UNIVERSITY OF
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Bahraini School English Language Teachers' Beliefs and Professionalism under New Educational Reforms in Bahrain: An Interpretive Perspective

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To

The University of Exeter

The Graduate School of Education

For the degree of

Doctor of Education in TESOL

Submission date

September 2014

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to explore Bahraini teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning as they related to their daily work and their interactions with the contexts in which they worked and lived so as to construct a deeper understanding of their professionalism. It particularly investigated the effects of contextual factors, in light of the recent educational reform initiatives in Bahrain, on the professional lives of practicing Bahraini school English language teachers who completed a Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) at Bahrain Teachers College (BTC) between 2008 and 2012. Research data were collected through face-to-face semi-structured in-depth interviews with twelve teachers in the primary, intermediate and secondary schools, whose experiences ranged between four to ten years at the time of the interviews.

The research revealed that the teachers' professional lives were influenced by three main contextual factors: intensification of teachers' work, marginality of teachers and control in education. These factors were found to be complex as they were not only influenced by the educational system and the environment in which the teachers worked and lived but also by personality issues. Hence, although these factors significantly impacted upon the teachers' professional autonomy and commitment, created moral dilemmas for them, and brought with them the question of what it means to be a teacher under increasing scrutiny, the findings showed that the consequences of these factors on the teachers' professionalism varied from teacher to teacher and from context to context, emphasising that this impact was largely mediated by the teachers' values and sense of professional identity.

The study highlights the situated nature of teachers' beliefs and the importance of considering teachers' professional identities, values and moral purposes in any educational reform attempts that aim to improve teacher practice. This study also has implications for teacher beliefs and knowledge, teacher professionalism, and teacher education.

TABLE OF CONTENT

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Description
BA	Bachelor Degree
B. Ed.	Bachelor Degree in Education
BHD	Bahraini Dinar (i.e. currency)
BTC	Bahrain Teachers College
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EdD	Doctor in Education
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
GCC	Gulf States of the Cooperation Council
GoB	Government of Bahrain
L2	Second Language
MA	Master's Degree
MOE	Ministry of Education
NIE	National Institute of Education
PGDE	Post-Graduate Diploma in Education
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SLTE	Second Language Teacher Education
TEE	Teaching English Through English
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
TESOL	Teaching English To Speakers of Other Languages
UN	United Nations
UNIESCO-IBE	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – International Bureau of Education
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Teaching today takes place in a world that is characterised by speed, rapid change, compression of time, complexity, instability and uncertainty (Hargreaves, 1994; Day, 1999). In today's rapidly changing educational landscape, change for teachers does not seem to be optional as today's global society 'requires political, organizational, economic, social and personal flexibility and responsiveness' (Day, 1999: 8). This situation can pose great problems and even 'threats' to teachers as it creates 'accelerated change, innovation overload and intensification in teachers' work' (Hargreaves, 1994: 9). In this contemporary time, it is argued, the world cannot be understood by appeal to 'one over-arching system of knowledge' (Burr, 1995: 9). As a consequence, the knowledge base of teaching is increasing and changing fast, making it almost unavoidable for teachers to adapt in order to stay even (Prensky, 2010).

Within this context, teachers are grappling with many issues in their profession within school environments that are increasingly demanding and more bureaucratically controlled (Day, 1999). Pressures have been mounted on teachers to change in order to meet the new demands of the contemporary world. Educational reforms have been initiated by governments in many countries around the world with the intension of improving standards of teaching and learning and raising the competency levels of teachers and students to enable them to cope with the unsettling political, economic, social, and personal circumstances of today's society (Day and Smethem, 2009).

These societal changes seem to have influenced life within the Kingdom of Bahrain, where this study takes place. This phenomenon is characterised by diversification of Bahraini society, a shift from primary reliance on public (government) employment to extension of work opportunities into the private sector, increased use of information and communication technology, as well as greater reliance on English language in international communication networks (Bahrain's Education Reform, 2006 in PGDE Concept Paper, 2013). Such

transformations have raised the imperative for the Kingdom to maximise its most valuable asset – its human resource by developing 'a flexible workforce within a populace of problem solvers, who value society over self and exhibit passion in working toward the greater good of all Bahrainis' (PGDE Concept Paper, 2013: 1).

Central to this enterprise are English teaching and English language teachers. There is consequently increasing demand in Bahrain for competent English teachers and for more effective approaches to their preparation and professional development. There is increasing demand for teacher education in the country to broaden its output from developing a teaching cadre that is mainly competent in delivering subject matter knowledge to encompassing new objectives (PGDE Concept Paper, 2013). This 'paradigm shift' required from Bahraini teacher educators to redefine their goals to prepare school teachers with a commitment to developing learners who are able to be adaptive to changing economic and social needs as well as value life-long learning (Bahrain's Education Reform, 2006 in PGDE Concept Paper, 2013). Following the recent trends in language teacher education, which began to shift towards sociocultural epistemologies (Johnson, 2009a), language teacher education programmes in Bahrain have pledged to give emphasis to the cognitive, physical, social, emotional and spiritual development of teachers to prepare them to take up productive roles in furthering Bahrain society through the education of its young people (PGDE Concept Paper, 2013).

This study looks into Bahraini teachers' beliefs regarding the effects of these reform mandates in education in Bahrain and the context in which they are supposed to be implemented on the teachers' lives and professionalism.

1.2 Significance of the Research

Although there has been a growing number of studies that addressed language teachers' beliefs as related to their work and lives in second language teacher education in the last two decades or so (see Borg, 2003; 2006; Barnard and Burns, 2012), there seems to be little known about practicing EFL teachers' beliefs (i.e. those teachers who have completed their initial training and work in

classrooms), whether novice or experienced (Borg, 2009a; Borg, 2011), about their professionalism and contextual factors, particularly in changing times (i.e. in the context of educational reforms). In terms of the contexts in which the work on what teachers think, know and believe has been conducted, Borg (2009) argues that there has been a number of studies that have emerged from the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, where English is taught as a second language (ESL). However, he claims that there remain many L2 education contexts where the study of the beliefs of teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) has yet to make an impression. Additionally, Johnston et al. (2005) claim that there is a paucity of research on how contexts impact upon the beliefs and experiences of in-service teachers who have enrolled in educational programmes, particularly in relation to the contested notion of professionalism and the teacher's identity as a professional.

As far as the context of the study is concerned, there has been a scarcity of research which looked into Bahraini school English language teachers' beliefs regarding the impact of contexts and reforms on their professional lives. In this regard, Kirk (2012) conducted a study on Bahraini teachers which aimed to explore teachers' views about how recent political, social and educational reform changes impacted upon teacher education in Bahrain. He encourages more research on teachers' lives in Bahrain because of the recent educational and political reforms which endeavoured 'to address many social and economic inequalities that exist' in the Bahraini society (Kirk, 2012).

Hence, this study seeks to redress this gap in the literature by exploring teachers' beliefs about the impact of educational reforms on their work, lives and professionalism. In particular, it focused on the Bahraini, government school, practicing, English language teachers who completed a Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) course between the years 2008 and 2012 at Bahrain Teachers College (BTC). The reason why these teachers were specifically chosen for this study was that the PGDE course they did was part of wider educational reform initiatives in Bahrain that aimed to reenergize and redirect teachers' practice in the country (see the Context Chapter). Therefore,

studying the context in which these reforms are being implemented and their impact upon the teachers, though the eyes of the teachers' themselves, might enable us to see how the recent reforms in Bahrain aligned with the teachers' subsequent experiences in schools and what might be needed for a more effective implementation of these reforms. This study intends to make a contribution to the body of literature on teacher beliefs and knowledge, teacher professionalism, educational reforms, and teacher education.

1.3 Research Aims and Questions

This study seeks to explore Bahraini school practicing English language teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning in the context of new educational reform initiatives in Bahrain. It poses two questions:

1) What are the beliefs of Bahraini English language teachers who completed a PGDE course at the BTC between 2008 and 2012 regarding the impact of new educational reforms on their lives and their professionalism?

2) How do these beliefs impact upon the teachers' professionalism?

In this research, the teachers' beliefs regarding the impact of the new educational reforms on their lives and professionalism are considered to be primarily shaped by contextual factors (see the Theoretical Framework in Chapter 3). Contextual factors are defined as factors 'which act as resources, constraints, and direct influences on teaching and learning' such as 'rules, facilities, values, expectations, and personal backgrounds' (Posner, 1985: 2, in Richards, 1998: 12). My view of 'impact' refers to the reactions and feelings (Kirkpatric and Kirkpatrick, 2006 in Borg, 2009b) of the teachers towards the contexts in which they are supposed to implement the new educational reforms in Bahrain after at least one year from being exposed to these reforms in the PGDE course, and the effect of these reactions and feelings on their professionalism at the time of collecting the data. A comprehensive discussion and definitions of the two key constructs in my research questions above,

namely, professionalism and teachers' beliefs, will be provided in the Literature Review Chapter.

While I recognize that other voices play a role in what goes on in education, teacher voice takes central stage in this study because it can have an impact on practices for others like students. Indeed, Johnson and Golombek (2011: preface) argue that focusing on teachers can serve the interests of students as well, because 'teacher professional development, it is commonly argued, is the key to improving the quality of student learning, the ultimate goal of any educational enterprise'. In addition to this, discussing teachers' views can provide insights for those involved in curricular reform and teacher education into what might be needed to resolve the possible conflicts that might arise between teachers' beliefs and the contexts of their work and might hinder an effective implementation of reforms in Bahrain.

1.4 Organization of the Thesis

Following this introductory chapter, the second chapter discusses the historical, social, political, and educational contexts of Bahrain where the current study took place. It also outlines the structure and organization of education in the government schools, the kinds of English language courses taught in these schools, and the PGDE course that the teachers participating in this research did at Bahrain Teachers' Collage. Chapter Three (Literature Review) provides an overview of the two main constructs in my research questions, namely, professionalism and teachers' beliefs, by discussing and defining them, and reviewing key studies relevant to each one of them. It also discusses the theoretical framework that was used by this research to explore the teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning in order to provide a theoretical justification for the research reported and analysed in my thesis. Next, Chapter Four (Methodology) aims to show how I conducted the research and answered the research questions. It describes the underlying paradigm, methods of the research design and the processes of data collection and analysis adopted by the research. It also discusses the research quality, ethical dimension and limitations.

In Chapter Five (Data Presentation and Analysis), I reflect on the research data to determine the contextual factors that impacted upon the teachers' beliefs about their work, lives and professionalism under the new reform initiatives in Bahrain in order to answer the two research questions. I argue that the contextual factors that the teachers thought impacted upon their work and lives were: intensification of teachers' work, marginality of teachers, and control in education. After that, in Chapter Six (Discussion of the Results), I consider these contextual factors in light of the wider literature in the field of teacher education, both in mainstream and second language teacher education (SLTE). This chapter also discusses what might be the dominant factor in the teachers' lives that mediated their professionalism and offers insights into what might be needed for enhanced teacher professionalism.

Finally, Chapter Seven (Conclusion) summarizes the key findings that emerged from my thesis to directly address the research questions. In addition, it explores the pedagogical implications of my findings in terms of how these can feed back into my local situation and inform professional practice, and what might be recommended for a more effective implementation of reforms in Bahrain. It also discusses how the findings can contribute to a deeper understanding of the notion of teacher professionalism, outlines the limitations of the study, puts forward some suggestions for further research and concludes with a reflection on my own learning from the research and how it might affect my practice in the future.

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the historical, social, political, and educational contexts of Bahrain where the current study takes place to help others better understand the research and how I arrived at my conclusions. It consists of four sections. The first section will provide a brief history about the country and its recent educational and political reforms. The second section will outline the structure and organization of education in government schools. The third section will discuss the state of English language teaching in government schools and the kinds of materials used in teaching. The fourth and final section will concentrate on teacher education programmes in Bahrain, particularly the PGDE course that the participants did at Bahrain Teachers College.

2.2 A Brief History of Bahrain

The Kingdom of Bahrain is an archipelago consisting of 33 islands, the largest and most inhabited of which is the island of Bahrain. Bahrain, which is literally translated as 'two seas', is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, with a total landmass of 760 square kilometres. To the southeast of Bahrain is the State of Qatar, and to its west lies the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with which it is connected by a 25 kilometre causeway.

According to the latest census, the total number of people residing in Bahrain as to the year 2010 was 1,234,571. Of these, 568,399 were Bahraini citizens (46%) and 666,172 were expatriates (54%). Of the total population of Bahrain, 70% were Muslim, while the remaining 30% were Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish or followers of other faiths (GoB Census, 2010). The official language in Bahrain is Arabic, but English is used on a large scale in various business fields (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Bahrain became a British protectorate in 1861 until it declared independence on 15 August 1971, following the withdrawal of the British troops that were stationed on the island since 1861 (Leonard, 2013). It joined the United Nations (UN) and the League of Arab States upon independence in 1971. It is also a

member of the Gulf States of the Cooperation Council (GCC), which also includes Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Yemen. The GCC was established in 1981 as a forum for coordinating policies in various areas, including security and economic development (Ramazani and Kechichian, 1988). Formerly a state, Bahrain was transformed into a Kingdom in 2002 when a new constitution was enacted.

In 2008, a comprehensive economic project for Bahrain, formally called the Economic Vision 2030, was launched by the government and aimed to develop economy and society over the period between the years 2008 and 2030. The development plan pledges to improve the Bahrainis' standards of living as well as reform the government, education, health sectors, increase privatization, and enhance the quality of life in Bahrain (Economic Vision 2030, 2008). This shift towards privatization and diversification has been characterized by an increased use of information technology and greater reliance on the English language in international communication networks (PGDE Concept paper, 2013).

In the education sector, Bahrain Vision 2030 aims to invest in education and training to provide 'every citizen with educational opportunities appropriate to their individual needs, aspirations and abilities' (UNESCO-IBE, 2011: 3) as well as to 'realise the full potential of all [young Bahrainis] who are joining the workforce' (Economic Vision 2030, 2008). As it is the responsible body for the administration of public education in Bahrain, the Ministry of Education (MOE) is the official authority responsible for executing the Bahrain Vision 2030 educational plan through directing the educational system at all levels and drawing up training programmes.

To ensure that education in Bahrain schools is congruent with Bahrain Vision 2030 as well as the current developments in education around the world, a Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training (QAAET) was set up in 2008. The QAAET is said to be an independent national body that is supervised by the Council of Ministers. It aims to review and assess the quality of the performance of the education and training institutions in Bahrain, publishing reports about the general status of education and training in the Kingdom,

identifying areas of strengths and areas in need for improvement in education and training, and finally, collaborating with regional and international organisations to facilitate the quality assurance processes and the international transfer and exchange of information (UNESCO-IBE, 2011).

Politically, the Kingdom of Bahrain was rocked by a large-scale civil and political unrest at the beginning of the year 2011 (Kirk, 2012). As a result of these political developments, the government of Bahrain recognized the need for addressing 'the social and economic imbalances' in the Bahraini society that might have triggered the unrest (Kirk, 2012). Therefore, it initiated a national dialogue that aimed at unifying the country, reforming the government and allowing normalcy to return. According to Kirk (2012: 1), the 'national dialogue instituted by the Government of Bahrain have, in the light of the recent unrest, shaped educational reform and teacher education which have now become part of wider policy shifts, linking national economic and social development'.

2.3 Structure and Organization of Education in Bahrain

Given that this study focuses on the beliefs of government school teachers in Bahrain, this section will only outline, in brief, the structure and organization of education in government schools. In Bahrain government schools, boys and girls attend separate schools with teaching staff of the same gender. Because of staff shortages in male teachers at primary schools, however, a growing number of boys schools have been managed by women since the academic year 2003/04 (Ministry of Education, 2008). Education in government schools is free of charge and basic education (the first nine years of schooling) has recently been made compulsory for children aged between 6 to 14 years old (UNESCO-IBE, 2011). Arabic is the medium of instruction in government schools while the English language is taught as a subject class starting from Grade One (Directorate of Curriculum, 2006).

As shown in Figure 1 below (adapted from Ministry of Education, 2008:20), the education in government schools in Bahrain is divided into four cycles: Primary (Cycles 1 & 2), Intermediate (Cycle 3) and Secondary (Cycle 4). The Primary Education Cycles target children aged between 6 – 11 years while the

Intermediate Cycle caters to pupils whose ages range between 12 – 13 years old. After finishing these stages, pupils move to the Secondary Education Cycle where they choose from different curricula, such as the Unified Tracks (which includes Science, Literary, and Commercial), or the Technical Track (UNESCO-IBE, 2011). School time starts at 7:00 in the morning and finishes at 13:15 in the afternoon for Primary and Intermediate levels, while the timing for the Secondary level has recently been extended one hour (i.e. till 14:15) in line with the new educational reforms in Bahrain. Starting from the academic year 2014/2015, school time for the Intermediate level will also be extended one hour.

FIGURE 1: Structure and Organization of Education in Bahrain

2.4 English Language Teaching in Government Schools

In this section, I will briefly discuss the state of the English language teaching in government schools in Bahrain along with the materials used in teaching and the expected outcomes of the English courses. The aim of this discussion is to give an idea about the expected accountabilities that teachers have to meet in their job in light of the new reform initiatives.

2.4.1 Primary Education (Cycles 1 and 2)

In addition to introducing English as an essential subject in Primary Education in the past few years, the MOE has introduced a Guided Reading Programme (GRP) in an effort to improve the English language proficiency level of government school students. The main aim of the GRP is to develop independent and silent readers who have a love for reading English stories and books (Directorate of Curricula, 2011).

The weekly timetable of a primary school pupil includes 5 periods (each period lasts for 50 minutes) for the English language subject. Children in Grades 1 and 2 study the textbook series *Happy House* by Maidment and Roberts (2008) and those in Grade 3 do the Happy Street textbook by the same authors. The English education in Primary Cycle 1 aims to enable pupils to learn English in chunks through play and other enjoyable activities, such as songs (See Appendix 1, for lists of specific materials and objectives for Cycle 1).

In Primary Cycle 2, students start to be injected with linguistic structures in small doses. These structures are embedded in the Reading and Listening components and practiced through the Speaking and Writing components. The course book that the pupils work on at this stage is called *Back Pack* by Herrera et al. (2009) (See Appendix 2, for lists of specific materials and objectives for Cycle 2).

2.4.2 Intermediate Education (Cycles 3)

Intermediate Education is an important stage in the pupils' educational lives as it prepares them to choose from a variety of disciplines in Secondary Education. At this stage, the focus on the four language skills (i.e. Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) in the English subject is more intensified although the same amount of time is maintained for each studying week (i.e. 5 periods). The books *Upstream* by Evans and Dooley (2008) are used for all the three grades at this stage (i.e. 7 – 9). English Education in Intermediate Cycle 3 builds on the content in Cycle 2 by introducing more sophisticated linguistic and social

activities and emphasizing the four language skills. (See Appendix 3, for lists of specific materials and objectives for Cycle 3).

2.4.3 Secondary Education (Cycles 4)

Secondary Education aims to prepare students for Higher Education as well as life in general by providing students with 'vocational training', 'values' and 'knowledge' about 'scientific trends' in order for them to become 'productive members' in the Bahraini Society (Ministry of Education, 2008). Based on a credit-hour system, students who choose to do the Unified Track have to do 12 core courses in English and other 5 optional ones, while those involved in the Technical Track do only 10 core courses in English.

Secondary English education aims to enable students to analyse, synthesize and apply into practice the language communicative skills and knowledge they acquired in Primary and Intermediate education, and helps them develop a competency in English so that they can access literature relevant to their study fields in Higher Education.

The books that are used to deliver these courses are the following: (1) *Opportunities* by Harris et al. (2005), (2) *Business Goals* by Knight et al. (2011), (3) *Flights of Fancy* by Koh and Holmberg (2010), (4) *Cover to Cover* by Day and Yamanaka (2009), (5) *Elective Academic Writing* by Savage and Shafiei (2009), and (6) *Introduction to Academic Writing* by Oshima and Hogue (1997). Each course of these is worth 4 credit-hours, which means that students do four 50-minute periods every week for each course (See Appendix 4, for lists of specific materials and objectives for Cycle 4).

2.5 Teacher Education for English Teachers in Bahrain

An important part of the Bahrain Vision 2030 educational plan was the establishment of Bahrain Teachers College (BTC) in 2008 by the Government of Bahrain with the mandate of preparing teachers, educational administrators, and other specialists (Ministry of Education, 2008). The college, which is administered by the Ministry of Education, is the only educational body that provides teacher preparation programmes in the tiny island. Among the many

courses that the college offers are the Bachelor degree in Education (B.Ed) programme and the Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) programme.

The present study concentrated on the beliefs of PGDE graduates who were teaching English at government schools at the time of the study. The PGDE is a full-time intensive10-month course that is divided into two semesters. According to the PGDE Concept Paper (2013), the programme was designed by the National Institute of Education (NIE) of the Nanyan Technological University of Singapore to prepare effective subject specialist teachers in post-primary schools (i.e. Cycles 3 & 4) in a variety of subjects such as Arabic, English, Mathematics, and Science. However, it is not uncommon that PGDE graduates are assigned to teach at the primary level after their completion of the programme, probably because of shortages in teachers at primary schools, particularly in male primary schools as I pointed out earlier in this chapter.

Specifically, the purpose of the PGDE programme is to prepare teachers who demonstrate 'core personal and professional knowledge, skills and values' appropriate for appointment within the teaching cadre of the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The programme engages teacher candidates in a range of teaching-learning strategies such as lecture, tutorial, group work, role play, interactive communication technology, project work, micro-teaching, peer-coaching, behavioural analysis, field work, and self-reflection (PGDE Concept Paper, 2013: 5). It includes two practicum periods, one in each semester (25 days and 50 days respectively) to enable teacher students to apply the knowledge and skills they gained in the programme into the classroom. Teacher candidates are expected to demonstrate competence in two main areas: (1) planning, teaching and evaluation; and (2) personal and professional quality outcomes (see Appendix 5, for more details about the specific objectives of the programme).

The PGDE teacher candidate (graduating with one teaching specialism) has to complete 33 credit hours of study. There are four key components in the programme: Education Studies, Curriculum Studies, Studies in Communication for Educators, and Professional Practice (applied studies). (The relative

proportion of the programme components are shown in Appendix 6). The Education Studies (i.e. Societal Context of Schooling, Adolescent Learners and Psychology of Learning, Managing Learning, Information and Communication Technology for Teaching and Learning) and Studies in Communication for Educators (i.e. English for Educators) are taken by all candidates regardless of their subject study. However, each specialization incorporates study of a series of three specialized courses (Curriculum Studies) that prepare participants to teach only in that specialization. For example, PGDE participants who do the subject of English have to do courses that train them to teach English only after their graduation, such as teaching Reading in English (Teaching & Learning in Specialism 1), teaching Writing in English (Teaching & Learning in Specialism 2), and teaching Speaking and Listening in English (Teaching & Learning in Specialism 3).

The PGDE targets Bahraini teachers who have been recruited by the Ministry of Education, who already possess a post-secondary credential (i.e. a Bachelor degree, which is the minimum requirement degree for employment in the MOE), who have no teacher training qualifications, and who have some or no experience in the MOE classroom. PGDE participants who already have started teaching in the MOE classroom but do not hold any teacher training qualification get a release time from their work to attend the programme as an in-service course, alongside the pre-service new MOE recruits who have never taught in the MOE classroom. The current study focused on the beliefs of practicing English language teachers who completed the PGDE in the subject of English as an in-service programme and were teaching English only in their schools. All of the participants in the research held at least a Bachelor degree in English Language plus a minor specialization in Translation, Information Technology, American Studies or French before they were recruited by the Ministry of Education. They all started teaching English in the MOE without a teacher training qualification and later on in their careers got a release time from their work to do the PGDE as a full-time course.

Kirk (2012) claims that teacher education and reform mandates in Bahrain do not overtly address issues that challenge teacher professionalism, such as the low status of teaching, centralized control, excessive workloads, and teacher autonomy. As I illustrated in the introductory chapter, Kirk called for more studies in this regard, especially in the context of Bahrain because of the recent educational and political changes in the country. Because it is not possible to understand reforms properly without understanding the beliefs and perceptions of teachers (Goodson, 2003), the present study, emerging out of this context, is an attempt to explore, through the eyes of the teachers, the impact of educational reforms, which were represented in the introduction of the PGDE course, and other contextual factors on the lives and professionalism of Bahraini school English language teachers. The next chapter will review the existing literature on professionalism and teachers' beliefs to develop a theoretical base for the research project.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

This thesis focuses on teachers' beliefs about their lives and professionalism in the context of recent reforms affecting primary and secondary education in Bahrain. The two key areas in my research are: professionalism and teachers' beliefs. These two constructs have recently emerged as important strands in the research on second language teacher education (SLTE). As we shall see in this chapter, the increased interest in teachers' beliefs and professionalism in SLTE is largely due to the changes in understanding the nature of L2 teacher learning, as well as the expanded need for competent language teachers as a response to the global spread of the English language (Richards, 2008; Burns and Richards, 2009).

This chapter will provide an in-depth critical review of the constructs of professionalism and teachers' beliefs, by firstly discussing and defining their meanings, referring to key works, and secondly, discussing key studies relevant to each construct that relate to my research. The review of the empirical research on professionalism and teachers' beliefs aims to show how these two concepts are mediated and shaped by the contexts in which teachers work and live. It argues that there is an urgent need to study how reforms in education and contextual factors affect teachers' professionalism and their identities as professionals, particularly in the case of Bahrain, because of the recent educational and political changes in the country. Finally, the chapter concludes by discussing the theoretical framework that my study employed to explore the teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning. This theoretical framework is grounded in the existing literature on teacher cognition (e.g. Borg, 2006; Freeman, 1996, 2002; Johnson, 2006; Woods, 1996; Johnston et al 2005) and it is motivated by a sociocultural perspective (Johnson, 2009a). This section also critically discusses two theoretical models that are used to study L2 teachers' cognition and puts forward a modified model that the current study adopted.

3.2 Teacher Professionalism

In the wake of globalization and the emergence of English as a global language, there has been an explosion for the demand for English around the world. Leaving aside the question of imperialism in the spread of English (see, for example, Pennycook, 1994; Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2009; Phillipson, 1992, for a critical review on this issue), the explosion of English worldwide has many implications for L2 teaching and teachers, such as the growing professionalism in the field with external pressures resulting from the need for competent language teachers as well as the need for acceptance of standards (Richards, 2008).

With respect to the question of whether teachers in general are professionals, Day (1999: 5) explains that professionals are traditionally distinguished from other groups of workers because they have: (1) a specialized knowledge base; (2) commitment to meeting client needs; (3) strong collective identity; and (4) collegial as against bureaucratic control over practice and professional standards. Because teachers, unlike doctors and lawyers, for example, are thought to lack rigorous knowledge (Tsui, 2003) and do not usually have control over their professional standards (Day, 1999), teaching has been regarded as a 'semi-profession' or a 'minor profession'. In TESOL, the topic of whether or not L2 teaching is a profession is still a subject of scholarly debate. In recent years, there have been attempts to professionalize L2 teaching and teachers (Richards, 2008). For example, Tsui's works (2003; 2009) focused on language teacher expertise in order to raise the status of the teaching profession by demonstrating to the general public that teachers do in fact have a solid knowledge base which is no less sophisticated than experts in other fields.

As far as the issue of L2 teacher competency is concerned, Johnson (2009a) points out that there have been attempts in the past few years to standardize practices in the field of TESOL (see also Katz and Snow, 2009) by trying to develop a specialized knowledge base in teacher education to prepare competent English language teachers and control access into the profession. The new knowledge base, according to Johnson, focuses not only on what L2

teachers need to know (i.e. content knowledge) but also how they should teach (i.e. the pedagogies) and how they learn to teach. As a consequence, taken-for-granted assumptions, such as 'if you can speak a language, you can teach it' (Johnston, 2003: 107), which reduces teachers' knowledge to the knowledge of language and can lead to preferring native-speaker teachers over non-native speaker teachers in employment, have begun to be questioned. Therefore, there has been increased demand for English language teachers, particularly native-speaker teachers, to obtain professional qualifications to demonstrate their level of competency in English language teaching (Barduhn and Johnson, 2009).

In addition to this, there has been a noticeable growth of TESOL organizations worldwide and a proliferation of professional journals, magazines and conferences, which attempt to create an international community of English language teaches with shared goals, values, discourses and practices (Richards, 2008; Johnston and Irujo, 2001) as well as emphasise the importance of diversity, on-going inquiry, cooperation and respect (Edge, 1996). For example, an organization by the name English Language Teaching Professional Network (ELTPN) was opened recently in Bahrain to 'help all those working in the field of English Language Teaching to share information, to find working partners and to collaborate on projects' (British Council Bahrain, n. d.). Moreover, a new journal called the International Journal of Bilingual and Multilingual Teachers of English (IJBMELT) was launched in 2013 by the Scientific Publishing Centre at the University of Bahrain. The journal focuses on a wide range of issues affecting EFL teaching, such as identity, language culture and teaching, language policy, critical issues in ELT and critical applied linguistics (see their website at: http://journals.uob.edu.bh/ijbmte).

Although these attempts to professionalize L2 teaching are undeniably desirable to raise the status of the teaching profession, Johnston (2003: 84) believes that the professionalization movement in ELT can be 'partly unproductive and partly useful'. First of all, he thinks that it is unrealistic to seek the same professional status that is given to established occupations such as

medicine and the law. He claims that teaching is of a different nature in that 'unlike doctors and lawyers, as teachers we hand over the knowledge and skills we have to our learners… the teacher-student relation lies at the heart of education, whereas one could argue that the lawyer-client relation, for instance, is less moral and more instrumental in character' (p. 85). In addition, Johnston claims that the discussion of teacher professionalism in L2 contexts usually ignores the 'dangers' that the call for professionalization can bring to teachers, such as increased accountabilities, work overload and increased monitoring of teachers' practice, which can ironically lead to the 'de-professionalization' (Day, 2005) of teachers.

However, Johnston (2003) argues that the study of L2 teacher professionalism will be useful if it focuses on the values underlying teachers' work and the contradictions in their identities. This seems to be a call to shift our attention from seeking to acquire the same professional status of established professions to examining the thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, practices, personal goals, emotions, and commitment of professionals themselves (Borg, 2012; Day, 2011; Richards and Lockhart, 2007). This idea is also echoed by Strike and Ternasky (1993 in Campbell, 2003: 3) as they believe that '[teaching] may seek the respect it deserves not by comparing itself to other vocations, but by focusing on the role and importance of teachers' moral and intellectual commitments in the lives of students and in society'. In this thesis, I endorse the viewpoints of Johnston (2003) and Strike and Ternasky (1993 in Campbell, 2003) above as my interest in the question of professionalism is not an attempt to discuss whether L2 teaching in Bahrain bears the traits of established professions, but to examine the beliefs and values underlying teachers' work and the contradictions in their professional identities in the context of professionalization.

