and conducted. In addition, it outlines the approval for research by the Ethics Committee at the University of Western Sydney and the General Department of Education in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia. Finally, Chapter 5 demonstrates the methods used to analyse the data and its selection mechanism.

5.1 Philosophical stance and epistemology

My philosophy has been influenced, since the beginning of my life, by eagerness and progression towards changing and developing the educational system, specifically the Arabic language curriculum. Studying for four years at the Teachers' College majoring in Primary Education has played a major role. In the last level of study, students undergo professional experience in schools. However, I found a difference between theory and practice, as the contemporary curricula are just theories taught in Tabuk College, whereas the reality is largely traditional. In spite of this, I tried to present Arabic language skills through my classes in an integrated approach. In addition, I wrote detailed reports about an integrated approach, describing how students respond to it. A copy of one report was sent to the General Department of Education in the Tabuk District, which included a request to endorse the integrated

approach of Arabic language teaching instead of using the traditional approach.

Since the Department of Education was established in 1926 (Alaqael, 2005), teachers of Arabic relied on the limited materials available. In other words, materials that they used were not current with international language standards. They were only suitable for teaching grammar, spelling, reading and five other subjects. As a result, students usually performed the tasks repeatedly; they had no access to enriched materials linked to their real lives. The new policy in Saudi education requires all textbooks to be designed in an edition that incorporates science, social studies and Arabic language subjects in order to switch from teaching these subjects separately to using a holistic curriculum.

This desire in me for change and development in teaching in general and in teaching Arabic in particular commenced when I was working and gaining professional experience at a primary school in Tabuk city. I was trying to apply theories I learned during my bachelor degree studies by changing the lesson on literacy to make it more interesting for students. I began to use a microphone and speakers during lessons. Students loved using the microphone in reading, and telling stories in front of the class because it was new to them. However, the use of the microphone was restricted to the school radio. Eventually, some students brought along cassette tapes they recorded in their house which consisted of stories to share with the class. The main objective of this idea was to integrate the curriculum into teaching Arabic. After I obtained employment as an academic (assistant lecturer at Al-Jouf University), my work gave me access to schools, bringing me closer to them in my role as a professional experience supervisor of final year teacher education students.

5.1.1 Universities and their influence on the research field

It is crucial to analyse my relationship with the study's problem, an important issue that must be disclosed because I belong to the research environment. The idea for the study began during my bachelor degree studies, specifically during the final stage – the professional experience when I worked as a teaching assistant (assistant to a university professor) in the university. The idea developed further when I received a scholarship to pursue a master's degree in Australia. At first, I began by studying the language (English), making many comparisons between what we were taught in the language institute, Arabic language instruction and curricula in Saudi Arabia. When I began my master's studies, I began reading and understanding more about literacy learning and language teaching curricula and all its branches in the additional language fields. At that time, I decided to develop my old dream, which began when I was in the professional experience stage in schools. The dream is to teach the Arabic language in a contemporary manner in accordance with the latest international curricula. It is to develop curricula so students can use the language in their daily lives, be closer to that language, and use it to communicate within their society.

However, the greatest influence on my life in general, and the research and academic field in particular, was to study overseas. I completed a Master's degree in Education from Griffith University in Queensland, Australia, which gave me the opportunity to familiarise myself with a different culture, and most importantly, the academic effects and scientific, practical experiences obtained through studying in Australia. For example, I used to believe that good teachers succeed in conveying information to their students even if that took longer than expected. However, I have learned here

that successful teachers are those who allow their students to discover information for themselves; the student should speak more than the teacher inside the classroom.

This research studies the perspectives of educational specialists in Saudi Arabia regarding the contemporary curriculum. As my background is the same as the participants, I am aware that the Saudi society does not accept change easily (Chapter 2). But when faced with change, especially change and theories adopted by Western countries, the Islamic society's values are in danger, regardless of whether change is for the benefit of the people or not. Perhaps claims to change the curricula at the beginning of the third millennium are proof of that. Some voices emerged, which claimed that America was asking Saudi Arabia to change its curriculum in preparation for an openness that will prevail in the Saudi community, most importantly, the reduction of religious curricula. However, much of these curricula was changed and developed according to the previously announced plans of the Ministry of Education.

Among the important issues is my discipline in this research, as a critical thinker. This tension is addressed in Chapter 6, and explicated in-depth in Chapter 2. Especially since I am an insider and participants of the study are of the same ethnicity and religious sect. More importantly, I have many friends and colleagues who graduated with me from Teachers College at Tabuk. They teach at different schools in Tabuk city and we usually discuss many issues related to developing our education system. Hence, my approach in this regard is from the inside (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007), referred to as the 'insider perspective'. Therefore, the research draws on communicative language teaching (CLT) approaches informed by the new

literacy theory (NLT) in teaching Arabic in an integrated approach. For example, the research encourages students to use objective criticism without violating religious principles and axioms. The Qur'an urges us to think and contemplate in the creation of Allah, and urges the human being to learn, as the first word in the Qur'an addressed to Prophet Mohammed, peace upon him, is 'read'.

One controversial issue in Saudi Arabia is that some students do not read books; however, the accusation is defended by explaining that we are people who do not read and we connect this with society and its culture (Alassaf, 2013). Hence, this research provides a new approach to literacy pedagogy, defined as the 'new theory of literacy', which depends primarily on using skills and knowledge. The nature of the society, especially the next generation of young people is probably more inclined towards technology and its usage. Hence, this research provides a new approach to teaching Arabic in Saudi Arabia which can be incorporated into the field of education. Optimistically, it will contribute to connecting teachers with different kinds of knowledge and guide them in how they can change their teaching and create new forms of pedagogy for this new generation of students. These tensions between the traditional and contemporary lead to the study's research questions.

5.2 The research questions

A specific focus on the most important educational frameworks and philosophies in Saudi education, including their benefits and drawbacks was important to the research questions. These issues are pertinent to this investigation in order to develop better understandings of their impact on the latest educational curricula. The principal research question is: *What are the perspectives of male primary educators*

of Arabic language on the use of technology and CLT informed by new understandings of literacy in Saudi Arabia (Tabuk)?

It is very important to investigate educators' views about education and pedagogy theories that are being used, because this helps to identify realities regarding current theories and curricula. Moreover, it can help to predict important issues about the application of these theories and curricula in the educational field, because educators' views regarding old and current curricula can clarify challenges and obstacles that result from using these theories. Additionally, surveys can also shed light on the impressions of educators, as they are the ones who work in the field. This can help paint a clear picture of Saudi pedagogy and curricula for Arabic language and literacy instruction.

The main goal of the research question is to investigate educators' perspectives regarding these theories and curricula, because their opinions significantly impact curricula in practice. To enable the investigation to be more precise, the main question was divided into sub-questions to bring theory and practice together. Therefore, the first sub-question focuses on the current pedagogy for Arabic language instruction in Saudi Arabia in order to identify and compare it with the contemporary curriculum. This pedagogy was the starting point for this study, as the theoretical framework for Arabic literacy and Arabic language curricula were designed in light of it. The aim of the second question was to identify how the contemporary curriculum is used in practice, as well as the curricula and contemporary theories that make up its contents. The second question also examines the influence of contemporary theories on Arabic language instruction. Finally, the

third question aims to examine the role of technology and how it can be used to improve Arabic language instruction, including providing students with communicative tools.

5.2.1 Question 1: What pedagogical approaches exist in Saudi Arabia in relation to teaching Arabic?

Several pedagogical approaches exist in Saudi Arabia in relation to teaching Arabic. These approaches are highly supported by the Ministry of Education to improve the quality of teaching in general education. Throughout Saudi Arabia, there is a strong emphasis to be a part of the digital world (Arabic Curriculum Document, 2007).

Because education is a significant factor in the country's development, the Ministry of Education supports the use of e-government via a portal called 'Saudi' on its website, which provides a connection with over 126 government departments (Kamal, 2012). In addition, there has been an emphasis on the use of electronics in general education. Moreover, as a result of King Abdullah's initiative to digitalise the government, a greater degree of attention has been given to teaching with the use of modern technology to advance learning in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, students are encouraged to communicate in Standard Arabic at their schools.

Through the questionnaire and interviews, I investigated the contemporary curriculum, which implements technology through learning, particularly, teacher-centred versus student-centred, traditional versus contemporary, didactic versus collaborative and negotiated versus interactive learning.

5.2.2 Question 2: How do contemporary curriculum approaches informed by new frameworks of literacy influence the use of communicative language teaching approaches in teaching Arabic?

In the questionnaire and interviews, teachers' understandings of CLT as a contemporary approach were investigated. It is important to identify understandings of CLT to examine how this approach works in practice. The questionnaire also investigates professional development, such as in-service courses that were held before the contemporary curriculum was implemented. In the questionnaire, teachers' perceptions of the traditional curriculum versus the contemporary curriculum were examined. Moreover, the research study intends to obtain their perspectives through feedback regarding how any weakness in the contemporary curriculum could be solved. The interviews undertook an in-depth exploration of teachers' views concerning student attitudes toward the Classical Arabic language, investigating how the contemporary curriculum affects them learning Arabic. The teachers were asked about student-centred and teacher-centred learning in the contemporary curriculum. In the contemporary curriculum, more attention is given to putting students at the centre, led by the national curriculum to be in alignment with the international education system.

5.2.3 Question 3: How does the use of technology in the classroom enhance and promote student use of Arabic for communicative purposes?

Oyaid (2009) argues that the use of technology in schools is more affected by school policy than the Ministry of Education. She also indicates that there are other major barriers to teachers' use of technology, including a lack of time and professional development. The questionnaire examined three main issues. The first is the

availability of technological tools at schools, such as access to the Internet, digital technologies, iPods, iPads and smart boards. For instance, the questionnaire investigated the cost of technology equipment, the number of laboratories and whether all classrooms have technology tools or equipment (all classrooms should have at least a minimum amount of equipment). The second issue concerns the availability of IT, IT specialist staff and their support in the schools, the possibility of using school facilities after school hours, and whether there is a budget for purchasing and maintaining the tools required. The interviews discussed details about technology-related issues related to the contemporary curriculum. Similarly, the future of Arabic curriculum instruction in this digital age was also discussed. As mentioned earlier, the third question presented the practical side of the first question, and the second question was about technology and its role in developing Arabic and literacy curricula through the use of communicative approaches and the modern concept of literacy.

Chapters 3 and 4 examined technology's role in expanding the concepts of the NLT, connectivism and the communicative approach. Therefore, eight sections of the survey were devoted to identifying the technology availability in schools and classrooms, as well as teachers' technology skills, views and opinions about technology use in Arabic language instruction. In order to research these issues, the interviews focused on identifying the reasons for them. Details were presented about technology availability and barriers to technology use. The most important issues related to technology use in the contemporary curriculum were also discussed. Finally, teachers' opinions were surveyed of the benefits of teaching Arabic with technology.

5.3.4 Research design

This research used qualitative and quantitative methods in case studies of schools to investigate male educators' perspectives on the teaching of Arabic, drawing on CLT pedagogy through the use of technology informed by new frameworks of literacy as highlighted in the contemporary curriculum. The study data collected from educators (teachers and principals) from five urban schools in Tabuk included four supervisors (elite professional) from the General Education Department in Tabuk. The schools were located in different locations in Tabuk city.

Due to difficulties in accessing girls' schools, they are not included in this study. More specifically, I cannot communicate face-to-face with female teachers for cultural and social reasons. Moreover, the alternative communication methods used by female teachers may not be sufficient to carrying out the research.

5.3.5 Research paradigm

This section explains the interpretative model of educational research (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Crotty, 1998). The interpretative approach was chosen because it is commensurate with the nature and methodology of this research. The interpretive approach is in conformity with the nature of people and their views about knowledge and the surrounding world. People differ in how they obtain knowledge and deal with the external factors (Dougherty, 1999). Hence, the interpretive approach is suitable for this research, which investigates the views of educational specialists about the research subject, and how these points of views differ between participants, their educational and scientific backgrounds and their philosophy of life.

As a human's beliefs and ideas are translated into actions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003), teachers' beliefs are translated into actions that are manifested in how they teach their students. One important point in this aspect, as mentioned by Almaghlouth (2008), is that the change starts from the philosophy and belief in change by the Saudi teacher. A great deal of changeability is attributed to the teacher, who is considered the starting point in the process of change and supervising the optimal delivery of education.

5.3.6 Research methods

This study combined mixed methods drawn mainly from a qualitative paradigm. Donmoyer (2006) states that the researcher should not use just one research method but multiple methods are better. Research methodology refers to the model, which leads to the research as a whole, whereas the research method is the technique used in obtaining and interpreting the data as indicated by Silverman (2006). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argue that quantitative research deals with a large number of participants in terms of generalising the findings of the result. On the other hand, qualitative research trends more intensively with a small number of participants with less attention to generalising the findings.

This research aims to discover the participants' thoughts, feelings and perceptions about the use of CLT and the NLT with suitable technology tools. Therefore, a qualitative approach is most useful and appropriate, particularly for the social sciences as it provides a focus on describing phenomena for a deeper understanding. For instance, the research questions are open-ended questions that concern the process and meaning more than the cause and effect in quantitative research.

Qualitative research has been referred to as ‘naturalistic research’ because it is interesting, valued and significant in the study of phenomena in the natural context. Also, it is called ‘interpretative research’ because it describes and expands from analysis and interpretation (Cohen & Manion, 1994).

Researchers engaging in qualitative research typically demonstrate a deep understanding and holistic explanation regarding the subject under study. It is often used to gather data in the investigation of learners’ abilities, which might not be obtained through quantitative methods (Cohen & Manion, 1994). Creswell (1998) defined qualitative research as a process of achieving understanding based on the traditions of excellence for social research that detects a social or humanitarian problem. The researcher builds a complex and comprehensive picture, analyses words, prepares a report detailing the views of mentors and then performs the study in the natural situation.

Quantitative research is an appropriate research methodology used to make comparisons between individuals and groups, including large sample groups. It involves obtaining statistics that may not be available through qualitative research methodology. This type of research methodology enables a researcher to make quantitative comparison of groups and social phenomenon in the context of the research, as well as gain a better understanding of the phenomenon under consideration in order to achieve the objectives of the study. Quantitative research focuses mainly on explaining and describing behaviour, rather than providing a basic description of the meanings of social phenomena (Kura, 2012). This type of research is useful for large sample groups because it ensures reliability, generalisability and

objectivity. The techniques employed in this study involve the research participants being randomly selected from a population of interest in a manner that is unbiased. The intervention or standardised questionnaire they receive and the statistical procedures that are employed to test the predetermined hypothesis connects the relationship between particular variables (Lombaerde, Flores, Lapadre & Schulz, 2012). In this study, this technique enabled me to study a small representative sample of a large population and make generalisations of the whole population based on the results.

While quantitative research is more concerned with explaining and defining behaviour through statistical analysis, qualitative research does not deal with numbers or statistics in data collection, but rather obtains it through questionnaires and interviews. Researchers engaged in qualitative research obtain data and information from reality, where the focus is on how learners communicate and live in their society. Qualitative research explains researched phenomena in a manner of expression that depends on structural terms and phrases describing the nature of these phenomena and their interrelationships with each other.

Qualitative research puts together different features, such as holistic, biographic, naturalistic and ethnographic research methods. According to Stake (2010), in the social research analysis framework, qualitative research has shifted the analysis from where interpretation was made based on a 'cause and effect' explanation to one that is based on personal interpretation. Qualitative research is experimental in nature which stresses on multiple realities, that is, it is based on a collection of interpretations. In this research, no single interpretation is considered the best,

however, a researcher should aim to collect experiences, explain how things occur, and work from multiple vantage points. Stake (2010) stated that by apprehending the particulars, researchers gain knowledge and understanding of complexity. This type of research relies mainly on analysing the personal experiences of the individuals being researched, as well as examining the researcher himself/herself. Qualitative research is relativistic and is located in government, corporate and daily life (Chorba, 2011). This research offers a great opportunity for the study of knowledge in the professions.

The qualitative researcher collects data based on the reality of the research environment from samples and participants. He/she focuses on the environment being studied, as well as historical, cultural and social contexts. Qualitative researchers study their participants from various perspectives, which might include the participants' ideas, perspectives, thoughts and reactions, all of which should be investigated naturally. In this study, which comprised of mixed methods, the questionnaire (Appendix A) posed questions to investigate teachers' understanding of the NLT and CLT, and their thoughts and views. Also, regarding the use of technology in the classroom, participants were asked about their use of tools that support CLT in classrooms (video tasks, recording tapes, cassettes and YouTube) in learning Arabic language and literacy. In the interviews (Appendix B), teachers' understanding of the NLT and CLT approaches were investigated and explored in-depth in relation to the contemporary curriculum. The use of these technologies in support of CLT in the classroom was discussed. As teacher perspectives regarding the importance of technology in the classroom are a significant part of their teaching, the questionnaire asked whether teachers were members of associations, blogs or any

other educational forum website regarding literacy, technology and language. These details were investigated in the interviews. In addition, teacher training and the development of their skills in using technology were a significant part of the research, which also examined teachers' views on workshops and in-service sessions regarding the use of technology.

5.4 Case study approach

The case study refers to gathering and presenting detailed information about the research subject or the small group of research subjects, which usually includes a list of the research subjects themselves (Stake, 2000). As the case study is one of the qualitative research resources, it emphasises the individual or small group of subjects and draws conclusions about them within a specific frame (Stake, 2010). In the case study, the researcher seeks to find general and global facts without considering the cause and effect relationships but emphasises on exploration and description.

The case study is considered the oldest form of data gathering in sociology and anthropology (Creswell, 2012) as these two sciences formulated the concept known to us today. However, it is used by many other disciplines, including medicine, social services, education and history. The case study deals with the interference between all variables in order to gain a clear understanding about the situation (Stake, 2000).

This type of comprehensive understanding can be achieved through an approach known as 'intensive description' which includes a deep description of the case under study. Intensive description includes an interpretation of demographic and

descriptive data, such as cultural values and criteria, society values and trends, and their inherent motives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

Creswell and Carrett (2008) note that, unlike quantitative data gathering methods concentrating on quantitative questions, the case study is the preferred strategy when asking qualitative questions. It is also the preferred method in situations where researchers do not have complete control over the situation under study, or when they have an interest in the reality of the framework under study. The case study also aims at providing new variables and questions about a specific situation.

Stake (2000) highlights three types of case studies: (i) intrinsic; (ii) instrumental; and (iii) collective analysis and description of data. Case studies can deal with either multiple or single cases. For single cases, there are two types of case studies: (i) instrumental; and (ii) intrinsic. The case study that is instrumental in nature uses a specific case to provide a general understanding of a particular phenomenon (Johnston, 2013). The chosen case can be a typical case; however, in other circumstances an unusual case may be used to demonstrate overlooked matters in a typical case since the two are subtler there. Hence, a good case for an instrumental case study does not depend on the capability of the researcher to defend its typicality although the researcher has the obligation to provide a rationale for employing a specific case. The intrinsic case study is conducted to provide knowledge about a unique phenomenon, that is, the major point of focus of that particular case (Magnani, 2009). The researcher is obligated to provide distinctive features of a particular case that differentiates it from others, possibly based on the sequence of events or a collection of features. The collective case study is the one conducted on

multiple cases. It is conducted to provide general knowledge by employing a variety of instrumental case studies that either come from multiple sites or occur on the same site. In such instances where multiple cases are employed, the format that is typically followed is to first provide a detailed analysis of each case study and then to conduct within case analysis (present the themes within the case), which is then followed by a cross-case analysis (thematic analysis across cases). Finally, the researcher needs to report the knowledge gained from the analysis.

A case study involves studying 'cases' and investigating a case as one entity with the focus on social, cultural and historical contexts of the participants in the case study (Mohr, 1982). Case studies are useful research methods because they can be used to investigate complex, cultural and social phenomenon within a social field (Cohen & Manion, 1994).

This study employed four types of case studies. Foremost, it used an explanatory case study because it answered questions by explaining presumed causal links in real life intervention (Stake, 1995). It also employed the use of an exploratory case study that looked into situations with interventions evaluated as lacking a single and clear set of outcomes. Furthermore, the study employed the use of multiple case studies to explore the differences between cases (Stake, 1995). Finally, an intrinsic case study was used as the researcher had a genuine interest in the survey to create a better understanding of the concept of literacy.

Explanatory case studies use both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

They explore and give a description of phenomenon but can also be used to explain

casual relationships and develop theory. These case studies are combined under the rubric of qualitative research and are confused frequently with methods such as ethnography and grounded theory as well as known as quasi experimental research. These case studies should consist of an accurate description of the realities of the case, alternative explanation considerations and a summary on the basis of credible explanations that are congruent with the realities (Stake, 2000).

Exploratory cases are at times considered a prelude to the basis of social research and may be used to carry out for casual investigations because descriptive cases require descriptions to be developed earlier before starting a project. This case study typology utilizes methodology in a particular education study by means of a particular pattern matching process. These case studies can be selective, focusing on one or two that are basic to understanding the system examined (Stake, 2000).

An intrinsic case focuses on certainties of one specific phenomenon rather than looking for a generalization of multiple cases, also preferred to as a 'collective case'. A case that concentrates on more than one specific entity or event in multiple case study data is analysed for insights, both within every case and across cases. Multiple cases can be chosen to copy data found within people cases or to represent contrasting predicaments (Stake, 2000).

Care was taken to ensure that the study's sample was comprehensive and representative² of all schools in Tabuk by the five that were selected. First, the schools were categorised by location (north, east, south, west and central). Next, the Tabuk schools were sorted according to specific attributes and characteristics that included the age of schools, whether they are located in government-owned buildings or rented ones, and the economic status of residents in the school's neighbourhood. This technique ensured the five chosen schools represented a large portion of schools in Tabuk and were classified appropriately.

Exploratory case studies are initially aimed at discovering phenomena in data. These discoveries then lead to researchers' interests. In general, exploratory case studies begin with general questions that pave the way for more detailed ones, with a goal of understanding aforementioned phenomena (Zainal 2007). For example, this study began by asking general questions about teachers' use of the communicative approaches. Based on their answers, the interviews then delved into greater depth and detail. Meanwhile, with explanatory case studies, data is examined closely. This analysis, which may be either superficial or in-depth, is performed to explain the phenomenon present in the data. For example, this study also delved into interpretations of phenomena by proposing reasons and causes. For example: *What strategies are used with the communicative approaches, and why are they used?*

² The word *Representative* here is not meant for generalization, but to indicate that these schools are examples of the government schools in the primary schools in terms of students' numbers, modernity of buildings, and the financial status of people.

The purpose of the case study method is to describe real life situations. However, the paradigm is not suitable in terms of generalised findings (Yin, 2003). Stake (1994) argues that case study approaches requires additional effort and time from the researchers. Indeed, time and effort are not a matter that researchers have with useful findings at the end. Also, for a greater understanding of the research questions, a case study strategy is used. A case study focuses on one or more cases in a detailed and accurate way, using all appropriate means (Punch, 2000). There may be diversity in the objectives or questions of the case study, but overall, the goal is to reach the fullest possible understanding of the situation. In this research study, five schools are considered as five different case studies with a focus on each one in their context and natural situations (Yin, 2009).

5.4.1 School selection criteria

The reasons why Tabuk city was chosen as the focus for conducting this research was related to the timeframe allocated to the research and the vastness of the geographical landscape of Saudi Arabia. As an international student, the timeframe available for me to travel to Saudi Arabia was restricted to three or four months. Combined with the vast area of Saudi Arabia to be explored, it was decided to collect data pertaining to one city. Due to difficulties in travel conditions and the distance between Tabuk and Riyadh being over 1000 kilometres, only one city was chosen (Tabuk) to ensure that information was collected accurately.

Five urban Tabuk boys' primary schools were invited to participate in this study from the case study sites. They were chosen based on my familiarity of this area. Having spent five years as a pre-service teacher and a teacher in this region, the

experience has given me an insight into the pedagogical issues facing Saudi Arabia in general.

They were chosen based on the following criteria: (i) location in lower, middle and upper socio-economic status (SES) areas; (ii) number of students in the school; (iii) age of the school building; and (iv) length of time the school in operation (e.g. the oldest school has been operating for 30 years and the newest one for less than two years). Next, there was a diversity of schools with varying reputational levels ranging from schools with a good reputation (called ‘model schools’), to those with a normal reputation and those with a lower reputation. Moreover, schools are carefully selected from all over Tabuk city from the four directions and downtown. Finally, all schools are public schools, but there is a mixture of government-built and non-government-built (rented) facilities.

5.4.2 Participants and selection criteria

The study sample from five case studies included 24 educational specialists who were specialised in ‘teaching approaches of Arabic Language’ in Tabuk city.

Teachers were different in relation to their educational backgrounds, experiences and educational qualifications, which included a high diploma in teaching, bachelor’s degree in elementary education, university bachelor’s degree, and in some instances, a Master’s degree. They were also different in terms of levels and competence of computer literacy.

5.4.3 The participants

The participants in this study included 24 educators, made up of 15 classroom teachers, five principals and five department supervisors. However, one supervisor resigned from working at the Education Department in Tabuk. Therefore, four Arabic supervisors were included in the study (Table 5-1).

The teachers were male primary educators of the Arabic language in urban Tabuk schools in Saudi Arabia who were selected based on their teaching experience, qualifications and computing skills. The teachers³ taught Year 4 and Year 5 students. The five principals were chosen based on their management experience, qualifications and level of computing skills. Finally, the supervisors were chosen based on their experience, qualifications and supervision of the Arabic teaching and curriculum.

The participants fall into two categories in this research: (i) those involved at the five case studies (schools) including the teachers and principals; and (ii) supervisors who are not part of the case study because they are not directly involved in the schools. Table 5.1 presents each case study school and indicates the principals and teachers who are attached to each school. Also, the participants include four allied professional (supervisors): Salem, Saleh, Fahad and Sameer.

³ The participants of the study were not chosen based on their qualifications or experiences, but chosen on the basis that they were teachers of Year 4 and Year 5. There was not a selection mechanism for the rest of the participants; all supervisors in the Arabic department in the Education Division were chosen, in addition to each school director who joined in the context of a research sample.

Table 5-1 Demographic data

Participants	Position held	Experience	Qualification	Age group
Mejel	Teacher	12 years	Bachelor (Primary Education)	30-34
Hamed	Teacher	17 years	Bachelor (Primary Education)	40-44
Hammad	Teacher	16 years	Bachelor (Primary Education)	40-44
Musaed	Principal	26 years	Bachelor of (Arabic)	45-49
Khadher	Teacher	5 years	Bachelor (Primary Education)	25-29
Mased	Teacher	19 years	Bachelor (Primary Education)	40-44
Mansour	Teacher	13 years	Bachelor (Primary Education)	35-39
Yousseff	Principal	21 years	Bachelor (Primary Education)	45-49
Abed	Teacher	13 years	Bachelor (Primary Education)	35-39
Awad	Teacher	1 year	Bachelor of (Arabic)	25-29
Meshari	Teacher	18 years	Bachelor (Primary Education)	40-44
Mussallam	Principal	17 years	Bachelor (Primary Education)	45-59
Mahmoud	Teacher	5 years	Bachelor (Primary Education)	25-29
Saeed	Teacher	6 years	Bachelor (Primary Education)	25-29
Kamel	Teacher	5 years	Bachelor (Primary Education)	25-29
Abdulrahman	Principal	22 years	Bachelor (Primary Education)	45-49
Abdulaziz	Teacher	3 years	Bachelor (Primary Education)	20-24
Asaad	Teacher	15 years	Master	30-34
Mekhlef	Teacher	2 years	Bachelor (Primary Education)	20-24
Ahmed	Principal	35 years	Diploma in Teaching	50-59
Salem	Supervisor	17 years	Bachelor (Primary Education)	40-44
Saleh	Supervisor	15 years	Bachelor of (Arabic)	35-39
Fahad	Supervisor	14 years	Bachelor of (Arabic)	35-39
Sameer	Supervisor	18 years	Master	40-44

5.5 Data collection

Ethical consideration from the Human Research Ethics at the University of Western Sydney (Appendix C) was applied for and granted. After the research was approved from the University of Western Sydney, the Department of General Education at Tabuk also granted approval to conduct the research at Tabuk. With all approvals in place, data collection commenced. In this qualitative research study, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were used to gather information. The interviews were held in private locations at schools, such as in a meeting room, where a brief introduction regarding the interview purpose was explained to the participants.

Moreover, data collection took place by distributing questionnaires to each participant (teachers, supervisors and principals), who volunteered their contribution. The participants were informed that any personal details would not be revealed and pseudonyms were to be used. Before establishing either a questionnaire or interview, the participants were asked to sign a consent form. Participants were also informed that they had the right to withdraw from participating in the research at any time.

5.5.1 Stages of data collection

In this study there were four stages to data collection. Researching and understanding the curriculum document was the first stage, and was undertaken as a reference point to identify accurate details in the contemporary curriculum. Moreover, it was helpful in creating the research questions, especially with regard to the pedagogy that it underpinned, as informed by the NLT and CLT. During the period of data collection,

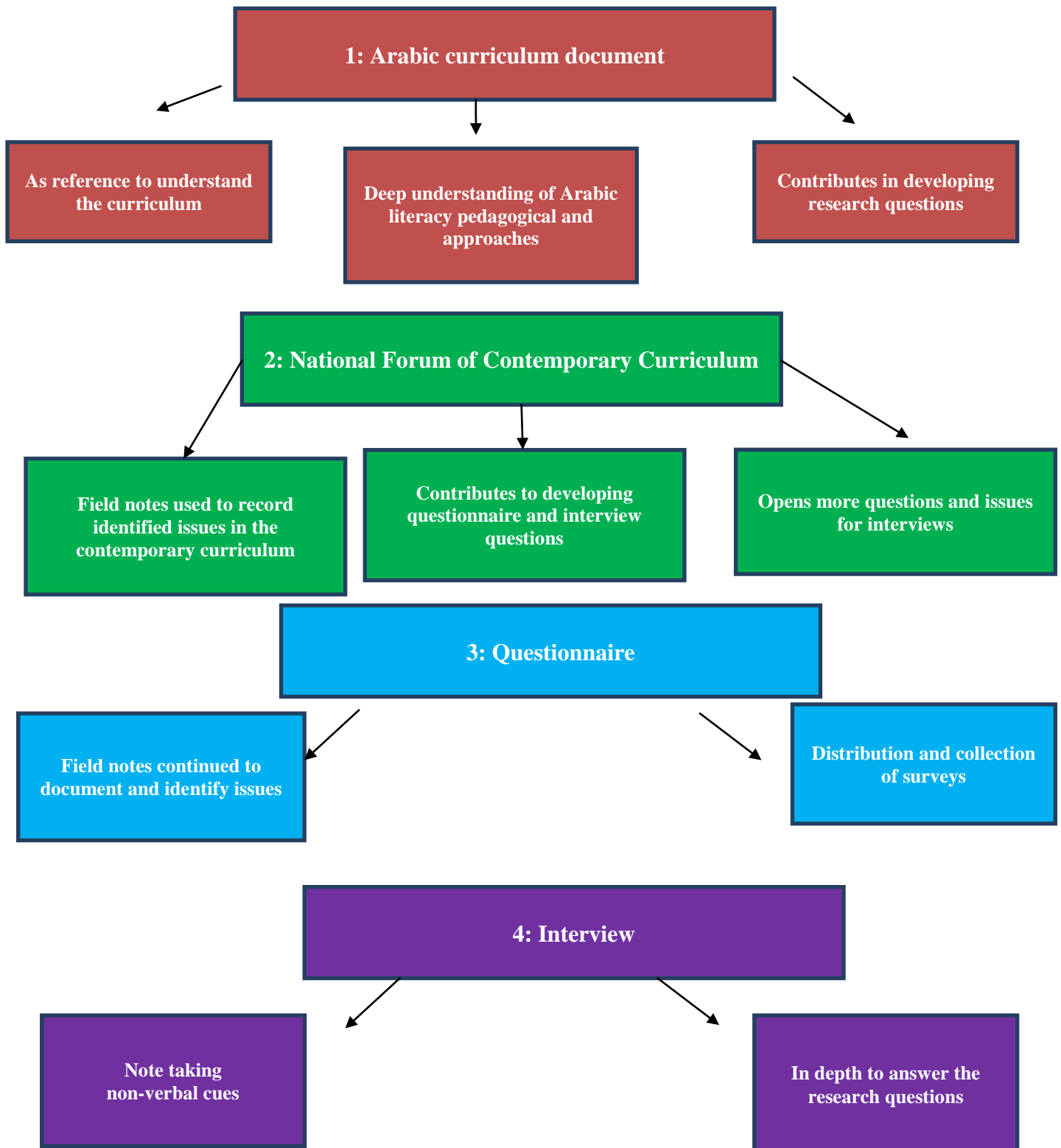
the curriculum was a useful reference point for comparing what is applicable in reality (Diagram 5-1).

The second stage was to attend the curriculum conference. By attending, I had the opportunity to hear different points of view regarding the contemporary curriculum and its issues, as well as other relevant educational issues (Diagram 5-1). This contributed in preparing and creating new questions for the interview, especially with regard to educational leadership, implementation of the contemporary curriculum and controversial views on the contemporary curriculum by educators in various educational levels, that is, primary, intermediate and secondary. Additionally, in order for these views to be accurately observed, field notes were handed out at the beginning of the conference.

Note-taking during the conference allowed for more precise details about the contemporary curriculum. Several workshops and lectures were presented during the conference that focussed on the preparation of teachers in the 21st century and the relationship between theory and practice in the contemporary curriculum.

The third stage was the distribution and collection of the questionnaire, in which I continued to take down field notes to accurately describe the schools. In distributing the survey, there was an opportunity to visit new schools and meet their staff. The fourth stage was conducting the interviews, for which I was well prepared for based on the previous stages (Diagram 5-1).

Diagram 5-1 Data collection stages



5.5.2 Design and procedures of the questionnaire

The survey was designed in relation to the research problem and related issues of the study. However, this process underwent many stages, beginning with experimental distribution to my supervisors and colleagues. This involved the completion of many drafts that were sent to my supervisors for their input. In addition, I sought feedback from two colleagues, one of which is a PhD candidate and the other has a Master's Degree in translation, in order to get their opinions about the survey and make sure that the survey is clear and understandable. After that, the questionnaire was sent to four teachers for the same purpose.

Through the survey, it was possible to identify the views and opinions of the participants regarding the research itself. It can be noted that the survey is an important tool to gather data, and the survey may be conducted face-to-face, through telephone call or by email. I chose face-to-face, which involved delivering the survey in person to the participants because I was not sure that all participants were familiar with emails and technology. It was also a good opportunity to schedule interviews with them during distribution or collection of the questionnaires. I also obtained information from other participants through emailing, when the participants feels able to write and express their opinions freely about the research questions

The questionnaire was designed to collect demographic data and information regarding the research problems and themes. In each school, the participants' experiences of the NLT, CLT and technology in teaching of Arabic were investigated. The questionnaire also investigated workshops or in-services that were held before the contemporary curriculum was implemented. In the questionnaire,

educators' perceptions of the traditional curriculum versus the contemporary curriculum were examined. Moreover, the research study intended to obtain their perspectives through feedback regarding how any weakness in the contemporary curriculum can be solved.

5.5.3 Questionnaire distribution

After approvals from the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Western Sydney, the Department of Education in Tabuk, five primary schools and 24 educational specialists in the Arabic Language Specialty in the Tabuk area were obtained, the survey was distributed in March 2012 to five schools in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia. The questionnaire was also distributed to four educational supervisors in the general department of education in Tabuk. I delivered the survey to the principal of each school, and explained the importance of the survey, giving a brief description of the questionnaire and its importance for full participation, as the survey explored the contemporary curriculum of Arabic language.

I requested that the participants read the questionnaire carefully and fill in the questions, emphasising that they should not hesitate to contact me for further information regarding the questionnaire, if necessary. I also clarified that the participants have enough time to return the answered survey. Some of the participants returned the completed questionnaires during the interview, and some were received from the school administration after several days.

5.5.4 Interview design and procedure

The interview protocol was semi-structured and designed to elicit information about the impacts of using technology with CLT approaches, as informed by the NLT on teaching Arabic. Before I began interviewing the participants, I explained the aim of the interview to each one, and stressed that the data and information would be utilised only for research purposes. I also explained to the participants that they would be assigned a pseudonym, therefore, remaining anonymous throughout the process. Without that freedom, there is every risk that they would fear revealing information or an opinion that critiques the Ministry of Education. Although the expression of opinions and media freedom has evolved in Saudi Arabia in term of the reform movement, some people may not understand the changes in Saudi society and therefore remain cautious about expressing their opinion.

The interview consisted of sections that addressed three problems of the research, and the fourth section dealt with professional development in the field of Arabic language pedagogy, including computer skills, related issues and future prospects about professional development. The personal interviews⁴ were conducted between 28 March 2012 and 25 April 2012, involving all participants in the research without affecting the quality or quantity of information obtained from the participants. I was able to conduct 24 interviews within the specified timeframe for the following reasons. First, the small area of Tabuk city where transportation was easy between

⁴ All the research tools were collected in Arabic, notes, surveys, interviews and the Arabic curriculum.

schools enabled travelling time from the north school to the south school to be less than 20 minutes, especially since I was travelling during non-peak periods.

The participants cooperated effectively and fruitfully, some even offering to attend the interview outside official working hours, or outside the school. Others did not have any problem in attending the interview during weekends; the cooperation was more than required.

The interview started with participants being asked about general questions related to their schools, the contemporary curriculum and teaching Arabic through integrated curriculum and CLT approaches.

5.5.5 The interview

Before I commenced the data collection I had the intention of recoding the interviews from 30 minutes to one hour. However, after I began recording the first four participants for 10-15 minutes, I noticed that they were answering with short diplomatic replies. I decided to stop recording and finished interviewing the participants. I asked them if they felt comfortable to finish the conversation, but without recording it. This allowed four participants to talk freely, without inhibition. During recording, I took notes, but after recording stopped, I had to depend entirely on my notes only. I then decided to not record the interviews with subsequent participants so they would also feel more at ease to talk. Hence, I did not record the interviews digitally, causing me to exert more effort in taking notes during the interviews and ensuring that any minor detail needed to be written down. Moreover,

after the interviews, I immediately expanded on these notes into my laptop by adding more comments and completing unfinished sentences.

The strategy of not recording the participants gave them the freedom to express their opinions frankly and clearly about the contemporary curriculum without limitation or hesitation. In fact, I came from the same environment as the participants and recognised that some do not like recording their answers even though they know that they would not be used except for research purposes. Therefore, this represented a dilemma in that I was aware of the possibilities of schools not participating in the study for fear of reprisals as a consequence of expressing an opinion about the new curriculum. Therefore, if an Arabic language teacher in a specific school refused, his school was excluded and replaced with another one. For example, one teacher refused to participate in the research, so another school was selected.

This was achieved, as the study produced extremely important results that helped answer the research questions. This particular case study is also affected by the lack of previous research conducted in Tabuk city, unlike other large cities. Therefore, the majority of teachers, principals and supervisors are not familiar with research interviews. While many participants commented that the questionnaire is a common research tool, 10 participants had not been involved in interviews before.

This conclusion was reached by a number of research participants, as well as from my experience studying and living there for a long period. Most participants indicated that this is the first time they were interviewed for a research study. Also, the city's university is newly established. At the time information for the study was

gathered, the university was less than five years old. Prior to the university, the only educational institution interested in carrying out educational studies in the city was the Teachers College, which did not have the financial and administrative capabilities to support a culture of educational research in the city. (The college was one of 18 colleges affiliated with the Faculties Agency in the Ministry of Education, that is, the only college affiliated with the agency, and this financial and administrative association affects the college's autonomy).

These circumstances that are linked to the participants and location were considered by me. The decision to not record all interviews may be considered bold, but it was done to encourage teachers to participate in the study and speak frankly and openly when responding to the interview questions. I had to encourage teachers to participate, as they are important to developing the curriculum. Many teachers felt that the curriculum was imposed upon them and they did not want to participate in creating it. They felt their opinions and suggestions were not considered by the Ministry when the curriculum was designed and implemented (Chapters 6 & 7). However, the invitation letter (Appendix E, Arabic version) affirmed that the curriculum's development also depends on their participation in the study, where they can frankly and openly express their opinions and visions about the curriculum.

Because of these reasons, note-taking was selected for this project. By recording non-verbal cues, it will be possible to collate a broader range of data for analysis, which can then be cross-referenced to assess reactions to the questioning process and the possibility of dissembling by interviewees. The method also demanded active listening of the interviewer and thus improves the quality of probing questions. For

example, recoding verbal cues referring to participants' attitudes and feelings by using abbreviations and symbols is commonly used in note-taking. For example, 'T' = tall, 'VPT' = very passionate about the technology, and 'Tr' = prefers the traditional curriculum. These were edited out and replaced with transferable terminology so that the research data can be understood by readers.

One of the research objectives in this study is to find out how teachers encourage students to improvise, critique and express opinions in public without shyness or hesitation. This aim will be difficult to meet if, due to cultural issues, many of the students do not like to be watched or observed, and they exhibit shy or hesitant behaviour. This is also compounded by an existing professional resentment of observation on the part of teachers (O'Leary, 2012) and a risk of insecurity or anxiety among students and teachers alike (Monahan & Torres, 2009).

The key to overcoming resentment or anxiety is confidence. As long as the participants are confident in their teaching, they will not feel insecure about the potential of being under surveillance. D. Davies and Dodd (2002) consider that confidence is rooted in the same ethical issues commented on and is chiefly built by facilitating trust between the interviewer and interviewee; what Grafanaki calls 'a good research alliance with participants' (Grafanaki, 1996, p. 329).

As mentioned in Chapters 3 and 4, this study supports curricula that focus on students by giving them a chance to speak and develop their skills for thinking, conversing and confidently interacting with others in a social way. Without a doubt, teachers play a large role in this, because they are the ones who teach students this

knowledge and experience. Even more important is to understand how to use everything that one has learned previously while interacting and coexisting with one's community. In fact, this touches on the modern concept of literacy.

After finishing with schools and gathering data from the teachers and principals, there were some questions that needed to be answered by supervisors, because they represented the connection between the Ministry and schools. I was eager to meet the supervisors and hear their point of view about the contemporary curriculum.

Note-taking was once again used during interviews with teachers and administrators. They did not respond to some of the questions because they were outside their field of expertise. These questions were more closely related to supervisors and the Ministry of Education. I wrote these notes regarding supervisors during interviews with teachers and administrators. When the interviews were over, I wrote these notes in detail, in addition to other questions related to issues about the contemporary curriculum. The next section presents in detail the role of note-taking and its importance during research interviews. It also addresses note-taking stages and other issues, such as facial expressions and body movement.

Note-taking

R.M Lee (2004) claims that interviews should be recorded electronically so that the researcher can review the information that has been conveyed and can consider it again. It may also be helpful to take notes on non-verbal cues while the interview is being recorded to write down the key points in the interview. Ashmore and Reed (2000) state that note-taking helps in describing an interviewee's physical

appearance. Furthermore, an interviewee's reaction to questions cannot be identified in the tape recording. Note-taking is required to register impressions, reactions, body language and interactions that are better recorded at a time when they occur. The interviews utilise note-taking to describe in-depth special situations and perspectives, behaviours and attitudes about significant issues. More importantly, respecting the participant's privacy and right to decide the terms of the interview is one of the most significant issues in ethical research (D. Davies & Dodd, 2002).

The primary concern in a project of this nature is establishing how data is collected for analysis. In this case, data is collected through interviews, taking a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach. As Polkinghorn (2005) explains, qualitative data frequently comprise of spoken or written words rather than numbers, and the advantage of the qualitative approach is the capacity to generate and analyse greater breadth and depth. A questionnaire which expresses job satisfaction on a 1 to 5 scale may identify how satisfied or dissatisfied a workforce is feeling, but it cannot ascertain why they are feeling that way. In an interview, probing questions can be employed to achieve that further level of insight into cause and motivation (Millar & Tracey, 2009). However, there is a further choice to be made, that is, to what determining whether the interviews are to be recorded (and transcribed) or whether notes will be taken during the interview.

Millar and Tracey (2009) stress the importance of accurate recording in ensuring that interview data is reliably reported and analysed. While they observe that note-taking during the interview can disrupt its flow, they list six reasons against using the tape

recorder, some of which can be reinterpreted as reasons in favour of note-taking. Of particular interest to the research are the following three arguments:

1. There must be clear reasons for using a tape recorder (i.e. an interest in how interviewees articulate their contributions or in every detail of a complete account). In the absence of such a reason, the tape recorder is not strictly necessary.
2. Active listening must continue throughout the interview. It is easy when working with a tape recorder for interviewers to not listen actively because they will be able to 'listen properly later'. Furthermore, the tape recorder cannot substitute for an active awareness of non-verbal cues, which will need to be recorded somehow if they add to or compromise the data.
3. Interviewees may opt out of having their interviews recorded if they so choose, in which case there needs to be an ethical back-up plan, for example, note-taking.

Non-verbal cues during note-taking

Non-verbal cues include body language, body movement, eye contact and facial expressions which occur subliminally through interactions when communicating with others (A. Pease & B. Pease, 2004). This study highlights the importance of using non-verbal cues for participants during the interviews because they accurately express what the speaker means. For example, one participant reported that technology was available at his school. However, it was apparent from the facial expressions and the way he uttered his words that technology was not readily available.

During the interviews, examples of participants' usage of body language and non-verbal cues gave rise to further analysis. This was apparent when one participant glanced insecurely at the door several times during the interview. He was talking quietly while arguing for more technology and facilities to be introduced at his school. Also, an unhappy expression on his face gave a clue when I asked him about the role of participants in implementation the contemporary curriculum. Moreover, one participant hit the table twice while critiquing the education system in the country, another shook his head when I asked him questions, and one talked sympathy during the discussion about the SES of students and their knowledge about technology. Finally, non-verbal cues add valuable insight to the interview data and support the voice of the participants.

Note-taking process

In note-taking, I opted for a three-stage process: (i) preparation of stock interview sheets; (ii) preparation for the interview; and (iii) review of the interview notes. The effects of these stages are outlined in the remainder of Chapter 5.

- 1. Preparation of stock interviews sheets:** All stock interview sheets were printed and organised into six envelopes. Every envelope had the school name written on it. The sixth envelope was for the supervisors.
- 2. Preparation for the interview:** Twenty-four interview sheets that framed the interview as a series of headings and sub-heading questions were prepared to ensure that I could easily take notes on them. Doing so ensured rigour, by providing a framework for each interview and thus a basis for meaningful

comparisons to be drawn between them. It also structured the conversations that took place in the interviews and ensured that similar data was drawn from each.

3. **Review of the interview notes:** After each interview, notes on the sheets were rechecked extra details were added in a *Word* document. Rereading the notes immediately gave me a chance to edit the notes from unclear information or the list of shorthand abbreviations, as well as add extra reflections. Eight teachers gave notes that were helpful for further interviews, such as those who referred to specific information about issues related to principals or supervisors. Consequently, the notes were prepared to question principals or supervisors during their interviews, with an eye to corroborating or contradicting the remarks made by the teachers working under them. Moreover, some notes guided me to explore issues requiring further research in relation to the research topic.

In summary, note-taking was selected rather than tape recording as a means of recording interview data because: (i) it demands active listening on the part of the interviewer; (ii) it allows for non-verbal cues such as expression and body language to be recorded and analysed; (iii) it allows for anonymity of the interviewees to be preserved and thus reduces the threat of compromise posed by the interview situation; and (iv) it presents an air of informality which will encourage 'research alliance' between myself and the participants.

All interviews were conducted in Arabic and noted exactly in a *Word* document. Moreover, they were translated into English. All data was saved on my computer and on an external hard disk. Hard copies of data were stored in a locked cabinet in my office at Building 19, Bankstown campus.

5.6 Data analysis

Data analysis is a crucial stage in qualitative research because it provides an advantage of the research process and gives it special creativity in analysis and synthesis. It is also the stage where qualitative research clearly differs from quantitative research; quantitative analysis is based primarily on statistical processes such as simple averages and analysis of variance, while analysis in qualitative research goes further in exploring the phenomenon to be discussed (Baxter & Jack, 2008). In this study it was a crucial stage.

The data collection stage usually produces a large amount and variety of data, including the texts of interviews, field observations and preliminary comments, along with a wide range of documents on the subject of research. At first glance, the analysis and interpretation of materials collected and extraction of their meaning can be difficult. Therefore, organising data in the correct order leads to valuable results regardless of the amount of data. However, for good researchers, this large amount of data can be useful and a wealth of information can be a source of creativity and in-depth analysis (Punch, 2000).

As explained, the procedure included two parts. The first part began after paper copies of the surveys and interviews were received and placed in six envelopes. The

envelopes were then numbered from one to six, specifically, one to five were for schools, and the sixth envelope was for the supervisors. Participants were also assigned numbers 1-24. For example, participants in the first school were assigned numbers 1-4, participants from the third school were assigned numbers 9-12, and so on, and supervisors were assigned numbers 1-24. After that, pseudonyms were given to participants and assigned to the numbers. The second part of the procedure included the electronic aspect. Participants were arranged into *Word* files, which included their pseudonyms and numbers. The first file was for surveys and the second was for interview transcripts. Notes were written and arranged numerically from 1-24, according to participants' pseudonyms. This enabled easy access to the paper copies and electronic files where all the notes were recorded in. Information could thereby easily be accessed throughout the study.

5.6.1 Stages of data analysis

Data analysis is the process of organising and discussing the text from interviews, survey and field notes collected and organised to enable the researcher's understanding and allow them to share discoveries with others. It includes the analysis of data, which when divided into units, can be handled and synthesised in search of patterns and formats, and to discover important information extracted from the data (K. Richards, 2009). In this study, three crucial stages of data analysis included: (i) organising data (ii) coding and indexing data; and (iii) categorising data. The following section explains each stage in relation to this study.

5.6.2 Organising data

The interview sheets and questionnaires were initially transcribed and then sent to a translator to check the Arabic and English versions. The Arabic version (Appendix B) was needed by the Education Department in Tabuk in order to obtain permission to conduct the research in its schools. After collection the questionnaire, the questionnaire sheets were divided into six envelopes, five of which were presented to five schools and the sixth envelope was given to the supervisors. This organisation of questionnaires assists in conducting the interviews with participants. As discussed, interview sheets were also organised in the same manner as the questionnaire sheets. This data was organised in this way to ensure that they were quickly and easily accessible. In this research, each school was allocated a number, for instance, School 1, School 2, School 3, School 4 and School 5.

5.6.3 Coding and indexing data

After the interviews were conducted, it was necessary to empty the text writing for easy analysis and reflection. In many cases, it may be useful to re-interview the participants, asking them to further explain about several points and add anything appropriate that needs to be clarified.

At this point, a large amount of data was gathered from the interviews, questionnaires and other documentation, such as the contemporary curriculum developing plan and related documents from the National Forum of Contemporary Curriculum. First, the data was transcribed and translated from Arabic to English. This data was set out in a way that could be quickly and easily read by me. In this research, the data was categorised according to schools, for instance, School 1, 2, 3,

4 and 5, or Case 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 as the five schools are five case studies. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) indicate that, in the initial reading of the data, the researcher begins to record a classification system, naming the items that the researcher believes are meaningful in their research; some researchers call for this type of classification (Punch, 2000.) In this study, I used *Excel* for the data analysis of the questionnaire and manual analysing for the interviews.

5.6.4 Categorising data

Categorising data is different from coding data because it does not deal with numeric codes. Rather, it is concerned with placing data into suitable categories or themes. For instance, in this research study, data is categorised as teachers (Te), principals (Pr) or supervisors (SP). Subcategories are created where issues that are relevant to each major category can be thematised. For example, in the Te category, subcategories ranging from teachers who use technology to teachers who do not have been created as emerging themes identified in the data related to teachers. This system has been applied to the two other remaining categories, Pr and Sp. In addition, the transcript has been organised into files under participants' pseudonym, and saved in my computer for easy retrieval. Also, all data was verbatim as it was.

5.6.5 Coding step-by-step

Coding the questionnaire

Initially, I planned to use the original questionnaire document to manually transfer the participants' answers on it. The participants were given numbers 1-24, and teachers were identified as (T), principals (P) and supervisors (S). Then, the *Word*

document was transferred to an *Excel* document to demonstrate data statistically. All graphs and charts present the essential issues relating to the questionnaire. For instance, in the statistics, communicative teaching approach activities in the classroom show that telling stories is the highest activity.

Coding the interview

Thematic analysis is a procedure that necessitates the identification, analysis and reporting of themes (patterns) within data. The analysis describes and organises a data set minimally in rich detail. It is a process that recognises patterns within a data set, where emerging themes become the essential categories for analysis. Codes are developed to represent the themes that have been identified and for later analysis, they are applied to raw data as summary markers (Lounsbury & Boxenbaum, 2013). In this analysis, a priori and empirical codes are employed. A priori codes are generated mainly to represent aspects that have initially been pre-specified. That is, particular issues of interest are initially formulated and often in the form of predetermined research questions (Gibson & Brown, 2009). On the other hand, empirical codes are generated through the exploration of the data set which can either be generated as a priori category or an entirely new category that has not been initially generated in the formulation of the research questions (Gibson & Brown, 2009).

After all information from the interviews was organised and arranged, there was the important coding stage (Appendix D). As mentioned earlier, a priori and empirical codes were used. Next, interview transcripts were written to begin the process of analysing information. In every research questions, there was an a priori code for

information that was previously known or anticipated (e.g. the availability of devices, infrastructure and technical support varies from school to school). There were also empirical codes for information obtained from the interviews. The interviews yielded valuable information, such as technology budgets and issues related to professional development. Next, all a priori and empirical codes were analysed, including all commonalities and differences. This will be introduced in detail in the Chapter 6 (Appendix D).

Survey

The scoring system in this analysis is used as a tool to measure the reliability scoring of the different forms of technology used by participants at home. The scoring system is used to rank items according to their preferences with the item with the highest preference allocated the highest score. This system can be used by study sections or reviewers where technological appliances have the highest rating among participants and hence are the most preferred technological appliance at home. The system provides reviewers with guidance in assigning individual criterion scores and overall impact scores. Hence, reviewers who carefully consider the ratings guidelines of the scoring system used in this analysis can easily identify the highly preferred technological appliance at home. In addition, it will enable suppliers of each appliance to determine the most preferred tool so they can supply more of them to increase their sales.

Relationship between research questions, survey and the interview

The discussion below articulates the various relationships between the research questions, survey and interview. It begins by examining how the survey and the

interview questions worked together to inform this study. It also provides several examples from both the survey and interviews explaining these relationships.

The survey and interview were used in this study to collect rich data. The purpose of the survey is to gain pre-information that informs the focus of the interviews. For instance, the survey's purpose is to collect general information, which is then followed up in greater detail in the interviews. In some cases, data from the survey lead to greater concentration in the interviews. For instance, it helped to ask questions in more detail during the interviews, such as: *Why is there a lack of technology use in the case study sites?*

Simultaneously, the design of the survey was created to help participants choose their answers from a number of choices that included several divisions related to sub-questions of the research (Appendix A). For example, in the communicative approach section, there are many possible answers to these questions that can be time consuming and difficult to address in the interview. Therefore, the use of multiple choice questions was an efficient way of collecting such information (Diagram 5-2).

Moreover, the survey contained three main sections regarding technology: (i) its use and availability in schools; (ii) perspectives of teachers towards it; and (iii) teachers' technological skills. This part of the survey helped give the participants a preview of the first part of the interview, which aimed to address the mentioned parts. In more accurate detail (Diagram 5-2). The sixth section of the survey included general questions about the contemporary curriculum and its applications, CLT approaches and the NLT.

Therefore, the aim of the survey was to obtain general information covering the questions of the research. In contrast, the interview was to provide more qualitative responses from the participants by giving them a greater opportunity to extend and reflect on issues pertaining to their views of the NLT and CLT in the teaching of Arabic.

In the survey questions in Section Six, questions 3-6 are directly related to RQ 1:

What pedagogical approaches exist in Saudi Arabia in relation to teaching Arabic?

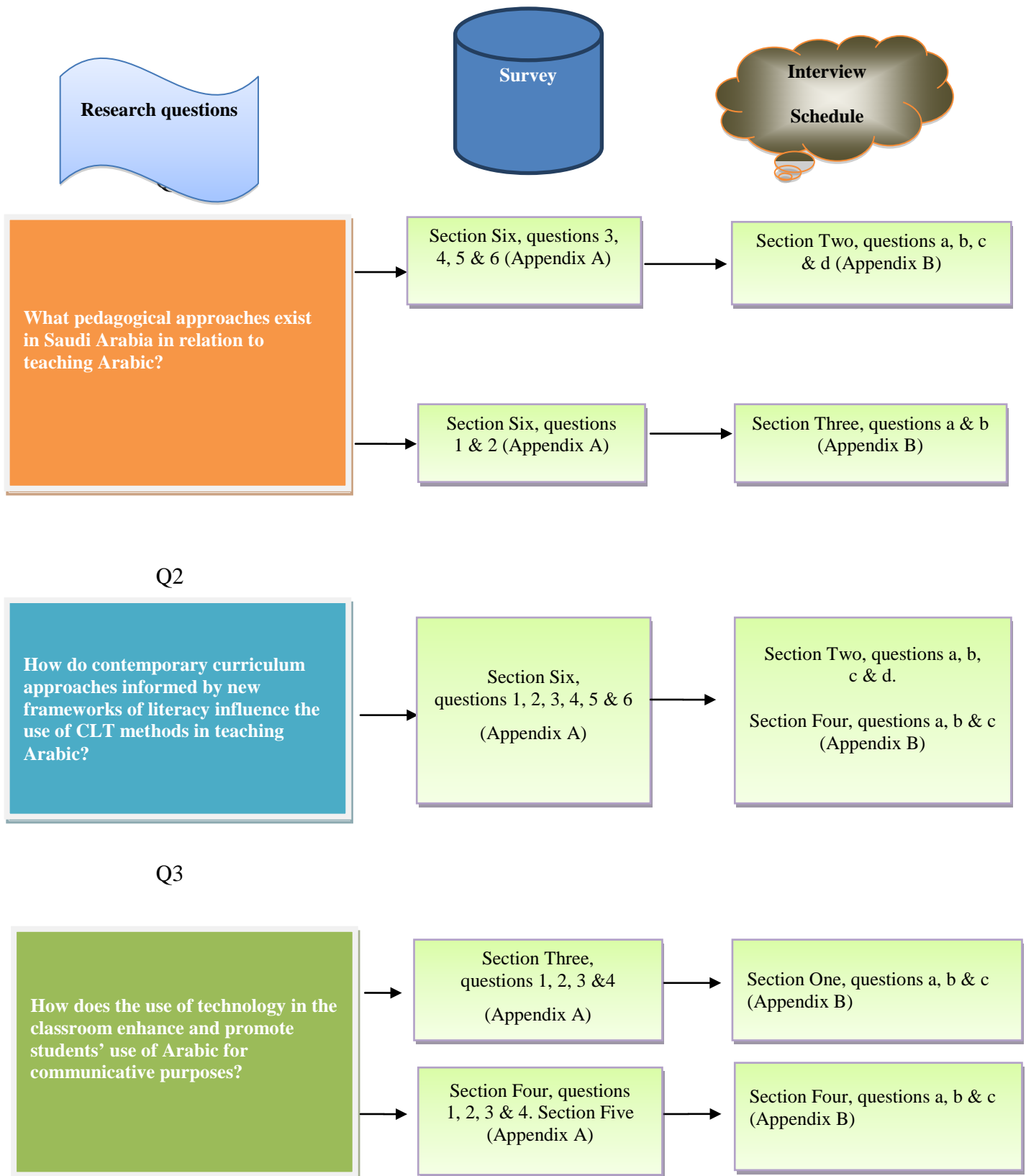
These questions queried the various pedagogical approaches that exist in KSA in relation to the teaching of Arabic and are aimed to ascertain what approaches the teachers implemented that have a focus on CLT. In the interview schedule in Section Two, (a) to (d) are related to RQ 1 in the same way. In the interview, pedagogical approaches in teaching Arabic were investigated in depth. There is a close relationship between the surveys, interviews and research questions. The interview questions in the Section Two were aimed to further investigate the issues connected to contemporary curriculum applications that were the focus of RQ 2: *How do contemporary curriculum approaches informed by new frameworks of literacy influence the use of CLT approaches in teaching Arabic?*

The most important aspect of these issues was participants' understanding of the NLT and CLT. In addition, in the interview in Section Two, it sought to understand the extent of the teachers' ability to combine the NLT and CLT in the contemporary curriculum. In Sections One, 5 and 6 of the survey, the questions focused on the nature of the sources of skills and qualifications that teachers had acquired.

Section Six focused on identifying teachers' perspectives on the use of the NLT and CLT in the contemporary curriculum, which is directly related to RQ 2. This was done through tick boxes, for example, in Section Six question 4, 14 paragraphs about NLT and CLT applications in contemporary curriculum were included. Here, the teachers indicated their opinions about these issues and methods. In the interview, Sections Two and Four aimed to outline the contemporary curriculum's situation and the extent to which it had accomplished its sought-after goals, according to the teachers' perspectives. Also, great importance was placed on the future of the contemporary curriculum through diagnosing and drawing up plans and solutions for effective implementation, according to the teachers' perspectives from their experience and expertise with the contemporary curriculum (Diagram 5-2).

Sections Three, Four and Five of the survey were closely connected to RQ 3: *How does the use of technology in the classroom enhance and promote student use of Arabic for communicative?* RQ 3 was to identify the use of technology in the classroom in relation to how it enhances and promotes students' use of Arabic for communicative purposes. Section Three and its questions 1-4 had an important role in identifying the availability of technology to teachers. Section Four aimed to understand the use and nature of technology used, whether within or outside the school. Section Five focused on teachers' attitudes to technology. In addition, there was a relationship between the interview and RQ 3. Section One of the interview aimed to provide opportunities for participants to discuss these issues in detail. Further, Section Four of the interview addressed particular uses of technology in Arabic, especially related to the language of instruction methods in the contemporary curriculum (Diagram 5-2).

Diagram 5-2 Relationship between the interview, survey and research questions



5.6.6 Reliability of the data

The reliability of data must be further ensured through the maintenance of an objective and unbiased stance and practice on the part of the interviewer (Searle & Silverman, 1997). As a researcher, it was important that the data collected was unbiased and that the information from participants reflected their opinions, views and experiences that were not influenced by the researcher's perspective. Therefore, I chose not to interview colleagues and friends from schools where I have had previous contact.

Arabic translation

The interviews with the participants were conducted by me in Arabic⁵. Field notes taken during the interviews were immediately transferred to the relevant sections of the interview schedule in a *Microsoft Word* document. This process enabled accurate transfer of data in accordance with the interview schedule. Moreover, there were many observational notes taken during the interview regarding body language or expressions of the participants as well as describing the general atmosphere of the interview. Subsequently, these notes helped in the process of analysis. After completing the interview transcripts which contained 45 pages in a *Word* document, and upon arrival in Australia at the beginning of May 2012, I started translating and transcribing them into the English language. Given the need for accuracy, this process took about three months. For example, there were some words, examples and phrases that have no equivalent in English. This required careful checking for

⁵ The interviews lasted approximately 22 hours, 10 of which exceeded one hour, 10 were 50-55 minutes in duration, and the rest were 40-45 minutes.

appropriate English equivalents. After I completed the translation of information from Arabic to English, I commenced the data analysis phase which was conducted in English and detailed in the data analysis phase later in this chapter.

5.7 Documents

The third section of data gathering was to collect relevant documents and directly observe the curriculum progress. I also read numerous resources, such as research journals and scholarly books that are related to the contemporary curriculum, Arabic literacy and the integrated approach. In this context, collecting such documentation formed a significant part of data collection apart from the semi-structured questionnaire (Stake, 1994). In my collection, significant data related to the curriculum policy. Data was collected in two stages: (i) during the first semester; and (ii) in semester two of the school calendar. In fact, each stage presented an excellent opportunity to cover the whole curriculum for the year. Therefore, the participants were updated with the current curriculum and syllabus.

5.7.1 Arabic language curriculum document

The document outlining the curriculum was similar to a map that had been used before, during and after the data gathering stage. It was important to analyse this document and compare it with what is being applied in schools. Also, the following question was asked to all participants in the study: *'Did you read the curriculum document?'*

The Arabic Language Curriculum Document is considered one of the most significant documents referenced in this study regarding the contemporary

curriculum of Arabic language. The evidence it holds is used to determine the theories upon which the contemporary curriculum is based. It acts also as a guide for teachers to familiarise themselves with the curriculum and its educational theories, pedagogies, strategies and language teaching approaches, and especially the Arabic language. When I started gathering the data and conducting the interviews, I asked the teachers about this document and encouraged them to read it and refer to it regarding any issue related to teaching the contemporary curriculum. In addition, I emphasised that the teachers needed to compare the curriculum practices, which are applied on the ground (within the school) with what is written in this document.

5.7.2 National Forum of Contemporary Curriculum

The National Forum of Contemporary Curriculum, which lasted three days in Tabuk in 2012, is considered the most significant phase of data gathering. The forum was the starting point for me, because it allowed me to meet a big group of teachers, principals, supervisors and those who are interested in advancing curricula from all over the Kingdom. I had the chance to become informed of the details and progress of the contemporary curriculum, starting from its preparation, application and continuous adjustment phases which included the National Forum of Contemporary Curriculum.

The notes that I took during my participation at the forum was valuable, because they represented the starting point of the data gathering phase of this research. They helped me also to view the previous studies in terms of what is required by the contemporary curriculum regarding the theoretical and application aspects. The forum was held in the period on 21-23 of March 2012 over three sessions. The first

session addressed the theoretical aspect of contemporary curriculums and presented several research papers related to the contemporary curriculum, developmental phases of Saudi curricula, and the contemporary concept of curricula.

The other two sessions of the forum were effective and important to me as they related to experiences presented by teachers regarding modern and innovative models for teaching in general, and contemporary education curriculums in particular. This included experiences and models of effective, reflective and integrative teaching. These experiences represented evidence that education is transforming from the traditional concept into the contemporary concept. Finally, the workshops of contemporary curricula were very useful because they introduced several aspects of contemporary curricula according to the opinions of educational specialists, including teachers and supervisors, and several issues were discussed regarding the contemporary curriculum, from both positive and negative aspects.

The conference and the experimental sample were the most prominent aids to start the process of gathering information with a clear vision of the contemporary curriculum and its applications in schools. Lincoln and Denzin (2000) believe that the experimental sample is the 'unheard sound' in the search. At this conference, there were diverse opinions of the contemporary curriculum, including one teacher who presented a typical criticism for the contemporary curriculum of the secondary stage in detail. He has been contacted by e-mail, but because this study is focusing on the primary school stage, this teacher was not included in the study.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented the study's epistemological philosophy and its relationship to the methodology. It has offered information about issues related to my philosophy and its influence on the study. After my time as a student at the Teachers College and a student teacher in an elementary school, I become a university instructor and finally, I am now a linguistics student outside my home country. Without a doubt, each factor plays a major role in shaping, my outlook and giving me the perspective of an insider. It is therefore easy for me to come up with numerous points of comparison between Saudi Arabia and Australia, as well as between Saudi and Western education. This helped me study a number of theories and curricula in order to contribute towards developing Arabic curricula.

Moreover, this chapter has examined the research questions and how they help answer the main research question. To facilitate this, the main points of the interviews and surveys are aimed at answering the research questions. The chapter then presented the study's design, which is very important for proceeding with a clear methodology that helps achieve the study's objectives and goals. It also addressed the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the study and compares and contrasts these different approaches as applied to my study. As the case study method is an important tool used in this study, this chapter discusses the different types of case studies with particular reference to my study. This chapter also detailed how participants and the mechanism for choosing them are considered.

After that came the practical stage. The chapter presented information about the data-gathering stage in which data gleaned during previous stages was applied for the

practical stage. At the beginning of this stage, the survey was carefully and precisely designed to help answer the research questions in detail. As mentioned previously, the survey aims to identify information from participants, as well as their demographics. The in-person interview stage came after the surveys were distributed. This stage was designed to obtain more information from participants. Interviews were carried out in accordance with detailed steps, which were designed to reach the most useful results. Additionally, I faced a number of issues while conducting the interviews. For example, one issue involved electronically recording the in-person interviews. However, as I am both an insider and a critical thinker, a solution was found. The solution was to take notes in order to arrive at approximate results. The process of organising, arranging and coding information was also important. Finally, the chapter concluded with other issues, such as reliability of data and the collection of documentation, including my participation at the National Forum of Contemporary Curriculum. Finally, this chapter has examined issues related to the case studies and the study's participants in detail. It also includes a step-by-step description of the data collection and analysis process. The next chapter presents five case studies in detail, as well as highlights the most prominent themes that emerge from the results.

CHAPTER 6: CASE STUDIES

Chapter 6 presents the findings from five schools, namely, Al-Amal, Al-Najah, Al-Wafa, Al-Nahda and Al-Jadida and four allied supervisors. The participants⁶ at the schools are 15 Arabic teachers and five principals, all representing five case studies in depth by analysing significant issues and themes that emerged. In each case, four main areas of investigation included technology, literacy and communicative language teaching (CLT) approaches in the contemporary curriculum, contemporary curriculum implementation, professional development and the future of teaching Arabic by using CLT and technology. Also, research findings are illustrated in detail, linking significant issues that emerged from the case studies and supervisors to the research questions.

6.1 Tabuk profile

Tabuk is located in northwest Saudi Arabia (Figure 6.1) and has an estimated population of around 578,359 (Central Department of Statistic and Information, 2013). The city's residents can be divided into three groups. The largest group is the middle class, whose constituents work for the government, private sector and army, as well as in education and small businesses. Meanwhile, most members of the lower class do not own their homes, but rather live in public housing in various parts of the

⁶ In Saudi Arabia, teachers of public education are appointed by the Ministry of Education. Thereafter, teachers are required to apply to the education department in their area where he/she works in situations where they desire to move to another school in the same area or another school in Saudi Arabia.

city. Members of this class receive support from the government in the form of a monthly salary from social insurance. The wealthy class is small, and its constituents own large commercial enterprises, land and residential buildings. Most members of this group educate their children in private schools or model schools whereas the rest are educated in public schools.



Figure 6-1 Map of Saudi Arabia

Therefore, care has been taken to provide in-depth and accurate descriptions of the schools. Al-Amal School was presented first. It has a large number of students and is located in a middle-income neighbourhood. Next is Al-Najah Model School, which is located in an upper class area, followed by Al-Wafaa School, which is characterised by progress and located in the heart of the city. There is also Al-Nahda School, which uses a rented school building and is located in an old neighbourhood with residents from a common cultural background. Finally, Al-Jadida School is located in a new neighbourhood and is currently under construction.

6.2 Case studies

6.2.1 Case study one: Al-Amal School

School profile

Al-Amal School is referred to as like a megacity due to its large number of students. When I informed my teacher colleagues that this school would form part of the research sample, they wished me ‘good luck’. My colleagues considered that conducting a study at Al-Amal was a difficult task, especially in a large school such as Al-Amal, because teachers are busy with big workload. Administrators are also busy dealing with students’ many different problems. I learned this later after repeated visits to the school.

However, this did not discourage me from visiting Al-Amal School, as the research requirements must include a sample school with a large number of students. The school is a primary school from Year 1 to Year 6 located in an old neighbourhood in the eastern suburbs of Tabuk city in Saudi Arabia. Al-Amal was established more

than 30 years ago, but has been fully renovated. The school is characterised by huge yards and external playgrounds with a small indoor soccer pitch and an internal yard located in the middle of the three storey building.

Al-Amal School is located in an old crowded neighbourhood surrounding by narrower streets than those near other schools. Around 2010, approximately 1200 students attended the school. However, many students and their families left the area and headed towards the southern region of the country during the war with the Houthis⁷ as their fathers worked in the army sector, who contributed to reducing the number of students in the school from 1200 to 1000. The average number of students in the classroom range from 42 to 45 students.

Reflections about the school

Before I visited the school, I was very eager to discover what the school looked like and thought about the students in the classrooms. A school with over 1000 students needs a strong management team to cope with such large numbers. When I visited it for the first time, I became aware of the problems associated with teaching large numbers of students, particularly as there were only 28 teachers, resulting in a ratio of one teacher to 37 students.

⁷ The Houthis are a tribe who are located in Sa'ada in the North of Yemen. There was an insurgency between the tribe and the Yamani government in Sa'ada, which caused six wars between 2004 and 2010. Saudi Arabia got involved in the sixth war, between November 2009 and February 2010. Saudi Arabia accused the Houthis of illegally crossing the Saudi border. The seventh war began on March 2015.

I arrived after the second lesson of the day⁸. The noise of the school introduced me briefly to the extent of the school population. I walked into the gate and looked to my right and saw a large number of students playing in the schoolyard – running, chasing each other and racing. Yet I did not see any equipment in the schoolyard for students' play during the break. In fact, my concern was about the practicality of the contemporary curriculum in this highly populated school. Large numbers in classrooms may be a hindrance for some contemporary teaching strategies. For instance, implementation of the contemporary curriculum, such as study groups and discussions, may not be appropriate with large numbers of students.

The participants

At this school, four participants volunteer for the study, Mejel, Hamed, Hammad and Musaed (the principal), and they have more than 12 years experience in teaching. All teachers teach Year 4 and Year 5. Mejel has strong skills in computing as he uses the Internet every day. Hamed has several qualifications in IT, holding a Diploma in Applied Computing, qualifications in Computer Maintenance and an International Computing Driving Licence (ICDL), and he uses the Internet daily. The principal, Musaed, also uses the computer and the Internet everyday to conduct school administration work. While Hammad does have the skills that Hamed and Mejel possess, he only sometimes uses the Internet or computer (Appendix F, Table 1).

⁸ As detailed in Chapter 5, most of the field notes were written during the visits to schools while collecting data. However, there were additional reflective comments while writing this chapter, in order to include important and relevant information regarding the schools and their neighbourhoods.

6.2.2 Case study two: Al-Najah School

School profile

Al-Najah School was chosen as a model school. In Saudi Arabia, a model school is one that represents all other schools, and is characterised by qualified teachers and has an acceptable number of students being a maximum of 25 per classroom. Model schools attract qualified teachers to work and gain benefit from the extra facilities provided, such as smart boards that are not available in other schools. The majority of model schools in Tabuk are private schools that are granted accreditation from the General Educational Department in Tabuk. In the city of Tabuk, there are only five model public schools among 88 primary schools (Tabuk Education Department, 2012), of which Al-Najah School is one of them.

Al-Najah School is located in the north of Tabuk in a region that is modern and inhabited by middle and upper social class families. The school is connected to another big building, so it is located on two byroads. Although the school has been established for nearly 10 years, it was renovated and repainted recently. What draws a visitor's attention to the school are its walls which are decorated with paintings and beautiful writings. The interior of the school is no less impressive than the outside, with its clean facilities and indoor/outdoor areas. A prominent feature of the school is the automatic bell, which is set to go off at the beginning and end of class rather than doing this manually.

The school is also distinguished from other schools because it has two computer laboratories, workshops for learning resources, and a library equipped with a data projector. Laboratories are available only for upper classes (Year 4, Year 5 and

Year 6) with one introductory class in each semester. The computers in the classrooms (Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3) were purchased at the expense of early year teachers. In addition, teachers of upper classes may take students to the laboratories after requesting the necessary reservation of the workshop through the school administration.

Reflections about the school

Since Al-Najah School is considered a model school, many hopes and aspirations are built around the school; therefore, expectations are high. The school principal, deputy and teachers who were interviewed at the school contribute to its uniqueness. For instance, the participants' commitment in interview time was higher than other schools. In fact, the school's administrators stayed focused on coordinating with teachers in advance in order to save their time and mine. They notified me about the teachers' office hours and available times so that I could coordinate the interviews in light of teachers' schedules.

However, I was disappointed that the availability of technology did not meet my expectations of what I considered a model school should have. For me, a model school means having technology available in every classroom, that is, more than one computer and display device. The expectation was based on what was mentioned in the media regarding the 2.3 billion Australian dollars King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Education Development Project, (Kamal, 2012). Hence, I assumed that Al-Najah School's budget would fulfil the model school aspiration, however, the model school is very ambitious, and its budget needs to be commensurate with its ambitions in

order to provide the latest technologies, such as electronic whiteboards, in the school and classrooms.

The participants

The participants at Al-Najah School comprise of Khadher, Masad, Mansour and Yousseff (the principal). The participants are four teachers from a total of 22.

Khadher is the newest teacher at the school with five years' experience. The other teachers, Masad and Mansour, are more experienced, having two years' experience.

All teachers generally have intermediate skills in using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and use the Internet mostly every day. As the principal, Yousseff has advanced skills in using computers and the Internet (Appendix F, Table 1).