3.2.1 What is Teacher Professionalism

The concept of professionalism has been a contestable issue in education. There is no universal meaning of the term as it is contextually, culturally, geographically, politically and socially constructed (Helsby, 1995). In second

language teacher education, Leung (2009) proposes two different dimensions to professionalism: (1) sponsored professionalism and (2) independent professionalism.

First of all, sponsored professionalism 'represents the views of ministries of education, teaching organizations, regulatory bodies, school principals and so on that specify what teachers are expected to know and what quality teaching practices consist of' (Richards, 2010: 119). The characterisation of what teachers should know and do in their work, however, is never static but always subject to change over the years. In Bahrain, for example, the definition of an English language teacher changed in the past few years. Prior to the year 2008, teachers recruited by the Ministry of Education were required to have specialist knowledge in their subject of teaching (e.g. a Bachelor Degree in English Language, which includes components such as Linguistics, Phonology, Morphology, Syntax and so on) but did not necessarily have to hold a teacher training qualification. However, this view began to change as the government introduced its comprehensive educational reforms in 2008 with the inauguration of Bahrain Teachers College (BTC). Hence, new English teachers working in the MOE now should be subject specialists with appropriate initial teacher education. The teachers who were recruited before the year 2008 and did not hold initial teacher education credentials (such as the participants in this research) have been required to do the PGDE course in the BTC in order for them to gain the same professional status that is given to those who already hold such credentials (i.e. in terms of promotions, salary, etc.). Leung (2009) argues that because the requirements of sponsored professionalism are usually imposed on teachers, they do not necessarily coincide with individual teachers' views on professionalism, which can cause conflicts in teachers' working lives.

Independent professionalism, on the other hand, refers to 'teachers' own views of teaching and the processes by which teachers engage in reflection on their own values, beliefs, and practices' (Richards, 2010: 119). As Leung (2009: 53) puts it, it is 'a commitment to careful and critical examination of the assumptions and practices embedded in sponsored professionalism with reference to

discipline-based knowledge and wider social values, and to take action to effect change where appropriate.' This intrinsic view of professionalism portrays teachers as conscious decision-makers and intellectual practitioners (Borg, 2003; Pennycook, 1994) with a high sense of commitment, responsibility and moral purpose (Day, 1999). The moral commitment and responsibility that teachers embody here are not only governed by a specific type of professional code (i.e. sponsored professionalism), but also informed by their 'professional consciousness' (Leung, 2009: 55) that is shaped by their past and present experiences as well as their daily interactions with students, colleagues, administrators, and parents (Campbell, 2003). Johnston (2003) believes that each teacher has a moral duty to examine his or her values and beliefs about what is good and right for his or her learners in order to reconcile his or her identity of being a professional with the realities in his or her own context of teaching.

Hence, the research presented in this thesis is an attempt to provide an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their values and beliefs about what is good and right for their learners so as to understand how they reconcile their identities of being professionals with the realities in their own context of teaching. The next subsection will discuss empirical studies that addressed teacher professional identity –professionalism– in order to show how professionalism can be mediated by context.

3.2.2 Key Studies on Teacher Professional Identity and Context

This subsection will review studies that have a particular focus on teachers' understandings of their professional identities, which is an important facet of their professionalism (Day, 2002), and how these understandings can be affected by the wider context in which they work and live. The studies here represent the synthesized main views on professionalism discussed in the above sections, particularly in relation to how teachers reconcile their identities of being professionals with their work realities, and the effect of this on their sense of commitment, responsibility and moral purpose.

With the so-called 'social turn' in education (Lea & Nicoll, 2002 in Reinders and Lazaro, 2011), there is a growing emphasis on understanding teacher professional identity and the association between identity and commitment, especially in the sociocultural and sociopolitical landscape of teaching (Tsui, 2007), because this relationship is considered as a necessary ingredient to the successful implementation, adaptation or resistance of educational reforms (Day et al, 2005) as well as teachers' professional development (Tsui, 2007). Day (2011: 48) defines professional identity as 'the way we make sense of ourselves and the image of ourselves that we present to others.' It is also related to how professional we feel we are as teachers and how professionally we are treated by others (Johnston, 1997; Edstam, 2001).

Many of the studies that explored teachers' lives as related to the teachers' context of teaching in mainstream teacher education (e.g. Day, 2011; Day, et al, 2005; Kelchtermans, 2011; Lasky, 2005; Smethem, 2007; Sachs, 2001; Wilkins, 2005) indicate that the way teachers perceive themselves and the way they are perceived by others is likely to have an effect, either positively or negatively, on their identity, motivation and commitment. For example, Day (2011) conducted a four-year longitudinal research project on the work, lives and effectiveness of 300 teachers working in 100 primary and secondary schools in England at six different stages of their professional lives. His primary aim was to investigate the importance of teachers' professional identities as a means of furthering understanding of the job of teaching and what it means to be a teacher striving to be effective and emotionally committed in changing policy, workplace and personal contexts. The research data, which were collected through in-depth interviews and critical incidents reported by the participants, were classified and placed into data matrix to produce individual profiles for each participant to identify their level of commitment and effectiveness.

The findings identified 'qualitative and statistically significant' associations between teacher commitment and professional identity. They also showed that 'teacher identities are neither intrinsically stable nor intrinsically fragmented, but that they can be more or less stable and more or less fragmented at different

times and in different ways according to the relative positive or negative impact of a number of personal, socio-cultural/policy and workplace influences; and that a positive, stable sense of professional identity is associated with teachers' ability to manage the emotional context of teaching' (p. 45). Day concludes that if teachers are to remain committed over their career, then they have, with the help of policymakers and school leaders, to develop a sense of agency about who they are and what they do and that their sense of professional identity relates closely to that, which is one finding that the current research in this thesis tries to verify (see Chapter 6).

Day et al (2005), too, emphasise, in their interview study on 21 teachers at primary and secondary levels in Australia and England, the role of professional identity in sustaining commitment in a period of reform and standardisation. The results of the study suggest that 'commitment may be better understood as a nested phenomena (*sic*) at the centre of which is a set of core, relatively permanent values based upon personal beliefs, images of self, role and identity which are subject to challenge by change which is socio-politically constructed' (p. 563).

Similarly, Smethem (2007) investigated 18 beginning secondary teachers' notions of career in England, from their initial attraction to the profession and in their second, third and fourth year of service, focusing particularly on their experiences, constructions of identity and perspectives on teaching. The aim of the study was to offer qualitative data to inform retention strategies at a time of increasing accountability. She collected her data by way of semi-structured interviews and written journal reflections and analysed them based on the emergent themes of career, vocation, impact of workload on the profession and induction experiences. The results suggest that the increasing accountability and intensification of teachers' work 'challenge teachers' 'moral purpose' and professional identity and adversely affect not only their retention but also new teachers' intentions to remain in teaching' (p. 465). Smethem concludes by suggesting that if retention rates are to be maintained at high levels, then policymakers should recognize that that job satisfaction is directly related to the

teachers' 'moral purpose' of teaching and that intensification of teachers' work may contribute to teacher shortages. The same idea is also echoed by Webb and Vulliamy (2004) who found, in their comparative, qualitative study of primary teachers in England and Finland, that the 'crucial factors discouraging teachers from remaining in teaching were work intensification, low pay, deteriorating pupil behaviour and a decline in public respect' (p. 196). On the other hand, they noted that the positive influences on teacher retention were commitment to students, professional freedom and supportive colleagues.

In regard to teachers' payment, however, Wang et al (2014) found that increment in salaries does not necessarily lead to improved performance in Chinese schools. In fact, their data show that linking remuneration to performance has led to teachers 'formalising their work and adopting an approach of "compliant professionalism"' (429), increased teachers' workloads, and fostered inequality as only the teachers who performed well on empirical performance indicators were given opportunities for professional development and remuneration. In Bahrain, there is also an attempt, particularly in secondary schools, to link bonuses with performance in the context of educational reforms. The teachers' responses to this will be discussed in chapters 5 and 6.

In second language teacher education contexts, the connection between teacher professional identity –professionalism– and teachers' work has increasingly been an area of interest in recent years (e.g. Edstam, 2001; Farrell, 2011; Johnston et al, 2005; Johnston, 1997; Liu and Xu, 2011; Reinders and Lazaro, 2011, 2013; Tsui, 2007). For example, Liu and Xu (2011) explored a beginner language teacher's identity in educational reforms in a Chinese university. Using the narrative inquiry as a methodology, the researchers asked the participant, through interviews and reflective journals, to reconstruct her experience of teaching English, focusing particularly, as my research in this thesis, on how the teacher reconciled her conflicting selves in order to adapt to educational reforms. The findings show that the teacher shifted her 'identities' to adapt to different teaching situations based on the meanings she made of these situations. These meanings came from a variety of resources, such as the

teacher's professional knowledge, personal experience, micro-politics, and the wider sociocultural contexts (Liu and Xu, 2011). The findings of the study illustrate how reforms and competing forces can shape teachers' identities, which, as Liu and Xu suggest, requires from teachers to reconstruct their identities to cope with new challenges in their workplace.

Johnston (1997) addressed the question of EFL teachers' professional identities and professionalism within the complex and dynamic sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts of Poland (i.e. after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the move towards an emphasis on EFL teaching in Poland) to determine how professionally the teachers viewed themselves. The research sample consisted of 17 teachers (11 females and 6 males; 12 Poles and 5 native speakers of English) working in private and public schools and universities in Poland. Using the life-history interview technique to elicit the teachers' stories about their professional lives, he posed two central questions: what discourses (professional, social, political, personal) do teachers draw on in talking about their working lives? And, how do teachers tell the story of their lives? The analysis of the data employed the discourse analysis technique and was grounded in the postmodern theory about language which posits 'that it is through language that individuals constantly (re)create their world' (Johnston, 1997: 683).

The major findings of Johnston's study can be summarized as follows:

1. The teachers told their life stories within a complex discursive context in which many occupational, socioeconomic, and cultural discourses competed for dominance.

2. The teachers presented their entry into teaching as accidental or as a second choice and did not draw on notions of vocation.

3. A lack of agency is also evident in the way movement from one job to another was portrayed; such moves may be shown to represent skilful adaptation to changing circumstances rather than progression along a career path.

4. Leaving teaching was a possibility that was constantly present in the teachers' accounts.

5. Teachers often drew on alternative identities; nonnative speakers of English preferred the identity of expert speaker of English to that of teacher.

6. A discourse of professionalism was absent from the teachers' discursive construction of their working lives; altruism was in some cases ironized whereas commitment was seen only in day-to-day terms.

Johnston (1997: 691-2)

Based on these findings, the researcher concludes that the widespread phenomenon of teaching being an 'easy job to get and leave' in Poland posed challenges to the newly established teacher training programmes in the country, which may, within the pressing social, economic and political culture of Poland, fail to produce large numbers of teachers with long term commitment to teaching. Hence, he recommends that teacher organizations in the country should campaign for improved working conditions and improved public image for English teachers, especially in the public sector. Despite the fact that the focus of Johnston's study here is on the status of EFL teaching, which is not primarily the main goal of my study, the ideas it suggests can be taken up in contexts outside Poland. For example, like Poland, Bahrain is also facing pressing social, economic and political challenges that have implications for the retention of Bahraini teachers, particularly male teachers (Kirk, 2012).

In the same way, Edstam (2001) explored the views of 53 ESL elementary school teachers in the midwestern part of the United States on how they understood professionalism and whether they perceived themselves as professionals. The data were collected through written reports, focus groups and open-ended interviews. Content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data where the researcher coded the written reports and the transcribed interviews to look for patterns and recurrent themes in the transcripts. The findings of the research suggest that the teachers characterized

their professionalism in at least four ways: they related it to how others legitimized and valued their practice; they related it to commitment and further personal and professional development; they related it to their sense of self-respect, sense of responsibility to one's job and the appropriateness of manner in carrying out one's job; and, they related it to serving their students in the best possible way and encouraging them to learn.

In terms of whether they viewed themselves as professionals and how professionally they were viewed, the teachers' reports, as Edstam points out, suggest that these were dependent on the contextual factors. The group of teachers who were respected and valued by colleagues and principals saw themselves as professionals while those whose roles were marginalized and diminished felt devalued in their jobs. The characteristics that fostered a sense of professionalism that the teachers suggested were: being knowledgeable in one's subject, being a life-long learner, collaborating with colleagues, being critical in one's job, and having the ability to get along with others. These findings clearly fit with the wider debate on professionalism discussed in the above sections, which emphasises the importance of 'teacher empowerment' through self-critical reflection and collaboration.

Following the footsteps of Edstam (2001) and Johnston's (1997) studies above, Johnston et al. (2005) explored the professional identity of an experienced American female teacher of English (given the pseudonym Bea) after her completion of an in-service course (MA course in TESOL at an American university). The data of the study were collected through a 90-minute, tape-recorded semi-structured interview with the participant, who was working at a Japanese university in Japan at the time of the study. The authors employed the discourse analysis technique to analyse the transcribed interview text, focusing particularly on tensions and opposing beliefs and values that constituted the professional life of the participant.

In terms of the teacher's identity as a professional, the authors found tensions between *assigned* or *perceived* identities (i.e. those identities attributed to Bea by other people) and *felt* or *claimed* identities (i.e. those identities that Bea

36

herself acknowledged and wished to take for herself). One such tension relates to the question of whether Bea felt that she was a professional or not. On the one hand, Bea did not feel that she was treated as a professional, because her being 'non-Japanese' meant that she could not secure a tenured position easily and that she could lose her job at any moment. Despite being marginalized, Bea, on the other hand, viewed herself as a professional and acted as a professional by engaging in professional education, attending conferences and reading professional journals and books. She asserted that if she did not see herself as a professional, no one would. The authors conclude that the clash between Bea's assigned and perceived identities shows the complex, dynamic, and fluid nature of identity and that it is dependent on social, cultural and political contexts. It also shows the marginalized position of many teachers in ELT, because although these teachers struggle to be professionals, their efforts are not always valued by those around them, which is one point that my current study will also shed light on (see Chapter 5, Marginality section).

Johnston et al also investigated the extent to which Bea was able to integrate into her teaching the linguistic and educational knowledge that she had acquired in her MA programme. Again, the researchers found tensions in Bea's identity that pulled her in different directions. While she accepted the importance of having an MA qualification for getting access to good jobs, she was unable to give credit to the MA programme for enhancing her professionalism. In addition, despite the fact that she was still reading journals and books, and attending conferences to keep abreast of latest developments related to her profession, she felt that much of what she read and heard did not resonate fully with her experiences in the classroom. The researchers claim that because of Bea's experience in the field (20 years of teaching), she developed a critical 'filter' of what new things she accepted into her teaching. They conclude that the knowledge base that Bea drew from in her teaching was wider than the knowledge base of the MA programme she did and that the programme failed to address the topic of her identity, which was, according the authors, a major part of her growth and change as a teacher.

Johnston et al.'s study above was one of the most influential studies on the current research in this thesis as I adapted the theoretical framework that Johnston et al used (see Figure 3 on page 52) to place teacher professionalism within its social and political contexts, thus focusing on the tensions that can arise between external views on teachers (assigned identities or sponsored professionalism) and teachers' own views about themselves (claimed identities or independent professionalism). Moreover, Johnston et al.'s study focused on the influence of educational programmes (MA in TESOL in this case) on the professionalism of teachers, which is the same aim for the current study, although an MA course is quite different from a teacher-training course (i.e. the PGDE) in that the former usually aims to help teachers who have already been socialized into the profession to enhance their theoretical knowledge while the latter focuses on practical skills to help teachers, particularly novice ones, to have control over their classroom teaching and deal with its dilemmas (Tarone and Allwright, 2005). However, both the MA course in Johnston et al.'s study and the PGDE course in my study were in-service courses that aimed to change teachers' beliefs and practice. Therefore, investigating the teachers' subsequent experiences after doing these programmes can, as Johnston et al.'s study above shows, give us insights into the effectiveness of these programmes in the lives of teachers (see below the section on the relationship between teachers' beliefs and the impact of educational reforms).

To summarize this section, the studies reviewed above show the complex interplay between teacher professional identity –professionalism– and context. They emphasise the importance of understanding teacher professionalism through the teachers' core values and beliefs, the contradictions in their identities, what roles teachers are expected to take in their workplace as well as the conditions and circumstances in which the work of teachers is embedded. They also emphasise the importance of bringing to the fore issues such as the moral nature of teaching, the moral duties and obligations of teachers, and the teachers' commitment to the development of students in any discussion of teacher professionalism (Fenstermacher, 1990 in Campbell, 2003: 3). This is because these elements have been found to be a critical predicator of teachers'

retention, motivation, performance, and attitudes towards teaching (Day et al, 2005). The detailed description of the methodologies and methods of data collection and analysis used by the studies reviewed in this section was purposeful to show that most of the studies on teacher professionalism and identity are interpretive and qualitative in nature. In addition, all of the studies here, like my research in this thesis, used interviews as a sole or a main data collection technique, which shows the value of interviewing in yielding considerable descriptions of the context and the teachers' stories that are told in it in order to deeply understand teacher professionalism and identity as a professional. The next section will concentrate on the element of teachers' beliefs as an important mechanism for teacher change and development.

3.3 Teachers' Beliefs

Although the interest in what teachers think, believe and know (or teacher cognition, Borg, 2006) has long been established in the context of general education (Barnard and Burns, 2012), it was not until the mid-1990s that the topic of teachers' beliefs and knowledge took central stage in L2 education research (Borg, 2012). The increased interest in L2 teachers' beliefs and knowledge is largely due to the shifts in the understanding of the nature of teacher learning from structural to functional, to a cognitivist SLA (second language acquisition), to socially situated (Johnson, 2009a). It has become something of a truism for many researchers in the field of L2 teacher cognition (see, for example, Barnard and Burns, 2012; Borg, 2006) that teaching is not simply the application of knowledge and skills. Rather, it is viewed as a much more complex process affected by physical, temporal, cognitive, social and cultural factors that can facilitate or constrain teaching and learning (Borg, 2006; Richards, 2008; Barnard and Burns, 2012).

This new understanding of teacher learning, which links 'practitioner knowledge' (Golombek, 1998) with the social (Johnston, 2003; Johnson, 2009a), challenges the separation between knower and knowledge, experience and science, subjectivity and objectivity (Golombek, 2009). This shift, according to Golombek (2009), has transformed research and practice in second language teacher

education. Therefore, it has become increasingly common that L2 teachers investigate their own classroom using 'teacher research' (Johnston, 2003: 97) frameworks, such as action research (Burns, 2009 and 2010), narrative inquiry (Johnson and Golombek, 2002) and reflective practice (Johnston, 2009). Johnson (2009b: 23) argues that the teacher research movement '[has] helped to legitimize practitioner knowledge by highlighting the importance of reflection on and inquiry into teachers' experiences as mechanisms for change in classroom practice'.

Hence, the underlying value in exploring teachers' beliefs and knowledge is 'teacher change', be it in their knowledge, beliefs, attitudes or practices, which is exactly the same principle that also informs mandated educational reforms (Richards et al, 2001). However, the nature and need of that change as well as how it might happen may differ. For example, much research on L2 teachers' beliefs and knowledge (see Borg, 2006) adopts a bottom up model of change where teachers' agency has a central role in their development and change. It also posits that teachers are not technicians enacting practices and using materials provided by others from outside the classroom, but ones who are able to operate under conditions of relative autonomy (Johnston, 2003). Therefore, such research, as Johnston (2003) points out, aims to react to the issue of power relations in many top down traditional models of innovation in education where 'expert knowledge', represented in teacher education programmes and educational policies, is usually produced for 'consumption' for teachers.

In recent years, there have been attempts in teacher education programmes in Bahrain to recognize and legitimize practitioner knowledge as a mechanism for teacher change. Starting with the year 2008, the new teacher education programmes that were designed for implementation at Bahrain Teachers College (BTC) for pre- and in-service teachers, such as the B.Ed and PGDE programmes, emphasise the importance of experiential knowledge in the development of the teaching competence of teachers. Influenced by the sociocultural movement in teacher education worldwide, these new programmes aim to promote principles such as the holistic development of

teachers, theory-practice link, experiential learning, modelling desired competencies, reflective communities of practice, and partnership (PGDE Concept Paper, 2013).

However, Day (2005: 108–109) claims that 'teachers' voices are [still] an… under-represented part of macro debate which focuses on whether educational reforms [around the world] are resulting in the "deprofessionalization" or "technicization" of teachers' work or whether they result in "reprofessionalization"'. Hence, it is essential to explore what L2 teachers know and believe about the impact of external educational reforms on their professional lives (Richards, 1998; Borg, 2006). Barnard and Burns, (2012: 2) argue that without understanding teachers' beliefs, and without realizing that teachers are 'the executive decision-makers of the curriculum', efforts to reform education will lead to failure to realize the intended curriculum. The current study is an attempt to explore teachers' beliefs about their professional lives under new educational reforms in Bahrain and the impact of these beliefs on their professionalism.

3.3.1 What are Teachers' Beliefs?

In this research, I focus on the concept of teachers' *beliefs*, which is an important element of teacher cognition (Borg, 2012). Although the term *belief* has been used widely in research focusing on L2 teacher cognition, it still lacks clear definition. M. Borg (2001) argues that the term may become clearer if it is compared with its parallel term *knowledge*. Knowledge is commonly defined as 'justified true belief' (Fenstermacher, 1994) and it must be 'true' in some external sense (M. Borg, 2001). A belief, on the other hand, is defined as 'a proposition that is accepted as true by the individual holding it, although the individual may recognize that alternative beliefs may be held by others' (M. Borg, 2001: 186). Barnard and Burns (2012: 3–4) illustrate the difference between the terms belief and knowledge by giving the following example: 'in pre-Copernican times, ordinarily people did not believe that the sun revolved around the earth: they *knew* it.' The knowledge of the sun revolving around the

earth here became a 'justified true belief' in an external sense (i.e. through the scientific discoveries).

Many definitions of teachers' beliefs (see for example, Borg, 2011, Phipps and Borg, 2009; M. Borg, 2001) suggest a bi-directional relationship between beliefs and behaviour. This means that beliefs (whether conscious or unconscious) affect and are affected by teachers' practice, such as their planning, decision-making in classroom, what teaching strategies they use and do not use, and their relationships with students, colleagues, administrators and parents. Because these beliefs are constructed by teachers themselves as they respond to the contexts of their teaching (Golombek, 1998) they 'can have a strong evaluative and affective component' (Borg, 2011: 370) and can be 'deep-rooted' (Phipps and Borg, 2009: 381) and, therefore, resistant to change (Borg, 2011).

Phipps and Borg illustrate that there is a distinction between 'core beliefs' and 'peripheral beliefs' and that each vary in strength. Core beliefs refer to the beliefs that are more stable and powerful in what teachers do. These may relate to educational issues more generally, such as the notion of considering serving students and society as a 'moral purpose'. On the other hand, peripheral beliefs are in constant change and may refer to specific issues on language teaching that teaches are less committed to and they might compromise on when tensions between core beliefs and peripheral believes arise. For example, a teacher may hold a core belief about the importance of keeping students happy versus a peripheral belief about the importance of using the target language in teaching (Birello, 2012). However, when the tension between these two kinds of beliefs arises, such as when the students' L2 is weak, the teacher may abandon his or her peripheral belief and use the students' L1 in teaching to stick to his or her core belief, which is making students happy in this case.

Beliefs can also be categorized into 'stated beliefs' and 'enacted beliefs' (Borg, 2006). Stated beliefs are what teachers say they think about teaching and learning (these can be articulated in interviews), while enacted beliefs are their actual practices in the classroom (these can be revealed by observation). However, teachers' beliefs are not directly observable (Borg, 2006) as they are

considered to be the 'hidden side of teaching' (Freeman, 2002: 1). Hence, one cannot always say for sure that what teachers do in class is what they actually believe in because their beliefs are contextually specific, personal, dynamic, multi-dimensional, non-linear, complex, contradictory, and unpredictable (Barnard and Burns, 2012; Borg, 2011; Freeman, 1993; Peacock, 2001; Phipps; 2007; Phipps and Borg, 2009a). Therefore, this presents challenges to the study of beliefs. Borg interviewed in Birello (2012) claims that the only way we can elicit beliefs is by getting teachers to tell us what their beliefs are.

Many researchers of teachers' beliefs in SLTE, therefore, resolve the problem of the complexity of eliciting beliefs by looking into the convergence and divergence between what teachers say they belief in (i.e. stated beliefs) and what they actually do in the classroom (i.e. enacted beliefs). Because I used in-depth interviewing as a sole method of data collection in my research, however (see my discussion on the limitation of this method in the Limitation Section in Chapter 4), my specific interest here is in the teachers' stated 'core beliefs' about teaching and learning – 'propositions about all aspects of their work which teachers hold to be true or false' (Phipps and Borg, 2009: 381) – in the context of educational reforms. These beliefs may be 'consciously or unconsciously held' by teachers; and are 'imbued with emotive commitment'; further, they can provide insights into teachers' thought and behaviour (M. Borg, 2001: 186). The next subsection will discuss key studies that focused on teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning in the context of educational reforms in order to show how these beliefs are shaped by context.

3.3.2 Key Studies on Teachers' Beliefs and Context

Numerous studies that have examined teachers' responses to the changing nature of teachers' roles and the contextual factors affecting implementation of change suggest that many large-scale traditional reforms in education usually have minimal, and sometimes perverse, results on teachers, because they target behavioural change in teachers without taking into consideration teachers' beliefs (Saqipi et al, 2014; Valli and Buese, 2007; Richards et al, 2005). Indeed, Saqipi et al (2014) explored 14 school teachers' perceptions of

their professional lives in post-war Kosovo where the country is undergoing major educational reforms that aim to improve the school system and overall societal expectations of the education system (as Kosovo is moving towards aligning with the European Union and developing as a democracy). They found that the new school curriculum in Kosovo is demanding teachers to behave in a manner that they have not been trained to and that it ignores the social and historical backgrounds of the teachers' work realities. Lamb (1995) echoes this sentiment on his study of Indonesian English teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning in light of new innovations promoted by an in-service education programme, claiming that most of the ideas that the programme fostered were forgotten by the teachers or appropriated in a way that the designers of the course did not anticipate. He suggests that in order for teacher education programmes to have their intended goals, the agendas of the programmes should be set up by the participants themselves.

Other studies in TESOL (e.g. Richards and Pennington, 1998a, Underwood, 2012, Nishino, 2009, Kim, 2011) also report similar findings. These studies, and a lot more similar ones (see Borg, 2006), however, investigate the tensions between teachers' said beliefs about a specific topic in language teaching (e.g. grammar, CLT, etc.) and the teachers' actual practices in the context of educational reforms. These studies have reported a variety of contextual factors that prevent teachers from implementing educational innovations and restrict their professional development. For example, Richards and Pennington (1998a) in Hong Kong found that although the teachers in their study had very strong beliefs in the usefulness of the new teaching strategies (i.e. the use of CLT) after the completion of their pre-service course, they felt that classroom constraints restricted the implementation of these strategies. Instead of focusing on the principles promoted by their pre-service training course, the teachers in the study preferred to adopt 'a simplified model of teaching' which was consistent with the status quo in the context of their teaching.

Kim (2011), likewise, reported tensions between teachers' said beliefs and actual practices in South Korea. Despite the fact that the teacher in Kim's

research believed in the importance of using communicative activities in classroom, she stuck to traditional ways of teaching because this ensured more emphasis on language structures, which the teacher believed the students needed most. Not to mention the fact that the teacher in Kim's study acknowledged her lack of confidence in her English language commands to carry out communicative activities. Underwood (2012) in Japan also found that the teachers in his study were concerned with the lack of time to carry out new educational reforms (communicative grammar, due to be effective in April 2013), the inadequate knowledge about the new curriculum and the insufficient training, as well as the scarcity of resources in their schools.

The findings in the above three studies might imply that pre-packaged Western strategies for teaching English (particular the CLT approach and student-centeredness) are not always readily acceptable by teachers in non-Western societies because these strategies can be incongruent with the teachers' cultural beliefs and values. However, Zhang and Liu (2014) claim that there is evidence that Western strategies for teaching English are not always in conflict with teachers' values and local cultures. In their study on the beliefs of nine Chinese junior high school English teachers about contextual factors influencing their teaching in a time of curriculum innovation, they found that although some of the new innovations were constrained by Confucian traditions and existing practices in China, the teachers were able 'to blend the Western-based theories of language teaching and learning with traditional Chinese cultural and educational values without much internal conflict' (p. 2002). They conclude that their findings highlight the contextual nature of teachers' beliefs in that teachers are flexible beings who are open to negotiate change while at the same time maintaining their traditional values.

All of the above studies in the context of TESOL, except perhaps for Zhang and Liu (2014), addressed teachers' beliefs from a technical perspective (i.e. in terms of teachers' subject matter knowledge and ability to tackle technical tasks in the classroom, particularly teaching strategies related to grammar teaching) rather than view them through the teachers' core values and beliefs that are

linked to the wider historical, political, and cultural contexts in which teaches work and live. In fact, the general direction of the studies of language teachers' beliefs (see Borg's 2014 Bibliography at http://simon-borg.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Language-Teacher-Cognition-Bibliography-14-APR-14.pdf) shows that the majority of researchers focus on technical issues with grammar being a prominent topic. Simon Borg in Birello (2012) claims that the reason why grammar teaching is a popular candidate for studies of L2 teachers' beliefs is the fact that a lot of educational reforms in language education are driven by the desire to change the way grammar is handled by teachers. However, he believes that the concept of tensions in teachers' beliefs 'is a sort of universal concept' and 'there is no reason that tensions cannot be studied in other aspects of language teaching' (Birello, 2012: 91).

Despite the fact that my study does not particularly focus on teachers' beliefs in regard to their subject matter knowledge, I included the above studies on L2 teachers in my review in this subsection for at least two reasons. First, 'Western' strategies of teaching (Holliday, 1994) imported and adopted in the contexts of the above studies also characterize reforms in the PGDE course in Bahrain and the contextual factors reported in the studies, such as the students' poor L2, lack of time, and cultural influences, can therefore be potential constraints to applying 'Western' strategies in Bahrain (see Chapter 5). Secondly, it is to show that research on L2 teachers' beliefs in general lacks focus on other important issues that concern the hidden side of teaching, the most obvious of which is the notion of teacher identity. It is only recently that the topic of identity in relation to teachers' beliefs and professionalism has begun to interest researchers in language education (Borg, 2012). Therefore, there is a need to focus on the topic of identity and its effect on teachers' beliefs, change and development, particularly within the wider sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts of teaching (See also the Section on Studies on Professional Identity and Context above).