6.2.3 Case study three: Al-Wafa School

School profile

Founded more than 30 years ago, the Al-Wafa School is located in one of the largest districts in midtown Tabuk city where the neighbourhood consists of a middle class population with a small percentage of low-income people. There are 18 teachers and approximately 560 students at the school. Therefore, the teacher/student ratio is one teacher for 31 students. The school is located on three sub-streets very close to another school. On the other side of the street, residential buildings are separated from a mosque with one sub-street. The school features a large yard with an external basketball area and football fields. The school building occupies approximately 40 percent of the total school area, and there are 15 classes in total. Additionally, the

school consists of two floors, a large room for teachers, a large room for school management and a hall for art education and hobbies.

Reflections about the school

Al-Wafa School is located near an old trading market facing carpentry shops and furniture stores. A mosque is also located just north of the school. Many foreign workers work in the market and stores near the school. Inside the school, there is a large soccer field and a small area for basketball and handball. Additionally, a courtyard between the two playing fields exists but does not contain any playing equipment. Rather, it is used for the school assembly. Al-Wafa School has been selected due to its location in the centre of Tabuk city, which fulfilled the selection criteria that a school must be located in the CBD of Tabuk.

The classrooms are mainly located on the first floor, but Year 4 and Year 5 classrooms were on the second floor. Moreover, I noted that classes had poor equipment and some classrooms did not have curtains, which affects the clarity of vision on the screen of the laptops. For example, Abed mentioned that he closes the door of the class by using a chair because the lock is not working properly. The school has two playgrounds, the first is a basketball court and the second larger one is a soccer field. The inner courtyard is used exclusively for school morning assembly.

The participants

The participants at Al-Wafa School comprise of Abed, Awad, Meshari and Musallam (the principal). Abed has 13 years' experience in teaching and has a Certificate in

Introductory Computing. He considers himself to be a moderate user of the Internet and computer, perhaps two to three times on the Internet and on the computer weekly. Awad is a freshman teacher with one year's experience. His usage on the Internet and computer is similar to Abed. However, Meshari with 18 years' experience in teaching has a Diploma in Information Technology. Musallam, the principal, has over 21 years' experience in teaching and has a Diploma in Teaching. All participants at the school do not use the internetInternet and computer every day – only two or three times a week (Appendix F, Table 1). The school has one computer laboratory, which has a data projector and computers that are considered old.

6.2.4 Case study four: Al-Nahda School

School profile

Al-Nahda School is located in a low and middle class suburb of old South Tabuk where neighbourhoods are characterised by old buildings, and the infrastructure is weak and deteriorated. The school is located on a commercial street next to a large block of land, and consists of a three-story building. Adjacent to the school is another large block of land used as the school playground. The capacity of the school is reaching its limit as there are over 600 students enrolled at the school. The classrooms are only 4m x 4m or 5m x 4m in size. The teacher/student ratio is a one teacher per 28 students.

Thirty percent of schools in Tabuk city (Okaz, 2013) are rented. A large number of parents are illiterate. The school principal mentioned the difficulties caused by low

SES. For instance, he explained that parents come to school to register their Year 1 sons because they could not do that electronically via the NOUR website.

Reflections about the school

I had to ask friends and colleagues to direct me to the school in the southern suburbs because I was not familiar with the school and its surroundings. In fact, I have not ventured into this part of Tabuk for more than 15 years. The first day I visited Al-Nahda was very interesting because my directions to the school were from a map on a piece of paper hand drawn by a friend who explained how to get there.

The school building is a typical rental school, that is, the premises was originally a residential building leased out to be a school. The school building is neither old nor modern. It is narrow and small. When I entered the school it seemed like I was entering an apartment block, because the office of the principal is next to a classroom and the stairs are a few metres from the principal's office. Adjacent to the principal's office was student advisor's room while the deputy principal's office was located on the second floor. Also adjacent to the school building is a block of land approximately half the size of the school building, used as a schoolyard for the students. Twenty-five percent of the playground is covered, whereas the rest is empty with no equipment for playing sport, except soccer goals.

The participants

The participants at Al-Nahda School comprise Mahmoud, Saeed, Kamel and Abdulrahman (the principal). The participants are four out of the 22 teachers at the school. Mahmoud and Kamel have five years' experience in teaching each and use

the Internet every day. Saeed has six years' experience in teaching and he sometimes uses the Internet and computer. The principal, Abdulrhman, has almost 20 years' experience in teaching and has an ICDL Certificate; he uses the Internet and computer every day (Appendix F, Table 1).

6.2.5 Case study five: Al-Jadida School

School profile

Al-Jadida School is located in a new western district of the city of Tabuk. The school can be seen from a distance with no residential buildings adjacent to the school building; therefore, it is surrounded by empty spaces. The school is deemed new because it was established two years ago based on the modern style pursued by the Ministry of Education in building public schools. The neighbourhood consists of middle-class residents who are offered government grants to build houses with facilitated mortgages. Compared to Al-Nahda school, a rental school, Al-Jadida School is considered quite suitable with no more than 600 students and 20 teachers, resulting in a teacher/student ratio of one teacher for 30 students.

This school includes an impressive computer laboratory for the upper classes (Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6), as well as a centre for educational resources, such as a smart board. With regard to the use of technology by teachers and the learning resource centre, most teachers revealed a shortage of teaching aids, such as CDs and DVDs carrying the contemporary curriculum. Usage is limited to the smart board and computer lessons in each class (Appendix F, Figure 4). One participant commented on the disorganised booking system for the laboratory and that it needs better organisation by the laboratory official. Findings from the survey demonstrate that

more than half of the participants reported that there is no clear schedule for the laboratories (Appendix F, Figure 2, column 5).

Reflections about the school

The first time I visited Al-Jadida School I heard dogs barking as I drove towards it. I looked out the car mirrors and saw several dogs chasing the car. Immediately, I thought about the students who come to school on foot. In other words, I had some concerns about their safety after seeing those wild dogs. When I wandered inside the school, I remembered Al-Nahda School and its leased building and realised the great importance of this vast governmental building. Classrooms are large and new with external playgrounds and a large indoor covered yard, surrounded by three buildings of the school.

The participants

The participants at Al-Jadida School comprise of Abdulaziz, Asaad, Mekhlef and Ahmed (the principal). Abdulaziz and Mekhlef are part-time teachers, each with three years' teaching experience at adult schools. At the time of data collection, they were both in their second year teaching at this school. AbdulAziz and Mekhlef use the Internet almost every day. Asaad has a Master's Degree and ICDL and almost 15 years in teaching. Asaad is an advanced user in specific programs. Besides that, he was in charge of IT development at the school. Ahmed, the principal, has 35 years' experience in teaching and uses the Internet and computers twice a week (Appendix F, Table 1).

6.2.6 The supervisors

Supervisors work at the General Education Department in Tabuk, Arabic language division, where four of them participated in the study, namely, Salem, the head of division, Saleh, Fahad and Sameer (Appendix F, Table 1). All the supervisors visit schools, supervise and observe teachers. They use a program called 'Fares', which allows them to organise and manage their visits to the schools and assess the teachers. Salem and Saleh are the only supervisors who train teachers in the contemporary curriculum besides performing their duties as supervisors.

6.3 Themes emerging across the case studies

This section presents key themes that emerged across the case studies⁹. As the research questions addressed pedagogical approaches in Saudi Arabia in relation to the implementation of the contemporary curriculum by new frameworks of literacy in the use of CLT approaches, the discussion that follows presents the themes through the use of relevant quotes from participants, tying them into the study's theoretical framework and exploring whether they support the aforementioned themes. Relevant literature is also examined. The six major themes emerging across the case studies are concerned with: (i) teachers' perceptions and understanding of the new literacy theory (NLT); (ii) their implementation of CLT approaches in the contemporary curriculum; (iii) tensions between traditional and contemporary curriculum supporters amongst the participants in this study; (iv) lack of

⁹ An issue related to analysis, for example, activities like stories, drama; discussions were analyzed on the basis that they include the CLT. Another example, some skills like critical thinking and pictorial reading as an indication of the NLT and illiteracy practices.

opportunities for professional development; (v) I T provision, access and use of technology; and (vi) issues in leadership and change. All the data seemed rich, significant and related to problems and themes in this study. The main concern was to pick the major findings. Hence, six significant findings were selected carefully to be the main findings in this research.

6.3.1 Perceptions and understandings of the new literacy theory

Theoretical frameworks that conceptualise literacy in 21st Century literacy are not clear to many teachers. As discussed in Chapter 2, the NLT is a broader and more contemporary concept to the acquisition of languages and literacies in an integrated approach rather than a fragmented approach (Cruickshank, 2006; Dooley, 2009; Gee, 2004; Jones Díaz, 2007; Luke, 2003; Street, 2013). In relation to RQ 1, findings from the interview demonstrated that teachers differed in their understanding of contemporary curriculum. Data from the interviews demonstrates that one third of the participants understood the NLT and identified its skills and application in the learning of Arabic. For instance, Mejel from Al-Amal School remarked:

Yes, I understand what you mean by new literacies theory. However, a lot of work needs to be done before this concept can be applied. Teachers need to understand their role better. By this, I mean their role with students and their relationship with society.

Nevertheless, the other participants considered the contemporary curriculum to be a failure in reading and writing skills, because the old curriculum focused only on reading and writing, while the contemporary curriculum expands to cover all language skills associated with using technology. For instance, Salem, one of the four supervisors who supervise all Arabic teachers at Tabuk city schools,

commented, ‘To be honest, personally I’m not satisfied with teachers’ performance regarding my supervision visiting; I would say 20% of the teachers understand the curriculum’ (disappointed look). Moreover, Masad who is a teacher at Al-Najah School commented, ‘This is a lack in reading and writing in this curriculum compared to the old curriculum, I’m concerned about the students’ proficiency in these skills’ (serious face). As Asaad (from Al-Jadida School) remarked, ‘Hence, I noticed that the correct perception of the new concept of teaching literacy, which is connected to technology has not reached those who teach this curriculum.’

Saeed commented:

We must deepen the love of reading in the hearts of our students through attracting them to the library, which shape we need to change to commensurate with the young children. For example, it should have colourful walls with graphics, and other things to entice children to love their school and encourage them to constantly visit it to read and know.

Many teachers think that some of the vocabulary used in the contemporary curriculum is arduous. For example, Khadher (from Al-Najah School) stated, ‘There is a poem by the poet Ma’ruf Al-Rusafi called Akibbu ‘ala Al-Khawan that contains vocabulary which is difficult for Year 4 students.’ Old poetry usually contains difficult vocabulary, which reflects the social environment of its time. The traditional curriculum includes a number of ancient Arabic poems that are not in touch with the reality of how students live. This is justified as an effort to fill students’ lexicons.

Today, however, the curriculum focuses on the NLT and its comprehensive and social concepts, which focus on achieving communicative objectives and social communication. Kamel (from Al-Nahda School) observed, ‘Some words in the

curriculum are rarely used, to the extent that I saw some words for the first time, and I looked up their meanings on my cell phone' (smiley face). This may be the result of remnants of the traditional curriculum, namely, its insistence on teaching students a huge number of words in order to develop their reading and writing skills. On a positive note, Kamel used his iPhone to find the definition in less than 10 seconds. Doing so in front of students helps strengthen technology's role in student research and learning.

In this study, contemporary theories of literacy were not clear to teachers, or the concept was not fully understood. Within a contemporary context, the teaching of literacy today corresponds with the overall concept of language teaching which became widespread in the developed state for language teaching and in particular, the English language.

Fahad, the supervisor, added:

The students nowadays are different from the students in the past. The NLT as approach cannot be understood immediately, teachers admired and mentioned several aspects relating to NLT such as exploring meaning or reading and writing to critical thinking, describe picture, strong oral communication skills and activities.

Moreover, data from the survey shows that several NLT strategies are highlighted in the contemporary curriculum. Data from the survey showed that teachers use several NLT strategies. For instance, almost two-third of the participants reported using picture talk activities, encouraging their students to express opinions about social issues. Over one-third use *Microsoft Word* and more than half use scanning and critical thinking about texts, images and film (Appendix F, Figure 13).

As Jones Díaz points out (2007, p. 32), ‘Literacy is a tool with which our values, attitudes, aspirations, opinions, dreams, goals, and ideas about the world are constructed, shared, represented, reconstructed and deconstructed.’ Therefore, understanding the different theoretical perspectives on literacy that acknowledge social and communicative practices is the first step to developing the concept of literacy (Cruickshank, 2006, Dooley, 2009; Gee, 2004; Jones Díaz, 2007; Luke, 2003; Street, 2013).

As discussed in Chapter 4, it is evident from the literature that the scope of Arabic language pedagogy research on the NLT is insufficient in Saudi Arabia. Firstly, the ability to read and write is acknowledged but other skills of literacy are under-acknowledged. Secondly, no special analysis is devoted to literacy as a social and communicative practice, which may develop different communication skills on literacy acquisition. Ali (2011) explores the contemporary concept of reading, but they do not draw on the NLT. Ali (2011) points out that reading passage is a centre of other skills such as writing, reading, listening and speaking. Moreover, Salem (2001) indicates that literacy learning is influenced by the Internet. However, the author’s assumptions are based on examining several American cases in learning literacy through the Internet.

Researchers and theorists hypothesise the impact of technological development on literacy education. Meaning-making that result from reading, viewing, producing, responding to and understanding digital text are some of the new literacy approaches jointly referred to as ‘multimodal literacy’. One emergent theme in multimodal literacy is the effect of changes in technology inherent in writing, producing on

screen and reading compared to reading and writing on print media (Pimpa, 2008). The development of Web 2.0 technology instigates the second theme of concern, that is, changes occurring in the social practice of literacy that have exponentially expanded and transformed with the development of the technology (Pimpa, 2008). As discussed in Chapter 3, technology and the Internet have contributed to the development of the NLT. In relation to RQ 3, findings from the survey showed that almost two-thirds of the participants reported that technologies support learning literacies (Appendix F, Figure 7, column 3).

With the spread of smart devices, it is now easier to surf the Internet at all times. In Saudi Arabia, these smart devices have become common among all age groups and classes of society. The Internet and related applications and search engines, which are all accessible from a single device, have helped diversify information sources. Children love the entertainment and games on these devices, which is beneficial because children learn through play (Gee, 2014). This is where, as mentioned in Chapter 3, the NLT presents a comprehensive concept to help children learn how to send emails, surf the Internet and use useful applications that help them study and research, as well as other applications that help develop their listening, conversation and writing skills.

This concept focuses on teaching literacy in a holistic manner and involves reading writing, listening, speaking, viewing, critiquing and using digital media, and technology (Gee, 2007). For instance, at Al-Amal School and Al-Najah School, as observed by many participants, especially at Al-Amal School, there is a lack of teaching reading and writing (literacy) competency. Since this case has been repeated

at Al-Najah School, there is a need to focus more on the contemporary curriculum, and to convey this concept to teachers in order for it to be understood clearly and firmly.

The principal at Al-Najah School (Yousseff) did not hide his admiration for the old curriculum, particularly its reading and speaking, citing that many of those who studied the old curriculum can read and express themselves better than our current students. The principal commented, 'In the past, you find someone who has completed primary school only, but writes better than high school students in the present day' (said in a loud voice).

The principal's opinion is respected and there is some truth in it; however, scientific evidence and reliable research is required to prove its worth. The percentage of old people who are able to read and express is not known. The contemporary curriculum aims to develop students of all language skills, and teach them in an integrated manner where each skill complements the other.

At Al-Amal School, Musaed, Hammad and Mejel believed that hopes and aspirations are placed on the contemporary curriculum in terms of transitioning from teaching Arabic as a separate material (reading, grammar, spelling, writing and calligraphy) to an integrated approach that combines all Arabic language skills. Moving to a contemporary approach will not be simple, as expressed by one participant in the research, Abdulraham, the principal of Al-Nahda School, said, 'All efforts shall be combined in this transition (interlock fingers) in order to achieve the application of this new approach starting from home, school and the Education Department.'

6.3.2 Time

Nine participants expressed the belief that activities in the contemporary curriculum needs time to be implemented, and the allotted time is not sufficient. Moreover, participants believe that the time allotted for courses is insufficient, for example, at Al-Najah School, Mansour described, ‘The time allotted for the course is not sufficient for fully achieving the curriculum requirements. The class lasts 40-45 minutes, and this affects the implementation of the curriculum in general and causes teachers to focus on the most important things in the course.’ Moreover, data from the survey reveals that over two-thirds of the participants reported that the contemporary curriculum requires additional lessons for better implementation (Appendix F, Figure 12, column 2).

This causes many teachers to focus on activities that are important from their perspective. For example, some activities build skills for conversation and oral expression, but some teachers ignore these activities because the class size makes it impossible to complete them in the allotted time of 40 to 45 minutes. This may be the reason why some teachers resort to teaching the old curriculum, which allocates time to each skill. Data from interviews shows that seven of the 24 teachers considered that shifting between skills at the same time may confuse students and impair their understanding of the course content.

6.3.3 Rote learning grammar

In relation to RQ 2, findings from interview revealed that more than two thirds of the participants stressed the importance of focusing on listening and teaching skills through drama, acting and storytelling since these activities break the routine of

grammar translation and learning literacy as taught in the traditional curriculum. At Al-Jadida School, Abdulaziz began with expressing his admiration for the style in which grammar is introduced in this curriculum, stating, 'It was presented in a form interesting to the students.' The data from the survey shows that over half the participants reported that in the contemporary curriculum, grammar is taught through indirect approaches as one of the CLT activities (Appendix F, Figure 13, column 17).

Basic grammar *القواعد* *Alqawaed* [Grammar] is taught to elementary students, while more advanced grammar *النحو* *Annahu* [Syntax] is aimed at higher grades in secondary school and college. Arabic grammar has been the topic of many studies addressing both content and approaches for teaching it (Al-Rikabi, 1996; Cruickshank, 2012; Madkour, 1991). The contents have been a topic of linguistic research, including approaches used for teaching grammar (Al-Rikabi 1996). Recently, the use of contemporary approaches of instruction has been noted. These approaches include teaching through the use of drama (Kukhun & Hania, 2008; Schejbal, 2006), integrative approaches, CLT approaches and the analysis of instructional positions (Qaranah, 2005). Toaima and Alnaqah (2006) proposed that language proficiency is not achieved by teaching grammar and translation, which is a prevalent approach in teaching Arabic to Arabic and non-Arabic speakers. As mentioned in Chapter 4, these approaches that emphasise translation are still present in the Arabic language (Al-Rajhi, 2006).

6.3.4 Communicative language teaching approaches in the contemporary curriculum

In relation to RQ 2, findings from the survey and interview data showed that there was a strong theme in participant views of the importance of focusing on all language teaching skills through drama, acting and storytelling (Appendix F, Figure 14). This represents a clear break from traditional approaches to grammar translation and learning literacy that are emphasised in the old curriculum. Abdulaziz (from Al-Jadida School) commented, 'I emphasised on the importance of CLT approaches; such as the use of video in teaching, because it fits with the wishes of the students who tend to narrative and drama style.'

Abed (from Al-Wafa School) believed, 'Certainly, children enjoy stories, and this is natural. I noticed that students are more engaged with the lesson with these approaches.' Also, Asaad (from Al-Jadida School) commented, 'Students like new and non-traditional approaches of instruction. Stories, games and role playing are very entertaining for them.' Data from the survey shows that most of the teachers were interested in using storytelling as a CLT strategy (Appendix F, Figure 13, column 1).

Perhaps the most important finding in relation to the contemporary curriculum is that the understanding of holistic approaches to teaching language is still unclear for teachers. There is a consensus that an emphasis on dictation and Arabic grammar is reduced in the contemporary curriculum compared to the traditional approach where teachers have found that spelling and rules have a lesser share in this curriculum.

Mahmoud (from Al-Nahda School) stated, 'The grammatical features in the contemporary curriculum are much less when compared with the old curriculum.'

In relation to RQ 2, data from the interviews revealed strategies for CLT implications as commented on by Abed (from Al-Wafa School):

By showing a fictional story about an ideal class that shows students participating and commenting on images. Training students to use their vision to read quickly while understanding what they are reading, and training them to extract specific information about the topic. Students expressing opinions about a particular topic. Experimenting with approaches for writing letters, including different types of letters. Teaching students empathy by having them portray different characters. Gaining language skills by using them real life situations

Sameer (supervisor) commented, 'The activities make students love the language more and take a greater interest in trying to use proper pronunciation and usage, which gradually helps students overcome the diglossia of and differences between the written and spoken language.'

In addition, Hammad suggests, 'The narrative manner uses stories to teach students things like diacritics, including فتحة *fatah*, كسرة *kasrah*, ضمة *dammah*, سكون *sukoon* and شدة *shaddah*.'

The findings also display the applications of the communicative approaches within the contemporary curriculum. The results showed that participants utilise communicative approaches with students for various skills, and employ these techniques in an integrated and comprehensive manner. In contrast, it was found that some participants mixed approaches by using CLT activities to support discrete reading skills, such as teaching students how to pronounce letters and diacritics.

Cruickshank, (2012) indicated that literacy in Arabic is different from literacy in other languages. A number of linguistic features make Arabic unique. In Arabic, a word's pronunciation may differ even when its form and spelling remain the same. Vowel, doubling and germination diacritics change the sounds of words and their meanings. Therefore, proponents of the traditional concept of reading stress that Arabic literacy is specific to those acoustic issues. Supporters of the traditional curriculum believe that literacy instruction in elementary schools should include alphabet letters and their sounds so that students can recite them, even though traditional methods are based on memorisation and rote learning.

6.3.5 Tensions between traditional and contemporary curriculum supporters

Despite limited understandings of the NLT and its application in the teaching of Arabic, some participants view the contemporary curriculum as a quantum leap in teaching the Arabic language. At Al-Jadida School, Mekhlef believed, 'The new curriculum encourages students to innovate and use technology for communicative purposes in their daily lives.' As indicated by Mahmoud (from Al-Nahda School), 'The curriculum helps the further aware of what is going on in the outside world.' Moreover, Mejel (from Al-Amal School) commented, 'This is the right way to teach Arabic – like the Arabs did in the age when they sent their children to the desert to learn the language through practice and speaking' (hitting the table gently). In addition, Mekhlef (from Al-Jadida School) remarked, 'Sometimes, I use stories and role playing in grammar lessons, and I have found that students absorb more this way.'

The contemporary curriculum focuses on students and makes them the centre of the educational process. The role of the teacher in the curriculum is to guide, counsel and follow-up. In addition, Arabic language skills are connected and interdependent, which facilitates the acquisition of these skills within a contemporary global educational model. In the contemporary curriculum, new skills are offered to the student, such as critical thinking, skimming, scanning, perception reading skills and expression. In relation to RQ 3, findings from the survey revealed that almost half the participants reported that the student evaluation process may change with the use of technology in the future. For instance, student usage of technology can be increased outside the classroom, such as submitting their homework via email (Appendix F, Figure 6, column 1).

Despite this view, the reality is that most villages are equipped with the necessary service telecommunication devices, such as the Internet network and satellite, and it is clear that the Internet is considered to be just as necessary in the villages as in the city. In addition, the Bedouin¹⁰ population in Saudi Arabia was around 80 percent before the foundation of the country in the late 1940s. However, after oil was discovered in 1938, people moved to the city for a better life, education and occupation (Al-Ghathami, 2004). Currently, the population of the desert is less than 2 percent and village residents are less than 10 percent of the overall population of Saudi Arabia (Central Department of Statistic and Information, 2013). Issues

¹⁰ Bedouins are people who live in the desert; they travel from one place to another where they find water and grass for their cattle. In the mid-1930s, settlement of Bedouins was important to build the state of Saudi Arabia. After the discovery of petrol, the Bedouins' willingness to move from the desert to civilisation increased as they had greater access to jobs and a better standard of living.

associated with technology and SES are highlighted by Abdulrahman the principal of Al-Nahda School who commented:

Abdul Rahman, the principal of the school, comments:

This neighbourhood is poor and lacks a lot of services; the rate of illiteracy is also very high among the parents (illiteracy in its traditional meaning). There is also a high rate of computer illiteracy as many parents come to the school to enrol their children in Year 1 provided that they can do that by logging into (Nuor website). Parents justify that by saying that they have no computers in their houses to do the enrolment process.

On the other hand, Asaad remarked confidently, ‘This curriculum has been applied five years ago in the eastern province as an experimental approach and proved to be successful there.’

There is no doubt that the contemporary curriculum requires technology in the school environment, which can be easily provided in the city and villages simultaneously. Inhabitants who live in the city and villages tend to come from homogeneous backgrounds, cultures and religions, and therefore are not as exposed to diversity as urban communities. Therefore, students from the villages need greater input into understanding the world, given the homogeneity. Findings from the survey demonstrate that more than two-thirds of the participants reported that technology is required for implementing the contemporary curriculum (Appendix F, Figures 7, column 5).

However there were views about the contemporary curriculum not being relevant or appropriate for elementary students, as evidenced by Hamed (from Al-Amal School):

I think that the contemporary curriculum has some advantages, but in fact, I strongly support the old curricula. In addition, this curriculum is not suitable for primary stage, as it is more suitable for middle and secondary stages. This curriculum is difficult to be understood by our students, and it is not appropriate for our society.

Primary education is a crucial stage in student education because it establishes a child's character, behaviour and ways of learning. As argued by Hamed (from Al-Amal School), 'Students cannot understand some controversial issues in the contemporary curriculum because they are too young.' However, in a globalised world, students can access any issue or information they want. For instance, issues relevant to senior students in the past are now discussed and negotiated in the digital generation through the Internet and social media. Hence, younger children have quicker access and negotiation to issues that emerge in our contemporary society. For instance, younger children can now access the Internet through smart phones, a common device in most Saudi households.

On the other hand, Meshari (from Al-Wafa School) strongly criticised the contemporary curriculum, 'It was still experimental and not yet official. I wished to return to the old curriculum since I considered that the advantages of the contemporary curriculum were much less apparent than the disadvantages' (angry face). He confirmed his support for the old curriculum because he believed that it was more suitable to the age level of the students, asserting criticism for the current education system in the country rather than the contemporary evaluation currently in place in schools.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the contemporary curriculum comprises both traditional and new approaches in language pedagogy. For instance, there are lecture, group

discussion, pair work and self-learning approaches. Ahmed (2014) claimed that *حلقه* *Halaqah* [Circle] can be a pedagogical approach, particularly in critical thinking, *تفكر* *Tafkur* [Reflection]. This approach originated from the Islamic Methodology, as there are many Qur'anic verses that need thinking, dialogue and peaceful discussion. The *halaqah* approach was affected by these activities originating from the Islamic Spirit.

However, some Arabic schools implementing a traditional approach do not officially support group work because teachers believe that it is not useful for large class sizes. These teachers are following the teacher-centred approach which they think is more appropriate for their big classes, that is classes with more than 35 students. Group work in these classes would require at least nine groups, which would require too much time to conduct the exercises.

In addition, in relation to RQ 2, data from the survey showed that most teachers use formal Arabic in discussions in the classroom or when students ask questions. On the other hand, slightly fewer teachers reported that informal Arabic is used during discussion and very few reported the use of informal Arabic when students ask questions. This is a good indication for students to practice the target language in formal and informal Arabic (Appendix F, Figures 10 & 11).

Asaad, (from Al-Jadida School) supported this view, stating that the contemporary curriculum is interesting, and as for students,

Students usually talk about the curriculum and the pictures, songs and audios they include among other things, particularly the stories in textbooks. Most

teachers agree that the contemporary curriculum is highly relevant to the global curriculum in teaching and learning language.

6.3.6 Professional development opportunities and pedagogical approaches

The third part of the interview addresses the issues associated with professional development in terms of the content of professional development, opportunities and incentives to attend seminars and in-service training. All those who were interviewed believed that there is a need for greater opportunities for professional development for teachers in the implementation of the contemporary curriculum and the use of technology.

Professional development (in-service)

This section presents an overview of the most important issues related to professional development, which revolve around specialised trainers and their ability to train teachers for the contemporary curriculum. Other issues related to the professional development sessions include: (i) timeframe; (ii) time of offer; (iii) how participants find out about them; and (iv) where sessions are to be held. Professional development content is also an important issue that elicits various opinions from participants, as well as the continuousness of professional development. Finally, there is the role of technology in technology development programs, including how technological tools are announced and used as useful tools in professional development programs.

In relation to this, Mansour (from Al-Najah School) commented, ‘I think that some of the trainers are incompetent for training, they just read from the papers and they

are limited to the information contained in these papers (unhappy face). I prefer the courses shall be outside official working hours away from the pressures of work.’

On the other hand, one of the most significant findings was the lack of specialised trainers. Saleh (supervisor) commented, ‘We train teachers, but we are not specialists in training. We need training specialists who have sufficient expertise in implementing the new curriculum.’

In order to obtain a high standard in professional development, effective instructors are in demand during this process. They are encouraged to effectively participate in these programs. The specialised instructor has the ability to deliver the content of these programs in a highly efficient manner. In relation to RQ 1, data from the interview revealed that many instructors were not specialized, which explains why the professional development programs did not achieve their goals, and this affected teachers’ understanding of the contemporary curriculum.

Conversely, school principals considered that teachers are responsible for their own professional development and it is incumbent upon them to look for courses and programs that meet their professional needs. According to the principals, it is the teacher’s responsibility to be aware of notifications and announcements regarding the contemporary curriculum provided by the Department of Education website.

The previous issues may be interrelated and form an integrated system that affects the success of training programs. Having qualified specialised trainers who are familiar with the latest technological tools in the fields of curricula and education is needed to drive training.

As mentioned previously, the academic load is a prominent obstacle that affects a large number of participants. It is very important for the timing and duration of training to be appropriate for teachers. Training must be offered at different times, such as in the afternoon and evening, or during the weekend. For instance, Sameer was satisfied about the preparation of the contemporary curriculum, ‘The training has been established on week one with 22 programs and providing good materials to attendees in Tabuk.’ Meanwhile, Abdulahman, principal of Al-Nahda School, commented, ‘Despite that the teacher is required to develop himself and depend upon himself in searching for courses, yet Education Department has not informed us officially with special dates for such courses.’ Furthermore, in relation to RQ 1, findings from the survey demonstrated that that less than half of the participants reported that workshops and in-service courses should be available and accessible, as well as educational forums regarding the contemporary curriculum (Appendix F, Figure 9, columns 2 & 4).

Mahmoud commented:

Professional development during official working hours disturbs the academic schedule, and it may even disrupt it. Teachers are not mentally prepared for training, as they have just completed a lesson and dealt with students’ commotion. They then go to training, which requires a clear head.

There is a significant role of professional development in the implementation of the contemporary curriculum. Importantly, participants suggested that professional development courses for teachers should be continuous, because it would lead to more focus on the advantages and improve weaknesses. The preparation of the contemporary curriculum took place in the beginning of Semester 1 1432 H

(September 2010). For instance, there is a strong theme from the participants that there was not enough preparation for the curriculum. This postponement of preparation affects teachers' understanding of the contemporary curriculum and its implementation.

Khadher commented:

I attended a 14 hours training on contemporary curriculum. However, I believe that it is essential that there should be an orientation week at the outset of each semester on teaching contemporary curriculum, so that teachers would remain updated with the new and beneficial with respect to the curriculum.

Others were highly critical about the way it was offered. Sameer also remarked:

There are courses held in the academic semester, but only for new teachers who are newly hired. In fact, any teacher needs to attend courses and workshops so they can deal with the contemporary curriculum, even if he has the experience and skill. The teacher who teaches the curriculum must attend courses on curriculum, whether in the first or second academic semester.

Another important factor in the success of professional development is teachers and their desire for self-development. For instance, Abdulrahman, principal of Al-Nahda School stated, 'Despite that the teacher is required to develop himself and depend upon this in searching for courses, yet the Education Department has not informed us officially with special dates for such courses.'

It is difficult to grasp the contemporary curriculum in just a few hours or days. As mentioned earlier, continuous training is necessary and extremely important.

Teachers should attend sessions at the beginning, middle and end of each semester.

This would help them put theory into practice and apply what they learnt in the training sessions. Teachers could also retain much of what they learnt in these

sessions and use it in the future. Al-Dakhil (2014) mentioned that teachers in Finland attend seven days of training sessions per year. He stressed that it is essential for training programs to focus on technology and its uses.

The next section will discuss pedagogy, curricula and the most prominent issues related to implementing the contemporary curriculum, as well as issues related to curricula and training.

Pedagogy of the curriculum

One important points raised in the interviews was the need for professional development to address specific issues of pedagogy in relation to the curriculum. Another strong theme identified in the teachers' data was that workshops have concentrated mainly on how to evaluate students, rather than focus on important aspects related to teaching the curriculum in a contemporary manner which enables the teachers to teach all the Arabic language skills during the one lesson. For instance, Mejel remarked, 'There is a need for training to address specific issues of pedagogy in relation to the curriculum such as CLT approaches. The workshops have concentrated mainly only on how to evaluate students' (serious look).

In relation to RQ 1, findings from interview demonstrated that a strong theme from the interviews showed that in-service on the contemporary curriculum should be more specialised in addressing the components of the curriculum. For instance, Khadher commented:

Attending workshops is not compulsory for the teacher, which means that the teacher's attendance stems from his attitude, and the encouragement made by the school administration to attend these sessions and workshops. Teachers

should be encouraged to attend workshops, in order to enhance their understandings about the curriculum.

Additionally, according to Mansour (from Al-Najah School):

Courses offer the opportunity to meet other teachers and exchange experiences among themselves. They should also drift from being traditional by the use of the approach of instructing as followed by some coaches. We do not go for this approach in teaching so how can we accept it in training? Workshops and working in small groups to understand the details of the curriculum is more effective and useful for those who attend training courses.

The issues revolve around where training is done, the trainers, what is presented in the training courses, and teachers' participation in the courses (specifically new teachers). From the participants' interviews, many opinions and views regarding the training programs and plans have emerged. But it was apparent from the education administration that teachers are the ones who would search for training courses. That is, school administration will undertake the task of getting teachers into training sessions. Meanwhile, school principals only inform teachers about the training courses. It would be more useful to have marketing material for the training courses, for example, a special committee that visits schools and highlights the importance of training to the curriculum and listens to teachers' opinions and suggestions about the training programs.

The content presented in training programs is also very important. This content should focus on how to teach the contemporary curriculum and integrated language curricula, including more focus on practical aspects than theoretical ones. In addition, there are significant issues about what teachers achieve from professional development. Many training programs are designed without surveying teachers' opinions about training programs or the topics that they would like to see covered.

Provision incentives to attend in-service professional development

As the attendance at workshops was not compulsory for the teachers, those who did attend were driven by positive attitudes and encouragement from the school administration. There was a consensus amongst the participants that teachers who attended these sessions and workshops should have been rewarded financially, as their participation is often outside official working hours. At Al-Jadida School, Ahmed, the principal, suggested:

The teachers should be evaluated after the sessions, like testing teachers to measure the extent of their understanding, and their comprehension of the course content. I also suggested that they be rewarded based on their attainment in the test and in those who fail, should not get the bonus.

Since a reward does not exist, it is merely a recommendation; the idea of testing the teacher may make him feel that he is still a student, so he may not accept the idea because it is understood that attendance is not mandatory. Nevertheless, this suggestion may provide some incentive for some teachers to attend professional development with regard to the contemporary curriculum. Finally, Musallam offered useful comments regarding the process of professional development for teachers, 'Professional training programs should conclude teacher testing in order to assess the extent to which they understand training session content. I propose using monetary, results-based incentives in order to motivate teachers.'

This suggestion seems punitive rather than democratic and supportive. Perhaps a more positive and inclusive approach would be to evaluate the content and delivery of professional development in order to facilitate improvement and attendance. The crucial issue is not about teachers' assessment after attendance at professional

development but how to deliver professional development that is of relevance to teachers implementing the new curriculum. There is a strong theme from the participants that professional development on the contemporary curriculum should be more specialised, addressing the components of the curriculum. Sessions should deal with multiple aspects in detail, such as student assessment, use of technology in teaching and use of an integrative curriculum in Arabic language. At Al-Wafa School (Abed) commented:

I had attended a very helpful session last year, yet I wish the sessions to be intensive; that is more than one day in order to cover all aspects of contemporary curriculum. I also wished to have a training course on the use of educational media in teaching.

One solution that is appropriate for training and may help in encouraging teachers to attend training workshops is to establish a school that hosts training and workshops to be located at each end of Tabuk. For instance, a training school to host schools in the east, middle, south and west regions of Tabuk. Even teachers feel a sense of change is needed to get away from the routine of conducting training in only one place. In addition, this concept would ease transportation issues as most teachers live near their schools.

The majority of participants believe that teachers who attend training sessions and workshops should be rewarded financially, because participation is often outside official working hours. It is reasonable to be compensated with an annual bonus for attending courses because the person who delivers the training receives a payment.

Also, Mahmoud said, 'We are all involved in such development process; we must leave recriminations and blaming each other, and do our utmost for the success of

this curriculum' (said with passion). Saleh's comment refers to training that is not compulsory, 'Well, it is the school management's responsibility to inform teachers about training dates. The announcement about training is in the Education Ministry website Lughatai or supervision website.'

Professional development and pre-service teacher education

Perhaps there is some connection between what educators learn in institutes of higher education, from education colleges and universities, and what they apply in their teaching. The focus is on educational institutions, from colleges to teacher training institutes where teachers received their education, because these organisations provide the first support in creating teachers of the future. It is very clear from the interview data that teachers do not have a clear understanding of the NLT. Meshari (from Al-Wafa School) commented, 'There is a lack of coordination between colleges and schools, as most of the people who established this curriculum are university professors. However, I am talking about what is studied in universities and its relationship with educational realities.'

Al-Rajhi (2006) suggests that there is a lack of academic guidance surrounding Arabic learning and how teachers should be teaching. Little attention is focused on academic strategies in order to develop the language teaching pedagogy. Thus, the first step in developing language teaching is for well-organised standards to match the contemporary language pedagogy. Furthermore, teacher preparation is an issue for ensuring effective teaching. This task is very much left to the individual to establish what they need or want to teach. There is a lack of academic guidance as to what students should be learning. An integration of new technologies into the

learning process would result in teachers being able to facilitate education and have a better understanding of student needs. As previously mentioned, in Saudi Arabia, Arabic is taught separately from other subjects (fragmented curriculum). As such, there are no connections among language skills unless individual teachers do so while teaching.

6.3.7 IT provision, access and the use of technology

As mentioned in Chapters 3 and 4, connectivism is a new theory for learning that emerged in the technological age. The survey's findings show participants having expectations and aspirations for the concept of education in the future, as well as for the way the learning process occurs, specifically with social networks and communication channels that support the learning process outside the classroom. For instance, the data reveals that almost all participants believe that several aspects of the curriculum contemporary depend on student-centred approaches that use various networks for learning (Appendix F, Figure 12, column 3).

Moreover, in relation to RQ 1, data from the survey demonstrated that less than half the participants reported that students will use technology outside school, such as sending emails and visiting school websites (Appendix F, Figure 6, columns 1 & 2). As discussed in Chapter 3, connectivism theory asserts that learning no longer occurs solely through formal education. Today, education occurs in different ways, that is, through personal, societal and other communication channels. Moreover, technology is altering people's minds because of devices that help shape their thinking. Finally, there is increased interest in what is known as 'connective knowledge' and 'learning

networks' (Downes, 2005). This theory is seen as a gateway to analysing the relationship between individual and organised learning.

A strong theme that emerged in the data from the teachers was that their classroom lack the necessary means of technology, such as computers, data project devices, DVD and other electronic devices, whether visual or auditory (Appendix F, Figure 4). The finding from the survey demonstrates that almost all the teachers use the computer and have good access to the Internet at home (Appendix F, Figure 5, columns 1 & 2). However, at school usage on the computer dropped to half of the participants and for the Internet access two-third of the participants (Appendix F, Figure 3, columns 3 & 8).

In relation to RQ 3, data from the interviews revealed that most participants indicated that their schools lack IT maintenance and support, access to computer laboratories and educational software (Appendix F, Figure 2). The results also indicated that a large percentage of participants believe the Internet is widely available. In the Al-Wafa School, due to a lack of technology there are limitations to the extent to which participants can use the Internet, that is, only two or three times per week; even though they have technology certificates (Appendix F, Table 1).

This is evident in the level of technology usage across most schools in this study. For example, a major issue evident in two schools (Al-Amal School and Al-Wafa Schools) was poor Internet coverage. For example at Al-Amal School and Al-Najah school, the insulation of the walls limits the spread of wireless network to all parts of the school. Another issue is the Internet coverage does not cover all parts of Al-

Najah School. The main reason is the insulation of the walls limits the spread of wireless network in all parts of the school. To solve this problem, several routers should be installed throughout the school.

Another problem faced by schools is the wireless network which does not provide coverage to all parts of the school due to insulation problems and the need for more routers to be installed. This problem exists also at Al-Amal School. At Al-Wafa School, the school suffers a severe shortage in the availability of technology. It lacks a computer laboratory, in addition to the poor wireless Internet network covering only a small part of the school. Al-Wafa School does not have any technological tools at all, however, an updated wireless network would allow students and teachers to use their personal devices. For instance, all teachers think that classrooms do not have sufficient access to technology in classrooms (Appendix F, Figure 4).

The most controversial issue related to the use of technology in Al-Amal School is access to the school's personal identification number (PIN) for the Internet wireless network. Mejel from Al-Amal commented:

The PIN number is given to those who are close to and have good relations with the school administration (disappointed face). Moreover, the password is changed periodically so as to resist users. But the participant who raised the issue said that I'm not interested in the wireless network, in fact, I have my own Internet connection for my laptop.

The computer network does not cover all parts of the school, particularly the upper floors, which causes a recurring problem in all schools. Also, the Internet coverage is limited because the neighbourhood and the Internet services are still under construction and third generation is not available. The computer laboratory manager

said he tried to solve the Internet problem but after several attempts, including with a modem, discovered that the problem is the fault of the service provider.

Abdul-Aziz concluded: ‘The Ministry should provide a computer set and a projector. The Ministry can do that in hours if it wanted to; there are huge budgets allocated for education, so why not?’ Also, Musallam, principal of Al-Wafa School, remarked, ‘We asked for new computers and electronic whiteboards for the school a number of times ...’ Abdulrahman, principal of Al-Nahda School, said, ‘They told us our room is too small to be used as a computer lab. It is indeed small.’ Moreover, in relation to RQ 3, the findings from the survey showed that more than two-thirds of the participants thought that school and classroom size could be a hindrance in the use of technology (Appendix F, Figure 7, column 12).

Yousseff remarked on an issue regarding communication by technologies:

We send all the letters we receive from the Education Department to the teachers who have email. As for communication with families, mothers are more connected with the school administration via email, and they contact the school to inquire about their children’s academic achievement.

The last issue related to technology and its uses in schools is the lack of any budget for technology. The principals of the five schools complained that the general budget of their school is minimal and that its allocations should be much higher. School budgets are allocated by the General Education Department in Tabuk, based on numbers of student enrolled at the school, as explained by Fahad. Another important issue is there was no budget is allocated for technology at the national level, although King Abdulla’s agenda for the government is to move all state institutions to a distinct technological system at a huge cost.

The Al-Wafa School principal acknowledges that budgets for technology are integrated within school budgets, however, they are insufficient and not in line with the school's ambition. He also confirms that he has requested for computer sets, data projector and other devices for his school. At the time of the interview they were yet to be received. Awad believed, 'Technology cannot be used in all classes (head shaking), but confirmed the usefulness of using video in explaining lessons because they are closer to students, attract their attention, and encourage them to participate actively.'

Abdulrahman stated:

Tendency to technology has improved. Previously, we are not in favour of dealing with technology, but it is no longer like that now; we are so fond of it now. I have an iPhone and a Laptop, and my little daughter uses computers easily though she's still pre-school (laughs).

In relation to RQ 3, findings from the survey demonstrated that most participants have a positive attitude toward technology (Appendix F, Figure 7, column. 3).

Kamel also commented on the role of technology in gaining and learning language:

Technology helps developing the curriculum. In the past, a seeker to learn English language had to register in an institute for the same. But now the Internet and technology have significant impact on self-learning; which also applies to Arabic language and literacy learning. Technology makes learning language skills much easier.

Data from the survey shows that the majority of participants emphasised the role of technology on students' performance (Appendix F, Figure 7, column 1).

As mentioned in Chapters 3 and 4, technology plays an important role in language teaching by increasing communicative interactions between students. The data from the surveys showed that two-thirds of participants believe that technology has a role to play in acquiring literacy and language skills (Appendix F, Figure 7, column 3). Moreover, data from the interviews also supported such benefits of technology. As mentioned in Chapter 4, Youtube is an excellent method for learning language. For example, many channels on Youtube provide lessons aimed at developing a range of language skills in addition to the ability to chat with the owner of the channel or other commentators.

In relation to RQ 1, findings from interview showed that traditional literacy supporters tend to stick to the traditional approaches of instilling knowledge through reading and writing. The contemporary curriculum expects teachers to engage students with interactive approaches of learning changes within society. Cultural beliefs limit most of these approaches of learning in the Arabic nations. The NLT is demanding and requires digitalised approaches of teaching that most Arabic teachers are not conversant with.

6.7 Leadership and change

One most prominent finding observed during the interviews concerns the relationship between the superintendent and participants from the case study sites, that is, teachers are dissatisfied with the administration. This was observed from teachers from Al-Amal School whose facial expressions, facial features and manner of speaking made this apparent. For example, Mejel and Hamed talked about how the Internet password was changed and only given to people close to the superintendent,

even though all teachers are entitled to use the Internet. As result of this situation, the administration affected the extent to which teachers support and accept the new curriculum. A sound analysis is that the administration's interactions with, and treatment of, Hamed and Mejel may be a factor in their opposing the new curriculum, as the superintendent is responsible for helping to implement it. An instance was when Mejel commented about the PIN being changed and not available for use. Another example is mentioned by Hamed, 'What change do you expect from a principle who is almost about to retire (head shaking)?'

In contrast to Al-Amal School, teachers at Al-Najah School praised the administration and believed the superintendent, deputy superintendent and the student counsellor cooperated to create an environment of equality for teachers. As for Al-Wafaa School and Al-Nahda School, the teachers had more contact with the deputy superintendent than the superintendent, which may be the result of the administrative burden on the two superintendents. Even I found it difficult to find time to interview them and was only able to do so after many attempts to make an appointment. This unavailability is due to their commitment to school-related work.

The role of contemporary school administrators lies in working as a team with teachers, and not under the old concept that was dominated by bureaucracy, nepotism and personal relationships. Surely, the curriculum's success and ability to offer outstanding education in any school depends on the principal who leads this change while involving all who work at the school.

As discussed in Chapter 2, there is tension in Saudi society about curriculum change. A debate was conducted after the announcement that the General Education curriculum would be revised and changed after 11 September 2001. Curriculum development not be inconsistent with the fundamental principles of the community, such as religion, culture and social values. The debate about curricula was a controversial issue in the media (Abu Taleb, 2005; Hein, Reich & Grigorenko, 2015). The debates in the community discuss the benefits of change to the curriculum and its impact on Saudi society. After several years, decision-makers succeeded in preparing the society for significant changes in Saudi Education history. As part of the community, educators may already have a productive perception toward the curriculum even before its implementation, as Mahmoud believes, 'There is also an attempt to connect students to the outside world.'

As discussed in Chapter 2, the Saudi government argues that external pressure for change is not the rationale for change in the curriculum, rather, it is the need to present reform in Saudi Arabia that is of benefit to the country's development on an economic, educational and cultural level (M. S. Alshahrani & Alsadiq, 2014).

Secondly, in Saudi Arabia there are moderate views and open-minded people who accept globalisation and believe that it is hard to ignore integration with the world on an economical, educational and trade level. At the same time, moderate thinkers still believe in Islam, and Islam as a religion can be immersed and flexible within the contemporary world. Finally, an emerging liberal thought in Saudi society is that individuals have the right to their freedom without retribution from Islam.

Indeed, education plays a significant role in a changing society. Apple (2012) explored the role of education in society. He outlined an excellent example of how schools can change society by allowing African Americans and other minority groups to have the same rights. His analysis of education is centred on its social role regarding transformation and identity in society. This is also evident in Saudi Arabia, as mentioned in Chapter 2 where girls had the right to an education in 1959. At that time, only four girls were studying at universities, however, this number increased to 500,000 female students (Hamadn, 2005, 2013). Currently, if a girl got a job in a distant city, a father or relative would accompany her, in contrast to 50 years ago when there was rejection of the idea girls to studying at schools in the same suburb.

In this study, it was found that the preparation of the contemporary curriculum was established over a couple of weeks prior to implementing the curriculum. Also, it was evident that some aspects of the curriculum are not clear to teachers. This led teachers to use their personal perspectives when teaching with the new curriculum. G. E. Hall and Hord (2006) believed that change cannot be accomplished by one single event. Several processes are required to conduct crucial changes in any organisation. As mentioned in Chapter 4, there is ineffective leadership a balance between leaders and employees (Thomson, 2009). Moreover, individual belief involved in the change process is crucial to how organisations manage change. The organisation does not change until individuals change. Leadership and change require an understanding of the community initially, followed by management and change achieving the objectives of the change. It is found that efficacy of change is reached through excellent leadership that involves all members in the change process (Gunter, 2001). Data from the survey shows that just over half of the participants

reported that there had not been enough preparation for the contemporary curriculum (Appendix F, Figure 8).

The contemporary curriculum is moving in balanced steps towards achieving its goals. In order to achieve development and desired goals, the curriculum organisers need to visit the schools, listen to the views of teachers and identify the needs of the curriculum closely and on the ground. They should not rely on the reports and letters sent to schools when monitoring the progress of the curriculum, as evidenced in Salem's (supervisor) comments:

I have received letters to show the contradiction between all departments regarding the contemporary curriculum (confused face). The Ministry of education and its departments want to listen to compliments about the curriculum not feedback and critiques, the ministry send letters to schools about mistakes in textbooks or the curriculum' (He laughed).

Moreover, Saleh (supervisor) touched a sensitive point by commenting:

The contemporary curriculum designers and decision makers must stay and traditional curriculum supporters in the education ministry have to stay away from the contemporary curriculum. Moreover, designing model lesson plan for teachers to avoid some incorrect sources can be found in the Internet.

This point links to Musaed, the principal of Al-Amal School, who mentioned about the influence of radical and liberal conflict in the Ministry of Education on the development of education in the country, 'There is a conflict between officers in the Ministry from the radical movement, and others representing the liberal trend to control the power in the ministry.' Moreover, a university lecturer at Tabuk University commented during a presentation paper at the National Curriculum Conference (March 2012) that there is a conflict and discussion between our educators on matters of education in the country. He argued that conflict is having a

negative effect on the development of the country in general, and in education in particular. Fahd believed, ‘The people who designed the curriculum cannot be reached. They installed the curriculum and then their mission ended, as most of them work in various universities.’ In addition, Yousseff commented, ‘Change always starts from the school. So, those who work on the curriculum should come to visit this school to know the big gap between what is written on paper and the reality.’

Foster (1989) indicates that one important leadership model is the political-historical model. He briefly mentions some important movements in history, such as Ghandi. In the Saudi concept relating to leadership, change and development, there is an inspiration from the previous Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad, and his innovative influence on Malaysia. Moreover, Singapore is another example of these movements in the history of developing third-world counties.

Foster (1989) indicates another model of leadership is the bureaucratic managerial model. In Saudi Arabia, this model hinders the development of the Saudi Education system when applied. For example, school managers cannot make decisions unless they seek approval from the Department of Education in the school region.

Foster (1989) emphasises that leadership processes will not be successful unless they are critical, educative, ethical and transformative. Grace (2000) argues that the ethical factor in schooling is consistent with the democratic morals of the community. At Al-Amal School, the PIN for the Internet access was only available to selected teachers, causing tension between the teaching staff and the principal and affecting teachers’ empowerment. In fact, there is a significant role for principals to implement the contemporary curriculum

6.7.1 Leadership and change

The transition from old approaches to contemporary ones is not based on lectures alone. Rather, panel discussions about issues in the contemporary curriculum must be held. The lecturer or the trainer must listen to teachers more than lecturing them about theory, because listening produces recommendations and suggestions that may have been overlooked by the Ministry's decision-makers. Teachers are more knowledgeable because they work closely within the educational field, as evidenced in Fahd comment, 'The people who designed the curriculum cannot be reached. They installed the curriculum and then their mission ended, as most of them work in various universities.'

The lack of coordination between planning, curricula and evaluation departments in the Ministry leads to the contemporary curriculum being applied before teachers, principals and supervisors are prepared. Even more significantly, there is a lack of technology available in many schools (Appendix F, Figure 3). Moreover, curriculum-specific applications and audio were not distributed in a number of schools, and these applications and CDs did not arrive in any of these five schools. The curriculum's official website also does not offer any details about the project. And finally, the five school administrators agree that inquiries about the contemporary curriculum are answered slowly, and this may be the reason for the lack of coordination between the Ministry departments.

6.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter revealed how many of the teachers' views indicated that the contemporary curriculum was limited in addressing reading, writing, spelling and

grammar. Therefore, it is apparent that the traditional curriculum, which uses discrete subjects, is still entrenched in teachers' minds and teaching approaches as the most appropriate. Moreover, the professional development programs, which began when the curriculum was first implemented did not help clarify the concepts of the NLT and CLT approaches in Arabic language instruction. The struggle between the traditional and modern, and between modernist and traditional movements, is also an important factor that affects the implementation of the contemporary curriculum. And perhaps the real issue is the lack of responsibility for educational administrators and universities to manage curriculum change and oversee training programs.

The survey and the interview complemented each other and allowed for a better understanding of the findings, thereby allowing valuable analysis and results to be extracted. Results showed that the traditional curriculum is still entrenched in participants' minds, as well as in their practice. Even though there is a trend towards CLT approaches, it is mixed with a focus on grammar. In other words, the focus on the NLT is mixed with a focus on reading and writing, which the old curricula focused on.

The purpose of the survey was to glean general information about the research questions. As previously mentioned, the survey included a number of sections about technology, for example, its uses, availability, opinions about it, and its role in the future of Arabic language instruction. Furthermore, technology is a central focus for the NLT, CLT and connectivism theory. The survey also presents valuable information about the contemporary curriculum, its applications and teachers' perspectives about the contemporary curriculum. The interview was very important

in probing teachers' opinions regarding this issue. For example, there is a lack of technology in classrooms. This allowed for more analysis as participants gave their opinions about how to challenge the obstacle. The survey's results also indicated a large percentage of participants have a limited understanding of the contemporary concept of reading.

The findings show a lack of technology available in schools. Therefore, technology is under-utilised by schools, especially in the classroom. The findings also reveal that classrooms lack the latest tools, such as electronic whiteboards. This lack of technology exists even though most participants view technology positively and see it as an important and useful tool for more effective learning. Technology is even more important in light of the widened scope of education, the new vision for education, and issues related to CLT approaches and the NLT.

The next chapter discusses the results in detail in light of the theories addressed in this study. It also contains in-depth analysis and explanations of these results and the extent to which society's ideologies have affected and shaped the key findings of this study.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

Chapter 7 aims to shed light on the study's most prominent findings in relation to the field of education. It locates the findings within a theoretical framework informed by the new literacy theory (NLT) that seeks to build a new paradigm for Arabic literacy teaching. Furthermore, this paradigm combines with communicative language teaching (CLT) approaches by combining language skills that underlie integrated curriculum approaches in order to replace fragmented curriculum approaches and the grammar translation method. This chapter discusses a number of influences related to educators' understandings of the NLT and CLT approaches, such as teachers' beliefs, teacher education and professional development. Moreover, the ideological and pedagogical struggle and its impact on educators' understanding of the contemporary curriculum and its theories are discussed. Issues relating to Islamic identity and reading-related aspects of the Arabic language were addressed. Additionally, this chapter also discusses the most prominent applications for CLT approaches and the NLT within the contemporary curriculum. It also examines some of the obstacles that teachers face as they apply the contemporary curriculum. Leadership and change, and their role in implementing the contemporary curriculum are introduced. There is a focus on significant issues that may help with curriculum development. Finally, the chapter discusses technology, the literacy-related issues of the study, the role of technology in the NLT, connectivism theory, and affairs related to the contemporary curriculum.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the principles of CLT are compatible with certain L1 teaching principles, such as ‘situated practice’. This study deconstructed the binary of L1/L2 language learning paradigms. It applies CLT approaches which inform L2 learning to L1 literacy learning, in situated practice where CLT approaches provide learners with meaningful learning experiences in a range of social contexts.

NLT was chosen as a theoretical framework for this study in order to bring about a quantum leap in Arabic language literacy. As discussed in Chapter 3, the study attempts to look at the Arabic language contemporary curriculum (Arabic Curriculum Document, 2007; Toaima & Alnaqah, 2006) which seeks to keep Arabic language teaching up-to-date with new international language teaching pedagogy. Indeed, the findings show this change will not happen overnight. Rather, for the desired change to occur, specific goals and clear strategies are needed for instructors. Therefore, an analysis of curriculum and ideology and related issues will make sense of the research findings.

7.1 Lack of understanding the new literacy theory and communicative language teaching approaches

This section discusses a number of issues related to educators’ understandings of the NLT and CLT approaches. It examines issues related to the contemporary curriculum, such as fragmented versus integrated curriculum and rote learning/grammar. For instance, several educators considered that compared to the old curriculum, the contemporary curriculum reduces the volume of reading, writing, grammar and spelling lessons. This chapter also focuses on issues related to professional development, pre-service (teacher education) and in-service training.

This section concludes with issues related to professional development and those that influence teachers' implementation of the contemporary curriculum.

7.1.1 Fragmented versus integrated curriculum understanding

Data from the interviews demonstrates that one-third of the participants understand the NLT and are able to identify its skills and application in the learning of Arabic. Similarly, Salem one of the four supervisors who oversee all the Arabic teachers at Tabuk city schools remarked, 'To be honest, personally I'm not satisfied with teachers' performance according to my supervision visiting; I would say 20% of the teachers understand the curriculum.'

Therefore, teachers viewed the contemporary curriculum as a mistake and flawed with regard to reading, spelling and grammar lessons. For instance, Masad commented, 'There is a lack in reading and writing in this curriculum compared to the old curriculum; I'm concerned about the students' proficiency in these skills.' This belief causes teachers to continue to teach the contemporary curriculum as if it is the old curriculum, in its fragmentation. This is in contrast with the contemporary curriculum which teaches different language skills combined in an integrated approach. The data from the interviews shows that 10 out of the 15 teachers have not read the Arabic curriculum document. For instance, Musallam commented, 'The curriculum document is not present inside schools. However, teachers can find it on the Internet.' Abed added, 'Yes, I read the curriculum document. I found it useful, but long – 165 pages. It includes many theories, but application is the most important thing. This is what we want.' The Arabic language curriculum document presents many contemporary educational trends and curricula in language learning and

teaching. For example, the document presents the old curriculum with its deficiencies and reasons why the new curriculum must be developed. The document includes a detailed explanation of the most prominent contemporary curricula and pedagogies, such as the contemporary curriculum and its communicative approaches. It also presents the most prominent skills and knowledge that students need in the contemporary curriculum, including critical thinking and collaborative learning skills (Arabic Curriculum Document, 2007).

As discussed in Chapter 3, a comprehensive understanding of the NLT is considered the first step in advancing the Arabic language teaching pedagogy (Cruickshank, 2006; Dooley, 2009; Gee, 2004; Jones Díaz, 2007; Luke, 2002; Street, 2013). The concept of the NLT is holistic and contemporary. As Leu et al. (2004) suggest, change requires technology. Likewise, Street (2000) believes that the NLT needs to be introduced within a social context with regard to reading instruction. Street (2000) believes literacy should be taught as a social practice because education is more useful if the social dynamics between students and teachers are employed. According to Street (2003), the concept of new literacy is a contemporary understanding of literacy in a social context instead of focusing on skills that are acquired through reading and writing. According to Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, Castek and Henry (2013), new literacies capture new ways of using texts and meaning systems due to changing social practices in our contemporary world. In Arabic literacy and language, the concept of reading is expanding slowly, as several studies that address Arabic literacy focus on reading and reading-related skills, such as critical thinking and creativity (Ali, 2011), in addition to optical reading skills, such as skimming and scanning (Alassaf, 2013).

As discussed in Chapter 3, Luke's resources model includes the four roles of the reader: (i) reader as code breaker; (ii) reader as text participant; (iii) reader as text user; and (iv) reader as text analyst (Serafini, 2012). Freebody and Luke (1990, 2003) developed this conceptual model for readers to adopt during the reading process. Its aim is to ensure that reading programs in schools incorporate the broad social and literacy related communicative practices required in current economies and societies (Freebody & Luke, 1990, 2003; Luke & Freedoby, 1999).

The first role of Luke's model relates to the findings in this study, in which participants stressed the importance for reading in the traditional sense, that is, decoding symbols. As discussed in Chapter 3, the first role is the code breaker, in which students interpret the text symbols by acoustics, spelling, symbols, pattern and dictation. In this study, which introduced the lack of understanding of the contemporary literacy concept, the research results showed that there is considerable focus on literacy under its old definition, such as a focus on spelling, reading and rules.

The second role is meaning making where learners are encouraged to participate in learning through communicative approaches in order to compose texts with meaning in written, spoken or visual forms. In this study, findings showed that CLT approaches and the NLT help learners to use the language in real life situations. In principle, there was agreement that the contemporary curriculum makes an important contribution to Arabic language teaching. But in practice, this was not evident in the findings. There was even misunderstanding of the communicative approaches. As

mentioned in Chapter 6, some teachers use the CLT approaches but limit this as a singular focus on grammar.

This contrasts with the third role (text user) which teachers were able to adopt the text to social settings for social communication and interaction with others. This was evident in the findings from the interviews or survey which showed that telling stories, role playing and drama are important in teaching the Arabic language.

Finally, the fourth role revolves around the student, giving emphasis to the learning process. As a text analyst, an individual can explore the manner in which text is constructed from a critical perspective. In this study, there was little evidence that participants encouraged students to critique and analyse text. Despite this, as mentioned in the Chapter 6, the *Halaqah* approach includes principals related to contemplation and critical thinking which may have some relevance to text analysis.

The contemporary curriculum strives to give learners more opportunities to learn through the provision of learning opportunities with classmates via discussions. As the social context entails learning and engaging in society, literacy encompasses how one is equipped to learn social changes and a way of adapting to them, hence conforming to the principles of the NLT. For instance, Mejel remarked,

Yes, I understand what you mean by the NLT. However, a lot of work needs to be done before this concept can be applied. Teachers need to understand their role better. By this, I mean their role with students and their relationship with society.

According to the theory of D/discourse developed by (Gee, 2007), it is clear that the new learning approaches abide by his findings. For example, Gee's theory explains

the relationship of language, learning and identity in a social context. Gee used 'd' to explain language and how it is used and 'D' to explain social learning through ideology, narrative and discourses such as the way of thinking, food, customs, behaviour, values and perspectives (MacKay, 2003). From his elaboration, literacy is not only gained through learning of language, but also through how individuals are capable of participating in the social context (MacKay, 2003).

The association between the works of Gee (1996, 2007, 2008), Luke and Freebody (1999) and Freebody and Luke (1990, 2003) on discourse can be linked through an in-depth analysis of their work. In the process of such an analysis, the key points and similarities are identified and linked together. Gee's work focuses on social aspects of language as well as the meaning put across by words. It is strongly suggested that when we speak or write, we simultaneously construct six areas of reality (Gee, 2007) that relate to connections, symbols, context, meaning and activities that people engage in while communicating. In a similar way, Luke discusses reading and language as a way of constructing meaning through symbols in text and words in spoken language in sociocultural contexts. Luke's work focuses on the most effective methods of teaching children how to read (Serafini, 2012). Indeed this was supported by Saeed, who noted, 'Cultural and social factors play a role in literacy. I was teaching in a school in an upper class neighbourhood, and it was very different from this poor neighbourhood. The way children think and interact, their culture in general, and other things were all different.'

In a similar way, Gee (2007) wrote about language in sociocultural contexts. According to Freebody and Luke (1990, 2003) and Luke and Freebody (1999), the

four resources are embedded into each other but not separately. Nevertheless, each of the four resources can have a part to play in developing an effective way of teaching how to read. The two works are linked by a common aspect of looking at language in social and cultural contexts.

In this study, social context may form a significant portion of language learning. The old curriculum lacked this context, but the contemporary curriculum is focused on the social context and connects learners with society. It also connects all of these learning processes with social contexts. Luke, Freebody and Gee's studies are concerned with language learning from a social perspective, as well as from other perspectives. Luke and Freebody focus on literacy and how to teach reading to children. Meanwhile, Gee is interested in social trends related to meaning and other related topics.

In this study, it is evident in the findings that the implementation of the contemporary curriculum might be different across cities and villages. The lack of linguistic activity, especially listening and conversation skills in the old curriculum is what causes apathy and boredom among students and keeps them from interacting with their society (S. A. Alshahrani, 2012). Whereas, in the contemporary curriculum the focus is on communicative and social aspects of language use designed to increase student engagement. For instance, as mentioned in Chapter 6, data from the survey shows that more than half of the participants in the contemporary curriculum believe that students can express their opinions about social issues (Appendix F, Figure 13, column 4). However, this is not always the case, as argued by Hamed, 'Students

cannot understand some controversial issues in the contemporary curriculum because they are too young.’

The next section presents the role that higher education institutions play in the extent to which contemporary curriculum theories are understood. There is a close relationship between higher education and general education. Academics and researchers who work together in universities hail from different political backgrounds and hold specific ideologies and thoughts. This influences teaching, as well as the construction and design of university curricula (Althuwaini, 2005).

7.1.2 Professional development pre-service (teacher education)

There is debate between higher education institutions and general education about educational outputs (students). Higher education complains about the output from high schools and general education responds by acknowledging that students are taught by graduates from institutions of higher education. This chapter presents various issues related to higher education institutions and focuses on curricula and pedagogy-related issues in universities, including the extent to which they are suitable for the reality of education. The chapter also addresses practical and theoretical concerns apparent in the findings of this study related to the role of professional development in pre-service teacher education.

Data from the survey shows that over 50 percent of participants graduated from teachers’ colleges (Chapter 5, Table 5-1). Teachers’ colleges have been affiliated with the Ministry of Education since it was established 30 years ago. At that time, there was a pressing need for teachers all over Saudi Arabia. Around 18 teachers

colleges were established in each of the province's administrative regions. They were tasked with supplying primary schools with teachers in different specialties. In these colleges, faculty members were familiar with elementary education curricula because of the educational studies they conduct, in addition to their experience of supervising education students receiving practical field experience in elementary schools. Most of the people who oversee and design curricula were faculty members of teaching colleges. However, in 2005, after a number of new universities were established (Hamdan, 2013), the colleges merged with existing universities in their respective cities. The colleges were thereby transferred from being overseen by the Ministry of Education to being overseen by the Ministry of Higher Education. Due to this, tension and sensitivity escalated between people working in the Ministry, especially in agencies concerned with curriculum oversight. As Salem mentioned, there are inconsistencies in a number of the Ministry's decisions, and these affect the curriculum's performance, 'I have received letters to show the contradiction between all departments regarding the contemporary curriculum.' Also, Musaed, the principal of Al-Amal School remarked, 'There is a conflict between officers in the ministry from the radical movement, and others representing the liberal trend to control the power in the ministry.'

Taha-Thomure (2008, p. 187) believes that 'at this very moment the teaching of the Arabic language needs immediate overhauling that is carefully thought through, professionally done and comprehensively evaluated.' Teaching of literacy of the new literacies, based on the realities of technologies, has rapidly progressed in impacting CLT in most classrooms (Crystal, 2001; Kinzer & Leander, 2003). For instance, as

students take their education journey, they are bound to meet countless possibilities in communication that were unimaginable at the beginning of their schooling.

In the Gulf region (Arabian/Persian Gulf), there is a fundamental lack of consistency in the theoretical training that different teachers have and a huge gap between early and later learning styles (Syed, 2003). A need for better initial teacher education in Saudi Arabia is recognised, along with a requirement to update serving teachers in areas like IT and communicative teaching approaches (Al-Hazmi, 2003). Al-Rajhi (2006) suggests that there is a lack of academic guidance surrounding Arabic learning and how teachers should be teaching. Little attention is focused on academic strategies in order to develop language teaching pedagogy. The most prominent criticism of teacher training institution curricula is that they focus on the theoretical more than the practical. For example, tests often form the largest tool used to measure the extent of the education student's understanding of university course material. Students therefore use rote memorisation to ensure success in class (Al-Shajrawi, 2013). There is little practical application. For example, some courses ask students to prepare research, but the research is graded at no more than 15% of the course (Althuwaini, 2005). Likewise, many university professors resort to lecturing while teaching, a style which education students absorb and later employ after graduating from college as teachers. Meshari (from Al-Wafa School) commented, 'There is a lack of coordination between colleges and schools, as most of the people who established this curriculum are university professors. However, I am talking about what is studied in universities and its relationship with educational realities.'

Some lecturers ask their students to diversify their teaching, use modern techniques, innovate and employ technology. They mention these contemporary approaches while sitting on a chair and lecturing. Another criticism, which the Ministry of Education has agreed with, is the gap between universities and schools regarding curricula and their development, as teachers are often shocked at seeing a different reality in schools. Coordination between universities and schools is important and effective. Universities, via faculty members who specialise in education and the science of curricula, need to relay new developments in the education field to schools. For example, the contemporary curriculum was prepared and designed between 2004 and 2008. During that time, the Ministry of Education coordinated with colleges and universities on the contemporary curriculum for teaching the Arabic language and its basic features. The Ministry did this to allow university study programs to focus on the new curriculum, and universities and schools to work together in preparing for the coming change in the curriculum. For instance, Asaad commented, ‘Many people who designed the curriculum had not visited a school for years. If you look at the Arabic language curriculum, you will find many names from universities.’

In most universities, curricula and Arabic-related programs focus more on theoretical topics than on practical ones. Moreover, there is a focus on the amount of knowledge that student teachers acquire. For example, one of the goals for curriculum and instruction division majoring in Teaching Arabic in colleges of education is to prepare students well in Arabic and Arabic literature, and also familiarise them with trends and contemporary curricula in their fields of specialisation (Al-Jouf, 2014). That is, the goal is to prepare students who are specialists in the Arabic language and

not teaching Arabic, especially as most of the subjects are linguistic ones (Grammar 1, Grammar 2, Grammar 3, Rhetoric 1, Morphology 1, Literature, Prosody, and Culture). Therefore, this increases the gap between universities and grade schools.

This section presents several issues that influenced the understanding of the NLT in its contemporary form. As noted, these issues affect this understanding directly and indirectly. They include the discrete curricula that were found in institutes of higher learning, including teaching universities and colleges, as well as the ideological dispute surrounding contemporary curriculum. Also discussed are issues related to professional development (in-service) of the contemporary curriculum and the extent of teacher education influence.

7.1.3 Professional development in-service

The following discussion examines the role of higher education institutions in teacher education and qualifying teachers for the education field, especially because these teachers spend years in universities and colleges. It will focus on the complementary role of professional development to supplement what teachers learn in college. This section will also discuss the most prominent and important issues that affect the implementation of the contemporary curriculum, as well as the role professional development plays in shaping teachers' understanding of the NLT and its application to the contemporary curriculum.

Chapter 6 addressed several issues related to professional development which influence the understanding of the NLT and CLT and implementation of the contemporary curriculum. This section, however, will focus on important, pivotal

professional development-related issues, including preparation for contemporary curriculum, professional development contents, approaches used in professional development and trainers.

In this study, it was found that the preparation of the contemporary curriculum was established over a couple of weeks prior to implementing the curriculum. Also, it is evident that some parts of the curriculum are not clear to teachers. The data from the survey reveals the lateness in preparing the contemporary curriculum. For instance, a little over half of the participants indicated not been enough preparation time for the contemporary curriculum (Appendix F, Figure 8). Also, Abdulrahman, the principal of Al-Nahda School stated, 'Despite that the teacher is required to develop himself and depend upon this in searching for courses, yet the Education Department has not informed us officially with special dates for such courses.' Similarly Saeed from Al-Nahda School believed, 'A lot of teachers are excited about the contemporary curriculum and willing to give it a go, yet the problem lies in their correct application; where they argue that teachers need to be trained on teaching contemporary curriculum as required.'

Al-Ghamdi (2012) is as insider who is an intermediate school principal noted that there was a lack in teachers' understanding in assessment and teaching approaches in the curriculum. In this study there was a strong theme from the participants that professional development of the contemporary curriculum should be more specialised and address the components of the contemporary curriculum. Therefore, in-service programs and workshops might need better clarification regarding the

NLT and CLT in Arabic literacy and teaching Arabic. Mansour offers a good suggestion regarding professional development:

Courses offer the opportunity to meet other teachers and exchange experiences among themselves. They should also shift from the traditional learning approach of instructing as followed by some coaches. We do not go for this approach in teaching so how can we accept it in training? Workshops and working in small groups to understand the details of the curriculum is more effective and useful for those who attend training courses.

Therefore, this study highlights the need for teaching to understand the theoretical concepts that frame the contemporary curriculum in terms of its application to pedagogy. As discussed in Chapter 6, findings from the participants show that these sessions lacked practicality in the real-world practice of the contemporary curriculum's theories. Rather, they focused on theory and how to evaluate students in this curriculum. For instance, Mejel stated, 'There is a need for training to address specific issues of pedagogy in relation to the curriculum such as CLT approaches. The workshops have concentrated mainly only on how to evaluate students.'

Professional development content is very important for introducing the contemporary curriculum and pedagogy and clarifying the contemporary curriculum for teachers. Also important are approaches for managing these programs, which should be based on discussions with working groups rather than lectures. Additionally, continuing training is important, especially if it is presented by qualified instructors. As Chapter 6 mentioned, teachers in Finland attend seven days of training per year (Al-Dakhil, 2014), therefore, contemporary curriculum approaches, content and implementation cannot be understood in just a few hours.

Qualified professionals are instrumental in the field of professional development, because they help training course achieve its desired objectives. Specialised trainers are also important. As the findings indicate, the current supervisors who train teachers are not experts in professional development. Their training responsibilities are in addition to the workload involved in supervising and visiting schools, therefore, their ability to provide effective professional development is affected. Managing teachers is different from training, as training teachers require special skills for managing training programs, drawing teachers to training sessions and getting them to engage in them. Mansour remarked, 'I think that some of the trainers are incompetent for training, they just read from the papers and they are limited to the information contained in these papers.' Saleh said, 'We train teachers, but we are not specialists in training. We need training specialists who have sufficient expertise in implementing the new curriculum.'

This section presents a number of issues related to teacher practices in the contemporary curriculum based on their understanding and experience in the education field. It also presents concerns that influence how teachers understand the NLT, including their viewpoints, what they learned at colleges and universities, and the role of professional development and preparations for the contemporary curriculum. The discussion that follows will detail several issues of ideological and pedagogical disputes over the contemporary curriculum and their impact on understanding, accepting and applying the contemporary curriculum.

7.2 Tensions related to the contemporary curriculum

This section examines the ideological and pedagogical struggle over change and the development of the contemporary curriculum. The discussion will focus on the ideological struggle in which conservatives contend that change may impact Islamic values, most importantly, Qur'anic literacy instruction and memorisation, by altering Arabic language curricula. This section also demonstrates the contemporary curriculum's policies and issues related to literacy, such as developing society's thinking and opening society up to the world. Finally, this section shows the pedagogical struggle by pointing out the advantages and drawbacks of the contemporary curriculum and the old curriculum.

7.2.1 Ideological tension

As mentioned previously, the conservative faction places an emphasis on sticking to fundamentals. They believe the new curriculum is a harbinger of Westernisation that aims to change society's ideology. Therefore, conservatives refuse plans for amending or changing curricula, especially with regard to content related to religion or Arabic, because Arabic is the language of the Qur'an (Suhid, Mutalib & Ahmad, 2012). Regarding this, Street (1984) mentions what is known as 'Qur'anic literacy' in which the Qur'an is taught in religious schools, as mentioned in Chapter 2. This type of instruction only addresses part of literacy and focuses on reading and writing. On a related note, Cruickshank (2004a) indicated that the concept of literacy in Arabic is closely linked to the Qur'an. Cruickshank quotes one of his participants as saying, 'The sheikh is very educated. When he reads he doesn't even have to look at the Qur'an' (Cruickshank, 2004b, p. 3).

As mentioned in Chapter 6, Arabic has characteristics that distinguish it from other languages (Cruickshank, 2012). These vocal characteristics include diacritics, which are first taught in school and taught in a partial way that focuses on the alphabet, teaching letters and their sounds in a discrete way. After that, words and vocabulary are taught. Later, attention turns to significance of teaching Arabic phonetics and grammar and their relationship to the Qur'an and proper Qur'anic recitation. This causes many teachers to use partial approaches for teaching spelling and assigning a great deal of importance to reading. For example, Mahmoud notes, 'Yes, the concept of reading has developed, but the old concept is also important for learning how to read the Qur'an correctly and without mistakes.'