In the context of Bahrain, the only study that I am aware of which addressed Bahraini in-service teachers' core beliefs about teaching and learning, in a time

of curriculum innovations, was a conference paper by Kirk (2012). In his study, which did not apparently focus specifically on the lives of English language teachers, Kirk explored how recent moves toward national dialogue instituted by the Government of Bahrain have, in light of the 2011 social unrest (see the Context Chapter), shaped educational reform and teacher education. In particular, he was interested in the role that education played in the social unrest, and how the same national education structure, which is claimed to be at the heart of government reform and policy initiatives, aimed at unifying the country and addressing many of the social and economic imbalances. To achieve his goals, he explored the current challenges faced by teachers, school leaders and system administrators through direct semi-structured interviews, completion of questionnaires, school visits and classroom observation, as well as a review of current government policy and directives.

Kirk's provisional findings indicate that teacher education programmes, which are exclusively offered by the recently formed Bahrain Teachers College (BTC), do not overtly address the numerous issues that face the teaching profession in the country, such as low status and compensation, divided communities and school population, high attrition rates within the profession, top-down and centralized control, lack of professional autonomy, ever increasing workloads and a lack of males entering the profession. Kirk argues that many of these issues are faced by countries around the world and have been widely reported on in the literature. However, he emphasises that what makes the situation of Bahrain unique is the recent political and educational changes in the country and the focused attention of the leadership to address many of the social and economic inequalities that exist in the country.

All in all, the studies reviewed in this subsection show that teachers analyse the conditions in their teaching contexts, such as student motivation, materials, facilities, and workload, etc., to make judgments regarding their ability to implement external educational reforms. The studies also show the complex and contextualized nature of teachers' beliefs. They suggest that teachers' beliefs should be considered by policymakers as legitimate mechanisms for

change, because these beliefs can play an important role in curriculum implementation and professional development. What these studies add to my set of arguments in the present thesis is that they show that if curriculum innovations are to hold chances for successful educational change, they should address teachers' beliefs in relation to the contexts in which the innovations are supposed to be implemented.

It seems from the review of literature in this chapter that many of the existing studies on L2 teachers' beliefs and professionalism took place in East Asia, Europe, and the USA, but there remain, as Borg (2006) argues, many L2 education contexts where the study of language teachers' lives has yet to make an impression. In addition, it appears that L2 teachers' 'core beliefs' and 'values', especially in relation to teacher identity and professionalism (Johnston et al., 2005), are still understudied. The current study is different from previous studies in that it takes place in a local and regional context (i.e. Bahrain) where there have been very few studies that have examined teachers' beliefs about their professionalism and contextual factors. It is motivated by Kirk's (2012) and Johnston et al.'s (2005) unaddressed call for urgent research on how contexts impact upon the beliefs and values of in-service teachers who have enrolled in educational programmes, particularly in relation to the contested notion of professionalism and the teacher's identity as a professional. The next section will discuss the theoretical framework that my study used to study the teachers' beliefs as related to their context.

3.4 The Theoretical Framework Underpinning the Study

The theoretical framework employed by this research was centred on the study of L2 teacher cognition that was carried out over the past two decades (see for example, Borg, 2006; Barnard and Burns, 2012; Freeman, 1996, 2002; Johnson, 2006; Johnston et al 2005; Woods, 1996). As stated earlier in this chapter, teacher cognition is broadly defined as what teachers think, know and believe (Borg, 2006). This thesis drew on a sociocultural understanding of teacher cognition to study the beliefs of the teachers in this research. The

following quotation from Johnson (2009a) summarizes the meaning of teacher cognition from a sociocultural perspective:

> From a sociocultural perspective, teacher cognition originates in and is fundamentally shaped by the specific social activities in which teachers engage. Thus, teachers' knowledge and beliefs are constructed through and by the normative ways of thinking, talking, and acting that have been historically and culturally embedded in the communities of practice in which they participate (as both learners and teachers). This suggests that the normative ways of acting and interacting and the values, assumptions, and attitudes that are embedded in the classrooms where teachers were once students, in the teacher education programs where they receive their professional credentialing, and in the schools where they work, shape the complex ways in which they come to think about themselves, their students, the activities of L2 teaching, and the L2 teaching–learning process (p. 17).

This view on teacher cognition is motivated by Vygotskian sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978 in Richards, 2008), which 'defines human learning as a dynamic social activity that is situated in physical and social contexts, and is distributed across persons, tools, and activities' (Johnson, 2009a: 1). Central to the process of human learning in Vygotskian sociocultural theory are meditational artifacts, such as books, computers, videos, handouts, the physical layout of the classroom, language, literacy, etc. (Lantolf, 2006), which are considered to shape the development of human beliefs, values and ways of acting (Lasky, 2005). Another key concept in Vygotsky's theory is the notion of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which means 'the difference between what a person can achieve independently and what he or she can achieve working in collaboration with others or with someone more experienced' (Johnson, 2009a: 19).

Adapting Vygotsky's theory in teacher education, Richards (2008) argues that teacher learning is considered as a process of 'apprenticeship' in the ZPD and it is through meaningful collaborative interactions with fellow experienced teachers, educators, or mentors, for example, that novice and less experienced teachers construct new forms of thinking. This process leads to the 'internalization' of expert knowledge, but it is not a straightforward appropriation of knowledge from outside in (Johnson, 2009a). Rather, it occurs on two planes: first on the social plane, and then the psychological plane (Lasky, 2005). In other words, anything which is psychological is first social. In this sense,

teacher cognition is initially external and socially mediated before it is internally controlled by the individual teacher and reconstructed and transformed in ways that are responsive to his or personal and local needs (Johnson, 2009a). What this means is that whatever influences on the teacher and classroom from outside, the teacher still has the lead role to play in education (Buzzelli and Johnston, 2002) and, therefore, should always be considered as an important catalyst for change and innovation (Saqipi et al., 2014).

3.4.1 Models for Studying Teacher Cognition

Based on his comprehensive review of studies in the field of L2 teacher cognition, Borg (2006: 280) claimed that the field lacked 'a programmatic research agenda conceived within an overall unifying framework.' Therefore, he developed a tool for conceptualizing the field of language teacher cognition research. In his model, Borg argues that language teacher cognitions about aspects of their work – such as teaching, teachers, learning, students, subject matter, curricula, materials, activities, self, colleagues, assessment, and context – shape and are shaped by four constructs: schooling, professional coursework, classroom practice and contextual factors (see Figure 2 below, adapted from Borg, 2006: 283).
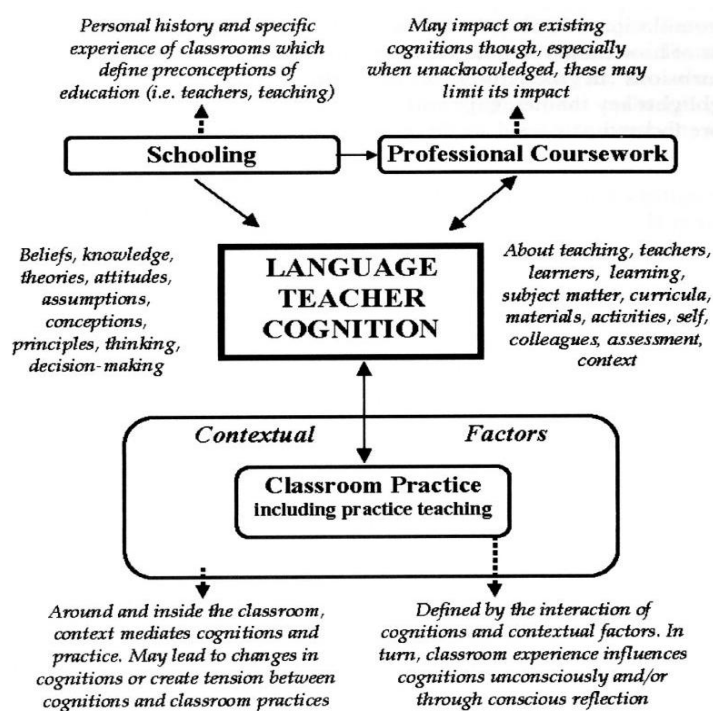
FIGURE 2: Language Teacher Cognition

The construct of schooling, as Borg explains, refers to teachers' personal histories and specific experiences of classrooms, which define their perceptions of education. In his review of the literature, Borg found that these cognitions are so strong that they can continue to influence teachers throughout their career.

Additionally, Borg explains that professional coursework, which is also affected by teachers' experiences of schooling, was also found to impact and be impacted by teachers' current cognitions about teaching and learning. However, professional coursework, which includes pre- and in-service teacher education programmes, was, as Borg claims, found to have a limiting impact on teacher cognition when it was imposed on teachers and did not address the teachers' prior beliefs about teaching and learning. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Borg found that teacher cognitions were bi-directionally influenced by classroom practice, 'with contextual factors playing an important role in mediating the extent to which teachers are able to implement instruction congruent with their cognitions' (Borg, 2006: 284).

While Borg's model offers valuable insights into teacher beliefs and knowledge, it has at least three main limitations. First, this model disregards the sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts of teaching which can have an impact on teacher cognition as well as the other elements in the framework. Second, the model contains no mention of the impact of *identity* on teacher cognition. However, as Miller (2009: 175) rightly argues, 'knowing, believing and doing are enacted in classroom contexts in a way that cannot be separated from identity formation.' Borg himself realized this drawback in his theoretical model when (in Borg, 2012) he urged researchers to include the construct of identity as 'a salient theme' in their inquiries on teacher cognition. Last but not least, the model lacks focus on the impact of teachers' personal experiences outside schooling such as their professional experiences in fields other than teaching.

A more useful model for capturing teachers' beliefs in a broader sense is proposed by Johnston et al. (2005) in their study on teacher professional development that was discussed earlier in this chapter. Johnston et al. identify four main focuses in the existing literature on teachers' work and lives, both in

general education and in TESOL, which impact the beliefs and knowledge of language teachers. These focuses are: *teacher life story*, *professional development*, *teacher beliefs and knowledge*, and *teacher identity* (see Figure 3 below, adopted from Johnston et al. 2005: 55).
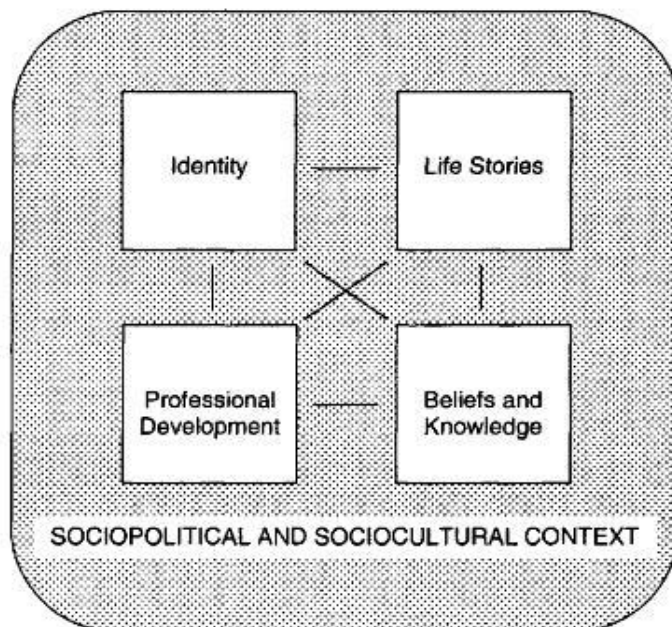
FIGURE 3: Teacher Professional Development

A major difference between this model and Borg's model discussed in the above is that it emphasises the importance of *identity* in shaping teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning. Johnston et al. argue that there has been an emerging literature that looks into language teacher identity, particularly the questions of whether teachers are professionals, how the native teacher and the non-native teacher identities are negotiated, as well as teachers' understanding of what it means to be a teacher (see subsection 3.2.2. above for studies on teacher professionalism and identity as a professional). Another difference between Borg's model and Johnston et al.'s model is that the latter considers the way teachers narrate their life histories or stories as an important factor that can influence teachers' beliefs (see also Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Johnson and Golombek, 2002). Johnston et al. explain that when life stories are used as a lens to understand teachers' beliefs, they can ask teachers to narrate their lives before and after becoming a teacher or a participant in a professional course (which could include their schooling, pre-

service training, and professional development), why they became teachers or participants in a professional course, what other jobs they have done or are doing, why they changed jobs, the turning points in their personal and professional lives, their goals, and their personal and professional plans for the future. Such questions are important because they can provide insights into the complexity of teachers' work, whether teachers draw on notions of vocation, and whether they have a sense of professionalism and identity (Johnston, 1997).

A third difference between Borg's model and Johnston et al.'s model is that the latter incorporates the construct of professional development, which is an aspect of the teacher life stories because it is concerned with their growth as teachers. Professional development here relates to the development activities that teachers find most useful and it is not only confined to formal professional coursework alone, but includes informal personal and professional development as well, such as peer- and self-monitoring, mentoring, teacher collaboration and support groups, and action research (Burns and Richards, 2009).

Finally, Johnston et al.'s model is different from Borg's in that it considers all of the elements in the framework as interrelated with each other. The interrelatedness of the elements is represented by the lines joining each box in Figure 3 above. Individually or collectively, these focuses, as Johnson et al claim, cannot be understood without linking them to the wider sociopolitical and sociocultural context in which they occur. This view of teachers' beliefs and knowledge is informed by the sociocultural theory which considers teacher learning as a dynamic social activity that is situated in physical and social contexts (Johnson, 2009a).

One limitation in Johnston et al.'s model, however, is that it does not consider Borg's element of *classroom practice* as a major focus that can influence teacher beliefs and knowledge. Hence, building on the models of Borg and Johnston et al. discussed in the above, I have developed a modified model to investigate the teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning in this research (see Figure 4 below).

53
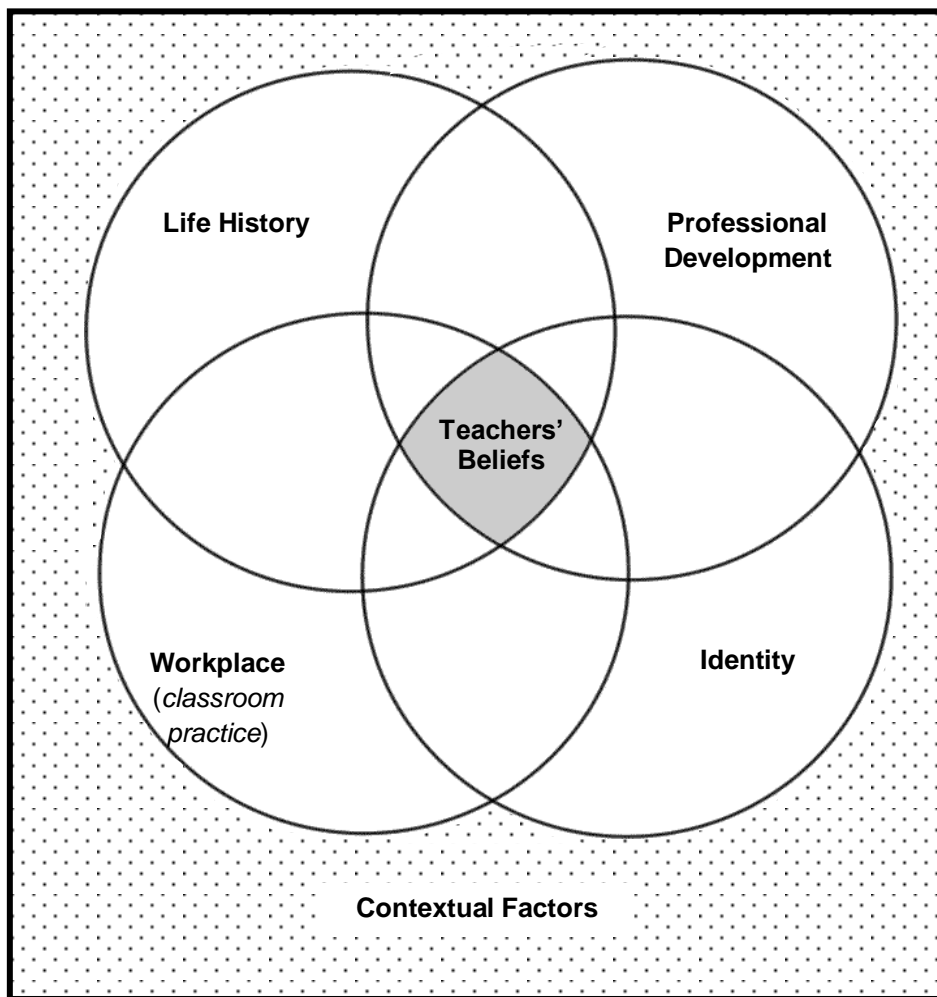
FIGURE 4: Teachers' Beliefs

As can be seen in this slightly modified model, I placed Borg's construct of *classroom practice* within its wider context (i.e. workplace), because I was not particularly interested in the actual practices of teachers in the classroom but sought their reports on what happens in there. Hence, classroom practice in my theoretical model is considered as part of the workplace that could mediate teachers' beliefs. Additionally, I use the term 'life history' rather than 'life story' as I did not really use a life story approach to collect the data but endeavoured to understand how the teachers' life histories (i.e. their lives before, during and after they did the PGDE course) impacted their current beliefs.

All of the five elements in the circles in the modified framework above (i.e. teacher life history, professional development, workplace, identity, and teachers' beliefs) are mutually interconnected, and each one of them is an integral part of the broader context, which is represented in the dotted area around the circles

(Johnston et al, 2005). The framework links teachers' beliefs with the social, assuming that these beliefs are always socially situated and constructed by and within social relations as well as contextual factors. In this research, I scrutinize these contextual factors through the theoretical model in Figure 4 above so as to understand how teachers' beliefs and professionalism are interdependent in their development, thereby exposing the impact that these broader contextual factors can have on teachers' beliefs and professionalism. I presume that if the goal of the PGDE programme in Bahrain is to prepare the individual teacher to function well in the professional context of the new educational reforms in Bahraini government schools, then it is critical to account for how an individual's beliefs shape and are shaped by the broader institutional, social, historical, political and cultural contexts which constitute that professional context.

One caveat, however, is that the theoretical models discussed in this section were only adopted and adapted to inform the collection of my data and to enable me to construct a justification for the focus of my research and the way that I have carried it out. They are, therefore, not presented here as a fixed approach in studying teachers' beliefs. Another caveat is that the term *political* in the framework might be understood narrowly. Many people might think of the term as relating to the government or the public affairs of a country, elections, and political parties and so on, which is probably one reason, as Johnston (2003) argues, why teachers are rarely encouraged to reflect on the sociopolitical contexts in which they work and live. However, the term *political* has a wider meaning than this. As Johnston (2003: 43) illustrates, the term political 'refers to anything that has to do with power and the control of resources of every conceivable kind.' With this understanding in mind, teachers can conceptualize their work in relation to many things that impact their profession such as imposed standardized curricula, tests and assessment procedures as well as the economic and social inequalities in the contexts where they work and live. In this research, the wider understanding of the term *political* will be endorsed.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter critically reviewed the literature on the constructs of professionalism and teachers' beliefs. It discussed and defined these two constructs respectively referring to key works in both general education and in TESOL. It also discussed key studies relevant to each construct that relate to my study to show how concepts of professionalism is mediated by context and how teachers' beliefs about their work are shaped by context. It argued that there is an urgent need to study the beliefs of teachers who have been engaged in in-service educational programmes, particularly in relation to their professionalism and identities as professionals. In the final part of the chapter, I critically discussed the current theoretical models for studying teachers' beliefs and knowledge and suggested a modified model to study the beliefs of teachers in my research. The next chapter discusses the philosophical and methodological assumptions underpinning my study as well as the way I collected and analysed the data of the research.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to show how I conducted this research and how I answered the research questions and achieved the objectives outlined in the introduction of this study. It describes the underlying paradigm, methods of the research design and the processes of data collection and analysis adopted by the research. It also discusses the research quality, ethical dimension and limitations.

4.2 Research Paradigm

An important aspect of any educational research is the discussion of the paradigm that underpins the study in order to provide the theoretical and philosophical stance taken by the researcher, how he or she views the topic in question, and how this may play out in terms of the research. In this section, I will discuss, in light of the research topic, the paradigm that informed my study and why it was suitable for my research aims.

4.2.1 What is a Paradigm?

Although the term 'paradigm' has many meanings, it is referred to in this research as: 'a way of looking at the world; interpreting what is seen; and deciding which of the things seen by researchers are real, valid, and important to document' (LeCompte and Schensul,1999: 41). It is described in terms of 'ontology' and 'epistemology' (Cohen and Manion, 1994). While ontology is a stance towards the nature of reality, epistemology is the theory of knowledge – that is, how the researcher knows what he or she knows (Creswell, 2007). In addition, epistemology is concerned with what constitutes knowledge, where knowledge comes from, whose knowledge it is, and what is possible to know and understand (Wellington et al., 2005).

4.2.2 The Interpretivist Paradigm: Epistemology and Ontology

This research adopted the interpretivist paradigm to understand the teachers' work and lives in this research, because interpretivism locates an individual's

beliefs and knowledge in their daily interactions with the wider social life. It rejects the commonsense notion that the world exists outside of and removed from the individual and that it can only be revealed by observation (Martin, 1995). Instead, it takes a holistic approach to understanding the phenomenon under study (i.e. teacher beliefs, in this case) by linking it with historical, socioeconomic, and cultural contexts in which it is embedded (Lodico et al., 2010). Hence, knowledge (epistemology) in this perspective is socially constructed and emerges from the social practices that people (or teachers) engage in.

In this case, reality (ontology) is fluid and open to negotiation (Cooper and White, 2012), and people construct it when they talk to each other and interact with the world around them (Burr, 1995). This reality is contextually specific and individuals constitute it in accord with the concepts most appropriate to their personal and subjective experiences (Lodico et al., 2010). Hence, one cannot assume that the experiences teachers have had in their teaching, for example, will always overlap. Indeed, different teachers may bring different, and even contradictory, meanings to the same phenomenon under study.

In this sense, the teacher who views modern technology, for example, as a wonderful way for facilitating the act of teaching is no more correct than the teacher who views it as restrictive in teaching; he or she just comes to modern technology with different experiences, knowledge, and opinions, resulting in a different interpretation. Although each person might bring different meanings to the same phenomenon under study, his or her interpretation is likely to be affected by his or her peer groups at school, family, church, or any other social groups that he or she belongs to (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). The goal of the interpretivist researcher is to examine how people participate in and constitute social reality and to try to figure out how these series of social constructions are connected to the participants' wider lives (Snape and Spencer, 2003).

The interpretivist researcher 'must' attempt to understand and interpret the complex and often 'multiple realities' from the perspectives of the participants, which requires from him or her to become involved in the reality of the

58

participants and interact with them in 'deeply meaningful ways' (Lodico et al., 2010). By doing this, the researcher will have the opportunity to 'see the world through the eyes of the participants' (Robson, 2002: 25), which can lead to mutual influence. As Lincoln and Guba (1985: 37) put it 'The inquirer and the object of inquiry interact to influence one another; knower and known are inseparable'.

When the interpretivist perspective is used as a lens through which to look at teachers' beliefs as related to their work and lives, the central question, as Johnson (2009a) argues, might be: How do teachers participate in and constitute their professional world? According to Johnson (2009a), the interest of the interpretivist researcher should be focused on what teachers know, honours what they know, and helps to clarify and resolve the dilemmas they face within the context in which they teach.

4.2.3 The Interpretivist Paradigm and the Current Research

Because the goal of the current research was to understand how teachers' beliefs about their working lives, within the context of educational reforms, impacted upon their professionalism, I assumed that the nature of reality (ontology) of the teachers' working lives and professionalism was subjective and that individual teachers had their own distinct and diverse meanings of them. The aim of my investigation was to understand and interpret how these individual teachers within the specific contexts of my study made sense of their professional lives. In addition to this, because knowledge or meanings in the interpretivist perspective are subjective, varied, multiple, and constructed through social interactions between individuals and their world (epistemology), I assumed that it was only through my interaction with the participants that I would be able to uncover their perceptions about the contextual factors that impacted on their work, lives and professionalism.

In the process of collecting and interpreting the data I attempted to understand the teachers' beliefs through the words expressed by the teachers themselves and then place this understanding within my 'theoretical and conceptual framework' (Arsenault and Anderson, 1998: 125). After that, I tried to sort

through the experiences of different teachers as interpreted through their 'own cultural lenses' and then weighed different versions to put together a single explanation (Rubin and Rubin, 2005: 30). This was a challenging task as I wanted to present diverse views of the teachers while never losing sight to the totality of their lived experiences.

4.2.4 My Role in the Research

My role in the research was first of all to extensively describe the meanings that the research participants attached to their professional lives (Ernest, 1994) and then reveal, explain, interpret and help to clarify the teachers' beliefs about what it meant to be a teacher for them as well as to help to resolve the dilemmas they faced within the context in which they worked and lived (Johnson, 2009a). Therefore, the findings of this research were mediated through the researcher (Snape and Spencer, 2003: 13). In my research, I acknowledge that 'who I am', my values and assumptions influenced the ways the data were collected and analysed. Therefore, I believe that knowing about me and my personal perspective will help other researchers to better evaluate my conclusions.

I am a Bahraini Arab Muslim and have been raised in a village where there is a strong appreciation for religion and religious occasions. I have a faith in Islam but I also respect all other religions and sects. In terms of topic selection, I think that my lack of personal experience in teaching at the school level was relevant to my interest in studying school teachers' work, lives and professionalism, because I plan to work with school teachers in the future. Hence, I thought that by researching school teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning as well as their teaching contexts, I would be able to understand them better.

What is more, a close relative of mine is a school teacher. She started off teaching with great enthusiasm but has been recently telling me stories about a 'biased' treatment towards teachers in government schools in Bahrain. She admitted that her initial motivation in teaching has declined because of these biases and other workplace factors. Thus, my interest was to learn more about school micro-politics, control and autonomy. The point of discussing this here is that although the focus of the research is on teachers' beliefs, I recognize that

their stories were collected and told through me, with the aforementioned cultural baggage and viewpoints.

My study then intends to explore and understand Bahraini teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning, in light of the recent educational reforms in Bahrain and within the environments in which they work and live, as well as the impact of these beliefs upon their professionalism. In order to understand and interpret the teachers' own individual and subjective professional experiences, I used a qualitative approach that builds on the interpretivist paradigm. The next section will discuss the qualitative research approach that I employed in my study to understand the teachers' lived experiences and the meanings they made of these experiences.

4.3 Qualitative Approach

Borg (2006) argues that because teacher cognition research seeks to study the 'tacit and unobservable' aspects of teachers' 'mental lives', a key challenge for researchers is to find a proper methodology and methods to make these explicit. He identified four commonly adopted approaches that have been widely used by researchers to study language teachers' cognition. These are: *self-report instruments*, *verbal commentaries*, *observation*, and *reflective writing*. These approaches along with a brief description of their goals and the methods they use are given in Table 1 below.

Generally, because the research on language teacher cognition draws largely on constructivist epistemologies, it has emphasised the situated nature of teachers' beliefs (Underwood, 2012), which in a sense requires more in-depth qualitative approaches to investigate, taking the form of words rather than numbers and seeking to understand rather than just explain. As my research was interpretive and exploratory in nature, a qualitative approach was chosen as a methodology for the study to generate a depth of understanding and interpretation of the teachers' verbal commentaries and distinct professional experiences in the specific context of the study.

Category	Goal	Methods
Self-Report Instruments	To measure teachers' theoretical orientations, beliefs or knowledge about an aspect of language teaching	• Questionnaires • Scenario rating • Tests
Verbal Commentaries	To elicit verbal commentaries about teachers' beliefs, attitudes, practical theories and related mental constructs	• Structured interviews • Semi-structured interviews • Scenario-based interviews • Repertory grids • Stimulated recall • Think-aloud protocols
Observation	To collect descriptions of real or simulated planning and teaching which can be compared to previously stated cognitions and/or provide a concrete context for the subsequent elicitation of cognitions	• Unstructured observation • Structured observation
Reflective Writing	To elicit through writing tasks teachers' perceptions of their experiences, beliefs and knowledge of the concepts they associate with particular aspects of language teaching	• Journal writing • Biographical accounts • Retrospective accounts • Concept maps

Table 1: Data Collection Methods in Language Teacher Cognition (Borg, 2006: 168)

Drawing on ethnographic and phenomenological methodologies (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982), the qualitative research in this study aimed to create spaces for the voices of those studied (Mockler, 2011) and enable the researcher to collect rich descriptive data in order to illuminate the complexities and nuances of the participants' lived experiences (Cooper and White, 2012) and to reveal connections between these experiences (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011). This required the complete involvement of the researcher in the reality of the participants. Therefore, I was considered as a key instrument for data collection and analysis (Brewer and Headlee, 2010) and my biases were, therefore, unavoidable (Selinger, 1989).

However, I was aware of my influences, which helped me to view the data more critically and reflexively, and approach them 'with a certain sense of naiveté, innocence, and absence of prejudgments' (Seidman, 2006: 33). In my research, I did not seek to offer prescriptive solutions to teachers' problems. Instead, I tried to understand, interpret and help to clarify and resolve the dilemmas that

the participants faced within the environments in which they were situated (Johnson, 2009a).

Because qualitative research is contextually specific, it can usually make do with samples that are small and purposefully selected based on certain criteria (Silverman, 2009). This feature was useful for my research because the number of teachers who qualified for the research and who accepted to take part in it was small. However, because many qualitative researchers employ a small number of participants, the qualitative approach has been criticized as 'soft' research (Richards, 2003). Richards denies this accusation and argues that qualitative research 'is anything but a soft option – it demands rigour, precision, systematicity and careful attention to detail' (p. 6).

4.4 The Participants and the Sampling Technique

The research participants were 12 Bahraini practicing English language teachers at government schools in Bahrain, seven females and five males. The participants' teaching experiences extended between four to ten years at the time of conducting the interviews in May and June, 2013. All of the participants started teaching in the Ministry of Education (MOE) without having any initial formal teacher training qualifications. Later on in their careers, they attended a one-year in-service post graduate diploma in education (PGDE) programme at Bahrain Teachers College (BTC). The selection criteria of the participants were that they should be practicing Bahraini EFL teachers and have completed the PGDE course to fulfil the part of my rationale which argues that there is a dearth of studies on how educational programmes and reforms impact upon the professionalism of practicing EFL teachers, particularly in the case of Bahrain (Kirk, 2012).