It also increases the importance of teaching grammatical and phonetic phenomena, especially when they are relevant to Qur'anic education (Mashdoud, 2008). For example, in the sentence 'Muhammad hit Khaled', there is a *dammah* ضمة diacritic on the letter 'd' محمدٌ (in Mohammed). Muhammad is therefore the subject. If there were a *fathah* فتحة on the letter 'd' محمدًا in Muhammad, Muhammad would be the object. Diacritics at the end of words differ according to the word's grammatical position. Therefore, in this study the findings indicate that teachers strongly emphasise teaching grammar and reading, which include teaching phonetics and grammatical phenomena. For instance, Hammad from Al-Amal School suggested, 'The narrative manner uses stories to teach students things like diacritics – including *fatah* فتحة, *kasrah* كسرة, *dammah* ضمة, *sukoon* سكون and *shaddah* شدة.'

Qur'anic memorisation is important for performing prayers, but it is not an end unto itself. It is not compulsory to memorise the entire Qur'an. Rather, Muslims just need

to memorise short chapters in order to perform prayers. The most important thing is for Muslims to understand the meaning of the Qur'an and apply it in all aspects of life by applying the behaviour that is found in Islam's teachings and recorded in the Holy Qur'an. This leads Arabic literacy to the contemporary concept, which includes social applications but is not limited to memorisation and writing. The contemporary curriculum does not ignore the skill of memorisation, as it does not completely depend on it. Rather, it focuses on other skills and knowledge, such as comprehension, analysis, critical and critical thinking, evaluation and others. All these skills are present in the Islamic heritage. For example, the Qur'an contains many verses that encourage thought, self-control, contemplation and proper etiquette for dialogue.

Moreover this study highlights how traditional grammar-teaching approaches do not help in teaching grammar. Despite the focus on explaining grammar, grammatical mistakes are present in the old curriculum. The curriculum document mentions this as a failure of the old curriculum. Therefore, this study focuses on social practice as a means for acquiring all language skills, including grammar. Originally, the fundamentals of grammar were introduced after Islam spread and many non-Arabs converted to Islam. Only then did grammar emerge as a separate discipline. Before this time, Arabic was acquired via social practice without being split into different parts.

Chapter 2 discussed curricula, curriculum changes and the debate between those who oppose change and those who support curriculum development. Chapter 2 included details about opinions held by the conservative, moderate and liberal factions. This

chapter, however, focuses on the role of these ideologies and how they influence the understanding of contemporary curricula, as well as their practical applications. Educators, regardless of whether they work in the Ministry or in schools, are parts of these factions. They undoubtedly influence and are influenced by these groups. For instance, as Saleh one of the supervisors stressed on this sensitive issue, ‘The contemporary curriculum designers and decision makers must stay and traditional curriculum supporters in the education ministry have to stay away from the contemporary curriculum.’

In contrast, liberals believe that religious curricula can be learned at home and in mosques. They do not believe it is necessary to learn masses of this information in school. Rather, many liberals believe that some people who teach these topics instil extremist thinking in student’s minds. Without a doubt, the struggle between the two factions is primarily ideological, and it hinders the implementation of the contemporary curriculum. Many members of the two factions have no experience in education and curricula. Instead, for them, this is a new arena in the struggle between the two factions. However, as mentioned in Chapter 2, both factions realise the important role played by the curriculum in forming society, building its culture and forming its ideas.

This leads to an essential and important point: dialogue and the culture of conflict. For example, after the events of 11 September 2001, we saw phrases similar to each other like ‘national dialogue’, ‘the other’ and ‘The King Abdullah’ Project for Interfaith Dialogue’ all expressing one issue: how to have a dialogue, how to debate, how to differ and what results from these differences. There is no doubt that the

teaching of dialogue and its principles begins during childhood. Despite the positive aspects of national dialogue and the wonderful connotations it carries about moving forward to build the nation, some debaters approach it while clinging to particular ideas. Moreover, they enter the dialogue to impose the control that their movement has in the area (Islamtoday, 2003). Data from the survey shows that more than two-thirds of the participants reported that several skills such as critical thinking are highlighted in the contemporary curriculum (Appendix F, Figure 12, column 4).

Meanwhile, moderate believers place an emphasis on developing Arabic language curriculum, especially considering that, as the Ministry showed, the old curriculum was a failure. Students were graduating from high school while being deficient in Arabic-language skills. They even lack the skills the old curriculum focuses on, such as grammar, reading and writing. The contemporary curriculum, however, prepares students well and imparts them with 21st Century skills. As mentioned in previous chapters, the future vision aims to realise a transition to a knowledge-based economy (Kamal, 2012).

As discussed in Chapter 2, Saudi society is, as a whole, conservative (Alsaddahan, 2010). Therefore, any issue that affects life is governed from a religious perspective. From an Islamic perspective, it is permissible to import knowledge and theories from other cultures and religions as long as they do not violate religious principles. During the era in which Islamic culture flourished in Andalusia and Baghdad, much knowledge was translated from Greek, Persian, Sanskrit and Latin. This was the starting point for a scientific revolution in various fields, such as medicine, astronomy and sociology (D.E. Jackson, 1987). As mentioned in Chapter

2, *halaqah* is an ancient approach rooted in Islamic culture and has some similarities to the NLT or CLT. The *halaqah* includes important activities that match with literacy, such as contemplation and critical thinking. The *halaqah* also contains many CLT principles, for example, discussion work groups. Despite this, it began to spread and has been used in a number of Western studies, particularly in the United Kingdom (Ahmed, 2014).

7.2.2 Politics of the contemporary curriculum

As shown in Chapter 3, critical and pedagogical literacy play an important role by providing students with sustainable education through societal development (Albright, 2001; Luke & Dooley 2011; Luke, 2000). Some of the issues included in this chapter will be controversial in Saudi society. The contemporary concept of literacy plays a role in building a society that has a healthy dialogue, accepts others and discusses social issues from a national perspective instead of from a narrow perspective that prioritises the interests of a particular group or ideology while ignoring ideas of other groups with opposing views.

One of the most important things a child must learn is the culture of using discussion and dialogue instead of arguments. Discussing a number of issues and the debate that accompanies these discussions is beneficial and helps to develop the nation.

However, fiery debates in which both sides trade accusations do not benefit the interests of the nation's people. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Saudi Government has long been occupied with addressing the emergence of extremist and radical thought. This ideology does not accept others' opinions, refuses discussion and dialogue, and is even antagonistic to others' thoughts and beliefs. As a result of this radical

ideology, many of the country's youth participated in a number of wars, including in Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq, and this continues today (Al-Easa, 2009). After the Riyadh compound bombings in 2003 (BBC, 2003), a new era of terrorist operations began which targeted innocent people inside the homeland, similar to activities abroad. Radical thought may not always use weapons. Instead, it can use the power it has been given because the state and society are, by their nature, conservative. The nation's leaders and a large segment of society may be influenced by strict adherence to Islamic belief which is sometimes extreme to an extent that it results in radicalism. For example, extremists oppose letting women drive cars or work in large industries; they do so under the pretext of preventing women from mingling with men without citing any evidence from Islamic Sharia law despite the fact that, in the era immediately following the emergence of Islam, women rode camels and horses.

This ideology enjoys being closed off from the rest of the world and refuses to acknowledge contemporary views at home and abroad. For example, at the beginning of the King Abdullah Scholarship Program in 2004, this ideology opposed the program, and proponents of this ideology said our children will go to the West to be brainwashed. They may have figuratively believed this, as it is an opportunity for students to become independent without being supervised. It is a chance for them to live alongside people they used to hear are infidels and to be introduced to different cultures and civilisations. However, recently in the King Abdullah Scholarship Program is an opportunity for students to accept others and live alongside people of other nationalities, beliefs, religions and cultures (Reid, Alsaiari & Rosmilawati, 2015). All these programs can be seen as lacking if they do not pay attention to children, starting from the pre-elementary school stage. This is where the NLT has a

role, because it is an innovative contemporary approach for learning language and literacy, which employs technology and the Internet. NLT theory can be a tool for teachers to instil values, attitudes and positive ideas in order to help learners communicate effectively with society and the outside world (Gee, 2007). As indicated by Mahmoud (from Al-Nahda School), ‘The curriculum helps the further aware of what is going on in the outside world.’

The curriculum must be reflected in the local community, and it needs to expound upon its ideology and stay closely connected to society’s contemporary issues and culture. In order for the study’s results to be understood, it is necessary to analyse the issues related to Saudi society (discussed in Chapter 2) and relate to the study’s theoretical framework. An analysis and discussion of Saudi society and its ideology is presented here, as the study’s influence by Saudi society and the ideologies present within it.

The discussion about changing the curriculum and developing the country’s education system, along with the related discussion and debate, as discussed in Chapter 2, leads us to understand how, in the past, Saudi society refused to change and therefore clung to old ways and heritage. There are many examples of this. As mentioned in Chapter 2, in the 1950s, education for girls was strongly rejected, and television was rejected in the 1970s (Hamadan, 2005; Alsaddahan, 2010). Later, after exposure to the world, the ratio by which such ideas were rejected began to gradually decrease, for example, females driving cars. Saudi Society is becoming more open and integrated with the rest of the world and less regional, as previously (Al-Ghathami, 2015). Ahmed said, ‘Society develops quickly and has many issues.

People have different demands now, which complicate the role of schools. Today, schools bear a greater burden.’

The conflict here is not just an ideological one. Rather, there is pedagogical and educational conflict that may be disproportionately influenced by ideology. The next section discusses the pedagogical struggle between supporters and opponents of the contemporary curriculum. It examines the pedagogical premise that gives rise to educators’ perspectives about issues related to the contemporary curriculum.

7.2.3 Tension between traditional supporters and contemporary curriculum supporters

This section presents the tension between traditional and contemporary curriculum supporters. For instance, some teachers openly declare their dedication to the traditional curriculum and consider it the best approach to teaching the Arabic language. Masad, a teacher at Al-Najah School commented, ‘This is a lack in reading and writing in this curriculum comparing to the old curriculum, I’m concerned about the students’ proficiency in these skills.’ Also Saeed believed, ‘We must deepen the love of reading in the hearts of our students through attracting them to the library, which shape we need to change to commensurate with the young children.’

Some studies have highlighted low levels of reading in the Arab world by Arabic readers. For instance, one study argued that the average reader reads six minutes per year (Al Nahar, 2008). However this statistic is ambiguous and does not specify important details, such as the type of texts or context in which reading took place. Further, questions relating to how contemporary theories of literacy inform this study

are raised in terms of what the researchers constituted as reading. It appears that they have drawn on narrow and traditional frameworks of literacy to arrive at this finding and have dismissed contemporary understandings of literacy as a social practice in which a variety of literacy practices beyond reading books are undertaken. Caldwell (2012) reported that the minimum amount of time spent by young Arabs is 365 hours per year, and if that is compared with the average in the previous study of six minutes per day, there are clear differences. As presented in previous chapters, the concept of literacy has widened and now focuses on social practice (Jones Díaz, 2007; Street, 2014).

Al-Ghathami (2010) analyses this phenomenon in an analytic way that reflects his understanding of the Saudi and Arab social realities. Al-Ghathami rendered the lack of reading among Arabs to the context of social traditions. Arab people are most commonly connected to social relations with relatives and friends, in addition to social events. For example, in a train, you see a Western person reading, while Arabs tend to chat about life with other people sitting with them.

However as discussed in Chapter 2, illiteracy rates in Saudi Arabia were low in the previous generation because mothers and fathers planted the seeds of reading in their children. Around 6 percent of children engage in a variety of literacy events other than academic literacy. It is important to challenge old stereotypes that Arabs do not read much and reading levels are low. While this stereotype may have had some currency in previous decades where the illiteracy levels were high in the Arabic world, such stereotypes are informed by traditional concepts of literacy as being confined to reading books only. As discussed throughout this study, the importance

of situating literacy in its contemporary concept is of major significance to studies of Arabic literacy learning today.

Al-Nassar (2012) suggests the weakness noticed among students stems from a lack of knowledge and functional skills in reading, writing, expression, comprehension and communication. Al-Nassar (2012) emphasises a weakness in the old Arabic language curriculum and that it is not appropriate for students because its content is not related to society. The contemporary curriculum is aimed at meeting the needs of the students and the plans for national development. Ansary (2008) suggests that reforms will reinforce Islamic and national principles and values, similar to moderation, loyalty to the homeland, tolerance and preserving its accomplishments. Sabah et al. (2014) assume a more philosophical approach in examining the ideologies related to the curriculum and those that have played a role in influencing the curriculum thought and practice in whatever society. Supposedly, students start to enjoy visiting the library by adding beautiful and stylish decorations that encourage reading, and then students will begin to read, however, for students to read quickly, find information and be taught contemporary reading skills would be ideal. It is not practical for a student to spend two hours or more reading a book to find a piece of information that could be found in less than a minute if a computer is used to research the information quickly and efficiently. At Al-Amal School, Musaed, Hammad and Mejel believe that hopes and aspirations are placed on the contemporary curriculum in terms of the transition from teaching Arabic as a separate material (reading, grammar, spelling, writing and calligraphy).

The contemporary curriculum encourages educators to search for various sources to draw from when presenting learning material to the student during the lesson. This is extremely important, as the educators study their field in order to convey contemporary and diverse information to their students to push them out of the traditional curriculum. One disadvantage of the traditional curriculum is that educators would implement it and rely only on textbooks while ignoring other sources, resulting in no encouragement for teachers and students to search for other resources, Mekhlef believed, 'The curriculum is very innovative in its focus on language in context and technology since it tackles new skills that were previously ignored; such as figurative reading and others. Students can practice language in life-like situations.' Data from the survey reveals that more than two-thirds of participants believe the usage of CLT approaches increases use of the target language in different functional and meaningful situations (Appendix F, Figure 12, column 8).

The contemporary curriculum is highly relevant to the global curriculum in teaching and learning language. One of the most important reasons for the development of Saudi curricula is the desire to be compatible with international curricula. Students are thereby more open to, and aware of, their surroundings in this world.

Internationalism in the old curricula is somewhat limited. For example, in geography lessons, the student is not introduced to many nations. Due to globalisation, it is currently impossible for countries to exist independently and be closed-off from the world; therefore, it was necessary for Saudi curricula to follow contemporary international curricula if they want to compete globally. As for the Arabic language curriculum, it was built and designed in light of the most recent theories and pedagogies for teaching English as a second language and as a foreign language.

According to Al-Nabi (2012), instructors in the 21st Century face challenges, among the most prominent of which are globalisation, the information revolution, the use of technology and the development of teaching skills (Al-Nabi, 2012). Likewise, the approach of memorisation and teachers' dependence is among the most prominent reason for students' weakness in the Arabic language. Asaad remarked, 'Most teachers agree that the contemporary curriculum is highly relevant to the global curriculum in teaching and learning language.'

This section presents issues related to the ideological and pedagogical struggle, as well as contemporary curriculum policies. The next section discusses the impact of these ideologies and pedagogical views on the implementation of the contemporary curriculum. Likewise, it will also discuss literacy-related issues, most importantly, literacy and the SES, including its impact on applying the contemporary concept of literacy. The section will also examine technology and its role in the NLT and CLT. It will then conclude by addressing connectivism, which arose in the technological age, and its role in literacy.

7.3 Communicative language teaching approaches, the new literacy theory and implementation of technology in the contemporary curriculum

The application stage for the curriculum is an important stage because it is the result of previous stages that included preparation for the curriculum, teacher education and professional development. In this study, the implementation of the contemporary curriculum is clearly affected by factors that influence teacher understanding of the NLT, as mentioned in previous sections. The ideological and pedagogical struggle also plays a role in implementing the contemporary curriculum.

This section will discuss applications for CLT, the NLT and technology in the contemporary curriculum, specifically for communicative purposes and social practice. Also, it focuses on the approaches and social context by presenting students with real-life situations and identifying problems facing the application of the approaches in the contemporary curriculum.

As CLT is a form of teaching that engages interaction during teaching. It also involves communication of the real meaning in learning, a process that engages students on the practical application of the language (Bahumaid, 2012). In this form of learning, group work is highly encouraged so as to engage interaction among students. According to Bahumaid (2012), CLT is one of the major issues emphasised in Arabic teaching. Having conducted a case study on CLT on the Arab Gulf region, Bahumaid (2012) found that in the past decade, the use of communicative language in the region was limited and that the current system was not producing positive results, a case that has affected teaching materials and syllabi in the teaching curricular. Other factors that affect the Arabic communicative approach are the nature of the old curriculum, which does not emphasise the use of the NLT, education system on students' ability and teachers' skills of teaching approaches. In this study where viewpoints of primary school teachers who teach Arabic as a first language are considered, CLT refers to the language-teaching schemes that emphasise the interaction between the learner and the teacher as both the means and the ultimate aim of a study (B. C. Green, K. A. Johnson, Bretherton, 2014). CLT has strong associations with a number of activity types involved in teaching activities, such as pair work and problem-solving. However, there have been uncertainties in the middle ground where theory meets practice. Teachers have difficulty in

understanding what CLT sets out to teach. There are problems associated with a lack of standard and comprehensive CLT syllabus (B. C. Green et al., 2014). Many feel that the syllabus is a merely a notional and fictional syllabus placed under a new name. Others have opinions that CLT does not meet its goals as a methodological approach. Despite the notions of many teachers about CLT, the manner of teaching foreign languages is still effective. It has, however, grown swiftly over the past 15 years and moved considerable distance from its initial practices without changing its original principles (Jacobson, Day, Leithwood, Gurr, Drysdale & Mulford, 2005; Johansson, et al., 2009).

The contemporary curriculum emphasises the communicative approach of teaching in combination with new literacy approaches. The new curriculum highly acknowledges the use of communicative teaching approach in view of its relevance to the new literacy approach, in order to track the route of understanding the language (Francies, 2012). To begin with, teachers use new words and definitions during the early learning process. In terms of CLT approaches, teachers are strongly recommended to utilise interactive approaches in their teaching, here, they give the meaning of the word or phrase and ask students questions regarding the meaning application of those words. In addition, students are engaged in a group approach of learning where teachers require them to discuss and ask questions among themselves. Through this, students gain knowledge of different uses of the language and learning. Moreover, their mode of communication is enhanced.

Chapter 6 discussed issues related to the communicative approach and its applications. The findings show a trend towards participants using the

communicative approach and understanding its significance. For instance, the survey showed more than two-thirds of the participants believed that students gain more opportunities to develop communication skills in Arabic in the contemporary curriculum (Appendix F, Figure 12, column 13). This indicates that many participants are willing to apply these approaches in practice if they are shown them correctly. For instance, Asaad (from Al-Jadida School) supposed, ‘Students like new and non-traditional approaches of instruction. Stories, games, and role playing are very entertaining for them.’ Moreover, data from the survey shows that almost all of the participants were interested in using telling-story as a CLT strategy (Appendix F, Figure 13, column 1). Also, data reveals the top CLT activities used in the classroom, as reported by the participants, which include story-telling, discussion role-playing and teaching through drama (Appendix F, Figure 14).

In contrast, the findings indicate a trend towards applying the communicative approaches in grammar lessons. From this, we can conclude that communicative approaches are not understood completely, as they are only partially used – and when used, the teacher employs it to help with certain skills. For example, data from the survey shows that more than half of the participants view teaching grammar through indirect approaches as one of their best CLT activities (Appendix F, Figure 13, column 17). Moreover, Mekhlef (from Al-Jadida School) remarked, ‘Sometimes, I use stories and role playing in grammar lessons, and I have found that students absorb more this way.’

As mentioned earlier, the findings show that some teachers view CLT positively and apply it to their teaching because they believe it is better than the traditional

approaches for teaching Arabic. On the other hand, others only use the communicative approaches or certain skills, for example, in grammar instruction. As Chapter 4 mentioned, teachers often combine the CLT approaches with traditional ones.

7.3.1 Technology, the new literacy theory and communicative language teaching approaches

Chapter 4 discussed the importance of technology in education, and specifically in language instruction. It highlights how technology plays a positive role by supporting learning and increasing student interaction (Arabic Curriculum Document, 2007; Baker & Kinzer, 1998; Barton, 2001; Ditters, 2006; Ward, 2013). Chapter 4 also presented a critique of technology, explaining that technology is not usually beneficial and may negatively influence those who use it (Bromley & Apple, 1998). This is where education plays a role by selecting suitable educational content for students, especially in the age of rapid technological growth. Today, students learn a great deal through the use of technology. However, supporters of connectivism contend that this also occurs outside the classroom.

The data shows that less than half of the participants believe that YouTube is a good tool for supporting CLT approaches (Appendix F, Figure 3, column 5). When technology is present, this approach becomes more effective and useful (Ward, 2013). Students learn by watching video clips of conversation, which discuss issues that are of relevance. This helps them to develop a number of skills, such as listening, speaking, watching, taking notes and discussing videos (Dooley, 2009). For example, when they are in small groups, students organise these activities

themselves. The communicative approach is not used in teaching for entertainment or to change the course's routine. Rather, it is necessary because it closely relates to daily life and helps students engage with society better. This is because it is derived from the social use of language, which, as mentioned earlier, facilitates students to get along and interact with their society (Heller, 2008). Abdulaziz (from Al-Jadida School) commented, 'I emphasised the importance of CLT approaches; such as the use of videos in teaching, because it fits with the wishes of the students who tend to enjoy narrative and drama style.'

The NLT involves using and applying new semiotics. It is segmented into two parts. The first part involves lower case theories that explore the use of semiotics on the Internet and other technologies such as social media communication (Street, 2003). The second part involves upper case theories that assess the lower case in detail, including related technologies and the use of the Internet for learning within a multifaceted society via technology. For instance, Kamel (from Al-Naha School) commented, 'Technology helps developing the curriculum... now the Internet and technology have significant impact on self-learning; which also applies to Arabic language and literacy learning.'

The emergence of new technologies in the classroom has changed the way of learning. In addition, the current changes in the contemporary social context have dictated that, much has to be covered in a classroom environment. Therefore, teachers are required to exhaust the curriculum so that it fits the student's adaptation to contemporary society. This includes exposing students to the margins of technological pedagogies. According to Secker and Coonan (2011), a new

curriculum in language is a holistic approach that does not only engage traditional library skills of teaching, but engages the whole research and study. Therefore, the curriculum is broad and in some cases, time-consuming, resulting in the teacher being unable to cover the syllabus. In this study, teachers complained about the time allocated for teaching and the curriculum that needs to be covered. According to Kennedy et al. (2012), the new curriculum in the United Kingdom entails carries a meta-analysis study that involves language enhancement interventions, phonic enhancement, shared reading and balanced literacy based on technological change and motivational self-regulation. This requires sufficient time to cover the syllabus, meaning teachers have to sacrifice their own time in order for students to fully understand the new curriculum. Hence, for the new curriculum in Saudi Arabia to be successful, innovative and relevant to the acknowledgement of changes in society, allocating enough time to implement changes in society is crucial.

Regarding NLT approaches, teachers engage their skills in the application of words and phrases in the social context (Smagorinsky, 2012). For example, consider a teacher who asks students the meaning of *Facebook* as a form of social media. Through the NLT, the teacher is not only required to give the meaning, but also explain how the *Facebook* application looks and how it is used as an approach to online communication. For example, a teacher may use his/her phone to open a *Facebook* page for students to view. Also, the teacher may show students how the application works. By doing this, he/she is engaging the NLT of teaching. Students under this new curriculum will have diversified knowledge, not only on the meaning of something, but also its application in the social context. This point is emphasised

by Asaad (from Al-Jadida School), 'Teachers were not aware about the connection between technology and literacy.'

In addition, the NLT emphasises the application of appropriate technologies. For example, a teacher who tries to explain to pupils the meaning of a computer through the traditional approach would not need an actual computer in the classroom to explain the meaning of its application. On the contrary, in the NLT of learning, it is a requirement for the teacher to use a computer while teaching pupils on its meaning and application. Therefore, traditional teachers may cover more topics in a single class compared to teaching the new curriculum. Efficiency and timely completion of the syllabus are the reasons for teachers preferring the traditional approach of learning. Asaad (from Al-Jadida School) remarked, 'Hence, I noticed that the correct perception of the new concept of teaching literacy which is connected to technology has not reached those who teach this curriculum.' Even though data from the survey shows that more than two-thirds of the participants reported that new approaches to Arabic literacy are highlighted in the contemporary curriculum (Appendix F, Figure 12, column 14), This could be related to the gap between theory and practice as discussed in teacher education and professional development sections.

As discussed in Chapter 3, connectivism denounces the boundaries of constructivism, behaviourism and cognitivism (Duke, et al., 2013). Connectivism is considered a learning theory due to its amplification of knowledge learning and understanding through the extension of personal networks (Siemens, 2008). In this regard, connectivist ideologies are entwined in the acknowledgement of the importance of personal networks. Learning literacy and language teaching involves a

considerable amount of personal networking and interactions between the teacher and students, as well as peer-to-peer networks. Since traditional theories are severely limited in their explanation of technology, connectivism bridges the gap and takes into account the use of technology in literacy and language teaching. Data from survey demonstrates that almost two-thirds of the participants reported that technologies support learning literacies (Appendix F, Figure 7, column 3).

As an emerging theory of learning connectivism, the postulate that knowledge is comprised of networked relationships while learning is comprised of the ability to successfully navigate those networks (Transue, 2013). Communication and learning are increasingly adopt digital and new technology. Connectivism is a theory that explains how learning and knowledge can be taught and developed in the digital era. As opposed to previous learning theories such as behaviourism, cognitivism and constructivism, connectivism explains learning while considering technology and digital learning platforms. The core idea is to make meaningful connections in order to acquire and build one's knowledge base.

Reading and literacy learning are a vital component in early childhood education. The connectivism theory links to language teaching in various ways. First, language learning is only possible through numerous connections and networks between people. In this context, teachers and learning interact at various levels in order for teaching and learning to occur. According to connectivism theory, knowledge is gained or developed through networks. In a classroom setup, learners create networks among themselves and share their ideas and knowledge on literacy and reading. Similarly, teachers connect to the students through various digital and non-

digital media to teach various aspects of language. It is through the networks and connections that learning occurs. Literacy and language teaching is closely linked to connectivism through the interactions that occur in the process. As mentioned in Chapter 3, in connectivism theory, learning occurs in networks supported by social interaction. This interaction encourages students to participate and cooperate with each other. It also reinforces student-based curricula, which are supported by communicative approaches. Here, the teacher's role is one of a supervisor and facilitator. Data from the survey shows that most of the participants reported that the contemporary curriculum encourages student-centred learning approaches (Appendix F, Figure 12, column 3). Moreover, data from survey reveals that most participants believe that student participation can be increased with the use of technology (Appendix F, Figure 7, column 2).

7.3.2 Socio-economic status and literacy

The social-economic status of students involves the combination of various factors such as occupation, education and income. Children from families of low SES have limited access to education. In this regard, the new curriculum emphasises on equipping them with diversified approaches of learning despite their social background. The security of low SES students entails the ability of the school to retain them in the curriculum and enable them to proceed to the next level.

Teaching languages in low SES schools is commonly faced by the challenge of dealing with linguistically diverse learners. According to Luke, Dooley and Woods (2011) learners from socially marginalised backgrounds may not benefit fully from autonomous models of skill acquisition and comprehension. Policy analysis of the

performance of learners from low SES backgrounds shows significant differences within and between national populations (Luke, et al., 2011).

As Chapter 6 pointed out, economic conditions play a significant role in literacy, whether referring to computer literacy or literacy in the traditional sense. The results show that the contemporary curriculum was tested in the Eastern Province and achieved much success, not surprisingly, as the Eastern Province¹¹ is considered one of the most educationally advanced in the country, especially due to its Aramco¹² schools (ARAMCO, 2015). This is because of the significant capabilities available at these schools, including electronic whiteboards and buildings, as well as being equipped with different types of modern facilities. Additionally, students attending these schools come from the upper and middle classes. Asaad (from Al-Jadida School) remarked ‘This curriculum has been applied five years ago in the Eastern Province as an experimental approach and proved to be successful there.’

Families’ social and economic situations play a significant role in literacy. In the southern regions of the city, there is a high rate of illiteracy among students. Computer illiteracy also spreads as a result, and some neighbourhoods lack infrastructure, especially Internet services. This is in contrast to the eastern region, where economic and social conditions are better because many parents work in

¹¹ The Eastern Province is located on the eastern coast of Saudi Arabia on the Arabian Gulf. The first petroleum fields were discovered in the Eastern Province, and therefore many developed educational sectors exist, such as Aramco schools, National Guards and The Royal Commission for Jubail.

¹² Aramco is a Saudi company that works in the field of gas, petroleum and petrochemicals. Its headquarters are located in Zhahran. Schools in this area teach children of employees of this company and due to an expansive budget, they are pioneering and innovative.

prominent jobs, particularly in the oil industry. Therefore, residents maintain computer skills and knowledge of the English language. Residential neighbourhoods in the eastern region are also equipped with better services than other areas in the city. Abdulrahman (from Al-Naha School) said, ‘The neighbourhood where the school is located is economically poor, and illiteracy is prevalent among parents let alone. Computer knowledge; I do not fancy that they have computers at home in the first place.’

The next section analyses leadership and change, which play a large role in reaching a clear conclusion about how the curriculum is to be properly applied. As noted in this section, there is a positive trend towards using and supporting the contemporary curriculum, its theories and approaches. Nevertheless, it is not being applied correctly. For example, many participants who support the contemporary curriculum still use the old curriculum because of a lack of professional development, preparation and leadership. The next section discusses these issues in detail.

7.4 Leadership and change

Chapter 6 showed that leadership and change emerged as an influential group as a result of the contemporary curriculum progressing. Chapter 6 presented several issues related to educational leadership, including their role in change, particularly during the curriculum preparation stage. It also addresses the relationship between the Ministry of Education, education departments and schools, as well as the relationship between teachers and school principals and their importance to curriculum implementation. This section discusses issues related to leadership, such

as centralisation of the education process and school management's role in implementing the new curriculum (Johansson, et al., 2009).

Following up the new curriculum's progress forms a formidable and important test for educational leaders. Leadership skills are needed in the follow-up stage, as the curriculum's progress in schools must be monitored. One of the biggest problems with the curriculum's follow-up phase is direct oversight, in which those in charge make personal visits to schools to check on the curriculum and its progress. Without a doubt, there is a need for steps such as this in order to determine the curriculum's actual progress. However, it is difficult for those in charge to visit and check every school in a nation as large as Saudi Arabia, particularly with regard to gaining access. For instance, Fahad the supervisor commented, 'The people who designed the curriculum cannot be reached. They installed the curriculum and then their mission ended, as most of them work in various universities.'

As this chapter discusses several issues related to supporters and opponents of the curriculum, those in charge of the curriculum must be more active in introducing the contemporary curriculum to society, instead of leaving it up to other people and movements to discuss and judge the curriculum before it is properly evaluated. These movements are not experts in curricula and education. Also, those in charge of the curriculum only publish information about the curriculum and dates related to its implementation in newspapers. They should have communicated the importance of the curriculum and the quantum leap it represents via various modes of media, such as television, newspapers and radio. As Chapter 6 mentioned with regards to the

importance of educating people and groups about the change, it should start with getting everyone, including the community, involved (Gunter, 2001).

Moreover, individual beliefs involved in the change process are crucial in how organisations manage change. An organisation cannot change until people change. Leadership and change requires an understanding of the community initially, to be followed management achieving the objectives of the crucial stages of change. It is found that the efficacy of change is reached through excellent leadership that involves all members in the change process (Gunter, 2001). As discussed in Chapter 4, the curriculum reform process depends, to a large extent, on the role of teachers and school leadership in leading the process of change. This gives rise to the feeling that everyone is a partner in every stage of this process (from planning to design, oversight, and finally implementation). In this study, for example, Yousseff commented, 'Change always starts from the school. So, those who work on the curriculum should come to visit this school to know the big gap between what is written on paper and the reality.'

Chapters 4 and 6 discussed many issues related to educational leadership and change, especially with regard to the new curricula. Some of these issues involve bureaucracy, such as relationships between administrators and teachers. As Thomson (2009) mentioned, effective educational leadership aims to build a balanced relationship with those working in the field. However, the results indicate a tense, delicate relationship that could influence the new curriculum's progress (such as in the Al-Amal School) and amazing human relationships (such as in Al-Najah School).

This section will focus on important issues related to the influential role played by leaders in a number of the study's findings.

Educational leaders play a major role in the contemporary curriculum. There were multiple stages that precede the implementation of the contemporary curriculum, including studying the education situation, and designing and testing trial curricula around Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, there appear to be gaps between curriculum leaders and schools. This was especially true during the curriculum experimentation period. While it is reasonable to experiment on selected schools, it would be more appropriate to test the contemporary curriculum in all schools. This is where educational leaders should play a role.

Effective development and implementation of a new curriculum depend on the ownership consensus among important stakeholders within the education system. A new curriculum cannot be effectively implemented without rethinking the role of the educator (teachers and school leaders). For a new curriculum to become successful, the role of the teacher and leader includes deeper and broader involvement in all instruments of teaching and learning, such as a curriculum (Palaiologou, 2013). As indicated by Mahmoud, 'We are all involved in such development process; we must leave recriminations and blaming each other, and do our utmost for the success of this curriculum.' When school administrators work as a team, they help eliminate any agitation and misunderstanding that can occur between participants during the curriculum change (Troudi & Alwan, 2010).

As mentioned in Chapter 4, in Saudi Arabia, the national curriculum is managed by the Ministry of Education (Syed, 2003). Since the contemporary curriculum is the national curriculum, educational leaders have a greater responsibility to oversee education, and specifically to oversee curricula. The findings show that the solution involves communications between the Ministry, educational departments and schools. The problem lies in the slow pace of communication from schools to the Ministry. Many inquiries about the contemporary curriculum and its applications go unanswered for a prolonged time.

Moreover, as mentioned in Chapter 4, education departments and school administrators play a major role in guiding teachers with regard to the new curriculum, however, with a lack of such guidance in Saudi Arabia due to the centralised nature of education. As mentioned previously, the Ministry controls education. The results of the study show that this centralisation impacts the curriculum's implementation and, to some extent, has led to increased red tape. In contrast, in Australia, the education system is decentralised and independent (Jacobson, et al., 2005; Johansson, et al., 2009). Accordingly, education departments and school administrators have more authority in Australia.

Giving more authority to education departments and schools will empower them, which promotes the successful implementation of curricula. This, in general, leads to educational reform and development. Authority enables school administrators to directly oversee the implementation of the contemporary curriculum and make immediate decisions that fall within the scope of their influence, without having to go through the bureaucracy at the Ministry of Education (Department of Education).

School principals and administrators are fully aware of the situation at their schools, including matters involving students, teachers and parents, even more so than the Ministry of Education. As Chapter 6 explained, case studies are used to study the schools, different capabilities available in them, and the availability of technology. Local education departments in the schools' neighbourhoods also had varying levels of knowledge, and residents of different neighbourhood came from different cultural and social backgrounds. As mentioned earlier, understanding social and cultural contexts is important for successfully implementing the new curriculum.

The findings show that the Ministry's decisions seem to emerge from a blurred vision. Saleh, the supervisor commented, 'This resulted from conflicting decisions that emerged from the planning, curricula, and assessment departments.' As Section 6.7 discussed, an ideological struggle exists that includes different opinions and conflicting decisions in the Ministry's departments.

This issue is related to the curriculum leadership, which aims to connect the curriculum department with other departments, such as planning and evaluation. There is no doubt that coordination is critical to the successful implementation of the curriculum, as the departments must complement each other without conflict when issuing decisions for affiliated schools and overseeing various educational sectors.

This section presents issues related to leadership and change, and the extent to which they impact the implementation of the contemporary curriculum. These issues are presented with a focus on fighting bureaucracy and providing education departments and school administrators with greater authority. Section 7.5 presents various issues

related to technology and technology availability in schools, includes examples of how educational leaders affect bureaucracy and red tape, and the availability of the necessary technology and capabilities in schools.

7.5 IT access and provision

The previous sections present issues related to technology in contemporary education. Technology plays an important role in this study, as it is a focus for the NLT, connectivism and CLT approaches. Eight sections are dedicated to technology in the survey (Appendix A). This was done in order to look into the availability of technology, teacher attitudes towards technology and other related issues. Moreover, Chapter 6 presented a number of issues related to the lack of technology in schools, especially in classrooms where technology is nearly non-existent. For instance, data from the survey reveals that almost all participants indicated that there is a lack of maintenance and IT support (Appendix F, Figure 2, column 1). Survey findings also indicate that most participants have medium to high-level technology-related abilities (Appendix F, Table 1). Moreover, almost all teachers use computers and laptops and had good access to Internet access at home. However, as mentioned, classrooms are nearly devoid of technology. Therefore, teachers mostly use technology outside of school.

This section sheds light on issues related to teacher perspectives about technology in education. As mentioned earlier, technology plays a role in opening up new avenues for education inside and outside of school through personal networks. Education occurs between individuals and groups within these networks. It also discusses how

participants use technology, as well as the short-term outlook for using technology in Arabic language instruction.

Chapter 2 mentioned Saudi society's significant progress with regard to technology and communications. This led the state to move forward with e-government and support it in order to keep up the progress. Without a doubt, technology has opened up new avenues for communication between people, including vast knowledge acquisition and expertise transfer. This interpersonal communication clearly occurs within widespread personal networks, which is a focus connectivism theory.

Technology and the NLT contribute much to interactions between teachers and administrators, and between administrators and parents. For example, an email can be sent to a parent about a student's educational situation, as Yousseff (from Al-Najah School) explained in terms of using emails to communicate with families of students, especially mothers. As Abdulaziz (from Al-Jadida School) remarked, 'The Ministry should provide a computer set and a projector. The ministry can do that in hours if it wanted to; there are huge budgets allocated for education, so why not.'

One of the most significant findings about technology is the lack of technology in classrooms. However, it is based on theoretical factors as opposed to practical ones. Technology also affects other issues related to educational leadership. As mentioned earlier, a huge amount of money is allocated to provide schools with the latest technology, especially inside the classroom as part of the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Education Development Project (Kamal, 2012). Another issue related to the contemporary curriculum is the curriculum document, which refers to technology

as the basic foundation for the curriculum (Arabic Curriculum Document, 2007).