Table 2 below outlines the participants' pseudonyms, gender, the current levels they teach, their teaching experience, the year of doing the PGDE, and the number of interviews they attended. In my report on the data in the next two chapters, I will refer to the participants by their pseudonyms followed by the number of interviews in which the data were taken (e.g. Osama, 2).

Access to the participants was established in four ways: (1) my personal contacts, (2) contacts given by those who accepted to be interviewed, (3) university online student lists, and (4) ELT emailing groups. The great majority of the participants knew about my research through the latter three methods, i.e. 2 to 4. I tried my best to come up with a sample that could best be representative of all PGDE participants in terms of the year of attending the programme, gender and teaching level (i.e. primary, intermediate and secondary levels). Therefore, I telephoned and sent emails to more than 40 teachers who completed the PGDE course out of whom only 14 (2 for the pilot and 12 for the actual study) accepted to take part in the research.

No.	Pseudonym	Gender	Teaching Level	Years of Teaching	Year of PGDE	No. of Interviews
1	Fatima	Female	Secondary	5	2008/9	2
2	Hameeda	Female	Secondary	6	2008/9	2
3	Zakia	Female	Secondary	6	2009/10	2
4	Afrah	Female	Secondary	10	2008/9	2
5	Nahid	Female	Intermediate	5	2009/10	1
6	Hanan	Female	Primary	4	2010/11	1
7	Zahra	Female	Secondary	7	2009/10	2
8	Ali	Male	Secondary	4	2009/10	2
9	Yasser	Male	Primary	7	2010/11	2
10	Hassan	Male	Intermediate	6	2008/9	2
11	Ahmed	Male	Intermediate	4	2009/10	2
12	Osama	Male	Intermediate	4	2010/11	2

Table 2: Research Participants

4.5 Data Collection

In terms of the data collection techniques that are used to collect teachers' verbal commentaries, Borg (2006) outlines an array of methodological tools, such as interviews, report grids and think-aloud protocols (see Table 1 above). However, Borg argues that semi-structured and stimulated recall interviews seem to be the most valued strategies used by researchers, because they allow the 'tacit and unobservable' aspects of language teachers' 'mental lives' to be made explicit. This research used in-depth semi-structured interviews as the sole method to explore the teachers' beliefs. Although it is recommended to use a blend of data collection methods to explore teachers' beliefs and classroom practices in order to produce triangulated information (Barnard and Burns, 2012), it is not uncommon, as Borg's (2006 & 2012) reviews show, that

research on teachers' beliefs uses interviews 'exclusively' (see for example, Cowie, 2011; Trent, 2011; Griva and Chostelidou, 2011; Johnston et al. 2005; Johnston 1997; Reinders and Lazaro, 2011; Warford and Reeves, 2003, which were all interview-based studies that addressed teachers' beliefs).

In addition to this, many of the studies that used a combination of methods (e.g. Basturkmen et al., 2004; Borg, 1998) to study teachers' beliefs focused on the relationship between teachers' beliefs about a specific theme (e.g. teaching grammar, using CLT, etc.) and their actual practices at a micro-level (i.e. within the teachers' classroom and workplace). However, studies which focused on teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning in general and their 'reported practices' (Borg, 2006: 46), particularly in relation to their professionalism and identities at a macro-level (i.e. within the institutional, sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts), tended to use interviews solely (e.g. Cowie, 2011; Trent, 2011; Johnston et al. 2005 and Johnston, 1997) or as a main data collection method (e.g. Farrell, 2011; Liu and Xu, 2011; Werbinska, 2011). In the same way, my research was interested in teachers' beliefs about their professionalism and their reported practices within the institutional and sociocultural context in which they worked and lived, and therefore used interviews alone to achieve this aim. The point of discussing this here is that despite the fact that my employment of interviews as the only data source in my research is considered as a limitation (see also the Limitation Section below), it is situated in a 'research tradition' that is established in the field.

4.5.1 In-depth Interviewing

In-depth interviewing considers language and stories as essential ways for obtaining knowledge of the lives of the research participants (Kvale, 2007; Seidman, 2006; Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003). In addition, it places a great emphasis on the importance of context, which was one major focus in my research, in understanding the meanings that teachers give to their experiences. It is neither an open every day conversation nor a closed questionnaire. Kvale (2007: 9) defines this kind of interviewing as:

an interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena.

Because semi-structured, in-depth interviewing is qualitative in nature, it is more interested in words rather than numbers. It seeks to report on the nuanced descriptive accounts of the research participants and the variant and diverse meanings they bring to their experiences. Although the general beliefs of the participants can provide important insights, in-depth interviewing seeks to obtain specific information about the participant's experience in a specific situation. Specificity can, it is argued, enable the qualitative researcher to arrive at a more rigorous and precise interpretation and understanding of the participant's life (Richards, 2003).

4.5.2 In-depth Interviewing and the Current Research

Each participant in my research attended two interviews, except two female participants who only managed to do one interview because of personal issues. The interviews took place in the teachers' private time after the school day in a place chosen by the teachers themselves. Some interviews were conducted in coffee shops and others were in public libraries. Following Seidman (2006), the interviews were spaced no less than a day and no more than a week apart to give participants enough time to reflect on what they said in the previous interview but not a long time to forget what they had said. The first interview set the ground for the next one by providing the contextual background from the teachers' life histories. The teachers were asked to reconstruct their lives before and after they took the PGDE programme and what their plans for professional development in the future were to see if there was a vocational purpose in their stories (Johnston, 1997). The second interview sought to explore the contemporary experiences of teachers by eliciting extensive details about what they actually did in their work, what their experience of life in their teaching context was like, and what meaning they made out of their work and experiences.

The interview schedule was piloted on two PGDE teachers: an Arabic teacher and an English teacher in order to give me a feel of how relevant the questions

were to the teachers, the language terminology to use, as well as to provide an opportunity for me to practice interviewing and transcribing. In each interview, the participants were asked seven main questions. The questions were constructed based on my theoretical model that I discussed in the literature review chapter and focused on issues such as teacher beliefs about teaching and learning, teacher life histories, educational and professional development, teacher identity and contexts (Details of the interview protocol are shown in Appendix 7).

However, reviewing the literature comprehensively before going to the interview can affect the themes to be pursued by the researcher in the study (Seidman, 2006). Therefore, the qualitative researcher, according to Kvale (2007), should also approach the interviews with a 'qualified naïveté' (p. 13). This means that although the researcher seeks focused opinions of the participants on certain themes, he or she should be open and receptive to unexpected topics raised by the participants. Despite the fact that I had a set of specified questions in my interviews, I tried to provide the participants with opportunities to bring up unanticipated topics – topics that mattered to them but eventually shed light on my research concern. For example, some participants spoke about the role of gender in defining their professionalism. I did not anticipate this, but when they brought up the topic of gender I pursued it. At the end of each interview, the teachers were also invited to share any thoughts they had not yet voiced.

During the interviews some participants seemed to contradict themselves by saying something and then opposing it in the same or next interview. For instance, one female participant initially said that the PGDE course she did was 'a waste of time' and then later on in the same interview she contradicted this statement by saying: 'I benefited very much from the PGDE programme'. Because I was aware that contradictions in the participants' accounts are not uncommon, I followed a non-confrontational style (Rubin and Rubin, 2005) in my interviewing. This means that I did not make the participant conscious about her contradictions. Instead, I assumed that my questioning got her to reflect on the PGDE in a more conscious way and probably allowed her to find new

meanings in it. In addition, the change in the participant's statements here can indeed, as Kvale (2007) puts it, 'testify to the sensitivity of the interview technique in capturing the multiple nuances and the fluidity of social attitudes' (124).

All of the interviews were conducted in Arabic, the mother tongue of both the participants and the researcher. This is because I was interested in the meaning that the teachers attached to their experiences and thought that the teachers would be in a better position to describe these experiences in their first language (Barnard and Burns, 2012). I also assumed that the use of Arabic would reduce the issue of power relations in that both the participants and the researcher would have an equal chance to express themselves freely in their first language during the interviews (Canh and Maley, 2012). However, some participants preferred to switch between Arabic and English in their responses.

4.5.3 Transcription and Translation of the Interviews

The interviews lasted between 30 to 90 minutes as some teachers were brief in their responses, especially in the first meeting, and others provided detailed descriptions of their experiences. All of the interviews were recorded using a digital recorder supplied by special wired microphones for both the participant and the researcher to capture the voices clearly. The recorded interviews were then transferred to the computer and transcribed by the researcher. It took me between five to ten hours to transcribe each interview. The transcription of the 25.5 hours of the audio recorded interviews produced around 180,926 words and 1224 double-spaced pages of text.

The transcription of the interviews did not account for the characteristics of oral speech such as repetitions, pauses, 'mms', and the like. These non-verbal characteristics are said to give precision to the transcription (Seidman, 2006) but they are also, as Kvale (2007) points out, difficult to grasp when presented in a written form. Because my concern was with meaning rather than with linguistic conversation analysis, which might require verbal and non-verbal transcription (Flick, 2007), I transcribed the oral conversations into a more formal, written style to 'highlight nuances of a statement and facilitate

communication of the meaning of the subject's stories to the reader' (Kvale, 2007: 98). The transcribed interviews formed the text for data analysis.

As far as the translation of the transcripts is concerned, only the excerpts that were selected to be used in the research were translated into English by the researcher. Because the structure of Arabic is different from that of English, word-for-word translation was in most cases inappropriate. Therefore, I undertook a meaning-based approach to translate the transcripts. To ensure that my translation was close to the original, I used the Google Translate tool to translate back my meaning-based English translation to Arabic. I then compared the back-translated text to the meaning of the spoken language of the participants.

4.6 Data Analysis

The analysis of the data began almost simultaneously with the data collection, as I began to compare the findings with the literature that I reviewed to look for similarities and differences. The interviews that were conducted in the afternoons were immediately transcribed the next morning. Before transcribing each interview, I first listened to the whole interview or parts of it and took notes (both in Arabic and English) while listening to get the general views of the teachers. These notes deepened my understanding of the phenomenon in question throughout all stages of data analysis and enhanced my reflexivity by making me aware of my biases. They also provided me with more insights into what was important for the teachers and what issues to probe in further interviews.

Following Hahn (2008), I organized and focused the mounds of the data I had using the 2003 Microsoft Word and Access Software programmes to exemplify codes, categories, and themes. A code is a word or a short phrase that summarizes a portion of an interview transcription; a category, on the other hand, is a group of codes, while a theme 'is an *outcome* of coding, categorization, and analytic reflection' (Saldaña, 2009: 13).

The reason for choosing the Word and Access programmes to facilitate my analysis was that they are within the grasp of everyday computer users and I was, to some extent, familiar with them. However, using the Access Programme in a sophisticated way was a new experience for me and it took me some time to understand how it worked. I found Access to be a powerful and user-friendly tool because it enabled me to organize my transcribed and coded data in one single database rather than multiple disconnected Word documents. It indeed saved my time and enhanced my ability to think analytically (For a step-by-step explanation of how to use the Access programme in qualitative analysis, I recommend reading Hahn, 2008).

The coding, which took place in English, included at least three levels: Initial Coding, Category Development, and Thematic Coding (Hahn, 2008). Everything in the interview transcripts was coded (Saldaña, 2009) to avoid the risk of deleting portions of data that could prove important in later stages. While coding, I considered a number of questions that could trigger my thoughts such as: How do teachers talk about, characterize, and understand what is going on? What assumptions are they making? What do I see going on here? What did I learn from these notes and memos? Why did I include them? And, what strikes me? (Emerson et al., 1995, in Saldaña, 2009: 18). I also kept a copy of my research concern, theoretical and conceptual framework, research questions and the goals of the study on one page in front of me to focus my coding decisions (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003).

The study produced around 247 Initial codes, 43 Categories, and just 3 Themes. These three themes provided the basis for the writing up of chapter 5, the Analysis Chapter. In Chapter 6, the Discussion Chapter, I reflected deeply on the results based on the literature review to compare my findings for similarities and differences and to consider what my research has contributed to educational research.

4.6.1 Initial Coding (Microsoft Word)

Initial Coding took place in the Microsoft Word programme, where I organized the transcribed data into tables of columns and rows (Hahn, 2008). As can be

seen in Table 3 below, there are three columns in the interview table: Row Number, Codes and Memos, and Transcript Text. Each paragraph of the transcribed data was put in a numbered row at the right hand side of the table, while the coded data and the researcher's comments were put in the middle column. The codes were assigned numbers to indicate which segment of the data they represented.

Level 1 Codes, Memos, and Transcript Text **from the Interview 2 with Fatima / Female**

Row #	Memos for Table of Memos & Level 1 Codes for Table of Codes	Transcript Text
1.	[1] TEACHING AS A MORAL ACTIVITY [2] ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF TEACHING **Other participants also shed light on the economic benefits of teaching. Yasser and Osama have to work in the evening to make ends meet as their salaries are 'not enough'. Ahmed, though he doesn't like teaching, says that the only thing that keeps him in teaching is the salary.** [3] TEACHING IS TO IMPART KNOWLEDGE [4] TEACHING AS A FORM OF COMMUNICATION	**Participant**: [1] Of course, teaching is a mission more than anything else. [2] **For us, however, it's a source of living, indeed, for thousands of teachers in Bahrain, but it's a mission.** [3] [On the one hand,] it's not just how to deliver the idea or the information in a language that you (Incomplete sentence) or the subject matter that you are to teach. [4] It's how you communicate with the person inside the student.

Table 3: Level 1 Coding

The initial coding was open and data were coded at both the sentence and paragraph levels. The aim was to examine and compare the data for similarities and differences (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) and to sift through the data to gain the insights from the teachers' perspectives and to answer my research questions based on the data (Hahn, 2008). As a beginner researcher, initial coding helped me to reflect on the nuances of the content, and begin to take ownership of the data (Saldaña, 2009). (See Appendix 8 for an extended transcript of an interview that shows the coding).

I used the Microsoft Word features such as References to create alphabetized tables of codes, tables of memos and indices of excerpts, phrases and

sentences that indicated related issues to the research interest (See Appendix 9 for a summary of a table of codes, a table of memos, and a code document index). The efficient organization of the text in this way helped me to return to the data easier and faster in the writing up stage.

4.6.2 Category Development (Microsoft Access)

The next step I took was to transfer all the data to an Access database designed by Hahn (2008) and downloaded from (http://qrtips.com/chapter7) to develop categories and themes. The downloaded template was used as an example by Hahn (2008) to explain how Access could be used in qualitative analysis in his book *Doing Qualitative Research Using Your Computer*. The transference of the data from Word to Access was mechanical, laborious and daunting, but once the data were all stored in Access, the analysis process was fun and enjoyable. This mechanical transference allowed me to have personal immersion in the research process and the data.

As illustrated in Figure 5 below, I followed four steps to transfer manually the data to the Access database and develop categories for groups of initial codes.

> ➢ Step 1: I copied all Initial Codes from Word and pasted them one by one in the Level 1 code fields in the Access database.

> ➢ Step 2: I copied the text that represented each initial code as well as my comments on it and pasted them in the Raw Data field in the Access database.

> ➢ Step 3: I identified the source of the text in Word document by indicating the Row Number, Participant's name, and Interview Number. This helped me to return to the data in Word faster so as to place them in their surrounding context.

> ➢ Step 4: I created categories for groups of initial codes. In this stage I began to recognize more focused patterns and affinities in my data. Hence, I tried to apply each category code to more than one section of the data – within the same interview transcript and amongst the rest – to

help me move the ideas to a conceptual level and start working towards identifying the larger themes that were discussed by all of the teachers.
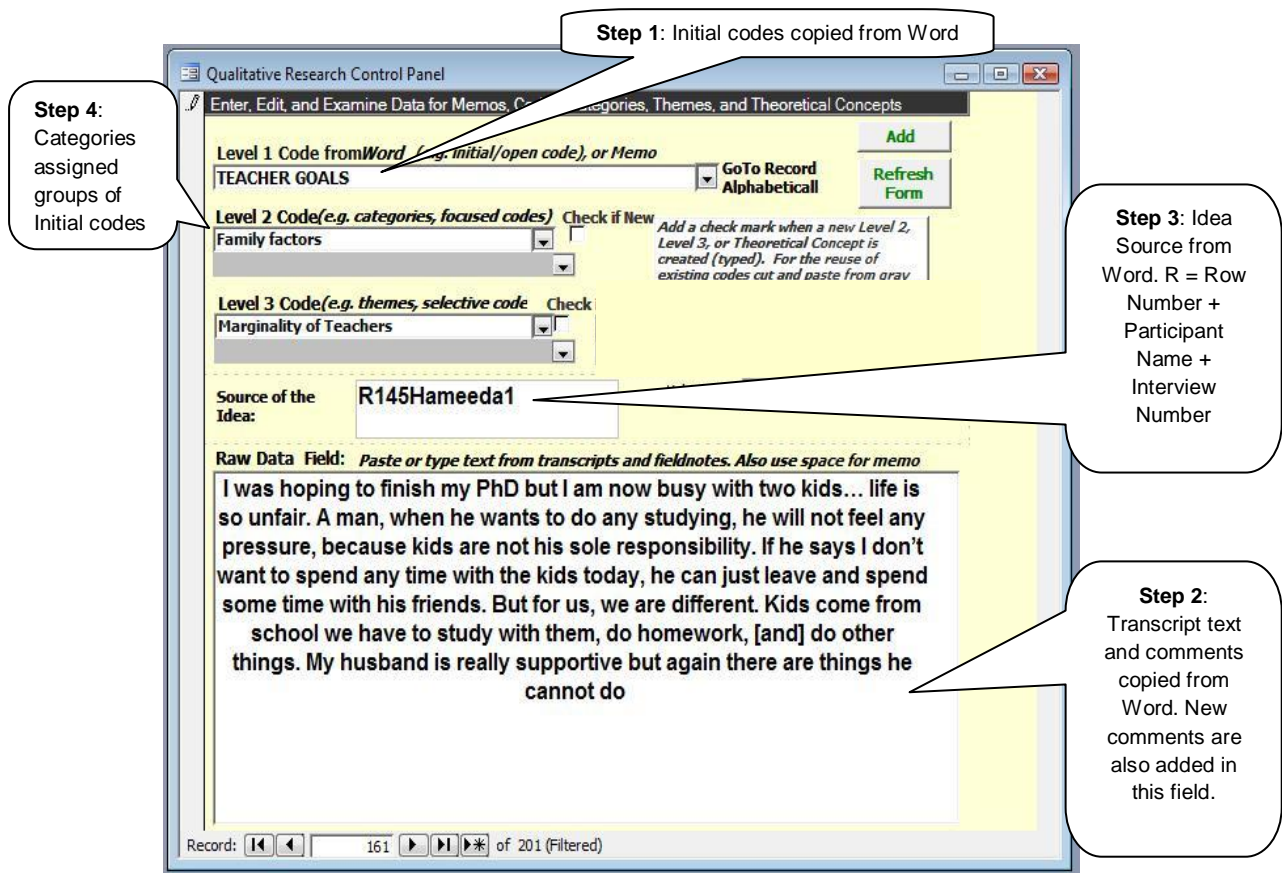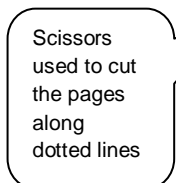
FIGURE 5: Level 2 Coding

4.6.3 Thematic Coding

Once I had developed Level 1 and Level 2 codes, the Thematic Coding took place away from the computer. Using the feature of Reports in Access, I printed out the code sheets (43 categories / 66 pages) as shown in Figure 6 below. I then used scissors to cut the code pages along the dotted lines to create individual Level 2 sheets. After that I placed all the individual Level 2 sheets on a large table and shuffled the code sheets to try to find patterns and affinities, while I frequently went back to the computer to re-examine the roots of my ideas in Word and Access. The code sheets that looked connected with each other were grouped together and a tentative theme on a scrap paper was assigned to them. I repeated the shuffling several times while constantly referring to the data in Word and Access until I was satisfied with the themes I created. The themes were then entered into the Access database Level 3 code

field (See Figure 5 above). Re-coding and retrieval and search for the needed data were easy thanks to the powerful features of Access such as Find and Replace, Filter-by-selection, and Filter-by-form (Hahn, 2008). Having finished Level 3 coding, I immediately embarked on the writing up of the research findings and discussion.

Language teaching policies	Level 2 Cod
Level 1 Codes related to this Level 2 code	*Idea Source*
INTENSITY OF DELIVERY	R86Zahra2
INTENSITY OF DELIVERY	R34Fatima2
INTENSITY OF DELIVERY	R91Fatima1
NOT REQUIRED COMPONENT	R27Fatima2
NOT REQUIRED COMPONENT	R72Fatima2
REQUIRED SUBJECT	R19Fatima2
RULES	R105Ahmed
Meaning of teaching	Level 2 Cod
Level 1 Codes related to this Level 2 code	*Idea Source*
BENEFITS OF TEACHING	R109Yasser1
BENEFITS OF TEACHING	R150Zahra2

Scissors used to cut the pages along dotted lines

FIGURE 6: Level 3 Coding

4.7 Research Quality

As interpretivist researchers do not usually tend to believe in one true social reality, the concern of these researchers is not with producing certain knowledge but with the quality and rigour of the knowledge produced (Powell and Ramos, 2009). To improve the quality of research, researchers should be concerned with issues such as validity and reliability (Kvale, 2007). These terms are usually used to describe the quality of research based on an 'objectivist' epistemology and some interpretivist writers, according to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), believe that qualitative research should have its own descriptive language that represents an interpretivist perspective. Therefore, they prefer terms such as credibility, transferability, trustworthiness and dependability (Ng and Brown, 2012), which do not view reality as observable and measurable, waiting to be discovered by a detached researcher. Other authors, such as

Kvale (2007), however, preserve the language of the objectivist research but they reconceptualise or redefine it so that it is congruent with the realities of the interpretivist research.

This research uses the distinct language of the interpretivist research, i.e. credibility, transferability, trustworthiness and dependability, to describe the quality and rigour of the research. While credibility, according to Denzin and Lincoln (1994:100), is defined as 'the degree to which findings correctly map the phenomenon in question', transferability is seen as 'the degree to which findings can be generalized to other settings similar to the one in which the study occurred'. On the other hand, trustworthiness means 'the extent to which findings can be replicated, or reproduced by another inquirer' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:100) and dependability refers to 'the extent to which the same results can be obtained by independent investigators' (Klenke, 2008: 38).

4.7.1 Credibility

According to Kvale (2007), issues of credibility in qualitative research are not confined to a specific stage in the research but 'permeate all stages from the first thematization to the final reporting' (128). It is the researcher's responsibility to provide justifications for the decisions taken throughout the research and to discuss the consequences of these decisions on the quality of the research. In my research I tried to explain in detail the purpose of the study, its philosophical underpinnings, the strategies employed to establish rigour and quality, and the analytic lens through which the data were examined. I also tried, as will be shown in the following two chapters, to make clear the link between the original conversations I had with the participants and the conclusions reported.

In terms of data analysis, I was aware that there was no one right way to interpret the data. Stemming from my interpretivist ideals, my interpretation of the data is considered as only one of several 'right ways' in which the data can be interpreted. Another researcher using the same method and sample might indeed come up with a different interpretation of the data. However, I believe that as long as my interpretation is supported by the research data and the

literature, then it is valid, even if there can be other ways to interpret the data (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003).

What is more, credibility of qualitative research requires the understanding of the researcher's position in the research. Jones et al. (2013) argue that without this understanding, the researcher's assumptions might dominate the research process. In my research, I was aware that I had both the status of an 'insider' and the status of an 'outsider' (Hidalgo, 1998 in Jones et al., 2013). I was an insider because I shared with the participants the culture, religion and nationality. Hence, I acknowledge that this affected how I interviewed, what I found, and how I interpreted what I found. I clarified my world views and assumptions and considered the importance of reflexivity, which means 'the extent to which the researcher has problematized their positionality in the research' (Cousin, 2010: 9). On the other hand, I was an outsider in the sense that I had the status of a researcher which could impact on the participants' responses. Hence, I tried to create a professional relationship with the participants by first talking with them through the phone and then conducting two interviews rather than just one to create good rapport.

4.7.2 Transferability and dependability

Qualitative research does not usually seek to produce generalizable knowledge that is meant to be valid for all places and times. Instead, qualitative researchers may ask whether the knowledge produced by a specific qualitative study in a specific context and time can be transferrable to other relevant situations. According to Ary et al. (2013), the researcher needs to enable the reader to decide whether the results of a qualitative study are meaningful and whether they can transfer to other settings. The reader's decision on transferability can be enhanced by the researcher's detailed contextual descriptions of the qualitative study (Kvale, 2007; Borg (2012) as well as the discussion of the assumptions that were central to the research (Trochim, 2006), the research process, methods of data collection and analysis, and a thick and thorough analysis of the data (Collins, 2010).

In my research, I have provided a rich, accurate, and detailed explanation of the context of the study and the assumptions that underpinned it, as well as a description of the procedures of data collection and analysis. In addition, I developed a theoretical framework in Chapter 3 for understanding the phenomenon under study (i.e. teachers' beliefs about their work, lives and professionalism) which I suggest can be used by other researchers to check whether the results of this study can be transferable to other situations.

Although this research offered an opportunity to amplify Bahraini English language teachers' voices in an environment where they seemed to be sidelined, it is not claimed to be representative of all Bahraini teachers. It is acknowledged, however, that some contextual factors impacting upon teachers' work and lives that were identified by this research could likewise apply to other teachers in Bahrain as well as other similar contexts. Two examples can be identified here:

1. EFL teaching in all kinds of contexts involves at least two or more cultures (Johnston, 1997). The moral question of teaching English with or without its cultural baggage (Johnston, 2003) is therefore a potential contextual factor that can impact virtually all EFL teachers in all contexts.

2. The discourse of using 'English only' to teach English and its potential advantages and disadvantages on students can also be experienced by almost all EFL teachers.

Hence, while most findings in this research are contextually specific, some of them can relate to other teachers around the world.

4.7.3 Trustworthiness

To increase the trustworthiness of the research and map the path for other researchers to repeat the research ('although it needs to be suggested that qualitative research cannot be truly replicated' (Barnard and Burns, 2012: 186)), I carefully worded the interview questions, piloted them, and re-worded them after the piloting. During the piloting stage, I enhanced my confidence in interviewing, learned how to transcribe and reflected on the processes and

problems of transcribing and interviewing. In the processes of data analysis, I transcribed the entire audio recorded interviews that I conducted with the participants (not just the portions that appealed to the research questions) and coded everything in the data to avoid imposing my world views on the data from an early stage in the analysis. Finally, I documented in detail the procedures of my research and included the research interview protocol as well as the processes of coding and analysing the data.

4.8 Ethics

Because qualitative research deals, in the main, with human beings in one way or another (Flick, 2007), it carries a high ethical load (Bell, 2005). Hence, it is important to inform research participants about the overall aims of the research and the possible benefits and risks of taking part in the research project (Silverman, 2011). The term 'ethics' is defined as 'a matter of sensitivity to the rights of others' (Cavan, 1997 in Cohen et al., 2007: 58). It is a moral act taken by the researcher to prevent the harming of the research participants and to be respectful and fair with them (Sieber, 1993).

In my research, I followed the ethical protocol of the University of Exeter for undertaking research and I acquired the ethical approval from the university to carry out this research (See Appendix 10). Prior to the first interview, I provided the participants with information about 'who I was', and which university I studied in. They were all informed about the purpose of the study and the likely consequences of the research findings prior to the interviews (either by email or over the phone) and in the first interview meeting. Then, they were requested to read and sign a consent form (See Appendix 11). A copy of the signed consent form was given to each participant. I made it clear to the participants that their participation in the research was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

In addition, the participants were reassured that all the information provided in the interviews and the follow-up emails and phone calls would be used for my doctoral dissertation as well as for other publication purposes, such as journals. They were given the right to access the audio digital files and transcripts – upon

their request – and to review them before they are published, and to request that material from the interviews be withheld (Seidman, 2006) if they thought these might be harmful to them. To protect their identities, I informed the participants that the private data identifying them would not be reported and that pseudonyms would be used instead of their real names.

In terms of accessing to the research participants, Cohen et al. (2007) stresses the importance of gaining institutional permission to access the research site if data are to be collected there. In my case, I did not need to obtain such permission because all of the interviews in this research were conducted in the teachers' private time outside of the school day. However, I managed to obtain information about the PGDE programme from Bahrain Teachers' College after presenting them with a letter from my university about my research (see Appendix 12). The college expressed their gratitude for my endeavour to conduct my research on their graduates.

4.9 Limitations of the Research

As I pointed out earlier in this chapter, it is acknowledged here that one weakness in my research is the use of one method to collect the data from the participants. Many qualitative researchers (e.g. Creswell and Clark, 2010; Borg, 2006 & 2012; Barnard and Burns, 2012) prefer the use of more than one method for data collection to strengthen the analysis of the research data. In fact, Barnard and Burns (2012: 185) claim that 'any single method of data collection, however thoroughly conducted, can provide only a partial view of the complex reality of educational contexts and especially... when studying language teacher cognition.' The use of a variety of methods to collect data is especially emphasised when the interest of the researcher is to study 'the extent of convergence and divergence between what teachers believe and what they actually do' (Barnard and Burns, 2012: 4). Hence, the fact that the data of my study came from one single source (i.e. interviews) is a clear limitation to the applicability of my findings as the data were not verified though other sources, such as classroom observation or lesson plans, and reports from other stake holders, such as students, colleagues, parents and administrators.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed in detail the research design of this study in order to explain how I achieved the objectives of the study on the Bahraini English language teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning. It described the philosophical assumptions that underpinned the study (interpretivism), the methodology (qualitative approach), and the data collection technique (in-depth interviewing). In addition, it also discussed the processes of data collection and analysis adopted by the research as well as the research quality, ethical dimension and limitations. The next chapter presents the findings of my study in order to answer the two research questions.

CHAPTER 5: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter reflects on the research interviews to identify the contextual factors that impacted upon the teachers' beliefs about their work, lives and professionalism in this research in order to answer the two research questions. The principal research questions driving the study were:

1) What are the beliefs of Bahraini English language teachers who completed a PGDE course at the BTC between 2008 and 2012 regarding the impact of new educational reforms on their lives and their professionalism?

2) How do these beliefs impact upon the teachers' professionalism?

The analysis of the data revealed that the contextual factors that the teachers believed influenced, to a varying extent, their work, lives and professionalism were: (1) the intensification of teachers' work (2) marginality of teachers, and (3) control in education. Given that the role of the recent reforms in education in Bahrain aimed to redirect and reenergize teaching and learning, the overriding theme that runs through the text in this chapter is that of *change* and how the teachers' beliefs about their professional lives and contextual factors within the environment of that change impact on their professionalism. Each one of the three aforementioned contextual factors will be discussed separately in relation to the teachers' professionalism in this chapter.