Likewise, CDs and DVDs were mentioned in Chapter 6, even though, as the results showed, most classrooms lack electronic whiteboards. This indicates a gap between theory and reality. This is undoubtedly apparent to the Ministry and people responsible for the curriculum. Nevertheless, we find that schoolbooks refer to non-existent listening lessons and video clips. There is no doubt that this could have negative effects and shake the confidence of teachers and students in the curriculum and what is being taught.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the major issues that emerged from the findings. It examined the lack of understanding about the NLT and contemporary literacy. For example, it was found that teachers have trouble understanding the contemporary concept of literacy because discrete topic curricula are embedded in their minds. Institutes of higher education play a large role in ingraining these curricula because of college and university curricula which are not in line with contemporary theories and approaches for language teaching and acquisition. This chapter highlighted the differences evident between the curricula and educational approaches presented in universities and the contemporary approaches that schools should be teaching. Similarly, professional development programs that accompany the contemporary curriculum's implementation do not fulfil their intended roles. These programs are not able to clearly illustrate the NLT, integrative curriculum, CLT approaches or their role in Arabic language instruction. Furthermore, this chapter discussed the ideological and pedagogical struggle in implementing the contemporary curriculum and examined different facets of the ideological struggle that revolves around

conservatives' refusal to change. This stems from a desire to stick to religious principles and protect them from Westernisation, as the Arabic language is a repository for Islam. Meanwhile, other groups disagree, especially in the age of globalisation. They consider change and development as pressing needs that do not conflict with religious principles. Also discussed in Chapter 7 is the pedagogical struggle that revolves around factors specific to Arabic. Supporters of the traditional approach believe it is ideal for teaching Arabic, because Arabic has a number of linguistic features that distinguish it from other languages. On the other hand, supporters of the contemporary curriculum consider it to be more advanced and focussed on language in social contexts by presenting students with real-life situations in which they can use language. The old curriculum neglected this aspect of language learning. This chapter has also discussed how these theories and approaches work in practice, and addressed the application of the NLT, CLT approaches and technology in the contemporary curriculum. It also analysed some of the obstacles facing this. It discussed how the contemporary concept of literacy is implemented in the contemporary curriculum and analyses the most important factors influencing its implementation in light of the study's findings. The chapter also presented connectivism theory and its role with regards to technology and literacy.

Issues of leadership were also examined in terms of its role in leading change and implementing the new curriculum. Decentralised educational systems, bureaucracy, and their roles with regard to educational leadership were also considered. Likewise, the chapter also discussed the role that school principals play in leading change, as they know the school environment (including teachers, students and residents of the

neighbourhood) better than anyone. Finally, the chapter discussed technology-related issues, the most prominent of which is participant use of technology and their opinions regarding technology's current and future roles in education. The following chapter provides a conclusion to this study by highlighting important implications and recommendations for future research to questions of Arabic literacy policy, pedagogy and theory in Saudi Arabia.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

This study aims to investigate 24 Arabic educators in order to identify the contemporary curriculum and developments in the field of Arabic teaching. It proposes to develop Arabic language curricula (Al-Rajhi, 2006; Arabic Curriculum Document, 2007; Cruickshank, 2012; Toaima & Alnaqah, 2006) by focusing on integrative and holistic curricula instead of fragmented approaches in Arabic literacy and Arabic instruction. It presented communicative language teaching (CLT) approaches with the hope of developing language competence and skills, as well as promoting language use in real-life situations in social and communicative contexts (Canale & Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983; Savignon, 1983, 2007). It also aims to achieve social communication, as this is what CLT approaches are based on. The study hopes to achieve this, not only with speaking and listening skills, but rather with all language skills. This study also re-examines the concept of Arabic literacy, because literacy is the basis and starting point from which language instruction and acquisition begin. Therefore, the theoretical framework causes concern about the contemporary understanding of literacy (Cruickshank, 2006; Dooley, 2009; Gee, 2004; Jones Díaz, 2007; Luke, 2003, Street, 2013), which focuses on literacy as a social practice. Hence, the theoretical framework strongly supports this study and its integration of CLT approaches and the new literacy theory (NLT) in order to promote optimal use of language in social and communicative situations. Because technology plays a large role in the NLT and CLT, connectivism is appropriate for this new system. Connectivism is a new theory for the digital age. It strives to present

a new concept of learning via personal networks, which form the basis of interpersonal, social interaction and communication that occurs through the exchange of vast amounts of knowledge and experience (Siemens & Tittenberger 2009).

Chapter 8 will reframe the thesis argument and restate research questions, as well as briefly highlight the most significant issues in the thesis chapters. Also, it will overview the key propositions emerging from the study findings and discussion, discuss limitations of the study, provide recommendations for future research for policy pedagogy and research, and finally, declare several issues that shape the research in relation to my reflections as a researcher.

The study's argument is that ideological and pedagogical tensions have influenced educators' views toward the contemporary curriculum. The lack of understanding of the NLT and CLT approaches can be attributed to these ideologies and pedagogies that influence educator opinions about Arabic teaching and Arabic literacy.

Additionally, the struggle has broadened and now affects other parts of the study. For example, there is now a debate between supporters and opponents of implementing the contemporary curriculum. The ideological and pedagogical tensions have even affected educational leadership, which plays a large role in curriculum change and development.

This study's goal is to answer the main research question, which revolves around examining educators' opinions about technology use and CLT manners informed by the contemporary understanding of literacy. Sub-questions were needed to answer the main question. These sub-questions complement each other and help to arrive at

an answer for the main question. The first question is about pedagogy and current approaches for teaching the Arabic language. It helps me to delve into the current pedagogy and the most significant issues related to it. The second question revolves around the contemporary theories and approaches in the contemporary curriculum and the extent of their influence on Arabic language instruction. Finally, the third question investigates the extent to which technology use in classrooms encourages students to use Arabic for communicative purposes.

8.1 Summary of the thesis chapters

Chapter 1 introduced the thesis by: (i) outlining the most significant issues covered in this dissertation; (ii) presenting the research problem and significant issues related to it; (iii) offering an initial overview of the principal argument; (iv) highlighting the methodology followed by the study by examining the study's main question and sub-questions; (v) addressing Arabic and its importance as an international language; (vi) examining the reasons behind the development of Arabic, including its religious significance for Muslims, its importance for the Arab identity, and the presence of a number of Arab communities in various different countries around the world; (vi) and finally, presenting a summary of the study's chapters and examining the most important issues in each one.

Chapter 2 presented the following by: (i) providing an overview and background information about Saudi society and its most significant social issues; and (ii) examining differences between Islamic and Western viewpoints regarding the socialisation of children, for instance, *حلقة* *halaqah* [Circle] was discovered as an old and new approach to be used in both Islamic and Western societies. This comparison

was made in detail in order to better understand the debate that curriculum change caused amongst different segments of Saudi society. Additionally, Chapter 2 provided background information about education in Saudi Arabia and the Ministry of Education's most prominent plans for developing it, the most significant of which is the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Education Development Project. The chapter also addressed Arabic language and educational policy, as well as the most significant issues related to pedagogies and teaching approaches for Arabic. So that these approaches and pedagogies could be changed for the better, curriculum theories are addressed. For example, it compared the contemporary curriculum with the old curriculum. Finally, the most prominent issues about literacy in the Arab world were presented.

Chapter 3 introduced the theoretical framework that informed this study which focussed on the contemporary concept of literacy. This concept has broadened our understandings of the tools for social communication that enables individuals to acclimate to and coexist with society. The chapter also examined the role of technology and the Internet in literacy learning by examining prominent issues relating to critical literacy and critical pedagogy. It stressed the role that critical literacy and critical pedagogy play in society and education. This chapter also introduced the contemporary concept of Arabic literacy, and examined connectivism theory and its role in the learning process in this digital age. Additionally, the relationships between connectivism, the NLT and CLT approaches were discussed. The chapter also examined curriculum change and its relationship to critical pedagogy and critical literacy, in terms of enhancing curriculum development through a focus on societal issues and their relationship with education. Finally, the

chapter concluded by noting the important role that educators play in curriculum development, the process of change and the contemporary curriculum's communicative approaches and theories.

Chapter 4 presented an overview of the development of CLT approaches.

Communicative competence was emphasised at first, and then the focus shifted and it became an approach. The chapter delved into this approach in detail and explored whether the communicative is a pedagogy or theory, as well as whether the communicative is a social issue or a psychological issue. Moreover, Chapter 4 offered an overview of the international uses of the communicative approach, with a focus on teachers and their understanding of CLT approaches. This was discussed in order to support the theoretical and practical facets that help make this approach more useful and effective in teaching, as many studies have shown that lacking understanding of the communicative method causes teachers to use traditional approaches in teaching. This chapter also presented demonstrations of how to enhance technology for teaching with the communicative approaches, and concluded with the most prominent issues, which are CLT approaches in the Arabic language and leadership in Saudi Arabia education.

Chapter 5 introduced the study's methodology and research questions by: (i) presenting my theoretical stance and epistemology, in addition to their influence on study, as I have an insider's perspective; (ii) discussing the research questions and addressing how they complement each other and help answer the study's main question with the use of interviews and surveys that each covered the main points aimed at answering the research questions; (iii) outlining the study's design, which

plays an important role by helping the study move forward with a clear methodology that helps achieve the study's objectives and goals; and (iv) highlighting qualitative and quantitative research methods and delving into details about them in order to arrive at an appropriate method for this study. Case studies were chosen, and, different types of case studies and details about them were introduced in order to select the most appropriate method for this study. Next, Chapter 5 continued with: (i) presenting details about the study participants and schools; (ii) examining the study's research tools (surveys and interviews) and various related issues; (iii) presenting the information-gathering stage in detail; (iv) introducing the information analysis phase and methods for organising; (v) classifying qualitative data into a priori and empirical data (vi) explaining how *Word* and *Excel* are used with quantitative data; and finally, (vii) addressing other issues such as the reliability of data, documentation and the National Forum of the Contemporary Curriculum.

Chapter 6 was the evidentiary chapter of this thesis, beginning with an overview of Tabuk, the city in which this study was launched; then the chapter presented five case studies. Demographic findings of each participant were examined. Additionally, information about the supervisors was provided. This chapter examined the key findings across the five schools in view of the research questions, NLT framework and the CLT approach. The surveys and interviews complement each other and were helpful in discovering important results. Four themes emerged from these surveys. The first theme is that teachers lack an understanding of the contemporary concept of literacy. Results show that participants believe the contemporary curriculum decreases the quantity of reading and writing, they still support the fragmented topic curricula. For example, some participants support the emphasis on grammar, but

some use the communicative approaches while teaching grammar. Additionally, this chapter examined tension emerging between supporters and opponents of the contemporary curriculum. Each group explained why it supports the curriculum that it deems most appropriate. Moreover, the chapter addressed technology availability in schools and related issues and examined professional development for the contemporary curriculum, which affected the contemporary curriculum's implementation. Finally, the chapter discussed educational leadership and change and presented a number of issues related to educational leadership of curricula, especially with regard to the contemporary curriculum.

Chapter 7 discussed the major findings that emerged from the case studies which included a lack of understanding the contemporary concept of literacy. It found that professional development and academic preparation (pre-service) received by students in colleges and universities affect teachers' understating of the NLT. This chapter also discussed the tension between supporters of the traditional and contemporary curricula and the conflict between conservative and liberal supporters about control over the curriculum. Furthermore, Chapter 7 examined issues that were relevant to CLT implications in the contemporary curriculum, as well as highlighted issues that are relevant to literacy, SES, connectivism and technology. Finally, it examined issues related to educational leadership, change, technology and its availability in schools.

8.2 Key propositions in the study

The key propositions that emerged in the findings of this study fall into six key categories that directly relate to three research questions. The key propositions are:

(i) understanding contemporary literacy; (ii) ideological and pedagogical tension; (iii) implementation of the contemporary curriculum; (iv) professional development and preparation of the contemporary curriculum; (v) educational leadership and change and (vi) access to information technology.

8.2.1 Understanding contemporary literacy

The first proposition is concerned with how the NLT is understood. This proposition relates to RQ 1: *What pedagogical approaches exist in Saudi Arabia in relation to teaching Arabic?* The misunderstanding of the new literacy theory was the result of pedagogy, which is informed by traditional concepts of literacy. This is a very important issue for this study because it is necessary to understand contemporary literacy due to a lack of understanding the NLT and the new concepts for Arabic instruction and literacy.

Numerous factors have influenced how the NLT is understood. The most significant of these is that the NLT is a new concept for the teachers in this study. Arabic language instruction was previously based on fragmented curricula in which reading was taught as a separate subject. When the contemporary curriculum was developed, teachers thought it lacked substance because it appeared to neglect reading and writing skills. They did not understand the holistic nature of contemporary literacy, which considers enabling individuals to use literacy under its contemporary concept as one of its most important goals. The aim of contemporary literacy is for individuals to communicate, coexist and function in their societies to share and construct meaning. This proposition relates to RQ 1 which contributed to answer questions about the lack of clarity surrounding contemporary literacy. In institutions

of teacher education, fragmented curricula continues to be taught and teachers tended to apply what they learnt in universities and colleges, resulting in a gap between the reality of language education and the contemporary concept of literacy.

Therefore, professional development plays an important role in this issue.

Professional development programs are largely unsatisfactory and fail to place focus on practical aspects of the contemporary curriculum, including the NLT. Professional development has considerable importance in teachers' understanding and implementation of modern methods and pedagogy. This proposition was connected to RQ 1, given the role of professional development to inform and update teachers in their pedagogical applications to the teaching of Arabic. The proposition highlights issues in professional development, such as professional development programs, their content, implementation methods for those programs, and the qualifications of trainers. Therefore, there is a need for qualified instructors to not simply recite and lecture. Here, we see the need for teacher-centred curricula. Likewise, training teachers over the course of an entire year would increase the effectiveness of professional development programs.

In Arabic, the scope of literacy is limited to reading and writing. Although there may be developments, the reading-based concept, which is textually based, has not expanded. Meanwhile, there is a lack of studies about literacy being broader and more comprehensive than simply dealing with texts. Rather, literacy extends to society, an idea that is absent from the concept of literacy in Arabic. Literacy as a social concept is an extremely important idea that all teachers should understand clearly. Many teachers do not think that literacy extends beyond vocabulary and the

definition of words. However, the problem is that these words are from an older era. Many participants do not perceive literacy as a means of communication that people use as active members of society. Even those who realise that the contemporary concept of literacy is comprehensive and general may find that this comprehensive concept is difficult for others to understand at the present time. This concept needs to be introduced gradually and sequentially for it to be easily understood. It is unreasonable to expect an immediate transition from the traditional concept of literacy (reading and writing) to the contemporary, holistic one. Likewise, society needs to gradually transition towards the contemporary concept of literacy. Therefore, understanding the various opinions about a literacy that is based on social and communicative practices is the first step towards developing the contemporary concept of literacy.

8.2.2 Ideological and pedagogical tension

The second proposition is related to ideological and pedagogical tensions over the contemporary curriculum. This proposition was connected to the answer to RQ 1. It shed light on minute details of existing pedagogies in Saudi education: pedagogies that affected ideologies held by educators. The proposition revealed the most significant aspects of the ideological and pedagogical struggle and its impact on contemporary curriculum applications.

Tensions and debate about the contemporary concept of literacy comes from the fact that Arabic is linked to the Holy Qur'an, and any changes to how Arabic is taught could affect Qur'anic literacy, which is very important from a religious standpoint. Participants see this struggle over literacy and Arabic language instruction as one

that extends to cover pedagogy. There is conflict and debate over the contemporary curriculum between those who support modernisation of Arabic language curricula and conservatives who want to protect older teaching methods. Conservatives believe these old approaches are appropriate for Arabic instruction, especially with regard to reading, writing and grammar instruction. Some participants insist that the contemporary curriculum includes less reading and grammar content than the previous curriculum, which could affect student mastery of these skills. In contrast, the contemporary curriculum focuses on developing student skills. Specifically, it focuses on using technology to help people use language for communicative purposes. The contemporary curriculum is keen on keeping pace with contemporary language teaching curricula and global curricula.

However, there are issues related to implementing the contemporary curriculum in Saudi Arabia. Specifically, the curriculum is being implemented differently in cities and villages, resulting in difficulty for it to be uniform. Some participants say the contemporary curriculum may be difficult to implement throughout Saudi Arabia because many villages lack the technological services and infrastructure that it requires. Another issue related to curriculum implementation is residents' economic conditions being closely linked to literacy and literacy instruction. As mentioned earlier, understanding literacy, according to the contemporary concept, depends on whether literacy's role in society is fully understood, a concept that requires time. In Arabic, the concept of literacy does not extend beyond reading and writing skills, therefore, to expand, there must be a collective awareness among those who teach (educators), as well as throughout society.

Ideological tension strongly influences the formation of participant thoughts and viewpoints. This struggle affects pedagogy and curricula with which Arabic is taught. Of course, there is a strong connection between the knowledge of Arabic grammar, reading and mastering oral and written Arabic. Grammar and reading must be taught, particularly because they allow people to write in Arabic and maintain their Islamic identity. As tension shows, the issue is not one of language learning or mastery. Rather, it involves the preservation of Islamic and Arab identities, as well as other related issues. Literacy is a tool that each group tries to use to either preserve or develop the Arabic language, and each group views this issue from its own perspective.

As for the pedagogical struggle, the group that opposed the contemporary curriculum stresses the importance of grammar and reading for language acquisition and literacy. Likewise, many participants believe that Arabic learning begins with mastering grammar, reading and writing. However, supporters of the curriculum view the contemporary curriculum as one that keeps pace with global curricula for language teaching by using integrative curricula for language instruction based on curricula that help to prepare students so they are able to acquire 21st Century language skills.

Grammar is considered one of the most important issues the Arabic language. Oral and written mastery of grammar is necessary, as Arabic is unique in its use of its diacritics. In English, a word's final letter does not change depending on whether it is the subject or object, or whether it is an adjective or the noun the adjective describes. This is known as 'functional grammar'. Regardless of the contemporary trend

towards learning languages while neither translating grammar nor using old methods, Arabic grammar is still very important because it is the standard by which language mastery is judged for both native and non-native speakers. Participants in this study, therefore, emphasise grammar, which led them to use contemporary methods while teaching grammatical rules. They do so primarily because they think it is helpful for grammar learning, and for language learning in general. For example, they use drama, which is a communicative strategy for teaching grammar.

8.2.3 Implementations of the contemporary curriculum

The third proposition deals with implementing the contemporary curriculum as the result of two previous propositions: (i) lack of understanding; and (ii) ideological and pedagogical tension. This proposition contributed to answering all the questions and is connected to the answer to RQ 1, especially with regard to the existing pedagogical and curricula approaches in Saudi education and their effect on contemporary curriculum applications. This proposition presented issues related to modern curricula and student-centred teaching in opposition to the old teacher-centred system. This proposition contributed to answering RQ 2: *How do contemporary curriculum approaches informed by new frameworks of literacy influence the use of CLT approaches in teaching Arabic?* In this proposition, there are issues related to the application of the contemporary curriculum to pedagogy. This proposition argues that effective implementation of the contemporary curriculum relies on understanding the contemporary theories of literacy and language learning.

The implementation of the contemporary curriculum emphasises language instruction that encourages the student to be the focus of the educational process. The contemporary curriculum is more interactive so that language can be used for communicative and social purposes. Implementation also makes use of technology, which supports and reinforces the learning process in a manner appropriate for learning environments. Keep in mind that technology is not always an effective tool or some sort of magic wand for the learning and educational process. The implementation of the contemporary curriculum did run into some difficulties, including economic conditions within society. As mentioned earlier regarding the first proposition, participants in the study did not have a clear understanding of the concept of literacy.

This proposition also addressed issues in RQ 3: *How does the use of technology in the classroom enhance and promote student use of Arabic for communicative purposes?* It clarified the role that technological capabilities and infrastructure of the school and other aspects play in facilitating contemporary curriculum applications in an effective manner.

In the Eastern Province where the economic situation is better than in other areas and residents are better off than those in other provinces, people have a better understanding of the holistic concept of literacy. Nevertheless, Al-Nahda School suffers because the contemporary curriculum is poorly implemented. This was because the neighbourhood is suffering from a lack of services, in addition to the presence of illiteracy amongst residents, which affects how well people understand the contemporary curriculum, because it requires more awareness from parents.

Another issue is that the contemporary curriculum disregards the old concept of literacy in Saudi society. However, this is not true because a large percentage of parents are not able to help their children with it.

In this context, connectivism plays a large role in learning, especially in a digital age where technology is vitally important to the learning process. This theory states that learning occurs within networks that include learners who manage learning within various networks outside educational institutions. Therefore, technology-based learning outside educational institutions is very important in this study. The study's findings show that participants use technology more outside school than in school because technology tools are available to them at home. This suggests that students (learners) may also be using technology similar to teachers, as the latest statistics show that technology services are widely available (Chapter 4). Here, we see the importance of this type of learning, as technology progresses rapidly and brings about significant changes in the learning process. Students have begun acquiring a significant amount of information and facts from these digital sources. Education has a role to play here in allocating and designing electronic sources so they are in line with contemporary educational standards.

8.2.4 Professional development and preparation for the contemporary curriculum

The fourth proposition examines professional development and preparation for the contemporary curriculum, which are strongly related to a lack of clarity about the NLT as professional development and preparation programs for the contemporary curriculum were delayed and did not pave the way for implementing the curriculum.

This proposition provided insights into all the research's questions. Professional development plays an important function in facilitating change in education, technology and curriculum. With regards to RQ 1, this proposition was connected to insisting on the importance of professional development in changing old methods which are firmly rooted in the pedagogical practices of teachers. As for RQ 2, this proposition highlights the role played by professional development and the opportunities it provide for teachers to update their understanding of the NLT and CLT methods. This proposition also addressed the issues highlighted in RQ 3 in terms of the role of training to increase teachers' skills in the use of technology for educational purposes.

Also, as mentioned in Chapter 6, professional development programs need more focus on innovative teaching approaches and strategies, as well as on how to teach the contemporary curriculum to teachers and how to move between the four skills during the time allotted for the lesson. Another issue involves teacher education, as universities and colleges play a large role in preparing teachers for the education field. For example, an Arabic language student must be knowledgeable with the latest developments in the field of language instruction, including contemporary theories and teaching approaches. The curricula that students and/or educators study in universities must therefore be analogous to what is taught in general education schools. They must also conform to the educator's new contemporary role as a guide, adviser and mentor of students. Moreover, the student must be the focus of the education process, not the teacher.

8.2.5 Educational leadership and change

This proposition addresses educational leadership, change, RQ 1 and RQ 2 in this study. As for RQ 1, this proposition showed the significant role of educational leadership in impacting the situation in the educational field. Effective leadership takes appropriate preparatory measures according to the educational setting before beginning to make changes. As for RQ 2, educational leadership is the responsibility to oversee contemporary curriculum applications, especially regarding enhancing the role of contemporary curriculum in the transition from teaching Arabic to modern, global methods.

Given that the contemporary curriculum is a modern curriculum, there are major advances in teaching the Arabic language. Essential in this process is educational leadership to facilitate change at all levels, including schools (teachers, administrators, students, facilities and infrastructure), universities and the Ministry of Education.

It emerges in this thesis that educational leadership is essential, and research must be conducted on the extent of influencing educational leadership on curriculum progress and implementation according to supporters and non-supporters of the contemporary curriculum. One of the most important aspects of the development of education is to give regional education departments more power, and to clear the routine tasks and bureaucracy related to the Ministry of Education. After allocating the Department of Education more authority, as it exists in the future vision for education, it was obligatory to give additional power to school administrators and be more flexible in dealing with issues related to schools without having to seek permission from the

Department of Education. There are internal issues linked to only schools that require the director of a school to issue a decision in accordance with a certain vision and build on data associated with the school environment.

Without a doubt, leadership is fundamental and relevant to other issues this thesis addresses. It starts with Saudi society and how it views change. Visionary leadership is required to lead this type of change. As mentioned in Chapter 7, leadership and change begin by equipping society for change and preparing it for the future. Next, there are other stages aimed at preparing teachers and educators for the next phase. Without a doubt, it is important to involve everyone who works in the educational system because the process of change is a cooperative one aimed at involving every person who works in the educational process and making them a part of it. As mentioned earlier and as many participants noted, everyone participates in the process of change, and this begins in schools.

Likewise, as noted above, societal understanding is important for accepting other opinions about the change process. There are many curricula-related opinions within society and its different segments. Even members of the Ministry of Education have diverse opinions about change. As mentioned earlier, this causes tension. However, dialogue is necessary and vital because it paves the way for people to speak and exchange opinions that go to the heart of educational leadership. Bureaucracy is a very important issue in this regard. As mentioned earlier, bureaucracy and centralisation in education have negatively affected the contemporary curriculum's implementation. They have hampered dialogue and timely communication between schools and the Ministry. Dialogue and communication often takes time, and

responses are often delayed and often fail to reach educators. These responses are important because they answer important questions related to the contemporary curriculum. The results show that some curriculum designers are practically inaccessible, that is, they are unavailable for comment or discussion.

8.2.6 Access to information technology

The final proposition is related to technology and its availability in schools, however, it is absent in the classroom. This proposition relates to RQ 3 which is related to the availability of technology and its role in developing the teaching of the Arabic language for communicative purposes. This proposition addressed that in the contemporary curriculum, technology is a useful tool in teaching language, which can be used for communicative and social purposes.

Technology is basic, necessary and prescribed by the contemporary curriculum. This situation gives a chance to contemplate an important issue. The theoretical framework for the contemporary curriculum assumes that many technologies (such as DVDs) will be available. However, in reality, this technology is not available in all schools. A number of obstacles hamper technology implementation in schools, including school infrastructure (such as Internet availability in some schools) and class size. Another issue is the budget allocated for technology, which is unreasonably low, especially considering the substantial size of Saudi education budgets. This is especially true in light of technology's importance for the contemporary curriculum.

8.3 Limitations of the study

This study has a number of limitations relating to the nature of the relationship with participants and the study's location. These include: (i) absence of female educators and children from the study; (ii) interviews not recorded electronically; (iii) types of methodologies used; (iv) power relationship in the study; and (v) researcher's position as an academic researcher.

This study was conducted in Tabuk therefore, its findings cannot be generalised to represent Saudi Arabia as a whole. However, because Tabuk is a Saudi city that is similar to the country's other cities, what is appropriate to Tabuk may apply to other cities. That is, there are cultural, religious and ideological similarities between Tabuk and other Saudi cities.

As Chapter 5 mentioned, female educators are not included in this study for cultural and social reasons. Of course, it would be of benefit if their voices were heard, as they would help present opinions and viewpoints from all segments of society, that is, males and females.

Children are also excluded from the study's participants, another important limitation. The study's topic involves children's education, surveying literacy and literacy instruction in the primary school.

There is also another related limitation – the tools used in the study's methodology and the fact that observation was not one of them. Observation is important, because

it allows one to see the communicative method and technology being used in classrooms. If used, it would enhance the study and present a different perspective.

Finally, as mentioned in Chapter 5, the plan was to take audio recordings of interviews, and this was explained in the application at the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. However, the aforementioned circumstances (the request by a number of participants not to be recorded electronically) kept me from recording them. This is a study limitation, as recordings would have allowed complete exact transcripts of participant interviews to be confirmed. As discussed in this chapter, a great effort was exerted because the interviews were not recorded. They began with taking notes carefully in Arabic in order to assure data reliability. Following by the notes translated and transcribed into English.

8.4 Recommendations for policy, curriculum and pedagogy

8.4.1 Professional development

One of this study's most important recommendations with regard to education is selecting demonstration schools that model the implementation of curriculum and pedagogy based on the aims of professional development in the Educational Supervision and Development Centre. Selecting five schools from different parts of the city makes it easier to visit them. This is also based on the desire of many teachers who prefer that training courses be outside working hours. Another important point regarding professional development involves encouraging teachers to attend the courses. This can be done by effectively promoting them and focusing on practical teaching instead of lectures. Finally, online workshops can be a

complementary aspect to these courses. Teachers could be able to go the Ministry website and participate the courses they are interested in by answering questions in order to become qualified.

The study recommends that two or three teachers be selected from each school to receive intensive professional training in teaching the contemporary curriculum and utilising technology. Later, these teachers would be tasked with training other teachers at their respective schools on a weekly basis over the course of a year. The selected teachers would be compensated for their efforts, and this would also serve as an incentive to undertake this work. These instructors would also teach fewer courses.

The study also recommends that the Ministry launch YouTube channels about the contemporary curriculum and directly oversee them in order to introduce new information about the counterparty curriculum as it arises. The channels would present information with illustrative video clips. Some clips could be directed towards teachers and address how the contemporary curriculum can be used, while others could be directed towards students and address the curriculum's lessons, the latter serving as an alternative to DVDs. YouTube was chosen because it is widely used by different segments of Saudi society, including children, men and women. Videos receive millions of views, especially those that address social issues, because YouTube offers greater freedom than the official media.

8.4.2 Future research

The NLT is a new field of Arabic literacy pedagogy, and interest is focused on getting the most benefits from technology to support Arabic language teaching and literacy. In Arab studies, there is a focus on reading skills, such as critical thinking and creative reading, and there are a few studies about using computers to develop literacy skills. However, literacy education must be viewed as a contemporary concept in which all skills and knowledge grow in a complementary and balanced manner.

In contemporary education, it is necessary to keep up with new concepts in literacy education. For example, procedures must be performed on the Internet, such as making an appointment to register a newborn or renewing a driver's license or ID card. Moreover, electronic services have become easier to use, less time-consuming and less expensive, therefore, allowing people to carry out their dealings at home instead of going to locations where they wait in line for attention for what could be a long time. In this way, it has become necessary to access the computer and at home, as the concept of literacy has begun to take on another meaning – computer and technology literacy.

In the contemporary concept of education, students are positioned at the centre of the educational process, and literacy in the traditional discourse of literacy learning renders the student as a passive recipient of the learning process. Completing research and studies in the same field opens up new abundant areas of research to develop education in Saudi Arabia. A huge budget of 80 billion SAR (AUD\$23 billion) to develop public education must be used to benefit Arabic language and

literacy learning, as well as support studies that strive to develop the contemporary curriculum and the Arabic language. Future studies must focus on other research processes, such as tools for observation and actions research methods for a deeper understanding of several educational phenomena in the Saudi education field and Arabic language globally. Finally, this study covers the perspectives of male educators at boys' schools; however, it would be useful if future studies about the contemporary curriculum in girls' schools, because issues that emerge differ from those in boys' schools. For instance, there is a plan to conduct a research in female education in Saudi Arabia by using social media to increase the engagement in learning for girls. This future research will also address the search for alternatives to closed circuit television for teaching girls, as male teachers often lecture girls via a video feed.

In addition, this study recommends that future studies be conducted to examine the opinions of female educators related to literacy, the Arabic language and the contemporary curriculum.

While this study focussed on surveying the opinions of educators, it is recommended that future studies should focus on children's views of the contemporary curriculum in Saudi Arabia.

8.5 Reflection on becoming a researcher

Several issues came to mind when I reflected on becoming a researcher. Firstly, I was told by a lecturer during my undergraduate study that curriculum is a 'dry' [dull or not interesting subject because of its theories] subject. However, after competing

my Master degree and studying for my PhD, I realised that a curriculum is more related to society. In fact, a curriculum and society forms a close relationship. I better understand literacy's role in societal development, realising that this study's main topic, and the topic most relevant to teachers' perspectives, was literacy. How societal thinking is shaped and formed is closely linked to literacy, as literacy is responsible for this. Teachers' viewpoints are a result of the views they grew up with. Therefore, the question is related to the ideology that teachers grew up with and believe in. It also relates to how they were taught literacy, and how they teach it.

It was my belief that learning for a PhD only involves addressing a specific topic, studying it in depth and in detail, and using research methods. For example, I thought this study would be limited to CLT approaches and the use of technology in Arabic language instruction, and I believed the contribution in the knowledge would primarily be included within this field. Gradually, the research began addressing issues, which I previously thought were not directly related to the study's subject matter. This occurred when I was asked to provide details about complexities and contradiction issues in Saudi society. I was also asked to compare children in the Islamic world with their counterparts in the West. After delving into these topics and studying them, I found that they have a large influence on education in Saudi Arabia because studying society, its ideology and its culture is important to better understanding of educational issues.

After I attained the Masters of Education, my concerns deepened regarding the teaching of language and its curricula. Therefore, I decided to prepare for a PhD in order to address my concerns through researching the teaching of the Arabic

language, because I thought that this would provide me with solutions to address problems with the Arabic language in Saudi Arabia. My expectations were based on the idea that completing a PhD would provide significant opportunities for me to develop expertise in this field. In other words, I thought that I would be able to solve the world's problems with regard to Arabic language and learning literacy. I didn't expect that importing curricula from the West would be so controversial. But as my journey in the PhD continued my knowledge of research approaches to the teaching of Arabic expanded. Also I discovered that issues related to language and literacy were complex and while undertaking a PhD is an important contribution in my own knowledge about these issues, it is not the end of my learning journey.

Regarding my experience of socialisation, this was a very important experience. When I started reading about the NLT with some help from the supervising team, I discovered that literacy has a critical relationship with society's problems, which were and still are a concern for me. And solving these problems can begin to be addressed in developing Arabic literacy.

My relationship with the theoretical framework adopted in this study became more pertinent for me during the writing of the discussion chapter, in which I believe that I developed advanced insights into understanding ideologies and pedagogies issues that impact on the Saudi social and educational context.

8.6 Conclusion

Chapter 8 concluded this thesis by providing a summary of the chapters: (i) highlighting the key propositions that emerge from the findings and discussion; (ii)

providing several implications to policy, theory and pedagogy for future research, including studies related to professional development, contemporary literacy and language teaching; (iii) offering an analytical vision for education in the country based on a knowledge economy; and (iv) suggesting ideas about preparing a productive and effective generation that is connected with the rest of the world, resulting in a positive tangible influence on the global market.

Additionally, Chapter 8 presented an overview of the study's most important limitations, which include the exclusion of female educators and children from the study and the fact that it was conducted in the city of Tabuk. Other limitations discussed include bias towards interviews not to be recorded and my academic position. Finally, in this chapter I provided a reflection on being a researcher who is also an academic in the field of curricula and education.

For the Saudi curriculum to be successful, changes that are occurring in society must be taken into account. Societal thought and acceptance of change is fundamental and important for curriculum development and change to determine the susceptibility of society and its preparedness to face global changes.

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List of Appendices

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APPENDIX A: RESEARCH SURVEYS

Survey (English version)

Student researcher: Hussain Alsaari
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Questionnaire

English Version

Note

This is a draft copy of the questionnaire, the Arabic transcript will be sent to the Human Research Ethics Committee at UWS.

Perspectives of male primary educators of the Arabic language on the use of technology and communicative language teaching CLT informed by new understandings of literacy in Saudi Arabia (Tabuk).

Section One: Information about you

(Please tick in the appropriate box)

1. What position do you hold in your at your organisation?

Principal

Supervisor

Teacher

2. How many years have you been teaching for? _____

3. What age group do you belong to?

20 – 24

45 – 49

25 – 29

50 – 54

30 – 34

55 – 59

35 – 39

60 – 64

40 – 44

65 +



4. What are your current qualifications?

- Bachelor of Primary Education – four years trained (Teacher’s College)
- Diploma in Teaching – two years trained (Teacher’s College)
- Bachelor of Arabic (University)
- Bachelor of Primary Education – two years after Diploma in teaching
- Master
- PhD
- Other _____

5. How did you gain skills in using technology?

- A course at school
- A course in the Education Department
- A private lesson
- From a colleague/friend/family member
- Independently
- Other _____

6. Do have special qualifications in using technology in teaching Arabic and/or teaching Arabic in contemporary approaches, communicative language teaching or the contemporary curriculum?

- No
 - Yes **please** specify what and where you have done this training
-
-
-
-

Section Two: Information about your school

1. How many Grades Four and Five Arabic teachers are at your school? _____
2. How many supervisors liaise with your school? _____
3. How many students are enrolled at your schools? _____
4. Where is your school located in Tabuk city? _____

Section Three: Availability of technology at your school

1. Issues and views about technology in your school

Please indicate your answer using the number that best represents your view about the availability of technology in your school

1 – Strongly disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – Not sure; 4 – Agree; 5 – Strongly agree

1	There is a lack in maintenance and IT support	
2	There is a lack of computers, laboratories and printers	
3	The tools are old and not updated tools	
4	There is a lack of educational software	
5	There is no clear schedule for the laboratories	

2. Please tick types of technology available in your school

1	Powerpoint	
2	Data show	
4	Internet access	
5	Video tape	
6	YouTube for supporting communicative language teaching approaches	
7	Using your own website	
8	Graphics/drawing	
9	Computers	
10	Data project	
11	Use students own technological tools E.g. IPod, IPod, MP3 or mobile phone in the class	
12	Smart board	
13	Overhead projector	
14	TV + LCD TV for school news and advertisement	
15	CD player	
16	DVD player	
17	Recorder	
18	Data project in a computer lab	

19	Digital camera (photo)	
20	Printers	
21	Overhead projector	
22	Scanner	
23	Slides projector	
24	Audio cassette, MP3 player	
25	Laboratory of sound and vision	
26	Other	
27		
28		

3. Please tick types of technology available in your classroom

1	Powerpoint	
2	Data show	
4	Internet access	
5	Video tape	
6	YouTube for supporting communicative language teaching approaches	
7	Using your own website	
8	Graphics/drawing	
9	Computers	
10	Slides projector	
11	Use students own technological tools E.g. IPod, MP3 or mobile phone in the class	
12	Smart board	
13	Overhead projector	
14	TV + LCD TV for school news and advisement	
15	CD player	
16	DVD player	
17	Recorder	
18	Data projector	
19	Digital camera (photo)	
20	IPads	
21	IPods	
22	Printers	
23	Scanner	
24	Audio cassette, MP3 player	
25	Laboratory of sound and vision	
26	Other	
27		
28		

4. Please tick types of technology available in your home

1	Computer	
2	Laptop	
3	TV	
4	Internet access	
5	CD player	
6	DVD player	
7	Recorder	
8	Audio cassette, MP3 player	
9	Scanner	
10	Printer/photocopy	
11	Digital camera (photo)	
12	IPads	
13	IPods	
14	Video tape	
15	Other	
16		
17		

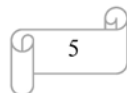
Section Four: Use of Technology

1. For each of the technologies listed in Section Three, how often do you use them?

1 – Every day; 2 – Twice a week; 3 – Once a week; 4 – Occasionally

Example

- 1. Data projector-----
- 2. -----
- 3. -----
- 4. -----
- 5. -----
- 6. -----
- 7. -----
- 8. -----



2. The future of technology in schools

Tick one or more from the following that might happen in the near future.