5.2 Intensification and Teacher Professionalism

Intensification of teachers' work in this research relates to the increased expectations of teachers and administrative pressures that resulted in the compression of teaching time, busyness of teachers in and out of school, reduced time for rest, reduced time for professional development, and work overload. In this research, intensification came from at least three sources. First, it derived from the increased expectations of the teachers as a result of the changing nature of teaching and learning. Second, it was driven by

accountability demands; and, finally, it came as a result of self-imposed expectations. The ways in which teachers reacted and coped with intensification will be related to their professionalism throughout this section.

5.2.1 Technological Change and Increased Expectations

The first set of issues that arose from the data concerns the changing nature of teaching and the increased expectations of teachers in an era of technological boom. Two teachers seemed to be suggesting that this intensified their work and increased the pressures on them to change. According to these teachers, the rapid change and advancement in technology posed a challenge to teachers because it made some of them out-dated in their use of technology. A female secondary school teacher, Fatima, admitted that her students had areas of knowledge in technology which were 'obscure' for her. She went on to say:

> They have means of communication that no generation has had before… They live with these smart sets all day long… Of course, they text-chat in Arabic using English alphabets and numbers… It's a challenge, how can you deal with a generation that nobody dealt with before? And I am sure that the generation in the coming ten years will be totally different as new things will be discovered… The sooner you come to grips with the current generation, a new one with new directions will appear, how can you cope? (Fatima, 2).

This comment suggests that the rapidly changing communication landscape has brought with it new kinds of students who use new ways to learn, which made the work of the teachers challenging. Indeed, Fatima mentioned that the students' electronic text chats through the smart sets, which were characterized by the use of special symbols, impinged on the students' spelling in the classroom English writings. She considered this to be 'catastrophic' because she thought it made the teacher's work more difficult and intense.

One interesting issue in Fatima's words above relates to the teachers' knowledge and development and their ability to take in new knowledge. Fatima seemed to find it difficult to adapt to technological changes in her job and acknowledged that her development in this regard was slower than her students':

> For us we got to a stage of stability. We are above thirty, that's it – we are in the state of stability in our life – our ideas are stable. We are really not ready for

change or if we were to change, it would be little by little, just like old women who started using the WhatsApp one or two years ago… You feel that their use of it (i.e. the WhatsApp) is limited unlike the use of younger people who use it in a much wider way (Fatima, 2).

Fatima seemed to believe that teachers get to a stage of 'stability' with their ideas, knowledge and skills after which it becomes difficult for them to accept change. This brings to our attention the teachers' capacity to change as well as their desire to remain 'stable', both of which can be challenges to mandated change.

The difficulty in adapting to change raised in Fatima's comment above was also echoed by another female secondary teacher, Zakia. She was against having a smart phone, but she 'had to' own one because she did not want to lag behind her students:

Now everyone has a smart phone, so it's not nice to be below the students… I only got a Black Berry phone because my students are talking about it… I was against having a Black Berry and these things but it's not good to be behind… Although I haven't yet activated it in teaching very much, I once used it to create a WhatsApp group to communicate with my students who were participating in a contest (Zakia, 2).

Here we could see how the pressures from the wider society generally and from Zakia's students particularly interacted with Zakia's beliefs about teaching and learning pushing her to act against these beliefs. Hence, Zakia's integration of smart phones in her teaching might reflect her feelings that she was not living up to the expectations of her students and that she gave importance to those expectations.

Ali, a male teacher in the secondary level, reported that the students in his school ridiculed teachers who used 'simple technology'. He said: 'students make fun of the traditional teacher because of the simple technology he uses'. The 'simple technology' mentioned in Ali's quote referred to the teachers' use of Power-Point slides in teaching while the students, as Ali mentioned, expected the use of new programs, such as, iPads, smart phones, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. According to Ali, these new programs enabled faster accessibility to the information for students and enabled them to have a continual connectivity with teachers in and out of the school. Ali reported successful stories about his

use of these programs with his students and how the programs enabled him to build a strong relationship with the students as well as enhance his teaching. However, Ali sympathized with his colleagues who did not use these new technologies and blamed overwork and pressures to have driven some teachers to resist integrating these programs in their teaching for the fear that this would further increase their workload and responsibilities. Here is how he described the pressures that the teachers faced in his school and how his colleagues reacted to his initiatives for change:

> The teacher in the secondary level works under great pressure… He only does the teaching duties and never cares about professional development. For him, development is a heresy, because he thinks that once he starts to develop, extra responsibilities will be given to him… So the reaction of some teachers to my technological innovations that I tried to share with them was 'No, No, do not cause a headache for yourself, teacher. Do not bring these things to us. We already have what is comfortable for us (i.e. the Power-Point presentations).' Therefore, the comfort of the teacher for these teachers was more important than the knowledge of the students, because of the great pressures that these teachers face. The teacher in the secondary school is like a machine that does more than a hundred things at the same time – it's very terrible (Ali, 1).

What can be sensed from Ali's last sentence in the above excerpt is that he thought that the overwork and pressures turned teaching into a set of mechanical tasks and forced teachers to be mechanistic in their work and that they were expected to multi-task. Ali seemed to imply that this situation created a negative culture and spirit in the school which made some teachers resist change (i.e. Ali's initiatives) and insist on maintaining the status quo (i.e. using the Power Point). The term 'comfort' in Ali's quote above is an interesting one because it fits with the issue of 'stability' that Fatima mentioned earlier. It also reflects something about the unsettling nature of change or newness and the pressures this causes to teachers, which the teachers thought pushed some of them to look for 'stability'.

This unsettling situation also seems to have impacted upon the teachers' commitment and professional identities and how they got on with everyday life at school, because they, as Ali's comment above claimed, preferred not to present themselves as professionals who took students' learning as a priority. In addition to this, Ali's comment also implied that one of the negative

consequences of work intensification may be the lack of time for teachers to engage in professional development and reflect on their pedagogical practice ('development is a heresy') as these teachers, according to Ali, seemed to be preoccupied with finding expedient ways to respond to external pressures.

Six other teachers in the research, however, reported that they avoided integrating the 'latest technologies' in their teaching not just because of overwork and pressures but also because they did not want to be vulnerable with their students. For example, Osama, who teaches in the intermediate level, did not want to use smart phones in teaching because he thought that the students could 'misuse them'. He claimed that some 'students secretly took photos of teachers in particular positions and made fun of them.' Additionally, Zahra, a female secondary teacher, was careful with using the WhatsApp because she thought that 'students could forget that they are talking with the teacher.' Another secondary teacher, Afrah, did not use these technologies in teaching because she thought that they limited the privacy between teachers and students. She believed that teachers should not involve themselves too much in the 'private lives of students.'

The teachers' responses here then reflect the various moral dilemmas that can arise in their work. While the teachers' decision not to use the latest technologies in teaching could have saved them from overwork and from being vulnerable with their students (e.g. embarrassment, losing face and emotional pain, etc.), it set them at odds with the expectations formed by others that they should use these latest technologies in teaching to serve, as Ali implied, the best interest of students.

The expectations of the teachers to use the 'new technologies', then, increased the pressures on the teachers to change, intensified their work, challenged their knowledge and professional identity, and posed moral dilemmas to them. However, most of the teachers seemed to be able to resist these technologies in some way.

5.2.2 Accountability Demands

The research participants also reported that accountability to parents and paperwork intensified their work and compressed their time. Nine teachers, for example, pointed out that they had to allocate time for meeting parents on a weekly basis as well as write reports to them or call them to talk about their children's progress. The following comment about this matter was given by Hassan, a male teacher at the intermediate level:

> Sometimes I have to contact a student's parents when his level drops... or when he has a discipline problem... But it is difficult to contact the parents of 140 students! I allocate time for calling parents... but you cannot call more than 10 – it's impossible, you do not have the time (Hassan, 2).

What can be understood from the above passage is that Hassan thought that the expected amount of contact a teacher would have to make with parents was high but the time available for this was not enough. This, as Hassan put it, made it 'impossible' for the teacher to engage all parents in the school matters.

Although many of the teachers' responses showed that they were keen to involve parents in the education of their children, six of them reported a scarcity of parents' involvement in the school. For example, Hassan said:

> There is a problem with parents. Very few of them come to the school, particularly, on the open day... I have 140 students but no one comes to ask about their children except 10 parents...

Ahmed, a male teacher at the intermediate level, also believed that the parents of 'weak students' did not try to make the teachers' work easier. He said:

> Fifty percent of the students do not want to work and when you speak with their fathers; they tell you 'I cannot do anything with them. I cannot deal with them'. If the father cannot deal with his son and cannot guide him, is there a doubt that the teacher can? (Ahmed, 2).

Hameeda also had a similar experience with parents of what she described as 'misbehaving girls' in her class:

> I try to contact parents of misbehaving girls but they don't pick up the phone. The problem is not just with these girls but also with their parents. These girls always behave so badly to the point that even their parents do not tolerate them and do not want to answer the school's telephone calls to hear about their problems (Hameeda, 2).

The above quotes seem to touch on the changing nature of the relationship between parents and their children in the Bahraini society, which is an issue that was also raised by Yasser. He explained that in the past, parents, especially fathers, had more influence on their children as they spent more time with them at home, but now things had changed. According to him, fathers nowadays are busy all day working in order to make ends meet, which, as Yasser believed, 'directly affected their relationships with their children and lessened their effects on them.' What this seemed to mean for the teachers was that their effects on their students reduced, too.

Similarly, Osama blamed parents for what he believed was their diminished role in educating their children, saying that student learning was 'a mutual responsibility' between the school and home:

> The student is a mutual responsibility between me and them (i.e. parents). They have to work with him at home. When he comes to me with a weak foundation, I cannot start with him from scratch. I have other responsibilities. They have to take care of him outside the school (Osama, 2).

The teachers, then, found that they were expected to promote school-parent relationships but they thought that many parents were not so enthusiastic to involve themselves in school matters. They believed that the non-active role of parents in school matters made it difficult for them to manage the behaviour of the students. They suggested that behaviour issues had crept up to a level which they felt was unbearable and could not be tolerated alongside other pressures. They seemed to believe that parents expected them to be responsible not just for the students' learning, as Osama stated, but also their behaviour, as Hameeda implied. This suggests that the teachers' work is open-ended and the teachers seemed to sense that others expected no limitation to their commitment. However, Ali implied that these responsibilities are an integral part of the teacher's work. He mentioned that he did not only teach his students English, but also 'manners, morals, ways of conduct and anything the students like.'

Yasser, on the other hand, reported a case of too much involvement from parents in school matters. He mentioned that the teachers in his school faced pressures from some parents to stop using music in the English class:

> Some parents reject the use of music in class. They come to the teacher and argue with him: 'why do you teach music to our children?' There have been incidents like these. Some parents are so strict to the point that they tell the teacher: 'don't teach my son music. If you want to teach other students, it's up to you, but not my son' (Yasser, 2).

In Yasser's quotation above, he implied that he was expected by the curriculum to use music but some parents objected to this. He described this dilemma in the following comment:

> If you play music in the class, I am certain that three quarters of the class will not pay attention to you – three quarters or more will not pay attention, because it (i.e. music) is Haram (i.e. religiously forbidden) in the students' view. Although it is a successful way of teaching English in other countries… the part of music in the English curriculum in Bahrain is not helpful to use, because of social or cultural factors. The local culture does not accept this. The teacher then has to find an alternative which is difficult… It is an additional burden, while the Ministry of Education can work with specialists to provide materials that suit the local culture (Yasser, 2).

The excerpt in the above shows that Yasser believed that the teachers were sandwiched between the school and the community, each of which expected them to teach in their preferred way. It also shows that he was aware of what was and was not acceptable in the local culture suggesting that pre-packaged strategies and approaches in the curriculum did not always fit the local context although they can be 'successful ways of teaching English in other countries' as he put it. What's more, this quote illustrates the potential problems of teaching English with its cultural baggage in societies with different religious and cultural values to those in the English culture. It poses a dilemma to teachers because they have to make a conscious decision on whether to cater for local values or not. Their decision to accommodate for the local culture or not is arguably connected to their cultural and personal identity, such as their religious beliefs.

An additional problem for almost half of the teachers was what they thought were the pressures resulting from the increased amount of paperwork. Indeed, Afrah stated that: 'the challenge we are facing is the paperwork required from

the Ministry of Education.' Ahmed also mentioned his thoughts about the paperwork being 'a waste of time' whilst Fatima also believed that much of the paperwork was 'irrelevant' to her job in the classroom and that it just increased the workload:

> You are required to do an enormous amount of paperwork which you personally feel irrelevant. You spend a lot of time on it and then all of these papers will be filed and put aside. It's just files that are piled on top of each other and I personally feel they have no relationship or influence on the job we do in the classroom or on raising the level of the students. It's just bureaucracy (Fatima, 2).

Fatima suggested that the increased paperwork forced teachers to fulfill bureaucratic requirements that made little or no difference in the classroom. She apparently believed that student learning was the core of her job but that the increased accountability to paperwork, as she thought, redirected the teachers' efforts to focus on other unrelated tasks. Fatima also reported that the paperwork 'gets to its climax' in the period after the midterm. Here is how she described the work in that period and how it affected her mental and physical health:

> Of course in the period after the midterm the work gets to its climax…I suffer from a health problem, so in that period I cannot talk, I cannot look at people, I cannot smell certain things, and I cannot eat everything – I am in a continuous boiling state and tiredness. You feel as if you are going to die before the work that we do in this period finishes. It's a very exhausting period (Fatima, 2).

This comment shows how negative emotions such as frustration and anger (continuous boiling state) and ill-health were exacerbated by overwork, tiredness and fatigue. The teacher here suggested that her performance was affected badly by overwork because she thought that she could not function in a normal way. Her job as a teacher practically depended on communicating with students and motivating them to learn, but she seemed to think that she could not meet these demands 'in the period after the midterm' because she struggled with both overwork and health problems at the same time.

In addition to this, Fatima also claimed that the work of the coordinators and senior teachers in her school was even more intense than regular teachers to the point that these coordinators and senior teachers wished to be demoted to

regular teachers. This situation made Fatima unwilling to seek a promotion to a senior teacher position because she thought that this would be a 'punishment' for her:

> I feel that all coordinators are under intense pressure. All of them say: 'Enough is enough! We don't want to be coordinators!' Even senior teachers say: 'Enough is enough! Demote us to regular teachers; we don't want to be senior teachers!' It's like when you move up in your career, your ambition dies. For me, becoming a senior teacher now is not an ambition – becoming a senior teacher is a punishment (Fatima, 1).

Fatima's comment above suggests that the increased paperwork made teachers less 'ambitious' and less motivated to develop professionally because this, as she implied, could further increase their workload and responsibilities. Indeed, she remarked that because of the overload that was resulted from paperwork, she felt 'pessimistic' when the administration told her to attend workshops, because she thought that her 'paperwork will pile up':

> The problem is that you have a full load so when they tell you to attend a course you become pessimistic because when you go to the course and come back, the paperwork will pile up… it will be difficult for me to catch up (Fatima, 1).

What this passage might suggest is that the increased paperwork threatened the desire of teachers to change because they had no time to reflect on their practice (i.e. through attending professional development courses), which is arguably important for their development and professionalism. As we have seen so far, when teachers were overworked, professional development for them become 'a heresy' as Ali put it earlier or something that brought 'pessimism' to teachers as Fatima described it in the above quote. Hence, being overworked might have made it difficult for teachers to keep pace with changes in their work because they thought that they had no time and desire to engage in professional development.

Yasser also illustrated that the documentation of lesson preparation intensified his work and derailed his attention from focusing on achieving the goals that he set out for himself at the beginning of the academic year:

> Lesson preparation, of course, takes up the largest part of teachers' time... Requiring from teachers to prove their preparation is a problem on its own… of course being busy with daily lessons and other tasks distracts you from

achieving the educational goals which you set out for yourself at the beginning of the year, so you may or you may not be able to achieve them (Yasser, 2).

Yasser added that the preparation did not only take away the teachers' time at school but it also did so at home:

Of course we are busy with teaching in and out of the school, I mean, we do not only prepare for the lessons in the school but we also do so at home. Sometimes the teacher is busy all day, he has no time, especially preparing the activities – it takes time, it's not easy (Yasser, 2).

Yasser suggested here that the school work intruded in the teachers' private lives making it difficult for them to strike a balance between the two. Although the paperwork related to lesson planning might have been intended to improve the quality and standards of practice, the teachers' words above seemed to suggest that it undermined teaching and learning and took away precious time from teachers that they thought would be best used in focusing on their students in the classroom. This being said, Hameeda said: '…I enjoy doing the preparation work and paperwork.' Hameeda's statement here shows that although the teachers thought that the paperwork intensified their work, some of them enjoyed it and others did not. Their reactions to paperwork perhaps depended on who they were as people and what expectations they thought they should live up to in their work, which is a topic I discuss in the next subsection.

5.2.3 Self-imposed Expectations

The research data also showed that the intensification of teachers' work was not always driven by external factors and accountability, but it was also sometimes self-imposed. Four teachers in the research seemed to demand from themselves more than what might be expected from them by working long hours and accepting the open-ended nature of their job. For example, Ali suggested that the lesson planning was an open-ended task for him which took between twenty minutes to even ten hours. He kept updating the lesson plan every day and incorporated in it materials that might not be expected from teachers:

The lesson I prepare and teach today I always develop the next day. Part of this preparation involves watching videos… you just get some simple ideas out of these videos because the local teaching is different from that in the world. I try

to get ideas and adapt them to suit the local context. Hence, the preparation extends from twenty minutes to three, four, five to ten hours. Of course in these ten hours I interview teachers in the school, print out pictures, create flashcards, download videos, translate and edit them, videotape my class, and interview students. I combine all this in one lesson… the preparation is very tiring, very, very tiring (Ali, 2).

Again, this seems to be another case about the intrusion of school work on the teachers' personal lives, which might suggest that the two cannot be easily separated out and that teaching is a distinct part of who the teachers are. The excerpt also illustrates that some teachers might not accept a one-size-fits-all preparation that they can use in their teaching every time. The lesson for them is dynamic and always needs changing and updating. This can indeed enhance teacher professionalism but it might also be a sign of a perfectionist. The following quote by Yasser expresses this idea clearly:

I am a person who does not accept to prepare a weak or disorganized activity. I make sure it is clear especially if it has pictures. This requires a lot of effort (Yasser, 2).

This comment might suggest that Yasser would perhaps feel guilty if he prepared a 'disorganized activity' because he was committed to perfectionism. In addition, Yasser's and Ali's quotes above suggest that perfectionism can sometimes be a form of punishment to be endured. However, two teachers, Hameeda and Zakia, suggested that their types of perfectionism came from enjoyment and living the job. For example, Zakia said:

I feel the enjoyment while preparing lessons. 'Oh my god', I say to myself when I get an idea in a sudden while preparing… As you get more experience, things come easily to you… Sometimes the planning for the lesson or the thinking for a new idea takes time but sometimes… it just falls on you and it is very nice (Zakia, 2).

Zakia seemed to suggest that lesson planning requires from the teacher to spend a lot of time but once the teacher gets into the swing of it, it becomes an enjoyable activity. Hence, she seemed to believe that time was necessary for reflection, innovation and creativity. She also seemed to suggest that if things were less intense for teachers at school and that they had more time, preparation would not be so much of a problem, and teachers would perhaps enjoy it more and feel like they could do it properly.

Despite all the hardship of lesson preparations, Zakia suggested that she still felt happy to dedicate a large part of her personal time to teaching. Indeed, she said about herself: 'I am one of those who love to give as much as she can to the students, to the school and to herself.'

Ali implied that his dedication for teaching sprang from his burning religious desire to challenge the orthodoxy of the Western theories in education. He thought that these theories could not be used in the local context without modifying them to suit the local culture. His religious motivation made him feel obliged to change these theories and encourage all Arabs to join him in the change process:

> Compared to other nations, Arab nationals always feel that they are lagging behind… The Arabs should be inspired by scholars such as Vygotsky, Piaget, Bruner, for example, who were able to come up with theories and bring about change in their societies. The Arabs should revise all of these theories and create their own that suit the local contexts. The Arab world should lead and should change these theories because these theories were not based on religion. The religious concept, in my view, is more inclusive to the world (Ali, 1).

What this quote suggests is that Ali felt that he was being pushed by Western change and developments but at the same time he thought that many of these developments were not appropriate for his local context, which made him adamant to change them. The need for change for Ali seemed to be fuelled by his wish to attach a religious meaning to teaching. This moral purpose demanded commitment, which Ali seemed to be ready to make. Indeed, he thought that the pursuit for the change and transformation of the Arab society was a goal that is worth sacrifice:

> Teaching has preoccupied my mind very much. In terms of health, I see my health in decline. I have put society, development, knowledge, and the goal of changing the Western, Eastern, Southern, and Northern views about Arabs, as a first priority on my agenda (Ali, 2).

The desire to change for Ali, then, appeared to come from his commitment to a moral purpose and religious beliefs rather than from compliance to bureaucratic control. He seemed to spend a substantial amount of his personal time to achieve his moral goals. Although his quest for change apparently intensified his work and affected his health, he seemed to be suggesting that he needed to

work this hard in order to achieve his goals. Indeed, he thought that teachers who engage in change and development need to develop a workaholic mentality:

> Development requires that the teachers work for 24 hours… in terms of thinking and the money they spend on teaching (Ali, 2).

Hence, the pressures on the teachers to change in this research did not only come from the educational system but they also came from other sources, such as the teachers' religious beliefs and religious expectations. This is an issue that is linked to the teachers' religious and cultural identities. This makes teacher professionalism a complex enterprise because each teacher had his or her unique identity that suited his or her beliefs, values, personal mission and context. It also poses a challenge to educational reforms because teachers' responses to these reforms can be affected by who the teachers are as people outside the school.

The teachers in this research, then, seemed to believe that the intensification of teachers' work impacted on their time, in and out of the school, and increased administrative tasks, which decreased the time for student learning, professional development and personal life. Intensification also seems to have affected the teachers' beliefs and knowledge and their identities. However, intensification did not influence the teachers' work in the same way. For example, what Fatima perceived as a threat ('you feel as if you are going to die before the paperwork that we do… finishes'), others, such as Hameeda, viewed as enjoyable: ('…I enjoy doing the preparation work and paperwork').

Hence, for some teachers, engagement with intense work was desirable, and sometimes pleasurable in some ways, even if, for example, it was detrimental to their health. It seems that for these teachers it was a good thing to be seen as a 'hard worker', or 'over worker', or to be seen as a 'perfectionist' who always puts the students first. Therefore, this is a powerful identity for them to take up and that they might want to position themselves in this way, or at least they do not know how to 'do' teacher in any other way.

5.3 Marginality and Teacher Professionalism

The second contextual factor, which the teachers seemed to suggest impacted upon their work and lives, was the marginalisation of teachers and teaching. As we shall see in this section, marginalization did not only manifest itself in the low status of teaching, lack of recognition, and power relations but also in the teachers' self-alienation. However, there was also the concept of resistance in the data which the teachers adopted to combat marginality and seek empowerment in their professional lives. The themes of marginality and resistance will be presented throughout this section and related to teacher professionalism.

5.3.1 Low Status of Teaching and Lack of Recognition

With regard to the professional status of teaching, five teachers remarked that the amount of work they did in teaching was disproportionate to the salary they got for teaching. For example, Yasser said:

> We are busy all day but the income is weak, while other government employees who hold the same qualifications as ours and might have served less than us get higher salaries. The teaching cadre is undervalued in this regard. This is an issue which we cannot ignore (Yasser, 1).

For Yasser, being overworked and underpaid in comparison with other government employees made teachers feel 'undervalued' within the profession, which can arguably affect the teachers' perception of the prestige of teaching or its position among other occupations. Indeed, Yasser remarked that teaching was 'not helping' him to fulfil his family demands and other obligations. This forced him, as the following quote shows, to do two jobs 'to make ends meet':

> You have obligations, and you want to improve your life, and you have children… you wish to do something for yourself and your children but the current job is not helping you achieve this… I am right now repaying three loans… so I have to work as a part-timer in any place to make ends meet (Yasser, 1).

Osama, who also had to do two jobs in order to survive, expressed similar ideas as Yasser's:

> The salary of the Ministry of Education is very low… and the burdens of life have increased… I know many teachers who work in the evening to cover the expenses of their lives… One has to work in the evening to get by (Osama, 2).

Yasser and Osama suggested that working in the evening to meet their financial needs took its toll on them. For example, Yasser said: 'when we get to bed at the end of the day, we feel totally exhausted.' He also explained that his teaching in the evening made him feel 'stressed', which he thought affected his relationship with his children at home.

Hassan explained that the financial disincentives in teaching made some teachers reluctant to engage in professional education such as doctoral courses:

> The problem, unfortunately, I mean, why the teacher does not seek to pursue a study? Why doesn't he study for another BA or a PhD? It's because of the poor financial benefits that he will gain afterwards. First, he will stay as a regular teacher. Second, the raise in salary that he will receive after getting such qualification will be just BHD 30 (about £ 50). You will spend a lot of money on your studies but then you will not benefit financially. So, money is important… This is what makes people think twice before deciding to pursue any study… Many teachers in my school have frankly told me: 'if you study, you will not benefit financially'. There are no incentives (Hassan, 1).

What this quote might suggest is that some teachers see money as a powerful motive for them to seek professional development and change. Therefore, it appears that growth or continuing learning can sometimes be opportunistic as it is sought for gaining financial benefits. In addition, Hassan's comment seems to be a direct reflection of the expectations of his peer group at school in that many of them seemed to imply that gaining a professional qualification was 'not beneficial financially' and therefore was not a priority. This might suggest that teachers with high hopes for their profession can find it demotivating to pursue their professional development in an environment where peers view it as opportunistic. However, Yasser, who thought that he was suffering financially and worked in similar conditions as Hassan's, took out a loan to do a Master's in his field in a Western country. Despite the fact that he thought he was overlooked for a promotion after getting his master's, he still seemed to have high standards and was willing to learn and grow. He said:

> I try to develop myself, and the evidence of this is that whenever there is a chance for personal and professional development I don't waste it… Despite having spent an age in studying but I still feel that any training course, even if it is for one day, is an opportunity for me to learn something new (Yasser, 2).

Yasser seemed to suggest that commitment to teaching and the desire to be a continuous learner were key qualities for change and professional growth for him regardless of the lack of financial recompense.

Concerning the issue of promotions, there was a general consensus among the participants that a promotion was difficult to get. Osama, for example, claimed that teachers had to wait 'for twelve years to move to the next grade.' Hameeda illustrated that promotions of teachers went through a strict bureaucratic procedure. She told a story of how her brother, who also happened to be a teacher, had to suffer a lot before his promotion was finally approved:

> My brother was a teacher as well. He was really, really hard working. He got a promotion… you cannot imagine the number of people who stood against this promotion… His directorate said, 'we need this teacher' – he was a senior teacher at the time – 'we need him at school'. I don't know which deputy stopped this promotion – a lot of people. It took a long time until he was finally promoted although he deserved it more than the others (Hameeda, 1).

Hameeda, who also was seeking a promotion after finishing her Master's qualification but was doubtful that the Ministry of Education would give her one, told another story about a 'hardworking' teacher who retired prematurely because, as Hameeda claimed, she was repeatedly overlooked for a promotion:

> The other day I met a teacher... whom I admired as a student. She retired this year, just recently… This teacher worked really, really hard, but she saw that the teachers around her, who were younger than her, didn't work hard enough, didn't know enough, and had no enough experience… promoted in front of her eyes, and she really got frustrated. So, she suddenly decided to have a premature retirement. It is really frustrating (Hameeda, 1).

When asked what she thought the reason for this was, Hameeda believed that this was a sociopolitical issue. She claimed that there was a certain group of people who dominated the administrative positions in the ministry and prevented other groups from moving up the career ladder:

> We all know that in the Ministry of Education… the teaching positions are assigned to a certain group of people in society but the administrative positions

and the positions in the ministry are occupied by another certain group. How does it become like this, I don't know (Hameeda, 1).

Hameeda seems to suggest that there was a certain group in the ministry which used its power to dominate administrative positions and exclude other groups. She described this as 'frustrating' and claimed that some teachers belonging to the 'disadvantaged' group said: 'we will not work hard enough because we will not get any promotion.' Hence, she seemed to think that being overlooked for a promotion resulted in the demoralization of teachers and pushed some of them to consider teaching as a job that is divorced from commitment and vocational purpose. Hameeda also suggested that the overlooked recognition of teachers eroded the trust between teachers and administrators because she harboured doubts about getting a promotion despite the fact that she thought she had the necessary qualifications for this.

Similarly, Ali explained how one 'skilful' teacher burnt out after years of not being recognized for his commitment:

> In one workshop that I conducted I met a teacher who taught me in the secondary school… This teacher is skilful, he is known by his deep knowledge, but despite this he is, unfortunately, still a senior teacher. Now of course he is old. This teacher produced a lot and learned new programmes and new things. He warned me from a certain group of teachers who claim credit that they don't deserve… by presenting someone else's work to the concerned people in the ministry as their own. His credit was claimed by others many times until he became disappointed. After this, his work became a complete routine. In the past he worked for 24 hours but now he only does eight, and whenever he finds an opportunity to get out of the school, he does so. The school has become a negative place for him (Ali, 2).

Ali, like Hameeda, seemed to suggest that power relations and micro-politics impacted teachers' identity and professionalism. His comment implied that there was an unfair competitive struggle for the best jobs in his school, which can be a part of the wider culture and pressure in education in Bahrain.

What can be implied from the teachers' words above is that the unending process of constant giving on the one hand and the undervaluing of this giving on the other resulted in the teachers becoming disenchanted, disillusioned and burnt out. They seemed to develop behaviours that made them appear uncaring or unproductive and unprofessional. These attitudes can arguably create more

stress and frustration, which in turn can affect the mental health of teachers and their morale. As an example, Fatima told a story of a PGDE graduate who got 'depressed' for not being recognized and decided to withdraw from teaching:

> Today, it was maybe the fourth teacher I have heard about in the past two years alone who left teaching and stayed at home. She was in acute depression… her psychological situation deteriorated very much… She was a distinguished PGDE graduate by the way. The situation in the ministry is killing the teacher (Fatema,1).