1	Students send homework via email	
2	School website is active and almost students and their parents visit it regularly	
3	Evaluation through portfolio and assignment	
4	Students complete online work through school website as part of their evaluation	
5	Electronic school	
6	Electronic curriculum delivery	
7	Providing internet in all schools	
8	School website is active and almost students and their parents visit it regularly	
9	Other	
10		
12		

Section Five: Attitudes to technology

Please indicate your answer using the number which best represents your attitude towards the use of technology in your teaching of Arabic.

1 – Strongly disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – Not sure; 4 – Agree; 5 – Strongly agree

1	Technology is improving student performance	
2	Using technology encourages students and increases their participation	
3	Students can get benefit from technology tools in term of learning literacies	
4	I don't use computers because they increase the workload	
5	With new curriculum teachers have to use technology as a priority	
6	Technology forms an important component to my teaching	
7	I would like to update my skills as my technology as part of my professional development	
8	I like to be update with technology	
9	Many of colleagues are experts in using technology	
10	Using technology is boring for me	
11	I don't like to be labelled as illiterate in information technology	
12	The school and classroom size influence the use of technology	
13	Teachers in my schools are negative toward the use of technology	
14	There is not enough time for learning about new technologies and their application to teaching	

Section Six: Curriculum change and pedagogy

1. Are you ready for the implementation of the contemporary curriculum?

- Yes, it is the right time
- No, there has not been enough preparation
- Other: _____

2. How well understood is the Curriculum Policy by educators?

- Curriculum guidelines are clear
- Workshops and in services are readily available and accessible
- The Ministry of Education website provides clear guidelines
- Educational forums are available and accessible
- Other _____

3. Communicative language teaching approaches

a) Please tick which situation you would more likely use formal Arabic with students, parents and colleagues

1	During discussions in the classroom	
2	Formal meetings with parents and colleagues	
3	At the library	
4	When students ask me questions	
5	In staff rooms, the management offices or teachers offices	
6	Meetings with the Ministry of Education and other government departments	
7	School excursions	
8	When students tell me about their weekend	
9	When students tell me about their activities interests	
10	At the office	
11	At the management	
12	School excursions	
13	At the management	
14	Other	
15		
16		

- b) Please tick which situation you would more likely use informal Arabic with students, parents and colleagues

1	During discussions in the classroom	
2	Formal meetings with parents and colleagues	
3	At the library	
4	When students ask me questions	
5	At my office	
6	In staff rooms, the management offices or teachers offices	
7	Meetings with the Education Department and other government departments	
8	School excursions	
9	When students tell me about their weekend	
10	When students tell me about their activities interests	
11	At the management	
12	School excursions	
13	At the management	
14	Other	
15		
16		

4. Communicative language teaching approaches

1. Strongly disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Not sure, 4. Agree, 5. Strongly agree

1	Teacher textbooks support teachers to implement the Contemporary Curriculum in the classroom	
2	The implementation of the contemporary curriculum requires extra lessons	
3	The contemporary curriculum encourages student – centred learning approaches	
4	The contemporary curriculum encourages students to think critically	
5	The contemporary curriculum provides new approaches in terms of teaching language	
6	Communicative language teaching approaches are separately highlighted in the contemporary curriculum	
7	The use of technology is highlighted throughout the contemporary curriculum	
8	Using communicative language teaching approaches encourages the use of the target language in different functional and meaningful situations	
9	Parents know the content of the contemporary curriculum	
10	Parents understand their obligation in the contemporary curriculum	
11	Students' language accuracy increases in the contemporary curriculum	
12	Students' language proficiency increases in the contemporary curriculum	
13	Students gain more opportunities to develop communication skills in Arabic in the contemporary curriculum	
14	New approaches to Arabic literacy in the are highlighted in the contemporary curriculum	

5. Please tick the activities listed below that best describes your approaches to the teaching of Arabic of the following areas in terms of language use which build CLT approaches.

1	Telling stories	
2	Drama	
4	Describing pictures (picture talk activities)	
5	Expressing opinions about social issues	
6	Discussion board	
7	Using maps	
8	Using Microsoft Word	
9	Skimming texts	
10	Scanning texts	
11	Critical thinking about texts, images, films etc	
12	Viewing	
13	Visualising	
14	Listening skills	
15	Presentations	
16	Writing letters	
17	Role-play	
18	The teaching of grammar through indirect approaches	
19	School radio programs	
20	Other	

6. For some of the activities above, how do you integrate communicative language teaching approaches?

Thank you for filling this survey. Please place into the envelope provided and drop it at the school office.

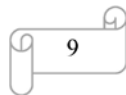
If you are interested in participating in an interview please indicate

Yes

No

Thank you

Hussain Alsaiari



Survey (Arabic version)

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الاستبانة

الموضوع: استخدام التكنولوجيا والطريقة التوافقية في تدريس اللغة العربية وفق مفهوم معاصر لتدريس القراءة من وجهة نظر التربويين (مديرون، مشرفون، معلمون) في مدارس مدينة تبوك الابتدائية.

القسم الأول: معلومات شخصية

فضلا ضع علامة (صح) في المربع المناسب

1- ماهي طبيعة عملك

مدير

مشرف تربوي

معلم

2- كم عدد سنوات الخبرة في مجال التعليم؟ _____

3- اختر فئتك العمرية من الآتي:

20 – 24

45 - 49

25 – 29

50 - 54

30 – 34

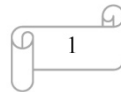
55 - 59

35 – 39

60 - 64

40 – 44

65+



4- ما هو مؤهلك الدراسي؟

- دبلوم في الكلية المتوسطة
- بكالوريوس في التعليم الابتدائية بعد دبلوم الكلية المتوسطة
- بكالوريوس في التعليم الابتدائي
- بكالوريوس جامعي
- ماجستير
- دكتوراه
- درجة غير مذكورة
-

5- كيف اكتسبت مهارات استخدام التكنولوجيا؟

- دورات في المدرسة
- دورات في إدارة التعليم
- دورات في معاهد خاصة
- عن طريق الزملاء / الأصدقاء / الأقارب
- تعليم ذاتي
- غير ما ذكر
-

6- هل لديك شهادات متخصصة في مجال الحاسب الآلي أو في تدريس اللغة العربية؟

- لا
- نعم

فضلا اذكرها بإيجاز

القسم الثاني: معلومات عن المدرسة

- 1- كم عدد معلمي الصف الرابع والخامس في مدرستك/ المدرسة التي تزورها؟ _____
- 2- كم عدد مشرفي اللغة العربية الذين يزورون مدرستك / التي تزورها؟ _____
- 3- كم عدد التلاميذ في مدرستك/ التي تزورها؟ _____

القسم الثالث: توفر التكنولوجيا في مدرستك؟

فضلا اختر رقم الإجابة الأصح والمطابقة لرؤيتك لتوفر التكنولوجيا في مدرستك

1. لا أوافق بشدة، 2. لا أوافق، 3. غير متأكد، 4. موافق، 5. أوافق بشدة

أ. قضايا ورؤى حول استخدام التكنولوجيا في مدرستك

1	هناك نقص في الصيانة والدعم
2	نقص في عدد الحاسبات والمعامل والطابعات...إلخ
3	الأجهزة في المدرسة غير حديثة
4	هناك نقص في البرامج التعليمية
5	لا توجد جدولة لاستخدام معمل / معمل الحاسب الآلي في المدرسة
6	أخرى
7	
8	

ب. الأجهزة الالكترونية المتوفرة في المدرسة

1	بوربوينت
2	داتا شو
4	إنترنت
5	اشرطة فيديو
6	موقع الكتروني خاص بالمدرسة
7	أجهزة كمبيوتر
8	التلاميذ يستخدمون أجهزة لهم الخاصة مثل الجوال، ام بي 3، أي باد، أي بود
9	السيورة الالكترونية
10	جهاز عارض فوق الرأس
11	شاشة تلفزيونية لعرض معلومات وإعلانات المدرسة
12	جهاز مشغل السي دي
13	جهاز دي في دي
14	جهاز تسجيل
15	كاميرا
16	طابعات
17	سكانر
18	أخرى
19	

ج. الأجهزة الإلكترونية المتوفرة في قاعة الصف الدراسي

1	بوربوينت
2	داتا شو
4	إنترنت
5	أشرطة فيديو
6	موقع الكتروني خاص بالمدرسة
7	أجهزة كمبيوتر
8	التلاميذ يستخدمون أجهزتهم الخاصة مثل الجوال، ام بي 3، أي باد، أي بود
9	السيبورة الإلكترونية
10	جهاز عرض فوق الرأس
11	شاشة تلفزيونية لعرض معلومات وإعلانات المدرسة
12	جهاز مشغل السي دي
13	جهاز دي في دي
14	جهاز تسجيل
15	كاميرا
16	طابعات
17	سكانر
18	أجهزة أي باد
19	اجهزة اي بود
20	أخرى
21	
22	

د. الأجهزة الإلكترونية المتوفرة في منزلك

1	كمبيوتر
2	لاب توب
3	تلفاز
4	أنترنت
5	مشغل السي سي
6	دي في دي
7	مسجل
8	سكانر
9	طابعة
10	كاميرا
11	أجهزة أي باد
12	اي بود
13	جهاز فيديو
14	اخرى
15	
16	

القسم الرابع: استخدام التكنولوجيا

1. فضلا اكتب الأجهزة الإلكترونية من (القسم الثالث)، مع توضيح الاستخدام

1. كل يوم، 2 مرتان في الاسبوع، 3 مرة اسبوعيا ، 4 أحيانا

- _____ -1
- _____ -2
- _____ -3
- _____ -4
- _____ -5
- _____ -6
- _____ -7
- _____ -8
- _____ -9
- _____ -10

2. مستقبل استخدام التكنولوجيا في المدارس

ضع علامة (صح) أمام العبارة الملائمة

1	التلاميذ يرسلون واجباتهم المنزلية عن طريق الإيميل لمعلمهم
2	التلاميذ يقومون بإجراء أنشطة كمتطلبات للمادة الدراسية عبر موقع المدرسة / إدارة التعليم / وزارة التربية والتعليم
3	أولياء الأمور يتابعون نتائج ومستويات أبنائهم عبر موقع المدرسة على الإنترنت
4	المدرسة الإلكترونية
5	المناهج الإلكترونية
6	الانترنت اللاسلكي
7	أخرى
8	
9	

القسم الخامس: اتجاهات نحو التكنولوجيا

فضلا اختر إجابتك بما يناسبها من العبارات الآتية حول موقفك من استخدام التكنولوجيا في تدريس اللغة العربية

1. لا أوافق بشدة، 2. لا أوافق، 3. غير متأكد، 4. موافق، 5. أوافق بشدة

1	التكنولوجيا تحسن أداء التلاميذ
2	استخدام التكنولوجيا يشجع التلاميذ على التفاعل في الموقف التعليمي
3	يجني التلاميذ فائدة من التكنولوجيا وأدواتها في اكتسابهم لمهارات القراءة بمفهومهما المعاصر
4	لا أحيذ التعامل مع التكنولوجيا لأن ذلك يزيد من عبء التدريس
5	مع المنهج الشامل أصبح استخدام التكنولوجيا بالنسبة للمعلمين من الأولويات في التدريس
6	التكنولوجيا جزء مهم في تدريسي
7	أنا أحب أن أكون مواكبا لكل ما هو جديد في مجال التكنولوجيا وخصوصا في ما يتعلق باستخدام التكنولوجيا في التدريس
8	أنا أحب أن أكون مواكبا للتكنولوجيا بشكل عام
9	الكثير من الزملاء لديهم خبرة في مجال استخدام التكنولوجيا
10	استخدام التكنولوجيا ممل بالنسبة لي في بعض الأحيان
11	لا أحب أن أكون أميا في ما يتعلق باستخدام التكنولوجيا
12	كثرة الطلاب في الفصل الواحد يؤثر في استخدام التكنولوجيا
13	المعلمون في المدارس قد يؤثرون سلبا في استخدام التكنولوجيا
14	لا يوجد الوقت الكافي لتعلم بعض التكنولوجيا الحديثة والبرامج التعليمية

القسم السادس: المنهج الشامل وتطبيقاته

1- هل كنت معدا ومستعدا للمنهج الشامل وتطبيقاته؟

نعم، هذا هو الوقت المناسب

لا، فلم يكن هناك تهيئة تحضيرات للمنهج

غير ذلك

2. كيف تم / يتم فهم المنهج الشامل من قبل التربويين؟

شرح المنهج الشامل في الدليل الإرشادي غير واضح

ورش العمل الخاصة بالمنهج الشامل ساعدت على فهم وسهلت / وتسهل في تطبيقه

موقع الوزارة يوفر شرحا وافيا حول المنهج الشامل وآليات تطبيقه والعمل به

الكثير من المواقع والمنتديات التربوية الحكومية والخاصة ساعدت في توضيح الكثير

حول المنهج الشامل

أخرى

3. مناهج تدريس اللغة العربية لأغراض تواصلية

1. فضلا اختر من العبارات الآتية التي تستخدم فيها اللغة العربية الفصحى مع زملائك، طلابك، أولياء الأمور

1	خلال النقاش مع التلاميذ في الفصل
2	خلال لقاء أولياء الأمور أو اجتماع الإدارة، أو اجتماع المعلمين
3	في المكتبة
4	عندما يسألني التلاميذ
5	في غرفة المعلمين، في غرفة الإدارة
6	اجتماعات مع المشرفين التربويين، اجتماعات مع الإدارة
7	خلال الرحلات المدرسية
8	عندما يتحدث التلاميذ عن قضائهم للإجازة
9	عندما يتحدث أنشطتهم واهتماماته
10	في الفسحة
11	أخرى
12	
13	
14	
15	
16	
17	

2. فضلا اختر من العبارات الآتية التي تستخدم فيها اللهجة العامية مع زملائك، طلابك، أولياء الأمور

1	خلال النقاش مع التلاميذ في الفصل
2	خلال لقاء أولياء الأمور أو اجتماع الإدارة، أو اجتماع المعلمين
3	في المكتبة
4	عندما يسألني التلاميذ
5	في غرفة المعلمين، في غرفة الإدارة
6	اجتماعات مع المشرفين التربويين، اجتماعات مع الإدارة
7	خلال الرحلات المدرسية
8	عندما يتحدث التلاميذ عن قضائهم للإجازة
9	عندما يتحدث أنشطتهم واهتماماته
10	في الفسحة
11	أخرى
12	
13	

4. مناهج استخدام اللغة لأغراض تواصلية في المنهج الشامل

1. لا أوفق بشدة، 2. لا أوافق، 3. غير متأكد، 4. موافق، 5. أوافق بشدة

1	كتاب المعلم يدعم المعلمين ويسهل في تطبيق المنهج الشامل في الصف الدراسي
2	تطبيقات المنهج الشامل تحتاج إلى حصص إضافية حتى تغطي المنهج بشكل كامل
3	المنهج الشامل يشجع على جعل التلميذ محورا للعملية التربوية
4	المنهج الشامل يشجع التلاميذ على التفكير المنطقي
5	المنهج الشامل يوفر مناهج وطرائق جديدة في تعليم اللغة العربية
6	طرائق تدريس اللغة العربية لأغراض تواصلية واضحة في المنهج الشامل
7	استخدام التكنولوجيا والتشجيع على استخدامها مطلب في المنهج الشامل
8	يشجع المنهج الشامل على استخدام اللغة لأغراض تواصلية، نفعية، وتعريض التلاميذ لمواقف حقيقية لا استخدام اللغة فيها.
9	أولياء الأمور يعرفون الكثير حول المنهج الشامل
10	أولياء الأمور يفهمون المنهج الشامل فهما دقيقا وما هو دورهم بالضبط تجاهه
11	يزيد المنهج الشامل من دقة التلاميذ في تعلمهم للغة
12	يزيد المنهج الشامل من كفاءة التلاميذ في تعلمهم للغة
13	المنهج الشامل يشجع على استخدام التلاميذ لمهارات الاتصال
14	يشجع المنهج الشامل المفهوم الجديد في تعليم القراءة بمفهومها المعاصر

5. فضلا عن علامة (صح) في المكان المناسب حول الأنشطة التي تستخدمها فيما يتعلق بمناهج استخدام اللغة لأغراض تواصلية

1	استخدام الأسلوب القصصي
2	الدراما التعليمية
4	التعليق على الصور وشرحها
5	آراء التلاميذ حول قضايا اجتماعية
6	نقاشات التلاميذ في مجموعات صغيرة
7	استخدام الخرائط
8	استخدام برنامج وورد
9	القراءة السريعة
10	القراءة من أجل البحث عن معلومات
11	النقد للصور، موضوعات، قضية ما
12	القراءة التصويرية
13	مهارات الاستماع
14	الارتجال
15	كتابة الرسائل
16	كتابة مقال
17	تمثيل شخصيات
18	تدريس القواعد بطرق غير مباشرة
19	الإذاعة المدرسية
20	أخرى

6. كيف تطبق الأنشطة التي اخترتها في تطوير استخدام اللغة لأغراض تواصلية

أخيرا

هل ترغب في المشاركة في المقابلة الشخصية

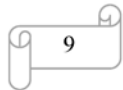
نعم

لا

شكرا جزيلاً لوقت الثمين في تعبئة الاستبيان

أخوك الباحث

حسين بن عيطة الصيعري



APPENDIX B: INTERVIEWS

Interview (English version)

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Interview (English Version)

Perspectives of male primary educators of the Arabic language on the use of technology and communicative language teaching CLT informed by new understandings of literacy in Saudi Arabia (Tabuk).

The interview will start with participants about asking general questions about the contemporary curriculum and teaching Arabic through integrate curriculum and teach communicative teaching language approaches.

1. Technology

- a. The availability of technology at school and home
- b. The use of technology
- c. Barriers to the use of technology

2. Literacy and Communicative Languages Teaching (CLT) approaches in the contemporary curriculum

- a. The implementation of the contemporary curriculum
- b. Participants' understandings of and application of new literacies theory in their teaching of Arabic
- c. Participants' understandings and use of CLT approaches
- d. Participants' combined use of CLT, new literacies and the use of technology in the teaching of Arabic

3. Education and Training

- a. Participants views on availability and access to ongoing training
- b. Participant suggestions for improved training and inservice content

4. The future of the Contemporary Curriculum and utilisation of e technology in the teaching of Arabic

- a. Participant views, issues and concerns on the implementation of the Contemporary Curriculum
- b. Participant views about, and concerns with the utilisation of technology in the teaching of Arabic
- c. Participants' experiences in combining the Contemporary Curriculum with technology through a CLT approach

Thank you

Hussain Alsaiani

Interview (Arabic version)

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Bankstown Campus
+61416212891
H.alsaari@uws.edu.au



Interview (Arabic Version)

الموضوع: استخدام التكنولوجيا والطريقة التواصلية في تدريس اللغة العربية وفق مفهوم معاصر لتدريس القراءة من وجهة نظر التربويين (مديرون، مشرفون، معلمون) في مدارس مدينة تبوك الابتدائية.

المحور الأول: التكنولوجيا

توفر التكنولوجيا في المدرسة والبيت (بالنسبة للطلاب)

استخدام التكنولوجيا بشكل عام، و على وجه الخصوص في المدرسة والفصل

عوائق تعترض استخدام التكنولوجيا

.....إضافة.....

المحور الثاني : مناهج التدريس لأغراض تواصلية في المنهج الشامل

ما هو مفهوم القراءة بمفهومها المعاصر ؟

المناهج التواصلية في المنهج الشامل

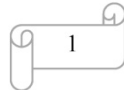
الجمع بين المنهج الشامل والنظرية الجديدة لتعليم القراءة للوصول إلى تدريس فعال للغة لأغراض تواصلية

تطبيقات المنهج الشامل إلى أين ؟

الجوانب الإيجابية في المنهج

جوانب تحتاج إلى تعزيز ومعالجة

.....إضافة.....



المحور الثالث: التدريب

ما هي وجهة نظرك حول توفر التدريب ومواكبة كل ما هو جديد في عالم التكنولوجيا
آراؤك حول الدورات التدريبية وورش العمل

خارج الدوام أو أثناء الدوام

مزاياها بالنسبة للمعلم والتقويم النهائي

يجب أن تتبع من رغبة المعلم

.....إضافة.....

المحور الرابع: مستقبل المنهج الشامل والتكنولوجيا في تدريس اللغة العربية

ما هي أبرز القضايا المتعلقة بالمنهج الشامل واستخدام التكنولوجيا

ماهي الرؤى المستقبلية حول الاستفادة من تدريس اللغة العربية عن طريق التكنولوجيا

.....إضافة.....

شكرا جزيلاً لوقتكم الثمين

أخوك حسين الصيعري

APPENDIX C: ETHICS APPROVAL

UWS HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

4 April 2012

Dr Christine Jones Diaz
School of Education

Dear Christine,

I wish to formally advise you that the Human Research Ethics Committee has approved your research proposal **H9423** "*Male primary educators of the Arabic language perspectives on the use of technology and communicative language teaching (CLT) informed by new understandings of literacy in Saudi Arabia (Tabuk)*", until 27 July 2013 with the provision of a progress report annually and a final report on completion.

Please quote the project number and title as indicated above on all correspondence related to this project.

This protocol covers the following researchers:

Christine Jones Diaz, Carol Reid and Hussain Alsaari

Yours sincerely,



Dr Anne Abraham
Chair, UWS Human Research Ethics Committee

c.jonesdiaz@uws.edu.au
16928002@student.uws.edu.au

APPENDIX D: CODING SAMPLES

Coding Sample (Al-Amal Commonality)

The research question	Apriori code	Empirical code (from data interview)	Code Commonality
How does the use of technology in the classroom enhance and promote students use of Arabic for communicative purposes?	Tools are different from school to other	IT budget ; not enough tools	
	IT support	Teachers' passion for ICT	
	Class size	Large number of student	
	Teachers knowledge ICT		
	Student SES	Low and middle classes Students' knowledge of technology 10%, 5%	
	King Abdullah project 2.3 billion	Students evaluation	
How do contemporary curriculum approaches informed by new frameworks of literacy influence the use of communicative language teaching methods in teaching Arabic?	NLT is not clear to teachers	Students excitement and CC	
	The preparation of CC (before I started my PhD)	Sources are not available	
	Some Teachers prefer the traditional curriculum	The curriculum (syllabus) is so long	
	Accept the CLT but less implantation	More focus on reading and writing	
	The link between all subject needs time	Less focus on grammar and spelling	

The research question	Apriori code	Empirical code (from data interview)	Code Commonality
Professional development	More theoretical rather than practice	Evaluation students	
	Teachers and attendance	Teachers did not know about training	
How does the use of technology in the classroom enhance and promote students use of Arabic for communicative purposes?	Feedback from schools lead the innovation	Involve teachers in the change	
	More training means more understanding to the curriculum	Development depends on the ministry plan	
		Provide all the curriculum application and resources	

Coding Sample (Al-Amal Differences)

The research question	Apriori code	Empirical code (from data interview)	Code Differences
How does the use of technology in the classroom enhance and promote students use of Arabic for communicative purposes?	Class size	The department of education can purchase lands and build school in this suburb	
	Principal's role	The principal is going to retire soon will not have the passion to have the change.	
	Student and technology	Students must study extra lessons and teach them how to use technology. Student should learn to how search for knowledge.	

The research question	Apriori code	Empirical code (from data interview)	Code Differences
	Teachers and technology	<p>People who close from the management can be provided by internet access they change the password regular.</p> <p>Teachers need to take more workshops and in-service in IT.</p> <p>In the past we used to afraid from using technology.</p> <p>Technology is putting more work on teachers load. However, we have to suffer to provide better education to our students.</p> <p>The Ministry of Education is required to employ more teachers in teams of teachers load.</p> <p>Some teachers do not want to spend time learning, preparing.</p>	
	Internet access	Waterproofing affects the wireless usage (Awazel).We need to get extra routers and more technical support.	
	Technology barriers'	Unlikely technology comes in the second (regrading SES).	
	Technological tools	<p>To equip classrooms with technological tools, we need to develop the Education system (change the mind of decision makers).</p> <p>The development depends on the ministry of Education members. (<i>Alrasheed as an example</i>)</p>	

The research question	Apriori code	Empirical code (from data interview)	Code Differences
		<p>Do you mean the conflict between the radical and traditional?</p> <p>I cannot use the laptop as tool in the classroom if do not have a data show or other tools.</p>	
<p>How do contemporary curriculum approaches informed by new frameworks of literacy influence the use of communicative language teaching methods in teaching Arabic?</p>	<p>Contemporary curriculum</p>	<p>Some optional sections in the curriculum should be chosen by teachers.</p> <p>There are no positives... actually I'm with the old curriculum supporter.</p> <p>The curriculum is easy for teachers hard for students.</p> <p>This curriculum is much better with elementary and secondary school.</p> <p>The contemporary curriculum does not match the environment and the society.</p>	
	<p>New literacies theory</p>	<p>It is difficult to implement literacy with its new approach immediately.</p>	
	<p>Parents' role</p>	<p>Putting more effort on patents to support their children in this curriculum.</p> <p>The curriculum is not clear enough.</p>	
<p>Professional Development</p>		<p>They pay for the trainer, so teachers should get paid for attending workshops.</p> <p>I have not heard about these workshops and in-service. The management did not inform us about it. Actually, when teachers absent that affect time table for school.</p>	

The research question	Apriori code	Empirical code (from data interview)	Code Differences
		<p>The duration is not enough, only or three days in the beginning of the year.</p> <p>There is no fine on teachers if they did not attend (serious face). Teachers do not care about attendance.</p>	
<p>How does the use of technology in the classroom enhance and promote students use of Arabic for communicative purposes?</p>		<p>For better results for teaching drama, we need fewer students in classrooms, some facilities (clothing, stuff for acting)</p> <p>The project should establish from the grade 1 and continues till next grade.</p> <p>Teachers are still away from the contemporary curriculum. (Some teachers try to follow up).</p>	
		<p>Many types of equipment are needed in labs and facilities such as curtain for better resolution for data show or projector.</p> <p>We have been asked to write feedback or opinions about the curriculum and other issues relate to it.</p>	

APPENDIX E: PARTICIPANT CONSENTS AND INFORMATION SHEETS

Participant Consent (English Version)

Human Research Ethics Committee
Office of Research Services



Participant Consent Form

This is a project specific consent form. It restricts the use of the data collected to the named project by the named investigators.

Note: If not all of the text in the row is visible please 'click your cursor' anywhere on the page to expand the row. To view guidance on what is required in each section 'hover your cursor' over the bold text.

Project Title: The use of technology in teaching Arabic informed by new understandings of Literacy in primary schools in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia.

I,....., consent to participate in the research project titled The use of technology in teaching Arabic informed by new understandings of literacy in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia.

I acknowledge that:

I have read the participant information sheet [or where appropriate, 'have had read to me'] and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s.

The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent to the [The information collected from the participants includes their age, educational background, technical training, qualifications and the years of employment.

The interview will investigate the following:

- 1- Technology
- 2- Literacy and Communicative Languages Teaching (CLT) approaches in the contemporary curriculum.
- 3- Education and training.
- 4- The Future of the Contemporary Curriculum and utilisation of e technology in the teaching of Arabic].

I consent to a one hour audio taping of an interview with the researcher and I am willing to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without affecting my relationship with the researcher/s now or in the future.

I understand that my involvement is confidential and that the information gained during the study may be published but no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

5 Alqattan Street
Alsulaymanyah

Return Address: 1619 Tabuk, Saudi Arabia

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee.

The Approval number is: [H9423]

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Office of Research Services on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 Fax +61 2 4736 0013 or email humanethics@uws.edu.au. Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Participant Consent (Arabic Version)



لجنة أخلاقيات البحوث البشرية

مكتب خدمات البحوث

نموذج موافقة المشارك

نموذج الموافقة ادناه خاص بمشروع معين. حيث أنه يقيد استخدام البيانات التي تم جمعها لمشروع محدد الاسم ومن قبل باحثين معروفين بالإسم .

عنوان المشروع : استخدام التكنولوجيا والطريقة التواصلية في تدريس اللغة العربية وفق مفهوم معاصر لتدريس القراءة من وجهة نظر التربويين (مديرون، مشرفون، معلمون) في مدارس مدينة تبوك الابتدائية.

أنا، ، أوافق على المشاركة في المشروع البحثي استخدام التكنولوجيا والطريقة التواصلية وفق مفهوم معاصر لتدريس القراءة.

وأقر بالتالي :

لقد قرأت ورقة المعلومات العامة للمشاركين في البحوث [أو عند الاقتضاء، ' قد تم قرائتها لي '] ولقد أعطيت الفرصة لمناقشة هذه المعلومات وكذلك مشاركتي في هذا المشروع مع الباحث.

لقد تم شرح الإجراءات اللازمة للمشروع و الوقت الذي يتطلبه لعمل المقابلة، و لقد تم الإجابة على جميع الأسئلة التي تم طرحها عن المشروع من قبلي إجابة شافية.

أوافق على المعلومات التي تم جمعها عن المشاركين والتي تتضمن العمر و الدرجة العلمية والمؤهلات و الوظيفة، و الخبرة العملية.

أوافق على تسجيل المقطع الصوتي للمقابلة مع الباحث لمدة قد تصل إلى ساعة واحدة وبذلك أنا على استعداد للمشاركة في هذا البحث ، مع العلم أنني أستطيع الانسحاب منه في أي وقت أشاء، دون أن يؤثر ذلك على علاقتي مع الباحث أو الباحثين سواء الآن أو في المستقبل. أنا أفهم أن مشاركتي في هذا البحث سرية وأفهم كذلك انه عند عرض او نشر هذا البحث فإنه لن يتم استخدام أي من معلوماتي الشخصية بأي حال من الأحوال ولن يتم كشف هويتي .

التوقيع :

الاسم :

التاريخ :

عنوان استقبال النماذج:

هذه الدراسة قد تم الموافقة عليها من قبل لجنة أخلاقيات البحوث البشرية في جامعة وستيرن سيدني. رقم الموافقة هو: [H9423]

إذا كان لديك أي شكاوى أو تحفظات على أخلاقيات هذا البحث فيمكنك الاتصال بلجنة الأخلاقيات من خلال مكتب خدمات البحوث على هاتف 61247360229 + أو البريد الإلكتروني humanestics@uws.edu.au وسيتم التعامل مع أي قضايا مثارة بكامل الحيطة والحذر و التحقيق فيها بالكامل ، وعند الوصول لنتائج التحقيق سيتم إبلاغك بها.

Information Sheet (English Version)

Human Research Ethics Committee
Office of Research Services



Participant Information Sheet (General)

An information sheet, which is tailored in format and language appropriate for the category of participant - adult, child, young adult, should be developed.

Note: If not all of the text in the row is visible please 'click your cursor' anywhere on the page to expand the row. To view guidance on what is required in each section 'hover your cursor' over the bold text. Further instructions are on the last page of this form.

Project Title: The use of technology in teaching Arabic informed by new understandings of Literacy.

Who is carrying out the study?

You are invited to participate in a study conducted by Hussain Alsaiani, PhD candidate, centre for educational research University of Western Sydney under the supervisor of Dr Christine Diaz and Assoc Prof Carol Reid.

What is the study about?

The purpose is to investigate the availability and the use of technology and the use of communicative language teaching approaches in teaching Arabic language informed by new understandings of literacy by male primary educators of Arabic language in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia .

What does the study involve?

Mixed methods will be used with male primary educators of Arabic language. A questionnaire will be disposed to the participants and audio taped interview for one hour at your school or a quiet place of your choice.

How much time will the study take?

The survey will take approximately half an hour to complete and the interview will have a duration of one and half hours.

Will the study benefit me?

It will provide you with an opportunity to reflect on your views and implementation of the Contemporary Curriculum in relation to the use of technology through communicative language teaching approaches benefit the contemporary curriculum and may assist you reflect on your teaching.

Will the study involve any discomfort for me?

Respect for your opinions and if you are uncomfortable you may stop the interview.

How is this study being paid for?

The study is being sponsored by Saudi Arabian Higher Education which has provided funding for a PhD scholarship.

Will anyone else know the results? How will the results be disseminated?

All aspects of the study, including results, will be confidential and only the researcher and my supervisors will have access to information on participants. The result through the completion of my PhD thesis, seminars, conference presentation and journal article.

Can I withdraw from the study?

Participation is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to be involved and - if you do participate -you can withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without any consequences.

Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you can tell other people about the study by providing them with the chief investigator's contact details. They can contact the chief investigator to discuss their participation in the research project and obtain an information sheet.

What if I require further information?

When you have read this information, you can contact Hussain Alsaari, mobile number is +966532062661 or +61416212891 or via e-mail 16928002@student.uws.edu.au if you wish to discuss it further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact me or my supervisors Christine Diaz Tel: 029772 6431, or e-mail c.jonesdiaz@uws.edu.au and Associate Professor Carol Reid Tel: 02 9772 6561 or e-mail c.Reid@uws.edu.au.

What if I have a complaint?

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is [H9423]

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Office of Research Services on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 Fax +61 2 4736 0013 or email humanethics@uws.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form.

Information Sheet (Arabic Version)



لجنة أخلاقيات البحوث البشرية

مكتب خدمات البحوث

معلومات عامة للمشاركين في البحوث

هذه المعلومات تم صياغتها بإسلوب ولغة تناسب جميع فئات المشاركين من معلمين مدراء و مشرفين.

عنوان المشروع : استخدام التكنولوجيا والطريقة التواصلية في تدريس اللغة العربية وفق مفهوم معاصر لتدريس القراءة من وجهة نظر التربويين (معلمون، مديرون، مشرفون) في مدارس مدينة نيوك الإبتدائية.

من هو القائم على إجراء الدراسة ؟

أنت مدعو للمشاركة في دراسة يقوم بإجرائها الباحث طالب الدكتوراه حسين بن عيطة الصيعري من مركز البحوث التربوية في جامعة غرب سيدني تحت إشراف الدكتورة كريستين جونز دياز والدكتورة كارولين ريد

ما هي دراسة البحث؟

فالدراسة تهدف إلى تقصي الأسباب المؤثرة في استخدام التكنولوجيا من عدمها في تدريس اللغة العربية

وعلاوة على ذلك ، فإن الدراسة تؤكد على أهمية استخدام المناهج المعاصرة في تدريس اللغة العربية والتي بحث على استخدامها المنهج الشامل للغة العربية بدلا من الطرائق التقليدية.

أيضا ستقوم الدراسة بتزويد الميدان التربوي بأخر ما توصل إليه في مجال تعليم القراءة والكتابة،

وتعليم القراءة والكتابة عن طريق استخدام كل المهارات مثال على ذلك (القراءة التصويرية، القراءة النقدية، الاستماع، التفكير المنطقي، استخدام الخرائط، الطباعة، تحليل الصور). فكل هذه المهارات وغيرها تتكامل حتى تساعد في تدريس الطفل على اكتساب اللغة كمنظومة واحدة من شأنه أن يجعل الطفل يستخدم اللغة ككل بشكل تواصل في ضمن نطاق المجتمع الذي يعيش فيه وهو ما يعرف بالإنجليزية

(New literacies theory and literacy as social practice)

على ماذا تنطوي هذه الدراسة ؟

هذا البحث سوف يعتمد على كلا من البحث النوعي والكمي لجمع البيانات وتحليلها، من خلال استخدام طريقة دراسة ا لحالة فالدراسة سوف تأخذ خمس مدارس ابتدائية في مدينة نيوك كخمس حالات،

في كل مدرسة سوف يتم التعرف إلى وجهة نظر التربويين (معلمون، مشرفون، مديرون) من خلال مقابلة والاستبيان حول سؤال الدراسة الآتي:

ماهي وجهات نظر التربويين (معلمو ومشرفو اللغة العربية والمديرون) في استخدام التكنولوجيا والطريقة الاتصالية في تدريس اللغة العربية وفق مفهوم جديد في تعليم القراءة والكتابة في مدارس مدينة نيوك الإبتدائية؟

كم من الوقت ستستغرق المقابلات؟

سوف تكون مدة المقابلة الفردية 45 دقيقة، أما بالنسبة لتعبئة الاستبيان فلا يستغرق أكثر من 20 دقيقة.

هل ستكون الدراسة (المقابلة) مفيدة لي ؟

سوف تتيح لك المقابلة فرصة لإعطاء وجهات نظرك وملاحظاتكم التي اكتسبتموها من خلال خبراتكم و تجاربكم في المدارس حول نوعية التعليم حول منهج الشامل في تعليم اللغة العربية، ومناهج الحديثة في تدريس اللغة العربية.

هل سينتج عن الدراسة أي آثار سلبية قد تلحق بي كمشارك في هذه الدراسة؟

طبعاً لا ، جميع أرائكم ستكون محل تقدير واحترام ، وإذا شعرتم بعدم الأريحية في اكمال المقابلة فسيتم إيقافها.

كيف يتم تمويل هذه الدراسة مادياً ؟

يتم تمويل هذه الدراسة عن طريق منحة دراسية من قبل كلية التربية والتعليم في جامعة ويسترن سيدني في أستراليا.

هل سيكون هناك أي شخص آخر على علم بالنتائج؟ وكيف سيتم نشر هذه النتائج؟

بالنسبة لجميع جوانب الدراسة، بما في ذلك النتائج، سوف تكون سرية وسيكون بمقدار الباحث فقط الحصول على معلومات عن المشاركين. وبالنسبة للنتائج فسيتم نشرها من خلال رسالة الدكتوراه الخاصة بالباحث الرئيسي ، أو من خلال المؤتمرات والمجلات. فالمعلومات الشخصية للأفراد ستكون سرية ولن يطلع عليها أحد باستثناء الباحث الرئيسي. بالنسبة للنتائج العامة للبحث فيمكن إرسال ملخص عام للنتائج لإدارة كل مدرسة إذا لزم الأمر.

هل بالإمكان الانسحاب من الدراسة (المقابلة)

المشاركة طوعية، فأنت غير ملزم أن تشارك وعند الموافقة على المشاركة في الدراسة ورأيت بعد ذلك ان تتسحب فيمكنك ذلك في أي وقت شئت دون إبداء أي سبب و دون أي عواقب.

هل بالإمكان إخبار الآخرين عن الدراسة؟

نعم ، يمكنك أن تخبر الآخرين عن الدراسة ويمكنك تزويدهم بإرقام الهواتف والبريد الإلكتروني الخاصة بالباحث الرئيسي للاتصال به ومناقشة مشاركتهم في مشروع البحث والحصول على ورقة المعلومات.