Fatima seems to suggest that the distinguished teachers' gifts and talents were not being recognized. Such a situation, as she claimed, 'kills' the teacher pushing him or her to resign or seek a premature retirement. Her following quote reinforces these ideas:

> Teaching for us, I may say, is in a woeful situation… The spirit of innovation in teachers is being suffocated – it is being crushed. I personally know many teachers who were hard working but now they became dull. They tell you 'we are waiting for nothing but the retirement.' Previously they gave their all to teaching to the point that they neglected their families so that they could concentrate on teaching. Their attitude changed now. You do not feel that if the teachers give an extra effort, they will get any reward, at least a symbolic one, which motivates them to do more (Fatima, 2).

Fatima seems to imply that there were very few incentives that motivated teachers to give their best, which she thought devalued teaching as a profession. Teachers, as Fatima suggested, looked for a stamp of recognition from administrators as a 'symbolic' reward for their efforts. Without this, they might feel rejected or devalued and therefore they see no point of working hard. This could arguably affect the esteem and commitment of the teacher and threaten his or her very desire to teach. Fatima herself said: 'although I am new… I would retire tomorrow if I could'. However, it seems that Fatima's strong opinions against teaching were also influenced by her personal biography or history, because she chose the teaching profession only as a last option:

> As a matter of fact, I was thinking of becoming a translator. My ambition was not initially to become a teacher… teaching is a great responsibility and its privileges are few… However, as a veiled woman who wears an Abaya (a cloak worn by Muslim women)… most opportunities are not available for us… In the Arab world, the opportunities that are available for women are fewer than those for men… This is a reality… Of course, the Arab Gulf countries are more conservative in this regard… Therefore, the choices were very limited… The

truth of the matter is that entering the world of teaching was not a choice… but because it was the only option available, I took it (Fatima, 1).

This quotation suggests that Fatima's personal history and mission seemed to have reinforced her current beliefs about the low prestige of teaching among other occupations. Her feelings towards teaching before and after she entered the profession seemed to match perfectly in that she still held strong views about teaching. In addition to this, Fatima seemed to suggest that her marginality was also motivated by gender issues because she claimed that women, particularly religious veiled women, had fewer job opportunities than men in society. What this suggests is that as a veiled woman, Fatima thought that she was ignored or overlooked and she was not seen fit to rise to higher levels.

Hameeda also raised the same gender problem but in relation to her professional education and the difficulty of balancing domestic work with employment for women in her society. She said:

I was hoping to finish my PhD but… I am now busy with two kids… Life is so unfair. A man, when he wants to do any studying, he will not feel any pressure, because kids are not his sole responsibility. If he says 'I don't want to spend any time with the kids today', he can just leave and spend some time with his friends. But for us, we are different. Kids come from school we have to study with them, do homework, and do other things. My husband is really supportive but again there are things he cannot do (Hameeda, 1).

In Hameeda's comment above there is the issue of family responsibilities and its influences on teachers' work. Hameeda suggested that married women with kids in the Bahraini society took almost the full responsibility for raising kids, which she considered as 'unfair'. She seemed to question this taken-for-granted assumption suggesting that men should share the responsibility of looking after children alongside women. Hence, marginality of teachers, particularly female teachers with children, here becomes a complex issue as it can be influenced by not only the contextual factors around the classroom of teaching but also the wider sociopolitical and sociocultural environments in which teachers work and live.

5.3.2 Teaching as a Mission versus Teaching as a Job

The teachers' stories in the previous subsection seem to indicate that there were many dedicated teachers who have left the profession and others who are considering doing so in the future because of what the teachers thought was the lack of recognition and pressures. Indeed, Zakia stated that:

> There are many resignations in teaching because of the pressures… There are many teachers who are forced to do the job, just to get money! It's a reality… If it were up to them, they would rather stay at home (Zakia, 2).

In her first year of teaching in the Ministry of Education, Zakia herself quit teaching, because of what she described as 'the pressures' of the job and the negative environment in her school which made her 'hate teaching' as she put it. Having spent one year in a non-teaching job, which provided her with a better salary, however, she quit again to take up the same teaching job in the Ministry of Education with a lower salary, because she claimed that 'teaching [was] running in [her] blood'. Despite the fact that she thought that teaching ran in her blood, which might show that she was committed to teaching, Zakia's story here, coupled with the above stories of Hameeda, Ali and Fatima about dedicated teachers whom they claimed became disenchanted or even left teaching, might indicate that teacher identity is fluid and that we cannot take commitment for granted as this can erode when it is faced with the daily contextual factors in school. I will come back to this issue in the next chapter.

Hameeda, on the other hand, pointed out that despite the fact that many teachers were thinking of leaving the profession, most of them indeed remained in the job. She said:

> A lot of people say they want to quit but at the end the rate of people who quit is very low I think. I see it with my colleagues, they say 'next year you will not see me here'… but there comes the end of the year, you see the results, you get together with the teachers, you have a laugh with them, you tell a story about what happened to you in the whole year, and you reconsider your decision to quit, and you say 'no, no, I am not quitting. I want to do one more year'. Once you do it, you get stuck, I don't know why… It's like something that is running in your blood (Hameeda, 2).

Hameeda's comment here clearly shows that there was something more attractive in teaching than money, which was keeping 'most of the teachers' in

the profession. It is perhaps that many of these teachers found satisfaction and pleasure that resulted from supporting students and seeing them learn. This contention was supported by the case of Zakia who came back to teaching after quitting for one year 'to be with students' despite the fact that her non-teaching job ensured a better salary:

> Teaching is not just a job for me. Teaching is satisfaction more than a job… I really find myself in teaching; I enjoy it, and that's why I quit an administrative job where I earned a higher salary than that I get in teaching just for wanting to be a teacher… just because I love teaching, just because I love to be with students (Zakia, 2).

Similarly, although Fatima expressed strong opinions against teaching and wanted to quit, she was still able to connect with her job through helping her students. She said:

> Teaching is a mission more than anything else… it's not just how to deliver… the subject matter that you are to teach. It's how you communicate with the person inside the student… It's how you… motivate and leave a lasting impact on a student who is careless so that she can remember your words even years afterwards. It's how you make a difference in the students' lives; it's how to make a difference in their level; it's how much influence you have on what they do and accomplish… A smile on the face of a student who does a certain thing she never thought she could do… is an incentive for me, because I was able to give her something; I was able to change her and enable her to do something she thought was impossible to do but now it is possible for her, even with difficulty... Such incentives, I believe, are enough to help teachers pass through difficult times (Fatima, 2).

This passage suggests that teachers might believe that their relationship with students can contribute to their sense of achievement and satisfaction much more than other materialistic benefits such as salary and improved working conditions. This idea seemed to be also true in the case of Yasser. Although he thought that he was overlooked for a promotion, placed in a primary school against his will (as his PGDE prepared him to teach at either the Intermediate or Secondary level), was underpaid, and worked under uncomfortable working conditions, he, as Fatima in the above, still thought of teaching as a 'mission' the aim of which was making a difference in the lives of students. He said:

> Many people have repeatedly asked me: 'why are you still working in the primary level when you have all these qualifications?' Sometimes I cannot answer them, but I feel I am fulfilling a mission that I love… The only thing that makes us patient is that we want to be in direct contact with the boys (i.e.

students), to live with them… and support them emotionally. Because you are older than them you are able to determine their needs. This in itself is a service to them personally and to the society as a whole (Yasser, 2).

Yasser here seems to suggest that care and compassion for students and society were essential features of his professionalism. Therefore, this moral purpose seemed to be a powerful motivating force that might have enabled him to sustain his commitment to teaching despite his thoughts that he was working in difficult conditions.

The above four quotes then suggest that the teachers had great concerns about their relationships with their students and how they could support them educationally and emotionally despite their beliefs that they were underpaid and undervalued in their profession.

However, Ahmed reported that teaching was 'just a job for earning a living' for him and that he did not 'do school work at home' because he was not paid for it:

I am only paid from seven o'clock in the morning to one o'clock in the afternoon… the time at home is mine and I don't like to give it to teaching… if they really care about whether you do extra work or not, they should at least spare one hour each day for us at school to do that (Ahmed, 2).

Ahmed's case is an interesting one because it seems to be just the opposite of Zakia's case above. Ahmed left a low-paid job that he liked to join teaching, which he was not very much fond of, because it provided him with a better salary. He mentioned that he 'resisted the very idea of becoming a teacher for three years' after getting his Bachelor's degree, but then decided to take up the job for financial needs. When asked why he did not like teaching and why he was still doing it, he said:

I don't feel I am suitable for teaching, because I don't like it... As for why I am still teaching, it is because there are no other jobs available at the moment… If I were single, it wouldn't be so much of a problem for me to do a low ranking job… But because I have a family now and other financial commitments, such as rent and loans… I cannot take a low-paid job (Ahmed, 2).

Again, this quotation shows the complexity of teacher identity and the many factors it is affected by. In this example it seems that teachers themselves can alienate themselves by considering teaching just 'as a job' that is done for a living rather than also for vocational purposes. This situation can affect the self-

efficacy and self-esteem of the teacher. Indeed, Ahmed conceded that once he started teaching, he became 'unhappy', 'stressed' and 'unwilling to do any social activity after school'.

Ahmed's excerpt above also seems to reveal a wider employment problem in the Bahraini society in that some university graduates struggle to find the jobs that suit their qualifications and skills. But because teaching is perhaps an easier job to get and leave, many people find themselves forced to do it to get by. This can undoubtedly contribute to the undervaluing and marginality of teaching and teachers as well as hinder the reform initiatives in Bahrain that aim to realise the full potential of all young Bahrainis who are joining the workforce.

5.3.3 Teachers' Ways of Combating Marginality

Marginality did not seem to affect teachers in the same way. Ali, for example, seemed to be suggesting that being in the margin did not mean that the teachers could not do something. Despite the fact that he thought that his innovations were not always recognized, which sometimes made him feel 'disappointed' and not 'like wanting to innovate again', he said: 'I cannot work in a place where there is something wrong and I do nothing.' Ali seemed to suggest that feelings of disappointment and frustrations were a natural part of the teacher's professional life but teachers should use these feelings for their advantage. Indeed, he implied that having these sad feelings for a short time could sometimes get teachers do something.

One strategy that Ali suggested for resisting marginality and getting his innovations public and recognisable was by being 'very energetic'. He believed that for a teacher to be able to make a change, he or she has 'to be known, has to have a platform to speak on, and has to have logic in speaking'. Ali illustrated that this strategy enabled him to take up leadership roles by convincing his superiors to trust him as the following extract reveals:

> The last task that I did recently was a field survey for the inspiring students in the school. The school nominated me among four others to attend a workshop on this matter. Of course I was the most interacting participant with the officials responsible for the project. Therefore, I was authorized to head the project and execute it (Ali, 2).

Another way that Ali implied was helpful for him to raise his status in teaching, and therefore his chances to change and lead, was his engagement in research. He said:

> After studying all theories in education, I found a need for new ones because the existing theories were designed for the societies in which they originated… I always discuss the theory and try to add and remove from it. Then I discuss it with the students… and as soon as I find that there is a possibility for creating a new concept, I immediately convert it into a theory (Ali, 1).

This quote shows Ali's confidence in his ability to challenge established theories in education and create original ones. This is arguably important for his self-actualization or self-fulfilment, the realization of his potential and self-efficacy. He seemed to think that he was capable of achieving anything he put his mind to. Indeed he mentioned that he was documenting his experiences so that he could combine them in a book or a doctoral thesis. Hence, he seemed to be working on opening up new channels through which he could deliver his message of change and enhance his professionalism. This perhaps shows that teachers were not only recipients of change but they were also able to initiate change themselves.

Moreover, Ali thought that in order for teachers to be effective change agents, they needed to be good learners who always sought to grow personally and professionally. His conceptualization of professional development did not only confine to the subject matter but also included almost everything:

> Now I am studying everything. I studied physics, chemistry and technology in a deep way. I have a group of books in all disciplines, some of which are electronic ones. Every now and then I watch Youtube videos about any field I like such as history or politics or anything else. I love knowledge for knowledge's sake (Ali, 1).

It seems from Ali's words here that being an English teacher for him did not only mean looking for the best methodology of teaching the subject matter, but also being intellectually curious and passionate for knowledge. This certainly portrays teachers as professionals rather than the more traditional academic conceptualization of teachers as being 'technicians'.

Additionally, Ali suggested that teachers could raise their status in the profession by becoming providers of continuing professional development for other teachers. He stated that he regularly conducted workshops to present his new projects as well as one-to-one tutorials for colleagues:

> I always take the initiative to help… I acquired the reputation as someone who always gives help to teachers. Therefore, you see teachers from all sections, whether they are senior teachers, new ones, skilful ones, or any other teachers, sit with me… and ask me about technology because I am known in the school for my technological projects (Ali, 2).

Ali's conceptualization of collegiality and collaboration here seems to have a wider meaning in that these were not limited to the relationships with colleagues inside his department but also with colleagues in other departments. What can also be drawn from the above comment is that Ali's consistency with and loyalty to his colleagues might have made them trust him and depend on him. Therefore, his ability to influence others and change them might have increased. He also recounted that his meetings with the colleagues enabled him to come to know 'long silenced voices' and bring them to the spotlight:

> We have teachers in the school who are much, much, much better than me but their voices are unheard and they do not show their knowledge. I connected these in the club (a social network on the internet) to listen to them and show their knowledge to the world (Ali, 2).

This passage shows that Ali's concern for the well-being of his colleagues seemed to help him involve many of them in his projects of change and benefit from their experiences. In the above comment, there is also an interesting point about collegiality rather than competition which was a recurrent theme in some of the stories mentioned earlier in this chapter. In the above quote, Ali demonstrated an ability to get along with other teachers and create positive work relationships despite differences in opinions, which arguably helped him to have a sense of professionalism.

Another important point in the quotation above relates to the power of listening, which Ali seemed to be aware of. He seemed to recognize that one way of reaching the marginalized was by being their sympathetic ears and making their voices heard. By taking the role of the listener, Ali seemed to manage to raise

the self-esteem of his colleagues, who, as the quotation implied, started to like him and trust him by virtue of his listening to them attentively.

What is more, Ali also seemed to encourage the idea of engaging teachers in communities of learning and networks to combat marginalization. In addition to the local networks that he created with his fellow teachers, he also mentioned that he was a member of a global network on Twitter that debated a new approach of teaching using modern technology. He emphasised that being dedicated was not always enough to help teachers improve their status and become change agents, unless this was coupled with publicising and sharing their knowledge and ideas with others. This sounded to be true with the case of Zakia. Zakia saw herself as a hard-working teacher but she felt that not many people knew about her work. She mentioned that she did not like to 'show off' but this seemed to cause her to stay in the shadows for some time until an outside visitor recommended her to the school principal. As a result of this visit, things transformed for her in the school. The principal praised her in the morning assembly and gave her a leadership role in a committee that aimed to improve the quality of teaching in the school. Her response to this was:

> I was so happy! I was flying out of happiness! Finally! You cannot imagine how much I dedicated myself to my students and no one knew about my work. Allah (God) made it possible for me to be known (Zakia, 1).

In Ali's and Zakia's experiences above we can see two distinctive approaches to career development. Zakia ascribed her eventual success to the help of others and God, while Ali ascribed his success to his strong self-promotionalism and belief in his own abilities. He believed that in order for teachers to initiate and effect change, and therefore empower themselves and combat marginalization, they need to raise their status and prestige by changing the way they do their work. However, the teachers' efforts to combat marginality in this way and take their destiny into their own hands can also be considered as a sort of double marginalisation, because they are not helped and the responsibility is now placed fully in their own laps.

Teachers, then, reacted differently to marginalization. Some teachers blamed external factors for their marginalization but others developed ways to face this

marginalization. Although payment and working conditions were matters of concern that affected the teachers' work and lives, emotions, and commitment, most of the teachers seemed to believe that satisfaction and pleasure resulted from helping students and seeing them learn were the principles that characterised their professionalism. Additionally, valuing the profession, involvement in research, engagement with and provision of continuing professional development, networking and sharing knowledge seemed to be helpful ways suggested by teachers to enhance their professionalism and improve the status of teaching.

Marginalization in this research was, therefore, found to be a complex concept, because it was influenced by not only the school environment but also by personal factors and the wider sociopolitical and sociocultural contexts in which the teachers worked and lived. While it seemed to have contributed to the erosion of teachers' trust and commitment and affected the status and prestige of teaching and teachers, the teachers' sense of vocational purpose, their professionalism and their desire to embrace and effect change, it also seemed to have provided opportunities for some empowerment and resistance.

5.4 Control and Teacher Professionalism

The third contextual factor, which the teachers suggested to have impacted upon their work and lives in this research, was control in education. Control manifested itself in the increased monitoring of the teachers' collaborative culture and classroom practices as well as the imposition of certain teaching strategies. However, the data also showed that control in education did not stop teachers from resisting top-down requirements and practicing their discreet judgement in their own classrooms. Control in education and the teachers' ways of resisting this control to gain empowerment will be outlined during the discussion in this section and be related to teacher professionalism.

5.4.1 Surveillance of Teachers' Collaborative Culture

Eight teachers implied that the increased monitoring of their practices affected the way they did their teaching as well as their desire to change. For example,

Fatima explained that the teachers in her school had to fill out a peer observation form and submit it to the administration to prove that they visited each other's classes. She criticized this administrative procedure although she thought that peer observation was 'a good thing':

> We're not benefiting from this… When you turn a good thing (i.e. peer observation) into a rule, it loses its purpose, which is to motivate teachers to love learning… In this case, all I care about is just to fill out the peer-visit form and leave the class, which means I don't go there to benefit, I don't go there to learn (Fatima, 2).

Fatima claimed in the above quotation that collaboration and collegiality in her school were mandated and that the means for measuring the teachers' professional growth was through a predetermined form filled out by the teachers themselves. She also implied that mandated collaboration undermined the teachers' desire to learn and pushed them to resist change proposed by the administration. As an example, she confessed that she sometimes 'forged' her classroom visits by getting her peer observation form filled out and signed by another colleague, without any actual classroom visits taking place:

> Sometimes there is forged work as well. I ask her (the colleague) to confirm that I visited her class. We don't have time! The schedule is full and it's the midterm period, but the principal says 'you must visit each other's classes.' How can I do that and I have a pile of papers to mark that you want us to finish in three days?! (Fatima, 2).

Fatima seemed to suggest that the administrators in her school ignored the teachers' circumstances, such as their heavy workloads and lack of time, which she thought might have prevented the teachers from collaborating in the way the administrators wanted. What can also be implied from the teacher's words above is that some teachers believed that the administrators treated them as technicians rather than professionals who could act autonomously. This seemed to have negative consequences on the identity and character of the teachers. For example, in addition to her acknowledgement that she 'forged' classroom visits, Fatima also admitted that teaching in a controlled environment affected her personality in a negative way, because it made her become 'careless' at times as the following quote reveals:

> It unfortunately affected my personality in ways that I sometimes get to the state of carelessness. The administration wants us to do the job in a certain way but this is how I do it, and if the administration will make a problem, so what?! Will it transfer me to another school? Let it do so – this is the last thing I care about. That's it, and if they extend the argument, I will fight with them, done! We got to a state that we have no options. They know that we are under pressure (Fatima, 2).

Fatima here seems to be suggesting that the punishment for teachers who opposed the administration was the transference to another school. She herself said previously in the same interview that 'the terrifying thing' for her was that if the administration transferred her to another school, because her current school was close to her place of residence, but in the quote above she said that she did not care if they transferred her. This might indicate an internal conflict within the teacher. On the one hand, the idea of her being transferred to another school scared her, but on the other she was ready to face this fear head-on when her professional identity and moral integrity were being questioned.

Another area where the teachers implied that their collaboration and collegiality were mandated was in the teachers' two-hour weekly development meeting. According to the teachers, these meetings were meant to enable the teachers to collaborate together in lesson preparation, support each other professionally and discuss problems related to their day-to-day teaching. Although Zahra thought that it helped her and her colleagues in lesson preparation, Fatima was annoyed because the administration, as she claimed, 'imposed' on the teachers a fixed list of topics to cover in the meeting. In addition, Hameeda explained that some administrators made teachers think that the attendance to the development meeting was compulsory. According to her, if teachers missed a single meeting, their bonus could be taken away:

> Attending the development meetings is very important as the hours are counted in our professional development credit. With the extension of time, if you miss one meeting, even with a justification, you could lose the bonus. This is to force teachers to attend. But they sometimes ignore it because I made one or two absences and I got the bonus (Hameeda, 2).

According to the teachers, the bonus that secondary school teachers got was supposed to be for the extension of duty time as part of the implementation of the new reforms in Bahrain, but Hameeda seemed to suggest that some

administrators used it as a stick to force teachers to work collaboratively and comply with rules and regulations. As an additional example, Afrah said: 'if we are late for even one minute to the class without a justification, we get deprived from the bonus, which is supposed to be for the extension of duty time.'

However, Zakia reported positive outcomes of mandated collaboration in that it encouraged the teachers in her school to work as a team and increased their motivation to change:

> Last year there was no teamwork. Everybody was doing things alone… But this year things changed, and thank God, things changed… This is because of the efforts of the principal – she put pressure on us to work. She made us feel that the department has to produce something… So with our collective efforts we were like 'let's be different this year' and thank God we succeeded to be different (Zakia, 2).

Here we could see that Zakia believed that external pressures were important to nudge teachers to work harder and that teachers could sometimes alleviate the pressures if they worked collaboratively and properly. But in her case, she felt that the principal's pressures were meant to motivate teachers rather than be a means of control. This might suggest that leadership and support were important for teacher motivation and change. Zakia herself illustrated this notion by comparing her past principal with the present one:

> If I compare my current principal with my previous one, it's totally different. The previous one knew nothing – she just sat in her office, she didn't visit us, didn't ask about us, and she even didn't know my name! There was no team work and there was a negative attitude in the school (Zakia, 1).

As we can sense from Zakia's words here, she seemed to think that leadership can set the tone in the school by either motivating or demotivating teachers to work collaboratively. Although Zakia's current principal seemed to use top-down strategies to encourage teachers to collaborate, she also seemed to allow some space of freedom for teachers to work on their own. This could suggest that the leadership which depends on bottom-up strategies with top-down ones to nudge teachers to collaborate seems to be more effective than the leadership which only uses top-down strategies alone.

Zakia also mentioned her thoughts about effective teacher collaboration being spontaneous rather than imposed. She talked about how voluntarily mentoring a peer and being mentored by other peers helped her to improve her teaching. For example, she explained how her coaching to a new teacher was reciprocally beneficial for her and her mentee:

> I sometimes ask her (the mentee) to prepare a warm-up activity and she surprises me the next day with a wonderful idea. I tell her: 'Wow, I really liked your idea. It was really wonderful'. Frankly, my encouragement to her made her more creative… Everyone says that her attitude, her way of teaching and her readiness changed a lot from last year (Zakia, 2).

In Zakia's comment here we see how she thought that more experienced teachers could empower novices with their experience and how the novices could inspire the experienced with new life and creativity. This reciprocity might not have been possible without the consent of the teachers to collaborate voluntarily and be open to learn from each other in an encouraging and supportive environment.

5.4.2 Supervision and Evaluation of Teachers' Work

An additional problem for almost all of the teachers was with the external classroom visits from educational supervisors, quality assurance specialists, and administrators, which aimed to supervise teachers and evaluate their lessons. For example, Ali was very critical of quality assurance specialists who, as he claimed, required teachers to use a unified template for lesson preparation and assessed teachers based on this template. He believed that the way these specialists assessed teachers should change because they still, as he implied, used old methods of assessment:

> When the teacher advances in his teaching, the specialist or the educational supervisor should do the same. It's unacceptable that an electronic lesson with the most recent ideas available is assessed as an ordinary lesson. All the assessment should be changed (Ali, 2).

Ali seemed to imply that some specialists were so rigid with rules and regulation and did not allow much freedom for teachers to think outside the box. He believed that they expected teachers to produce set outcomes rather than

challenge their knowledge in order to help them explore new routes and avenues in their work.

Three teachers also remarked that some quality assurance specialists were not specialized in English, which they believed was 'unhelpful' for them. Fatima, for example, claimed that some specialists 'do not understand English', which, as she suggested, did not qualify them to 'judge' the content of the English lesson. Hanan, a female teacher in the primary level, remarked that the quality assurance specialists 'just criticize and leave' while Ahmed described their visits as 'heavy' because 'they just try to catch you'. One male teacher was annoyed by the way one quality assurance specialist assessed his teaching and described him as someone who 'doesn't know chalk from cheese'. Hassan believed that some of the specialists' 'requirements are difficult and sometimes impractical for' the teachers.

Yasser, on the other hand, suggested that there was incongruence between what educators taught teachers in professional development courses and what educational supervisors believed teachers should do in class:

> The strategies we learned in the workshops were wonderful but when the educational supervisor visits you, he tells you: 'what you have learned is old-fashioned. It's not useful for you in teaching anymore.' But this is what we learned in the PGDE and what we took in the workshops! The teachers are convinced with the effectiveness of these strategies but the educational supervisors have a different opinion (Yasser, 1).

In this quotation, Yasser suggested that there were contradictions in terms of the interpretation of progress or change between the teachers and educational supervisors. He argued that some educational supervisors, however, ignored the teachers' interpretations of this progress or change and instead imposed on them certain strategies.

Fatima also explained that she faced a similar problem with a supervisor who, as she claimed, told her not to speak with her students in Arabic in the English lesson. But she mentioned that when she discussed this matter with an educator in her PGDE course, she was told the opposite:

> I told one teacher in the PGDE programme that they forced us to use English only in our teaching and it was difficult for the students to understand. He said: 'God has given you two languages, why do you disregard this important strength in you that enables you to communicate well? You have two languages… you can get the message across better to your students'… I told him: 'rules!' (Fatima, 1).

Similarly, Ahmed illustrated that that he used to use some Arabic to explain and this helped him to engage more students in his lessons, but he stopped using Arabic because he claimed that a supervisor 'told' him to do so. He explained that this affected the participation of students in the class as the following quote reveals:

> I was using Arabic with them until a supervisor visited me and said: 'Why are you using Arabic with them?' I said: 'They taught us in the PGDE course that if the student doesn't understand, you can use Arabic'… He told me: 'No, don't use Arabic'… Once I began to use English only… the students didn't pay attention, didn't try to participate and the situation is continuing like this (Ahmed, 1).

In the above three quotations, Yasser, Fatima and Ahmed were convinced that what they were doing was working well in their classrooms but they thought that their supervisors were not. This being said, not all teachers thought negatively about the supervisors' visits to their classroom. Afrah, for example, described one supervisor who evaluated her lessons as 'dedicated' and 'distinguished'. She said: 'when she visits my class, she gives me a lot of beneficial feedback.' She added: 'I not only benefitted from her on how to deal with the students but also how to deal with fellow teachers in my section.' Moreover, Zakia talked highly about one of her educational supervisors whom she described as 'really excellent'. She said:

> When she visited me, she said: 'you are doing something really great, Zakia'… She was really excellent in terms of guidance. She gave me the good points and the areas of improvement which I still remember now. Her words were positive and full of praise for me (Zakia, 1).

What can be sensed from the words of the teachers in this subsection is that they thought that their supervisors gave them conflicting forms of advice that negatively impacted their work. They seemed to suggest that the supervisors' or the specialists' feedback would perhaps be more effective if it was given in a more constructive, positive and motivating way rather than in a way that

114

criticized teachers, judged their productivity and questioned their professional identity and integrity.

5.4.3 Imposition of Certain Teaching Strategies and Teacher Autonomy

Another area of concern for ten teachers was what they believed was the imposition of using certain teaching strategies, particularly, the use of what they called *the differentiated instruction approach*. Hameeda said:

> The problem of the ministry is that they put a lot of pressure on teachers such as you must have differentiation in your lesson plan every day (Hameeda, 1).

The meaning of differentiation was not really clear-cut. When asked what 'differentiation' meant for her, Hameeda explained that a differentiated activity was student-centred and should accommodate to three levels of learners: high achievers, average achievers and low achievers. She explained that any activity should be divided into A (easy to answer), B (average), and C (difficult):

> The good students will answer the whole worksheet, average students will do A and B. C is usually too difficult for them. The very low students will do A. And what will happen in the lesson is that I will give them [i.e. low students] more support… and try to move them to B (Hameeda, 2).

However, Yasser explained that the meaning of 'differentiation' was not very clear for him:

> Differentiating activities is not easy. Although the idea of differentiation has been a hot topic, it is still not clear – what do we mean by differentiation? Some will tell you 'it's progressing in difficulty' while others say 'it's in the different ways you express the same idea'. So differentiation has different types, but which type is to use is the challenge (Yasser, 2).

Yasser's confusion about what differentiation means and the difficulty of using it seemed to pose a challenge to its implementation for him. Similarly, Fatima, who also seemed to understand differentiation as 'progressing in difficulty' in an activity, explained that she faced a problem with using differentiated activities as her students were resistant to them:

> When I use these activities, the students say: 'teacher, just explain normally no need for these kinds of activities… why do you cause a headache for us? Why do you waste our time?'… So here is a problem because the students are not accepting this (Fatima, 1).

115

One reason that Fatima believed made some students in her class get bored and was an obstacle for the implementation of differentiated instruction was what she thought was the wide gap in the English language levels of the students:

> Some students speak better English than me, their level in writing is better than me, while other poor students when they want to write 'Zaina*b*' they write 'Zaina*d*' with a '*d*'. They can't even write their names properly. It is a challenge. How can you prepare a lesson where you can balance all needs? (Fatima, 2)

Because of this and the students' reaction to differentiated instruction, Fatima seemed to develop a negative attitude towards the approach. Indeed, she was annoyed because the Ministry of Education, as she claimed, hammered the differentiation approach into teachers in professional development courses and workshops. She said:

> Do you want us to spend the rest of our lives discussing differentiation? Every day you tell me about differentiation? I get bored – give me something else, give me something different (Fatima, 2).

Ahmed also believed that differentiated strategies were not always 'effective' admitting that he only used them when the supervisors visited his class:

> We're just like someone who is wearing makeup – when a visitor comes to see us we apply these strategies but when there is no visitor, we have no time to apply them and they are not always effective (Ahmed, 1).

This extract suggests that some teachers portrayed their teaching to be in a certain style whenever a supervisor came to their class but then they went right back to what they normally did when the supervisor walked out. This is probably because the teachers were under pressure to conform to the principles and practices promoted by those assessing them. In such a case, education seems to be undermined because teaching is brought down to a set of observable criteria where teachers need to follow a tick list. Therefore, the teachers here seemed to think that they became like implementers of pre-packaged pedagogical strategies where their autonomy was diminished.

However, this did not mean that the teachers could not practice their discreet judgments and resist the practices that they thought were imposed on them from above. For example, Hameeda mentioned that she did not use the

differentiation approach in 'every lesson' because this, as she explained, would leave no room for other approaches:

> Even if the ministry tells me to do it [i.e. differentiation] every day, I will not do it every day... It is a good practice, but there are a thousand good practices out there. If we do differentiation every day, what does this leave to other strategies, other ways of teaching? (Hameeda, 1).