كيف بالإمكان الحصول على مزيد من المعلومات؟

إذا كنت تحتاج إلى مزيد من المعلومات، يمكنك الاتصال على الباحث حسين الصيغري عن طريق الوسائل التالية:

جوال رقم : 0061416212891 أو 00996532062661

بريد الكتروني: 16928002@student.uws.edu.au

وإذا كان لديك أسئلة إضافية أو جوانب تحتاج إلى إيضاح أكثر حول أي مرحلة تتعلق بالبحث فما عليك إلا الاتصال بفريق الإشراف على البحث وهما:

الدكتورة كريستين جونز دياز ، هاتف رقم 0061297726431

c.jonesdiaz@uws.edu.au

الدكتورة كارول ريد، هاتف رقم 0061297726524

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ماذا لو كان لدي شكوى ؟

[H9423] لقد تمت الموافقة على هذه الدراسة من قبل لجنة أخلاقيات البحوث البشرية في جامعة ويسترن سيدني. رقم الموافقة هو

فإذا كان لديك أي شكوى أو تحفظات على أخلاقيات سير هذا البحث ، يمكنك الاتصال على لجنة الأخلاقيات من خلال مكتب خدمات البحوث على هاتف 0061247360229 أو فاكس 0061247360013 أو البريد الإلكتروني au.edu.uws@humanethics

سيتم التعامل مع القضايا المثارة بكامل السرية والمهنية وسيتم التحقيق فيها بالكامل ، و سيتم إبلاغك بنتائج التحقيق.

إذا كنت توافق على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة، قد يطلب منك التوقيع على نموذج الموافقة للمشاركة.

APPENDIX F: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

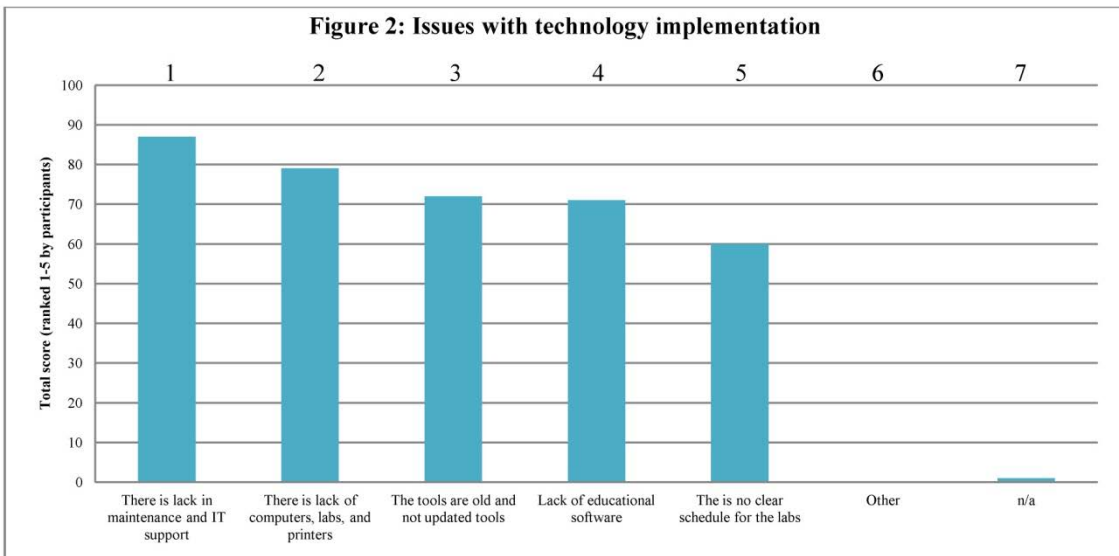
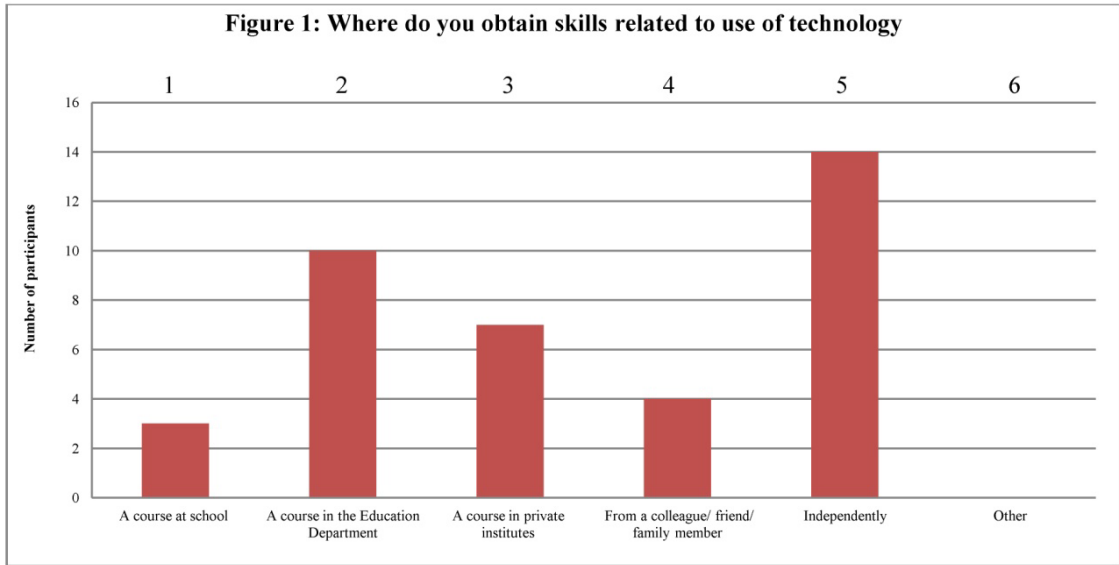
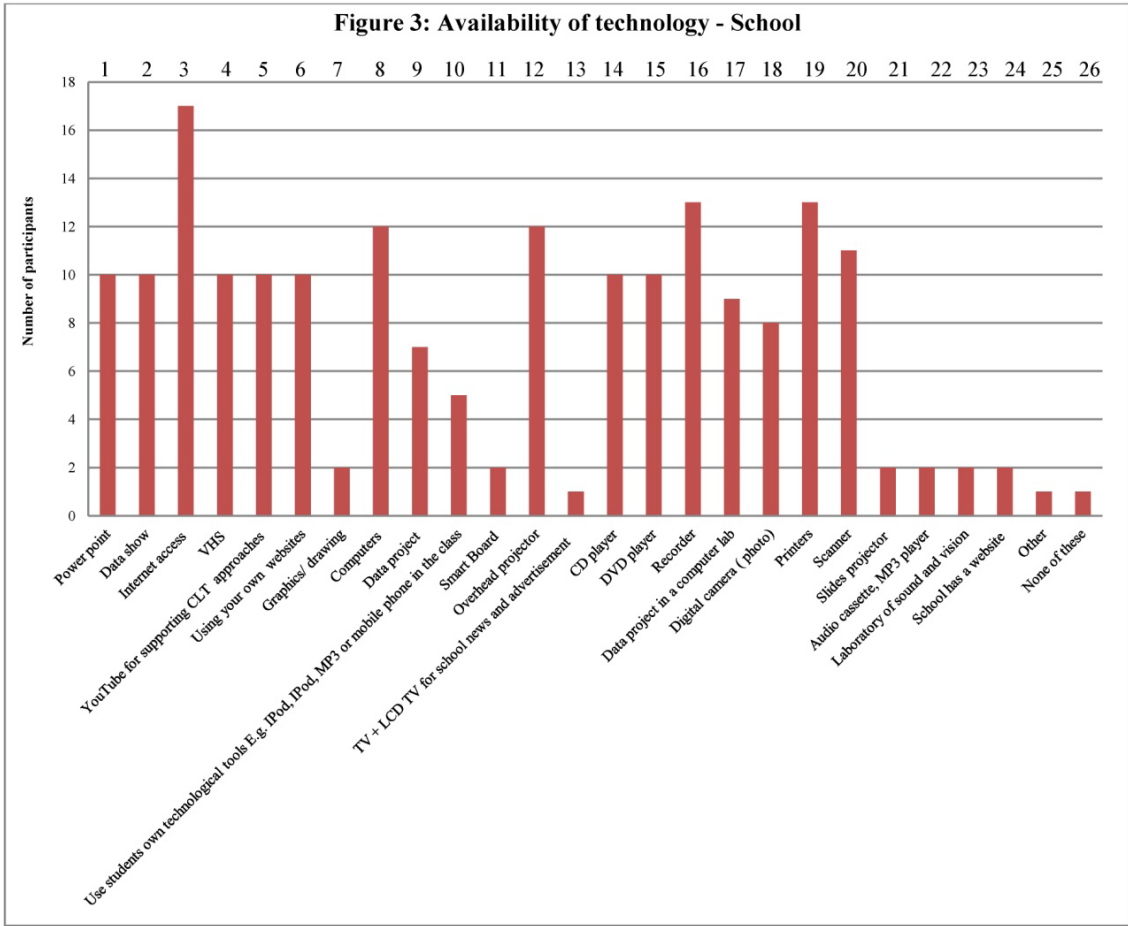
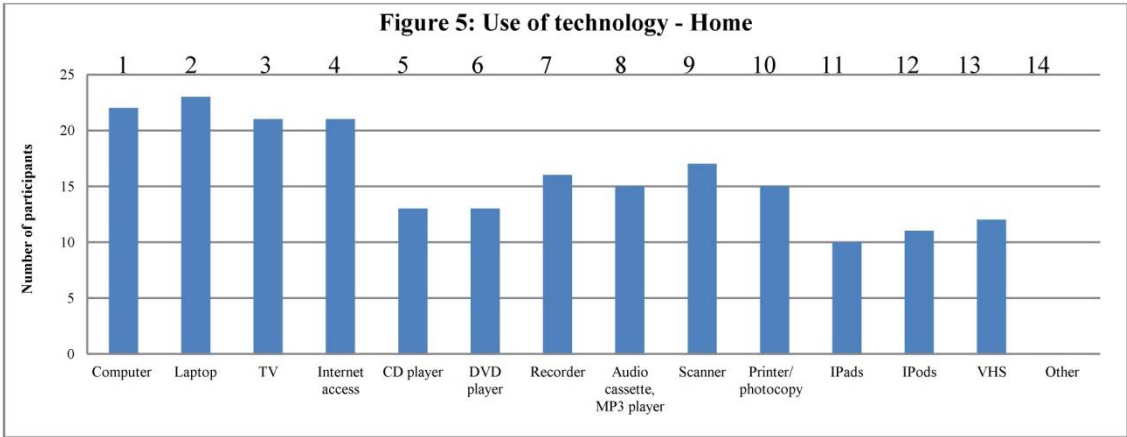
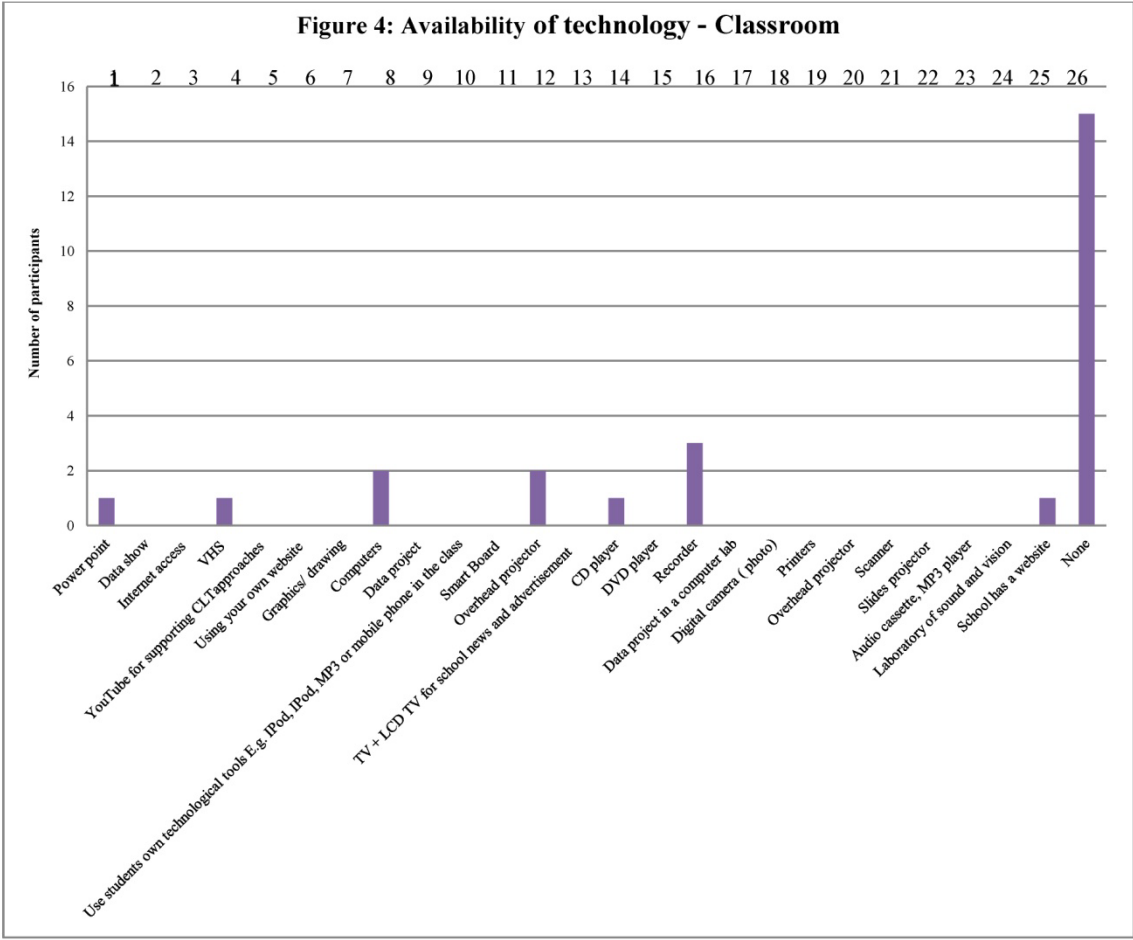


Figure 3: Availability of technology - School





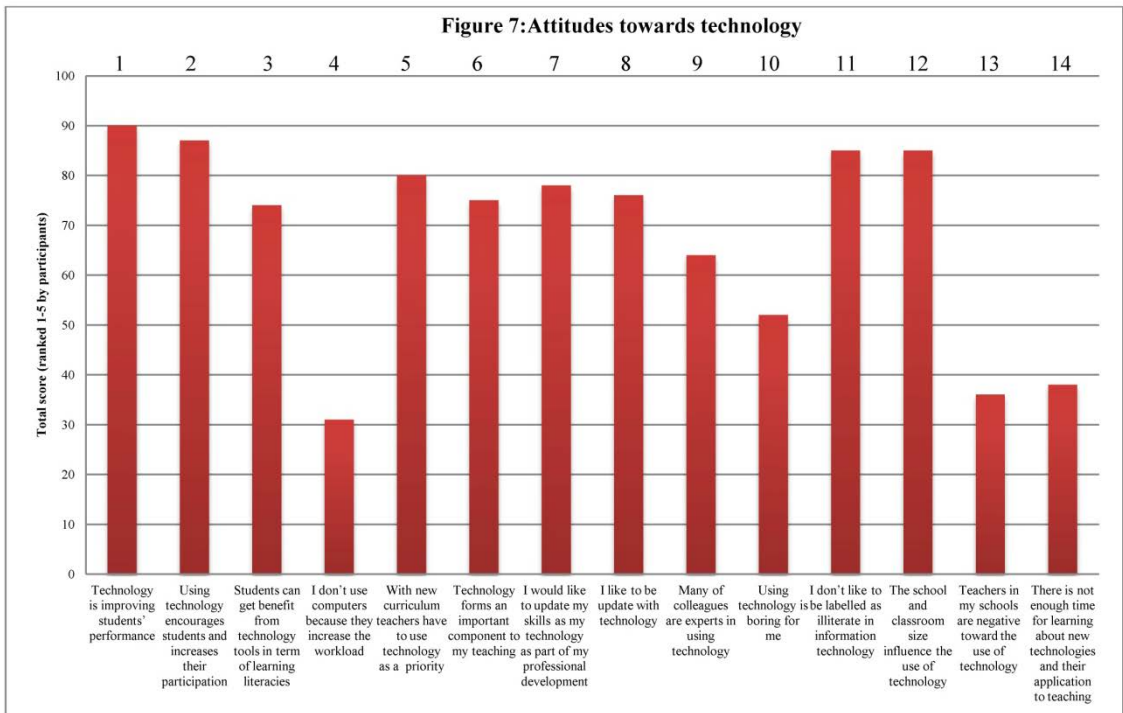
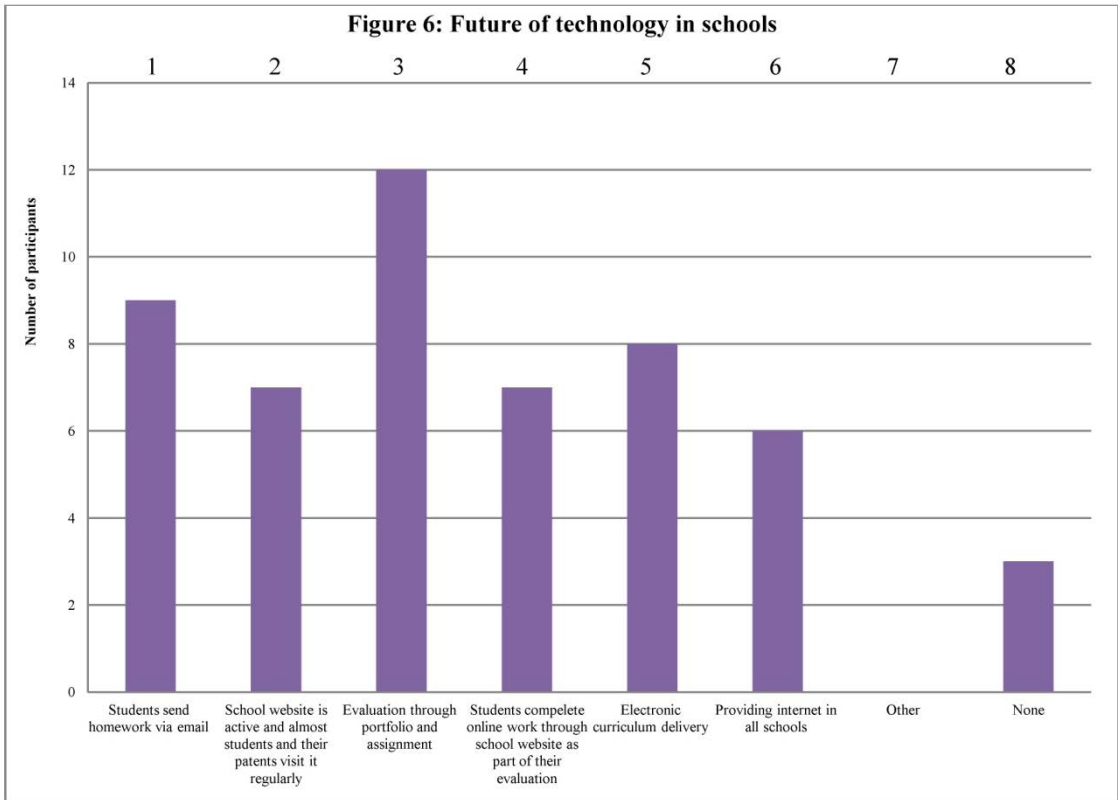


Figure 8: Are you ready for the implementation of the new curriculum?

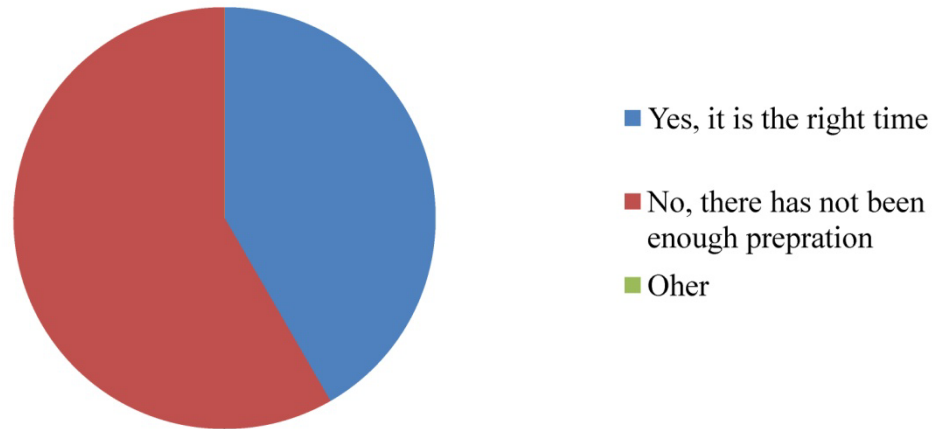
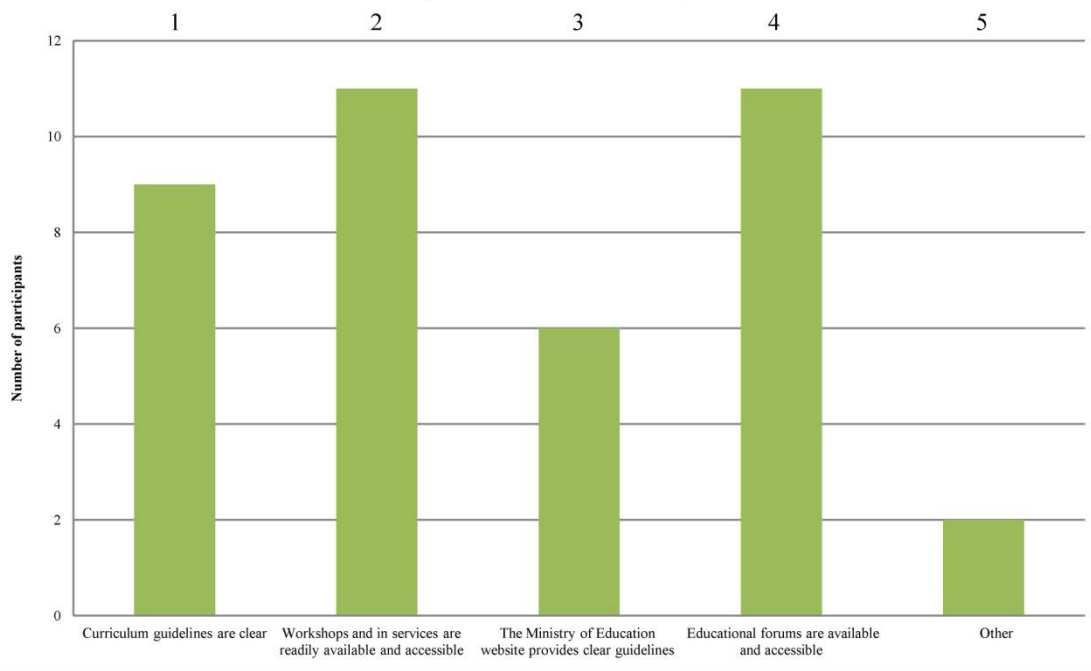


Figure 9: Curriculum change



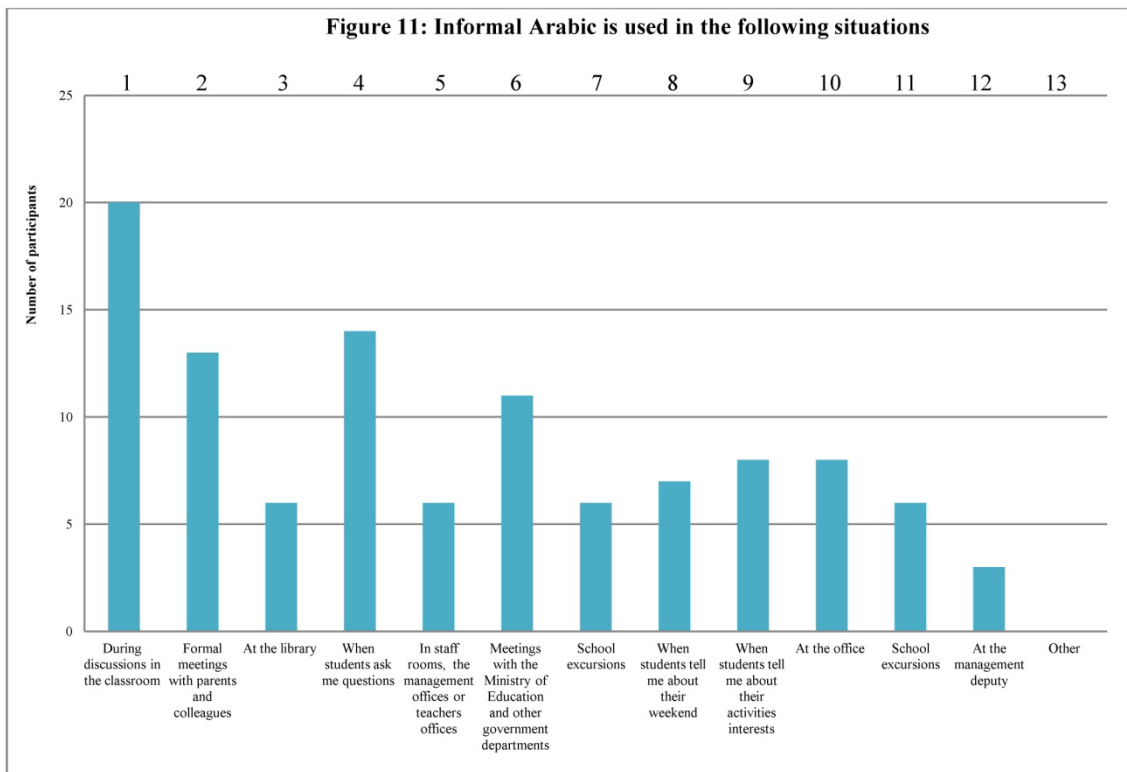
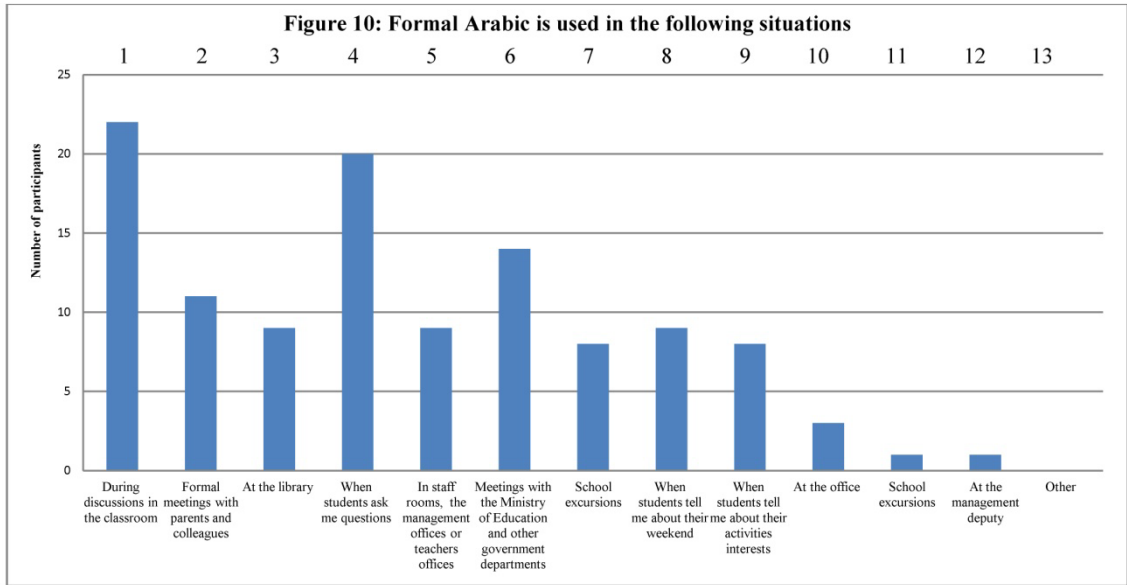
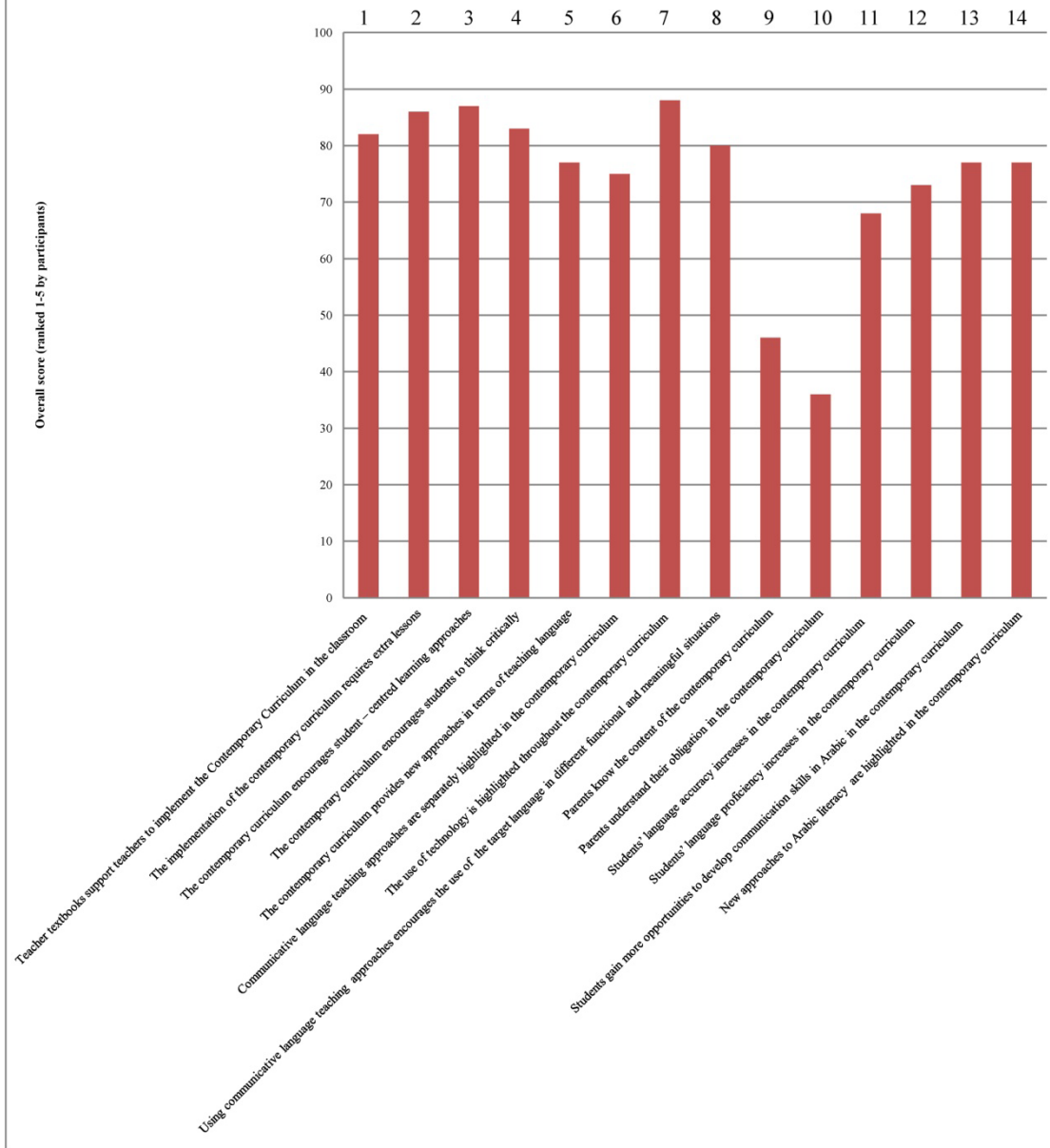


Figure 12: Importance of issues relating to contemporary curriculum



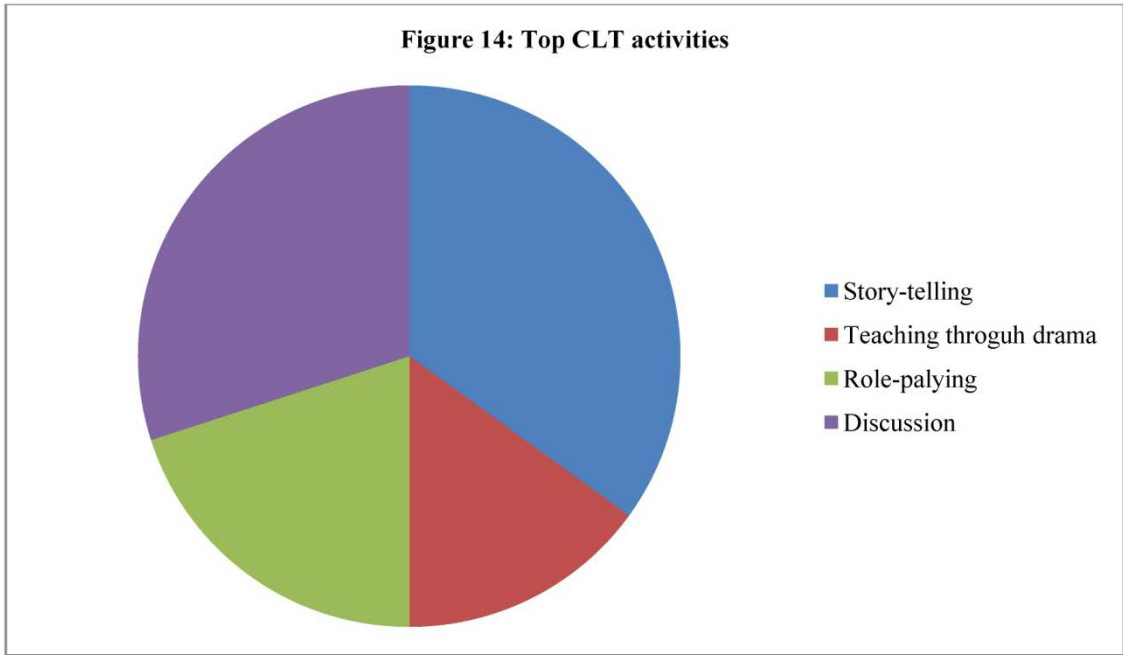
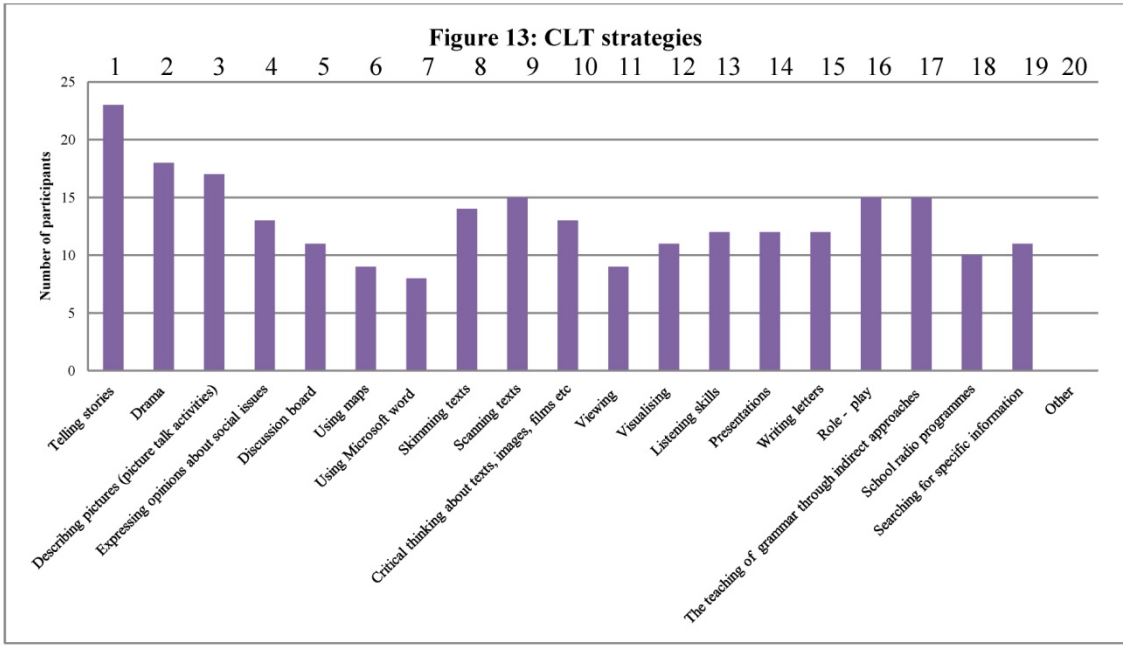


Table 1: Information and Communication Technology Capability

Participants	Computing skills	Qualifications	Computer internet usage
Mejel (Al-Amal School)	Strong	Several certificates in IT	Everyday
Hamed (Al-Amal School)	Advanced	Has several qualifications in information technology and computer maintenance; Diploma in Applied Computing and ICDL	Everyday
Hammad(Al-Amal School)	Beginner	None	Sometimes
Musaed (Al-Amal School)	Intermediate	None	Everyday
Khadher (Al-Najah School)	Intermediate	None	Everyday
Masad (Al-Najah School)	Intermediate	None	Everyday
Mansour (Al-Najah School)	Intermediate	None	Everyday
Yousseff (Al-Najah School)	Advanced	Several certificates in information technology	Everyday
Abed (Al-Wafa School)	Intermediate	Certificate in Introductory Computing	Two to three times weekly
Awad (Al-Wafa School)	Intermediate	None	Two to three times weekly
Meshari (Al-Wafa School)	Intermediate	Diploma in Information Technology	Two to three times weekly
Musallam (Al-Wafa School)	Intermediate	Certificate in Introductory Computing	Two to three times weekly
Mahmoud (Al-Nahda School)	Intermediate	None	Everyday
Saeed (Al-Nahda School)	Beginner	None	Sometimes
Kamel (Al-Nahda School)	Intermediate	None	Everyday
Abdulrahman (Al-Nahda School)	Advanced	ICDL	Everyday
Abdulaziz (Al-Jadida School)	Intermediate	None	Everyday
Asaad (Al-Nahda School)	Advanced	ICDL and advanced user in specific programs	Everyday
Mekhleef (Al-Nahda School)	Intermediate	None	Everyday
Ahmed (Al-Nahda School)	Beginner	None	Twice a week
Salem (Supervisor)	Intermediate	Several information technology certificates	Everyday
Saleh (Supervisor)	Intermediate	IT Certificate	Everyday
Fahad (Supervisor)	Beginner	None	Sometimes
Sameer (Supervisor)	Advanced	Certificate in Introductory Computing; trainer in using technology in education	Everyday