Hence, it seems that some institutional rules opposed the beliefs and values of the teachers and posed a moral dilemma for them but in some cases the teachers ignored these rules and did what they saw fit for their students.

On the other hand, three participants in the research implied that the teachers ignored implementing the teaching strategies that the Ministry of Education promoted through the PGDE programme and other professional development courses because the ministry 'failed' to create suitable environments for these strategies. However, Ali disagreed with this opinion. He said:

> I disagree with this point of view and I say the opposite. They gave us tools in the PGDE and we can use these tools in the school whenever we want. And if the ministry cannot create a suitable school environment we ourselves can create this change (Ali, 1).

Ali seemed to imply that change should be teacher-driven and that no circumstances could prevent it if teachers were adamant to make it. He also seemed to encourage teachers to be solution oriented, because the Ministry of Education, as he suggested, would not always step in to offer solutions. Additionally, Ali implied that teacher development courses should not be viewed by teachers as proven recipes for good practice but rather sites that stimulate the curiosity of teachers and expose them to a higher degree of thinking. Here is how he described his way of implementing the strategies that he learned in the PGDE course:

> I try to apply what I learned from the PGDE in my classroom and whenever I face a roadblock, I try to remove it and experiment something else… Some of the things I experiment succeed and some fail but in both cases I am the winner (Ali, 1).

Ali implied that successful implementations of strategies involved trial and error, and that failure was part of winning. In other words, he seemed to think that the more the teacher fails, the more he or she learns. He also seemed to suggest

that persistence in the face of failure and the ability to endure it were important for success. Hence, he portrayed himself here as an autonomous professional who was capable of growing professionally and bringing about change in whatever circumstances. He said about himself:

> I feel that if you put me in any situation, I can learn. I can learn in whatever situation I am in, be it negative, positive, silent or even dull. I always try to be positive in all my life (Ali, 1).

What can be sensed from Ali's comment here is that he thought that teachers could turn a bad situation into a good one by being positive and cheerful all the time so that this could help them face the inevitable ups and downs in their daily work at school. He seemed to imply that there was a gift in every situation and that teachers needed to search for it.

Control in education, then, seems to have affected the autonomy of teachers and restricted their choices. According to the teachers' responses, some administrators seemed to turn collaboration and collegiality into administrative devices to increase bureaucratic control rather than facilitate the professional growth of teachers. The teachers also suggested that the administrators used their coercive power to 'force' teachers to comply with rules and regulations and 'punish' those who did not. They implied that this undermined education, because the teachers were assessed on the degree to which they implemented what the administrators set out for them. Hence, some teachers seemed to turn their focus on matters that pleased the administrators to probably ensure that they got good evaluations although some of what they focused on went against their beliefs about teaching and learning. The teachers here seemed to suggest that they were treated like technicians who implement predetermined curricula rather than professionals who can act with freedom and autonomy.

However, control in education that used bottom-up with top-down strategies to nudge teachers to change seemed to be more acceptable by teachers than only top-down strategies alone. In addition to this, spontaneous collaboration through mentoring, for example, seemed to help teachers to mutually benefit from each other. Also, the teachers did not always portray themselves as representatives of their institution. Some teachers, for example, ignored some

rules and regulations of their institution because they thought that these rules went against their moral purposes and did not serve the best interest of their students. Hence, this shows that the teachers were able to practice a certain degree of autonomy in some areas of their work, particularly when they were alone with their students. Additionally, some teachers suggested that teachers could portray themselves as autonomous professionals by adopting a solution oriented approach in their work and lessening their dependence on external authority. In this case, control in education, like marginality of teachers, did not seem to stop every teacher from creating opportunities of empowerment and resistance, and, therefore, enhancing their professionalism.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of the research to answer the research questions. The analysis of the data revealed three main contextual factors that affected the work and lives of Bahraini English language teachers who completed a PGDE course. These were: (1) the intensification of teachers' work (2) marginality of teachers, and (3) control in education. The effects of these factors on the teachers varied.

On the one hand, these contextual factors seem to have technicized the teachers' work, affecting the prestige and status of teaching and teachers; affecting their emotions, commitment and vocational purpose; contributing to the erosion of autonomy and trust; affecting the teachers' identity and character; and undermining education. Additionally, they affected the way teachers could initiate and effect change, pushed them to resist change and threatened their very desire to teach. On the other hand, these factors did not stop every teacher from creating for themselves opportunities that could lead to empowerment and resistance and therefore enhancement of their professionalism.

The notion of teacher professionalism within the increased accountability and ever changing circumstances in which the teachers worked was found to be complex. The contextual factors seem to have challenged the teachers' professional identity, autonomy and agency, and brought with them the question of what it means to be a teacher under increasing scrutiny. Most of the teachers

characterised their professionalism in terms of moral purposes, commitment, their relation with students and the satisfaction and pleasure they got from supporting students and seeing them learn. But these notions of professionalism interacted with the institutional and social contexts in which the teachers worked and created moral dilemmas for the teachers. The next chapter will further discuss these findings in light of the literature.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

6.1. Introduction

In seeking to place teacher beliefs about teaching and learning in the context of teachers' work and lives, I explored, in light of the recent educational reform initiatives in Bahrain, the contextual factors that impacted upon the careers of Bahraini school practicing English language teachers who completed a PGDE course at the BTC between 2008 and 2012, as well as how these beliefs impacted upon their professionalism.

The data presented in the previous chapter extend prior work on teachers' belies that was illustrated in my theoretical model, (see Figure 4 in Chapter 3, page 54), by providing examples of how teachers' life histories (e.g. Fatima's and Ahmed's incidental entry into teaching shaped their current strong views against it), professional development (e.g. Zakia's effective collaboration with her colleagues helped her to renew her spirit and recharge her confidence), workplace (e.g. the control over the teachers' collaborative culture resulted in resisting administrative pressures as in Fatima's and Ahmed's cases), identity (e.g. Ali's strong professional identity helped him to cope with external pressures) as well as the larger social and political contexts, such as the low status of teaching and lack of compensation, can mediate and be mediated by the teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning. However, it was evident, as we shall see in this chapter, that the impact of the construct of identity, within the broader institutional and sociocultural contexts in which the teachers worked and lived, was more dominant than the others on the teachers' beliefs and their responses to contextual factors.

Hence, the strong focus on the element of identity in my theoretical model in this chapter is due to its recurrent appearance in the data analysed in the previous chapter. Moreover, the concentration on identity here is consistent with my overall aim in this research, which is to understand teachers' professionalism through the contradictions of their identities. Additionally, the discussion of identity is congruent with the recent trends in research on teachers' beliefs in language teacher education (e.g. Cowie, 2011; Farrell,

2011; Liu and Xu, 2011; Trent, 2011; Miller, 2009; Morton and Gray, 2010; Tsui, 2007; Johnston et al. 2005; Johnston, 1997) in which identity has emerged as a salient theme (see also the section on professional identity in Chapter 3). One reason for the increased interest in identity in contemporary research on language teacher education, particularly from a sociocultural perspective in SLTE (Johnson, 2009a), is the belief that the 'reshaping of identity and identities within the social interaction of the classroom' is a central aspect in the process of teacher-learning (Richards, 2008: 167) and professionalism (Johnston, 1997). Therefore, Borg (2012), who ignored the construct of identity in his methodological framework on teacher cognition (Borg, 2006, see Figure 2 in Chapter 3, page 50), has now acknowledged the role of identity in language teacher education and recommended that it 'should be recognized as an important strand of teacher cognition research' (p. 11).

In this chapter, I will relate the findings of this research to the wider discussions and the research aims as outlined in the introduction and the literature review chapters, drawing out conclusions and considering what it is my research has added to these initial debates. Additionally, I will discuss, based on the findings of the research, an emerging perspective on teacher professionalism; one which takes into consideration the importance of teachers' professional identities, values and moral purposes (Day, 1999; Leung, 2009) in any educational reform attempts that aim to improve teacher practice.

6.2 Teacher Professionalism: Site of Struggle

The research questions guiding the study were: (1) What are the beliefs of Bahraini English language teachers who completed a PGDE course at the BTC between 2008 and 2012 regarding the impact of new educational reforms on their lives and their professionalism? (2) How do these beliefs impact upon the teachers' professionalism?

The findings of the research suggested that the professional lives of Bahraini English language teachers who worked under new educational reforms were a complex issue, because they were influenced by three main contextual factors: (1) the intensification of teachers' work, (2) marginality of teachers, and (3)

control in education. In terms of how the teachers' beliefs impacted upon their professionalism, it was evident from the analysis of the data in Chapter 5 that the three aforementioned contextual factors largely impacted, both positively and negatively, upon the teachers' sense of professional identity, and consequently influenced their beliefs about teaching and learning, their professional development, their relations with students, administrators and parents, their autonomy, agency, commitment, job satisfaction, sense of self-efficacy and vulnerability, emotions, and well-being.

Many of the teachers' responses about their working lives in the previous chapter raised important issues associated with teacher professional identity and provided insights into how they felt they were professionals and how professionally they were treated. It was clear that there was a tension between how the teachers viewed themselves and how they believed other stakeholders, such as policy makers, administrators, parents, and students, viewed them. These findings resonate with the studies discussed in the literature review chapter, particularly, in the section on professional identities and context.

The tension between the teachers' viewpoints and the viewpoints of others that were reported by the teachers will be discussed here in light of the literature to understand how these factors impacted upon the teachers' sense of professional identity, which is considered as a key component of their professionalism (Day, 2002). References to the influences of other components in my theoretical framework (i.e. life history, professional development, workplace, and contextual factors) on teachers' beliefs and identity will also be made where appropriate.

6.2.1 Influences of Intensification on Teachers' Identities

The first area of influence on the teachers' professional identities, and consequently on their professionalism, was *intensification of teachers' work*. Intensification in this research was reflected in the teachers' beliefs about the increased expectations of teachers, such as the increased demands on teachers to use modern technology as a result of the changing nature of teaching and the increased workloads, which determined what it means to be a

'good' teacher, what teachers should know and how they should do their job (Day, 2011; Johnson, 2009a; Leung, 2009). These expectations that the teachers reported did not necessarily coincide with the teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning and hence created tensions and conflicts in their working lives as well as increased the pressures on them to change.

The teachers' reports about how their students expected them to use modern technology that I discussed in the previous chapter was just one example of contradictory views on what a 'proper teacher' should do in his or her job. With the advancement of digital technology, such as the appearance of smart phones and Ipads, new kinds of students appeared (Canagarajah, 2006) and therefore, new challenges for and expectations of teachers emerged. Canagarajah (2006) argues that students around the world today have a plethora of digital tools at their disposal. The availability of the information and its transmission has become instant thanks to these digital tools. Students have, therefore, arrived at new ways of knowing and understanding which challenged the old notions of 'linguistic conversation' (Murray, 2000 in Canagarajah, 2006). Hence, the teachers in this research reported that many of their students characterized 'good' teachers as those who used modern technology, but many of the teachers did not seem to fully believe in this characterization.

According to the teachers, smart phones, for example, became central in the lives of their students. They explained that the students utilized these smart sets to text-chat with each other using a special language characterized by symbols. This new kind of discourse, which Fatima described as 'obscure', had its new vocabulary, rules of spelling and grammar. Fatima (whose case will be discussed extensively here as an obvious example of how external expectations impacted the teachers' identities) recounted that the new genre impinged on the writings of her students as they began to include the electronic chat symbols in their English writing productions in class, which she thought made the teachers' work, especially the correction of students' writings, more difficult and intense. She grappled with understanding and dealing with the new identities of her students and the new discourses they used. This impacted upon her

professional identity and left her with a feeling of 'uncertainty' and 'vulnerability to inefficacy' (Kelchtermans, 2011), because she thought that she had reached a stage of 'stability' in her development and knowledge, and that she found it difficult to cope with changes in her job ('we are above thirty, that's it – we are in the state of stability in our life – our ideas are stable. We are really not ready for change…' Fatima, 2).

Fatima's feeling that her impact on the students in regard to the use of modern technology was limited also seems to have challenged her 'moral purpose' (Smethem, 2007) in teaching, which was 'to make a difference in the lives of students' (Fatima, 2). This moral purpose might require a commitment to the continual development of her knowledge and skills to keep her close to her students' needs (Fullan, 1993: 12) and to be abreast of rapid changes in teaching. However, she thought, as her quote in the above shows, that she found it difficult to develop her knowledge and skills (professional development influences) to meet the new arising demands of teaching, because of her age ('we are above thirty, that's it... We are really not ready for change') as well as excessive workload ('The problem is that you have a full load so when they tell you to attend a course you become pessimistic because when you go to the course and come back, the work will pile up… it will be difficult for me to catch up' Fatima, 1).

In addition to this, Fatima also implied that excessive workload (workplace influences), which seemed to be exacerbated by her illness ('I suffer from a health problem'), negatively impacted upon her practice as a teacher. As we saw in the previous chapter, she explained how she became almost paralyzed, so to speak, and unable to function normally in the period after the mid-term when work, as she put it, 'got to its climax' ('in that period I cannot talk, I cannot look at people, I cannot smell certain things, and I cannot eat everything – I am in a continuous boiling state and tiredness' Fatima, 2). This seemed to have impacted upon her emotions and professional identity as well, because she admitted that she became 'careless at times' and was ready to 'fight' with administrators, even if this led to undesirable consequences.

125

Because of her beliefs about the increased expectations of teachers to use modern technology and excessive workload, as well as other reasons, such her attitude towards teaching (life history influences), which showed that she was not fond of teaching even before she became a teacher ('entering the world of teaching was not a choice… but because it was the only option available, I took it' Fatima, 1), Fatima did not envisage herself teaching for many more years ('although I am new… I would retire tomorrow if I could'). Hence, she was emotionally vulnerable and at risk of leaving the profession because she seemed to be unable to manage the changes and pressures in her work. According to Kelchtermans (2011):

> The experience of vulnerability includes feelings of powerlessness… i.e. of an inability to create the workplace conditions one considers necessary for good job performance and job satisfaction (p. 77).

In the literature that addressed teachers' work and lives, there is abundant evidence of the detrimental impact of the intensification of teachers' work on teachers' professional identity, moral purpose, and desire to remain in teaching (e.g. Hargreaves, 1992 and 1994; Merson, 2000; Penrice, 2011; Wotherspoon, 2008; Roberts-Holmes, 2003; Smethem, 2007). For example, Smethem (2007), who investigated the experiences, constructions of identity and perspectives on career trajectories of 18 beginning secondary teachers of modern languages in England (see the full details of the study in the literature review chapter, Section 3.2.2), found that 'intensification of teachers' work challenge teachers' 'moral purpose' and professional identity and adversely affect not only their retention but also new teachers' intentions to remain in teaching'.

Although my research offers some support to these findings, as the discussion of the results in the above shows, there also seems to be some differences. For example, intensification in this research was not only attributed to external demands and expectations, as many of the studies in the literature suggest, but it was also self-imposed in that some of the teachers accepted the 'open-endedness' of their job (Hargreaves, 1994). For example, Ali explained that his lesson planning was an open-ended task that took between 'twenty minutes' to even 'ten hours' and that 'development' for him meant working 'for 24 hours'.

Hence, he seemed to suggest that intensification was an important feature of his work, identity and moral purpose.

In addition to this, the impact of intensification was not entirely direct (Ballet and Kelchtermans, 2009). For instance, what Fatima perceived as a threat ('you feel as if you are going to die before the paperwork that we do… finishes'), others, such as Hameeda, viewed as enjoyable: ('…I enjoy doing the preparation work and paperwork'). However, some teachers also implied that this kind of commitment and effort from teachers could legitimize intensification (Hargreaves, 1994). For example, Ahmed said: 'if they [i.e. administrators] really care (i.e. by compensating teachers) about whether you do extra work or not, they should at least spare one hour each day for us at school to do that'. This, therefore, makes the concept of intensification complex, which might require researchers to look at it in a different way.

6.2.2 Influences of Marginality on Teachers' Identities

The second area of influence on the teachers' professional identities and professionalism that my research recognized was *marginality of teachers*. Marginality was associated with the teachers' beliefs about the low status of teaching and the lack of recognition, as well as the teachers' self-marginalization. One issue that the teachers thought influenced their lives and work in my research was related to the teachers' payment and compensation, which seemed to result, as we shall see below, in financial worries, job dissatisfaction and disenchantment.

Many of the teachers' responses in the previous chapter suggested a low status of teaching in Bahrain, which they thought impacted upon their professional and personal lives. Yasser, for example, mentioned that he was 'repaying three loans' and could not get by with his life normally without doing two jobs (socioeconomic influences). His working day did not end with the ringing of the bell in his school as he had to do another job somewhere else. This meant that he had to spend long hours away from his family, which he thought made him feel 'stressed' and affected the quality of his relationship with his children at home. Similarly, Osama implied that the teaching salary was just barely enough

to keep food on the table. The inflation, he suggested, left teachers vulnerable to economic pressures, which also seems to be common in the wider context in the Bahraini society (Kirk, 2012).

While better payment for teachers and compensation are desirable to improve the image of teaching (Johnston, 1997), Sockett (1993) warns against considering the pay as the primary goal for teaching. He said:

> The most obvious common danger is that status (better salary, for example) will become a goal to which practical improvement is subservient, rather than the other way around, and that leads to a poor public image of a profession (p. 10).

In this quotation, Sockett presents teaching as a moral activity the goal of which is the improvement of society through education. Although the issues of status are important to teachers, practice, as can be understood from Sockett's words, is what seems to be the key for this improved status. Hence, Sockett implies that when teachers value their profession (i.e. by improving their practice), others might follow suit.

Despite the fact that many of the teachers in this research seemed to believe that the satisfaction and pleasure, or 'psychic rewards' (Lortie 1975 in L. Hargreaves, 2009: 217), resulted from their positive relationships with students were the principles that characterised their professionalism rather than just improved salaries and compensations, they also suggested that the wider policy of the Ministry of Education (educational policies influences) undermined teachers and teaching, which made it difficult for them to foster a good image about teaching. For example, Hameeda claimed that: 'many teachers say: 'we will not work hard enough because we will not get any promotion.'' Similarly, Fatima believed that the lack of incentives made many teachers feel de-motivated: 'You do not feel that if the teachers give an extra effort, they will get any reward, at least a symbolic one, which motivates them to do more'.

These responses, then, suggest that some teachers, consciously or unconsciously, preferred not to claim a professional identity or act as professionals, perhaps as a way of protesting against what they thought was the lack of recognition. On the other hand, some participants thought that

teachers could empower themselves and foster a positive image of a professional within the minds of others by possessing certain attitudes and doing certain actions. For example, Ali thought that his initiative and concern about helping his colleagues helped him to raise his status in teaching and become likable by others: 'I always take the initiative to help… I acquired the reputation as someone who always gives help to teachers'. Hence, it seems that the teachers' feelings of being valued or devalued within their profession were also mediated by their sense of professional identity rather than just external factors, and this in turn affected upon their professionalism and commitment to teaching.

In the literature looking at teachers' professional lives and work, the concept of marginality, which includes themes like underpayment and overwork, lack of job security or benefits, and the lack of recognition from authorities (Johnston, 2003), was recurrent (see e.g. Johnston et al, 2005; Edstam, 2001; Johnston, 1997, 1999; Popkewitz, 1994; Pennington, 1992). Many of these studies discussed how marginality affected teachers' professional identity, motivation, and commitment (Popkewitz, 1994). While the findings of this research add some support to these studies, they also offer new insights into the concept of marginality.

First of all, marginality, like intensification, did not seem to be influenced by the educational system alone but it was also mediated by the teachers' sense of professional identity. In other words, the teachers who appeared to have a strong sense of identity seemed to feel empowered (Giroux, 1988), while those who did not appear to consider teaching to be as their life-long careers felt marginalized and diminished in their role (Edstam, 2001). For example, Ali seemed to look at marginality as a challenge that could trigger him to do something ('I cannot work in a place where there is something wrong and I do nothing' Ali, 2). He seems to have found ways to combat marginality by sympathizing with his colleagues and helping them to share their knowledge (professional development influences). He said: 'We have teachers in the school who are much, much, much better than me but their voices are unheard

and they do not show their knowledge. I connected these in the club (a social network on the internet) to listen to them and show their knowledge to the world' (Ali, 2).

On the other hand, Ahmed's narrations of his life (life history influences) before he became a teacher ('I resisted the very idea of becoming a teacher for three years after my graduation') and after he became a teacher ('I don't do school work at home because I am not paid for it') appear to suggest that teaching was 'just a job' for him. This made him vulnerable to feelings of inefficacy ('I don't feel I am suitable for teaching… because I don't like it') and was probably at risk of leaving the profession, because he was ready to replace teaching with any job had he not had family and financial obligations: 'If I were single, it wouldn't be so much of a problem for me to do a low ranking job' (socioeconomic influences). Hence, it appears that marginality was not only a position that was enforced by social inequality but also by personality issues.

However, if we were to take gender into account (sociocultural influences), for example, then we could say that it was perhaps easier for those who were less marginalised to empower themselves, but perhaps those like women were doubly marginalised, i.e. as teachers and women. Unlike men, as Hameeda claimed in the previous chapter, women found it difficult to develop professionally while at the same time balancing domestic work with employment. Ali as a man, on the other hand, seemed to make good use of the resources around him, and actually took up the established/powerful discourses of technology and managed to change to make his situation work for him. Because he understood technology, he was in a good position to get ahead in a way that others were not. Therefore, we could argue that he was making the best of a bad situation, that he was less marginalised than others, and that in some ways he was also marginalised because he was now being expected to make himself as a professional with fewer resources to do so (workplace and educational policies influences).

6.2.3 Influences of Control on Teachers' Identities

The third and last factor that seemed to impact upon the teachers' identities and professionalism in this research was *control in education*. This theme was related to the teachers' beliefs about the increased monitoring of their collaborative culture and classroom practices as well as the imposition of certain teaching strategies, which they thought restricted their autonomy.

Many of the teachers in this research suggested that their working relationships were bureaucratically imposed. This seemed to fit with what Hargreaves (1994) describes as 'contrived collegiality', which he defines as a form of collaboration that is 'controlled, regulated and predictable in its outcomes, and is frequently used to implement system initiatives or the principal's preferred programs' (p. 135). He contrasted it with 'collaborative cultures', where teachers' working relationships are more spontaneous, informal and less controlled by administrators.

The teachers' responses in the past chapter implied that their collegiality was contrived in at least two ways: the teachers' development meetings and peer observations (administrative practices influences). The teachers there suggested that what was important for their administrators was that the teachers went through the motions of 'collaborative' activities, rather than perhaps focus on the 'real' intended purpose behind these activities, which was, as they thought, to provide opportunities for learning ('When you turn a good thing (i.e. peer observation) into a rule, it loses its purpose, which is to motivate teachers to love learning' Fatima, 2). They seemed to believe that the peer visits and development meetings were mainly conducted to satisfy bureaucratic demands that sought predictable outcomes ('they put a lot of pressure on teachers such as you must have differentiation every lesson' Hameed2). Therefore, they implied that their autonomy and the space to make collaborative decisions for themselves were lost or at least hidden within what they appeared to describe as a culture of managed compliance.

In his critique to contrived collegiality, Cooper (1988: 47 in Hargreaves, 1992: 82) wondered:

Whose culture is it anyway? If teachers are told what to be professional about, how, where and with whom to collaborate, and what blueprint of professional conduct to follow, then the culture that evolves will be foreign to the setting. They will once again have "received" a culture.

Because many of the teachers believed that their collaborative activities were not always spontaneous and voluntary, and did not to take into account the time and excessive workload (workplace influences) of the teachers, they thought that the outcomes of these activities were sometimes perverse. The teachers seemed to develop their resistive strategies by appearing to conform with administrative demands while in fact they were not. For example, Fatima admitted that she 'forged' classroom visits that she claimed were required by the administration during busy times in the semester. Contrived collegiality, therefore, impacted upon teacher identity and how they went about doing their daily business in school.

Another facet of control in education that some teachers discussed in the previous chapter, which also seemed to impact upon their professional identity and autonomy, was linked to what the teachers described as an imbalanced relationship with administrators, educational supervisors and quality assurance specialists (power relations influences). The teachers seemed to suggest that this relationship was judgemental in nature because they thought that the supervisors focused on the teachers' productivity and performance (e.g. 'they just criticize and leave, Hanan 1'… 'they just try to catch you, Ahmed 2'… '[they tell you] 'it's not useful for you in teaching', Yasser 2'). Bullough (2011: 16) argues that:

When "valued for their productivity alone" authentic social relations… are replaced by "judgemental relations"… Judgemental relations enhance vulnerability and undermine trust by encouraging deceit.

As we saw in the previous chapter, the teachers reported a noticeable erosion of trust between them and the administrators. For example, one teacher described one of the specialists who visited his class as someone who 'doesn't know chalk from cheese' as a way of protesting against what he thought was 'deterministic' feedback on his lesson. In addition, the 'judgemental relation' that the teachers reported seemed to have encouraged 'fabrications' and 'deceit'

(Bullough: 2011: 16) in that some teachers acted in the way that they thought the administrators wanted when the latter visited their classes but went back to what they normally did once the administrators walked out of the classroom.

In the literature dealing with the impact of control in education (particularly the kind of control which is motivated by reforms) on teachers' professional lives, many studies generally suggest that control has negatively impacted upon teachers' professional identity and curbed their autonomy, increasing teacher stress, contributing to the decline of teacher morale, and affecting their health and well-being (e.g. Moss, 2004; Wilkins, 2011). As shown in this chapter and the previous one, the findings of the current study resonate with the findings from the literature in that the teachers in this research reported that control in education jeopardized their autonomy, agency, commitment, job satisfaction, sense of self-efficacy and vulnerability, emotions, and well-being.

However, the findings in this research also seem to offer some new insight into the concept of control in education. For example, they seem to oppose the widespread notion of control as solely bad, drawing attention that control can both be bad and good for autonomy and professional identity, which might enable us to focus on power as a force for change. On the one hand, many teachers thought that the control exerted over their collaborative culture and classroom practices reduced their autonomy, which seemed to have impacted negatively upon their commitment and professionalism. On the other hand, however, some teachers thought that control could trigger teachers to do something that enhances their autonomy and helps them to initiate change. For example, Ali said: '… whenever I face a roadblock, I try to remove it and experiment something else… Some of the things I experiment succeed and some fail but in both cases I am the winner' (Ali, 2).

In addition to this, control in education seemed to have different styles. Some types of control seemed to be 'coercive' but others seemed to be 'persuasive' (Cribb and Gewirtz, 2007). The impact of the former seemed to be sometimes destructive while the latter seemed to be more productive. This was obvious in the case of Zakia. She quit teaching for one year because of what she

described as 'great pressures' on teachers (workplace influences). However, she considered the kind of 'pressures' which allowed some space of freedom for teaches to be beneficial to encourage teachers to work collaboratively in teams:

> …this year things changed… because of the efforts of the principal – she put pressure on us to work [and] made us feel that the department has to produce something… So with our collective efforts we were like 'let's be different this year' and thank God we succeeded to be different (Zakia, 2).

Therefore, control in Zakia's case here, which used a leadership style that depended on bottom-up strategies with top-down ones (Hargreaves, 1994), seemed to have been motivating for teachers and useful for their collective identity (Helgøy, Homme and Gewirtz, 2007) as well. This finding might open up a space to deeply discuss the value of balancing control and autonomy for teacher professionalism rather than viewing them in a traditional, normative way which favours one over the other (Cribb and Gewirtz, 2007).

In conclusion, the findings of this research suggest that the intensification of teachers' work, marginality of teachers and control in education had serious consequences on the teachers' professionalism. However, the findings also indicated that the impact of these contextual factors varied from teacher to teacher and from context to context, emphasising that this impact was largely mediated by the teachers' values and sense of professional identity.

Based on these findings, the next section will discuss an emerging perspective on teacher professionalism – one which offers insights into discussing the value of striking a balance between institutional and public requirements in education and teachers' professional identities, values and moral purposes (Day, 1999; Leung, 2009).

6.3 Towards a New Perspective on Teacher Professionalism

From the above discussion of the research findings, it was evident that the contextual factors took their toll on the teachers in this research. Because many of the teachers seemed to invest a lot emotions and efforts in their work, they were in danger of experiencing setbacks, disappointments, demoralization,

disenchantment, and disillusionment when these contextual factors challenged their professional identity (Kelchtermans, 2011; Hargreaves, 1994; Day, 2004; Palmer, 1998). Although the teachers' belief of the marginalized position of teachers and teaching is a problem in many countries around the world (Hargreaves, 2009), what might make the case of Bahrain unique is the different cultures (i.e. English culture, Arabic culture, religious beliefs, etc.) impinging on the teachers' values, goals, moral purposes for teaching, attitudes and professional identities. It was clear that the teachers' professional identities were a site for struggle (MackLur, 1993) within the teachers themselves and between them and the environments around them.

It also seemed that these professional identities could not be separated from the teachers' personal identities, because each one fed into the other (Day, 2011). For example, Al's goal in teaching ('changing the Western, Eastern, Southern, and Northern views about Arabs') seemed to be congruent with his religious personal values ('the religious concept, in my view, is more inclusive to the world'). He explained that he was ready to throw all his heart in teaching to commit to his goals, even if this was detrimental to his health ('Development requires that the teachers work for 24 hours… in terms of thinking and the money they spend on teaching'… 'Teaching has preoccupied my mind very much. In terms of health, I see my health in decline'). Hence, his philosophy in teaching seemed to be to 'make a life' (Palmer, 1998) and this seemed to enhance his sense of professional identity.

On the contrary, Ahmed admitted that teaching was 'just a job' for him and that he was attracted to it because it provided him with a better salary, which is probably one reason why he only taught to the extent he was paid. His philosophy in teaching, therefore, seemed to be to 'make a living' (Palmer, 1998) and this seemed to impact negatively on his sense of professional identity and satisfaction ('I don't feel I am suitable for teaching… because I don't like it' Ahmed, 2).

Therefore, it seems that because Ali saw a higher/wider moral purpose in education his sense of professional identity was enhanced and his commitment

to teaching became stronger, and this might have helped him to manage the influences of contextual factors and thrive in the most challenging circumstances (e.g. 'I cannot work in a place where there is something wrong and I do nothing' Ali 2… 'I feel that if you put me in any situation, I can learn. I can learn in whatever situation I am in, be it negative, positive, silent or even dull. I always try to be positive in all my life' Ali, 1). Day (2004: 52) argues that:

> Many teachers have somehow found 'room to manoeuvre' as external reform initiatives (which have the effect of reducing teachers' range of discretionary judgements) are imposed and as the bureaucracy associated with increased contractual accountability begins to bite. Such teachers survive and once again flourish in the most challenging circumstances, principally because of the strength of values they hold.

What can be implied from Day's quotation here is that the teachers who have managed to sustain their long-term commitment to teaching and maintain their well-being, found ways to deal with the tensions between their values in teaching and contextual factors. However, the findings of this study also showed that teacher identity was not fixed, and that it was dependant on the context (Sachs, 1999). This meant that teacher professionalism and commitment could not be taken for granted as these could erode when they were faced with the daily contextual factors. For example, Zakia, who viewed herself as a dedicated teacher ('teaching runs in my blood'), quit teaching for one year because she became demoralized as a result of what she considered to be 'great pressures' on teachers.

These findings, therefore, suggest that the conflicts between the values the teachers held and their thoughts about the values and expectations of others in specific contexts can lead to unpredictable consequences on teacher professionalism, even for those teachers who hold strong values in teaching. The implication of this is that issues such as teachers' values, commitment, and professional identity 'must be forever re-established and negotiated' in teacher training and development as the definitions of these can 'change at various times according to contextual and individual factors and exigencies' (Sachs, 1999: 5 in Lopes, 2009: 265) as well as due to a conflict in different cultural ideals and educational understandings. It becomes the responsibility of second

language teacher education to make L2 teachers aware of contextual factors, such as cultural conflicts, curricular mandates and educational reforms, that can shape teachers' beliefs, if they are expected to work with and against the consequences that these contextual factors may have on their professional identities and professionalism, and, in turn, on students' opportunities to learn L2 (Johnson, 2009a).

The challenge for educational reforms and teacher education in Bahrain is, therefore, how to form, maintain and build upon the teachers' professional identities, moral purposes, goals and values within the context of educational reform and rapid change in teaching. The findings of this study, however, generally suggest that the implementation of the recent educational reform changes in Bahrain, which endeavoured to reenergize and redirect teachers' practice, have, in many instances in this research, been challenged by contextual factors, which impacted upon the teachers' sense of professional identity and restricted their professionalism to prescribed performances that seemed to intensify their work, contribute to their marginality, and increase control over their practice.

The tensions in the teachers' lives resulted from the introduction of these reforms, which pulled them in different directions, and the importance of the topic of identity in their professionalism, commitment, professional growth and change might enable us to see what is needed for a more successful implementation of reforms in Bahrain. A holistic and long-term study of what happens to reform and its consequences on the teachers' professionalism, particularly in light of their identity, is, therefore, required. The theoretical framework that this study employed to explore the teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning (see my theoretical model in Chapter 3, Figure 4, page 54) might be a useful tool to provide valuable insights for those involved in curricular reform and teacher education. Because this theoretical lens links teacher beliefs about teaching and learning to the broader institutional, social, cultural and historical contexts where the reforms are being implemented, it is

possible to understand teachers' perceptions regarding reforms and why they might resist their implementation.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter considered the key findings of this study in light of the research questions, wider debates, and literature in the field of teacher education, both in mainstream and second language teacher education (SLTE). In the first section I argued that there were a clear conflict between the teachers' definitions of 'what it means to be a professional' and the definitions of other stakeholders, such as policy makers, administrators, and students, which were reported by the teachers. This conflict impacted largely, both positively and negatively, on the teachers' sense of professional identity, which I considered to be a key component to their professionalism, and consequently influenced their beliefs about teaching and learning, professional development, their relations with students, administrators and parents, their autonomy, agency, commitment, job satisfaction, sense of self-efficacy and vulnerability, emotions, and well-being.

In the second section, I suggested that that this conflict in values should be negotiated constantly in the context of teacher education as these values can always be changing in today's ever-changing educational landscape. I also suggested that a holistic and long-term study of the implementation of reforms in the context of teaching in Bahrain that takes into consideration the teachers' professional identities, moral purposes, goals and values is needed. I argued that the theoretical lens used by this study might give us insights into what might be needed for a more successful implementation of reforms in Bahrain. The next chapter will summarize and wrap up this thesis by discussing the implications of the study on teaching and teachers and offering recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This study set out to explore the beliefs of Bahraini school practicing English language teachers about the impact of the recent educational reform initiatives in Bahrain on their professional lives. It aimed to study the teachers' perceptions of and beliefs about their work, lives, and the contexts of their teaching in order to construct a deeper understanding of their professionalism.

The research was carried out to redress a gap in the literature on the study of practicing EFL teachers' beliefs (Borg, 2011, 2006). It was also a response to Johnston et al.'s (2005) unaddressed call for urgent research on how contexts impact upon the beliefs and experiences of in-service teachers who have enrolled in educational programmes, particularly in relation to the contested notion of professionalism and the teacher's identity as a professional. Additionally, it was motivated by Kirk's (2012) study on the working lives of Bahraini teachers in which he encouraged more research on teachers' lives, particularly in the case of Bahrain, because of the recent educational and political changes that the country witnessed.

The findings of my study suggest that the contextual factors that the teachers believed impacted, to a varying extent, on their work, lives and professionalism were: the intensification of teachers' work, marginality of teachers, and control in education. These factors affected the way the teachers could initiate and effect change, pushed them to resist change and threatened their very desire to teach. However, the contextual factors did not stop all teachers from creating opportunities for themselves outside the boundaries of their institutions' structures to generate power that enabled them, to a certain extent, to change. Additionally, although the contextual factors challenged the teachers' professionalism, some of them, such as control, sometimes seemed to be beneficial for change when they accommodated for the teachers' professional identity. Hence, this research discussed the value of striking a balance between institutional and public requirements in education and teachers' professional identities, suggesting that this might enhance teachers' professionalism. This

139

also suggests that public requirements in education and 'professional self-interest' are not always 'at opposite ends of the continuum and that the pursuit of self-interest may be compatible with advancing the public interest' (Evetts, 2006, p. 136, citing, Saks, 1995).

7.2 Implications

One implication of this research is that in today's complex world, educational reformers cannot afford to ignore teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning (Troudi, 2005). This is simply because reform changes, as we have seen in this research, cannot be implemented successfully without the consent, competence and commitment of teachers (Goodson, 2003). Hence, a holistic understanding of teachers' beliefs as related to their work and lives is essential (Johnston et al. 2005, Barnard and Burns, 2012; Borg, 2006), because prospects for change can be constrained by contextual factors, such as increased accountabilities, lack of recognition and compensation, and increased monitoring and surveillance of teachers' work (Kim, 2011; Popkewitz, 1994; Pennington, 1992).

Another important implication of this research is that language teacher education in Bahrain must take into account the social, political, economic, and cultural factors that are located in the contexts where L2 teachers work and live. Hence, preparing teachers to function well in Bahraini schools entails creating local responses to support the professionalism of teachers and recognizing how sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts impact upon the ways in which teachers enact educational change, how they teach and learn to teach, and, most importantly, how they can provide opportunities for student learning (Johnston et al. 2005; Johnson, 2009a).

Last but not least, although the constructs of teacher professional identity, beliefs about teaching and learning, values, goals and missions in teaching were key factors that seemed to help teachers to enhance their professionalism (Day, 2004; Johnston, 2003), these concepts were dynamic and fluid (Day 2011) because they could 'change at various times according to contextual and individual factors and exigencies' (Sachs, 1999: 5 in Lopes, 2009: 265) as well as due to a conflict in different cultural ideals and educational understandings

(Johnston, 1997). Hence, for the sake of their commitment and well-being, teachers, with the help of educators in training and professional development programmes (Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005 in Johnson, 2009a), should forever re-establish and negotiate these constructs in their professional lives (Johnston, 2003). The role of teacher education and professional development in Bahrain should, therefore, aim to equip teachers with the meditational tools of inquiry that will help them to reshape their identities in order to adapt and adjust to the unpredictable nature of the broader institutional, social and political contexts that are ever present and ever changing in their profession (Richards, 2008; Johnson, 2009a).

7.3 Recommendations

In this research, the teachers suggested many topics that could benefit from an on-going negotiation between teachers and their superiors; these include:

- Creating a less intensified working environment and providing more time for preparation work (Hargreaves, 1994): As we saw from the words of the teachers, many of them thought that the school life intruded a lot into their private life and made it difficult for them to strike a balance between the two. Some teachers implied that if things were less intense for teachers at school and that they had more time, preparation would not be so much of a problem, and teachers would perhaps enjoy it more and feel like they could do it properly.

- Improving payment and working conditions (Johnston, 1997): some of the teachers complained that the salary they got from teaching was disproportionate to the amount of work that was expected from them. They suggested that the pay was not enough to keep food on the table. This pushed them to work in the evening to make ends meet, which they thought affected their family lives. They implied that being overworked and underpaid made them feel undervalued within the profession and affected their perception of the prestige of teaching or its position among

other occupations (see Hargreaves, 2009 for a detailed discussion on this topic).

- Listening to teachers' voices and their interpretations of reforms and newness (Lamb, 1995): Many of the teachers in this research thought that their voices were not heard and that their interpretation of how they should teach was not always considered. Some of them suggested that their superiors assessed them based on the performances that were congruent with reform changes and allowed little freedom for teachers to experiment. They implied that their superiors' feedback would perhaps be more effective if it was given in a more constructive, positive and motivating way rather than in a way that criticized teachers, judged their productivity or performance and questioned their professional identity and integrity (see Bullough, 2011 for a detailed discussion on this issue).

7.4 Contribution to Knowledge

This study has offered some new insights into the subject of teachers' beliefs through adding to the sparse knowledge about teachers' views in the TESOL field in the local and wider regional context of the study. First of all, it challenged the normative presumption that control in education is always bad for teachers, drawing attention that it can both be bad and good. It demonstrated that control can have different dimensions, such as *coercive* and *persuasive* (Cribb and Gewirtz, 2007). The former, which depends on top-down leadership strategies alone, seemed to be sometimes destructive, while the latter, which blended between top-down and bottom-up leadership strategies, seemed to be more constructive. What this implies is that we have to explore how control in education is negotiated and recognize it as a dynamic process. It is also perhaps more useful to talk about the potential value of balancing between autonomy and control in education for enhancing teacher professionalism than favouring one over the other (Cribb and Gewirtz, 2007).

Additionally, the research also offered new insights into the concepts of intensification, marginality and control in that these were not always negative as many studies in the literature might suggest. It also showed that these were not

always resulted from the educational system in which the teachers worked but they were also mediated by the teachers' sense of professional identity. Hence, the impact of these factors on teachers was not equal. Some teachers found these factors as constraints and hence they preferred to reduce their commitment to teaching, while others found them as opportunities that helped them to keep the spark of their commitment alive. Such findings urge us to take a fresh look at these concepts as well as other similar issues in education. Rather than always trying to identify what is missing and find ways to replace what is missing, it is, as I suggest here, more useful to adopt a positive orientation to professional practice, and focusing on teacher commitment, values, moral missions, goals, and professional identities is one way of doing that (Day et al., 2005). Bringing these ethical terms to the forefront of our thinking about teaching and learning and encouraging teachers to reflect on them on a continuous basis may provide the basis for a '*renewed sense of professionalism*' (Campbell, 2003: 4) and may help the individual teacher to reconcile his or her identity of being a professional with the realities in his or her own context of teaching (Johnston, 2003).

7.5 Limitations

One of the limitations of my study that I found about after completing the project was that I could not draw strong conclusions in regard to educational policy based on just the voices of the teachers. In many instances in my thesis, the teachers were very critical of policy makers and administrators but because the voices of these stakeholders were absent I could not bring counter arguments to the claims of the teachers and make suggestions based on both views. Hence, although the voices of the teachers were at the heart of this thesis, this does not mean that their views were always endorsed by the research. I presented their voices in the thesis so that they are taken seriously by teachers themselves, administrators, policy makers and other stakeholders in education. If I had a second opportunity to do the research over, however, I would definitely consider engaging the voices of these other stakeholders in order to present a more balanced argument in my thesis. Such research would need to be longitudinal to allow me more reflection time, and should capitalize on a

variety of data collection methods to account for the extent of convergence and divergence between teachers' stated beliefs and enacted ones (Barnard and Burns, 2012).

7.6 Suggestions for Further Research

In carrying out this research study I have come across several areas of potential research on teachers' work, lives and professionalism that could be addressed by future researchers. For example, my research focused extensively on professional identities and their impact on teacher professionalism, but, as the findings suggest, the teachers' professional identities were closely bound to their personal and cultural identities. There was some strong evidence in the research about the conflict between different cultures/cultural values. As an example, Yasser claimed that nearly three quarters of his students and their parents refused the use of music in the English lesson, because it was, as Yasser explained, 'Haram' or a 'taboo' in their opinion. Yasser seemed to suggest that the parents and the students wanted the language to be taught without its cultural 'baggage' (Johnston, 2003: 91). This is probably because they looked at English as a means for occupational purposes that can be learned separately from culture.

However, Johnston (2003) claims that many scholars in the field of language teaching believe that it is difficult, if not impossible, to have a dividing line between culture and language. This can, therefore, pose a dilemma to teachers because they have to make a conscious decision on whether to cater for local values or not. Their decision to accommodate for the local culture is arguably connected to their personal and cultural identities. Hence, there is a need to broaden the scope of inquiry on teachers' lives to include teachers' out of school personal and cultural identities, such as their religious and political beliefs, and how far these can play a role in shaping their beliefs about teaching and learning, their professional identities as English teachers, their professional development and the way they narrate their life story (i.e. whether this affects their discourse of considering teaching as a life-long career). This investigation should also include the voices of students and parents, as well as policy makers

in order to understand deeply how their expectations of teachers affect teachers' identities.

One additional issue which should be brought to the consciousness in educational research in Bahrain concerns female married teachers' professional development and pursuance of their higher education. As we saw in the previous chapter, Hameeda mentioned that she had difficulty pursuing her plans for a PhD because she had to take care of the children at home after school. She considered this as 'unfair' because men, as she claimed, did not face the same pressures if they had decided to continue their studies. Therefore, it would be of interest to study the lives of female married teachers with children who are engaged in professional development or higher education studies after the school time, and examine how the gender roles in their society affect their lives and how hard it is for them to accommodate dual responsibilities (i.e. looking after children and studying) as well as how they might face double marginalisation (i.e. as teachers and women), or may be further disrespected due to their gender.

7.7 A Final Reflection

In this final section of the thesis, I will reflect on my own learning from the research and how it might affect my practice as an English teacher and educator. It is not a secret to say that when I embarked on the EdD course, my main aim was to benefit economically from becoming a doctor. However, three months into the course I realized that this was not a worthy goal to trade my life for. Besides, it put me under great pressure and made it difficult for me to stay motivated in my course. Hence, I realized that it is not whether I become a doctor is what counts but it is the person I become after achieving my doctorate. I realized that if my doctoral journey would contribute anything to my personality, character, self-esteem, satisfaction and self-worth, then I should develop a moral purpose for my work, which should be the welfare of students, teachers, education and the society as a whole. This was a remarkable discovery for me as it changed my life entirely. This was reflected on the way I

approached my doctoral work as I became more conscious about my own biases and began to tolerate ambiguity and respect diversity and differences.

As I conclude this project, I undoubtedly feel more informed about the work and lives of Bahraini English language teachers who completed a PGDE programme than I was at the beginning of this study. I am now more aware that these teachers work within complex institutional, social, cultural and political contexts, which challenged their beliefs about teaching and learning. The ways in which they reacted to and coped with these complexities gave me insights into their professionalism. My understanding of their professionalism is that it can shape and be shaped by a variety of contextual factors, such as, intensification of their work, marginality, and control in education as well as their sense of professional identity and mission, moral purposes, goals and values. This understanding will undoubtedly help me in my future work as a teacher educator and trainer for school teachers in pre- and in-service teacher preparation programmes in Bahrain, because I will be able to share and reflect on this understanding with these teachers whom I will be working with. In addition, I would like to share this understanding in workshops organized by Bahrain ELT groups that I am a member of, in national and international conferences, and journal papers. I would also like to turn this thesis into a publishable book and translate it into Arabic so that it can reach a larger number of people.

When I started this research, my interest was to explore the teachers' perceptions and beliefs as related to their work, lives, and the contexts of their teaching so as to construct a deep understanding of their professionalism as teachers. My interest has furthered into understanding how the development of teacher cultural and professional identities are important for their professional development and effectiveness. In the future, I would like to gain a deeper understanding of how the development of teacher identities, within and beyond the classroom, contributes to their growth and change as teachers. In particular, I would like to focus on the work and lives of secondary school teachers, because it seems that they were, as was evident from the words of Fatima,

Hameeda, Zakia, Ali and Afrah in my research, the most affected participants in my research by the introduction of the educational reform changes in Bahrain. Of course, such kind of in-depth qualitative and interpretivist research would require a long term investigation (Barnard and Burns, 2012) as well as the use of multiple data collection techniques such as classroom observation, field notes, policy documents, journal writing, and stimulated recall (Borg, 2006) to capture the complexities and dynamics of the teachers' identities.

As a final reflection, although doing this research has been a transforming experience for me in that I became more conscious about my own biases, beliefs and values in education, there remains a lot to learn. For me, this research has raised more questions than it answered, and therefore, I intend to continue exploring new avenues in the teachers' work and lives in order to find more answers that demand more questions. As Jarvis (1992: 246 in Burgess et al, 2006) states:

> Beyond answers to questions lie more questions and answers and yet more questions lie beyond answers and these also demand answers. Learning, then, typifies the human condition and is part of the human quest – one that is bound to remain unsatisfied within the bounds of time.

These seem to be fitting words with which to end this chapter and this thesis.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Material and Objectives – Cycle (1)

First Primary	
Material	**General Objectives**
– Happy House (1) by Maidment and Roberts (2008) – Rigby Star Story Telling Program 20-30Titles. Levels (lilac, pink, red)	– Participate in partner work and class discussions – Produce short utterances in English – Produce words for simple objects – Develop motor skills – Cooperate with others – Draw to express simple ideas – Participate in pair/ group work – Develop relationships through work and play – Display sensitivity and respect for others – Use isolated words and phrases to communicate daily needs – Ask for help (for example from family and friends) – Learn from watching others

Table 4: Materials and Objectives for First Primary – adapted from Directorate of Curricula, (2011)

Second Primary	
Material	**General Objectives**
– Happy House (2) by Maidment and Roberts (2008) – Rigby Star Story Telling Program 20-30 Titles. Levels (red, yellow, blue)	– Interact with classmates/develop – relationship through work and play/ develop the concept of belonging – Respond to a topic in both oral and written form – Listen for specific information – Use isolated words and phrases to communicate daily needs

Table 5: Materials and Objectives for Second Primary – adapted from Directorate of Curricula, (2011)

Third Primary	
Material	**General Objectives**
– Happy Street (1) by Maidment and Roberts (2008) – Rigby Star Story Telling Program 20-30Titles. Levels (blue, green, orange, torques, purple)	– Reflect on learning experiences – Recycle vocabulary with – pronunciation focus – Interact with class mates – Listen for gist – Write letters to complete words – Write words to complete simple – sentences – Write very short simple sentences

Table 6: Materials and Objectives for Third Primary – adapted from Directorate of Curricula, (2011)

Appendix 2: Material and Objectives – Cycle (2)

Fourth & Fifth Primary	
Material	**General Objectives**
− Backpack 3 − Guided Reading Program	− Understand and follow simple instructions and directions. − Understand and respond to formulaic questions about themselves, their needs and familiar topics. − Listen for gist and details. − Talk about themselves their daily needs and familiar topics using isolated words and phrases and simple formulaic expressions. − Requests clarifications and repetition. − Tell a simple story. − Express preferences, state and support opinions − Understand very simple text with visual support on familiar topics such as weather, jobs, food etc.. − Read for main idea − Scan for information/details. − Draw conclusions − Read and understand a short story independently. − Recognize a sequence of events. − Make predictions and summarize stories. − Write simple isolated phrases and sentences and manage 2 to 3 sentences paragraphs on familiar topics. − Interact with peers in classroom activities to develop the concept of belonging and team work. − Compare and contrast − Describe people and places. − Record and share thoughts and feeling, for example in self assessment tasks. − Use graphic organizers

Table 7: Materials and Objectives for Fourth and Fifth Primary – adapted from Directorate of Curricula, (2011)

Appendix 3: Material and Objectives – Cycle (3)

First and Second Intermediate	
Material	**General Objectives**
– Upstream (1)	**Linguistic Outcomes/Cognitive** – Make comparisons between English and – Arabic language. – Make use of an – English/English dictionary. – Associate pictures, illustrations, and sounds with meaning. – Produce the sounds, pronunciation and intonation of the target language. – Communicate in English and exchange information. – Comprehend different forms of English; dialogue, short exchanges etc. on tape and use the set of patterns in multi- sensory tasks. – Achieve oral competency through the reproduction of short exchanges. **Learning to learn/ Metacognitive** – Concentrate better and longer to perform a task. – Skim and scan texts and dialogues to locate the necessary information. – Monitor own speech and writing for persistent errors. – Develop their writing skills – Empathies with aspects of life in English-speaking countries. – Record and assess progress thus develop autonomy. **Social/affective** – Experience being part of a group and obeying rules through games and projects. – Show support and tolerance for other learners' learning styles. – Respond to feedback from teacher and peers. – Become responsible by keeping and updating own language portfolio. – Have some understanding of the culture, traditions and life in English speaking countries.

Table 8: Materials and Objectives for First, Second and Third Intermediate – adapted from Directorate of Curricula, (2011)

Appendix 4: Material and Objectives – Cycle (4)

English Courses 101, 102, 201, 202, 251, 252, 301, 302, 303, 304, 351 & 352	
Material	**General Objectives**
– Opportunities by Harris et al. (2005)	– Raise cultural awareness through exposing students to a variety of reading and writing genres of the English language as well as cross-cultural discourses from all around the world. – For the listening component, students are expected to be able to listen for gist, main ideas and specific information that correspond to each course level. – For the reading component, students will be able to scan and skim, make inferences, draw conclusions, predict outcomes, and distinguish between facts and opinions. – For the writing component, there will be a great emphasis on the process of writing such as brain storming and other pre-writing activities as well as feedback and redrafting.

Table 9: Materials and Objectives for Core Courses in Secondary Education – adapted from Directorate of Curricula, (2011)

English 215	
Material	**General Objectives**
– Business Goals by Knight et al. (2011)	As the name suggests, the course covers topics related to business, such as Advertising, Reporting, Trading, Companies and Changes at Work, to accommodate for school leavers who do not wish to work after graduation as well as those who would like to major in Business at university.

Table 10: Materials and Objectives for elective course English 215 – adapted from Directorate of Curricula, (2011)

English 219	
Material	**General Objectives**
– Flights of Fancy by Koh and Holmberg (2010)	This course intends to enable students to read poems, stories and plays and help them provide responses to different types of questions both analytically and accurately.

Table 11: Materials and Objectives for elective course English 219 – adapted from Directorate of Curricula, (2011)

English 217	
Material	**General Objectives**
– Cover to Cover by Day and Yamanaka (2009)	This course aims to expose students to extensive reading as class work and homework to improve their pace of reading, comprehension and other reading skills. Among the reading topics in this book are: Marriage, Online, Culture, Looking Good and Personality.

Table 12: Materials and Objectives for elective course English 217 – adapted from Directorate of Curricula, (2011)

English 218	
Material	**General Objectives**
– Elective Academic Writing by Savage and Shafiei (2009)	The main objective of English 218 is to help students write different types of writings at the level of paragraphs, such as descriptive, example, process, opinion, and narrative paragraphs

Table 13: Materials and Objectives for elective course English 218 – adapted from Directorate of Curricula, (2011)

English 323	
Material	**General Objectives**
– *Introduction to Academic Writing* by Oshima and Hogue (1997)	This course aims to introduce students to writings in academia so as to prepare them for the university level.

Table 14: Materials and Objectives for elective course English 323 – adapted from Directorate of Curricula, (2011)

Appendix 5: PGDE Objectives

Programme Objectives

Specifically the purpose of this programme is to produce teacher graduates who demonstrate core personal and professional knowledge, skills and values appropriate for appointment within the teaching cadre of the Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Bahrain. Grade 3 teacher candidates will demonstrate competence in the two areas—*planning, teaching and evaluation* and *personal and professional quality* outcomes—each of which has a number of categories. These are outlined on the following pages.

Specific planning, teaching and evaluation competencies (PTECs)

1. Content knowledge in their curriculum area of certification at a breadth and depth necessary to be able to

   - select the appropriate scope and sequence of subject matter for cohesive units of work at the assigned intermediate or secondary grade level

   - plan lessons by transforming subject matter into cohesive lesson content and translating it in such a way as to make it meaningful for their adolescent students

   - operate in accordance relevant educational policies and initiatives and changes in the educational landscape

2. Pedagogical knowledge and content-specific pedagogical knowledge necessary to

   - define appropriate learning objectives and lesson outcomes

   - select and apply a wide range of teaching strategies, appropriate to the content area and relevant to programme and lesson objectives

   - meet the diverse learning needs of their adolescent students in the changing educational landscape

   - engage students in the learning process through the building of learning communities and promotion of life-long learning

3. Assessment and evaluation skills necessary to

   - make judgements about the range of knowledge, skills and values relevant to their curriculum area

   - design assessment rubrics appropriate to the content and assigned grade level

   - identify students' progress on learning objectives and provide them with regular, formative feedback

- systematically document students' progress and identify any difficulties in order to remediate and to provide appropriate feedback to parents

- evaluate their planning and teaching as process of reflective practice

4. <u>Knowledge of, and sympathy toward, adolescent learners and their families in order to</u>

   - develop the social and emotional well-being of students

   - build support networks for students with families and within the community

5. <u>Commitment to the spiritual well-being of students by being able to</u>

   - enact a disciplined devotional life

   - encourage and enable a wholesome lifestyle amongst students

6. <u>Understanding of and commitment to core civic values in order to</u>

   - promote harmony of community through communicating with parents and establishing community networks

   - promote good citizenship and develop civic mindedness in students as exemplified in social cohesion, participation and civic engagement

7. <u>Knowledge and skill in classroom management necessary to</u>

   - create safe and productive learning environments among adolescents

   - define and maintain clear and consistent student expectations in relation to learning tasks and peer interactions

8. <u>Commitment to the physical well-being of students through a keenness to</u>

   - project interest in students' physical wellbeing and development

   - promote a healthy lifestyle by encouraging participation in extra-curricular activities and physical recreation in the community

Broad professional and personal competencies (PPCs)

1. <u>Interpersonal and communication skills necessary to</u>

   - operate effectively in Arabic and English

   - build rapport with and motivate students

   - model and promote core Bahraini values such as respect, kindness, care and concern for others

2. <u>Leadership skills as demonstrated in the ability and willingness to</u>

   − engage in the school life beyond the immediacy of the classroom

   − make productive, justifiable professional decisions and confidence to act on them

   − take initiative to create and sustain learning communities in their classrooms, in their schools, and in their profession

3. <u>Team work skills as exemplified in the ability to</u>

   − establish and maintain productive relationships with peers and supervisors in the university and school setting

   − organise and mobilise needed resources within the school community

   − collaborate with colleagues and other professionals, with parents, and with other members of the community to enhance student learning

4. <u>Professionalism and desire for school improvement as demonstrated in taking initiative to</u>

   − examine their professional beliefs and engage in reflection on action

   − build and maintain a professional portfolio

   − engage in a continuum of professional growth to improve their practice

   − stay abreast of the latest developments in the profession and develop or enhance their process skills

   − engaging in activities and organisations that promote the quality of the school life

   − build rapport and productive networks with stakeholders

Source: PGDE Concept Paper, (2013)

Appendix 6: PGDE Programme Structure

Portion	Course Title/Focus	CHV
	Education Studies	
	Social Context of Schooling	3
	Nature of Adolescent Learners and Learning Theory	3
	Managing Learning	3
	Information and Communication Technology for Teaching & Learning	3
38%	Total	**12**
	Curriculum Studies	
	Teaching & Learning in Specialism 1	3
	Teaching & Learning in Specialism 2	3
	Teaching & Learning in Specialism 3	3
28%	Total	**9**
	Communication for Educators	
	English for Educators	3
6%	Total	**3**
	Professional Practice	
	Pre Course-work School Attachment	0
	Teaching Practice 1	3
	Teaching Practice Seminar 1	0
	Teaching Practice 2	6
	Teaching Practice Seminar 2	0
28%	Total	**9**

Table 15: PGDE Programme Structure – PGDE Concept Paper, (2013)

Appendix 7: Interview Protocol

Introduction:

Background information about the researcher

My name is Mohamed Hasan and I am form Bahrain. I am a full time self-sponsored doctoral student in Education in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) at the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom.

Research Aims

My research seeks to understand how teachers' beliefs and experiences impact upon their teaching. This will involve asking you about your previous teaching experiences and training, as well as your current practice.

This research stems from my interest in listening to teachers, in order to hear what they have to say about their own professional development.

Possible benefits of the research:

I hope that the research will not just benefit my career, but also that it may be of some benefit to you. By taking part in this research you will have the chance to be listened to. You will have the chance to discuss whatever issues related to your life histories, professional coursework as well as your current experience with teaching at government schools in Bahrain. The implications of the research are hoped to offer insights into the planning and designing of an informed knowledge base for teacher education that could help teachers to work within and around the settings in which they are situated. In appreciation for your participation in this research, you will have the chance to enter a raffle draw and win an iPad upon the completion of the interviews.

Informed consent

- Just as a reminder, your participation in this research is voluntary.

- You can withdraw from the research at any time you like and you can refuse permission for the publication about you.

- Any information which you give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications

- All information you give will be treated as confidential

- The researcher will make every effort to preserve your anonymity

Could you please read and sign the statement of informed consent?

Do you mind my recording of the interview?

Do you have any questions before we start?

Interview One: Life History and Professional Development

1. Can you please just start by telling me a bit about yourself (who you are, what you currently do, etc)?

2. Can you tell me a bit about yourself before you became a participant in the PGDE programme? Let's start from your life as a student at school.

3. Why did you choose English as your major at university?

4. When did you become a teacher and why did you choose teaching?

5. Tell me about the PGDE programme that you did at Bahrain Teachers College.

6. Have you gained any further qualifications after the PGDE? How have you moved forward?

7. What are your professional goals for the future? (In five years and in ten years).

   Are these goals which you think you will be able to fulfill?

   (What might hold you back/help you?)

8. Is there anything you would like to add?

   Thank you very much for attending this interview. I wish all the best.

Interview Two: Contemporary Experience and Contexts

1. Tell me about your experience with life in the school where you teach right now.

2. Tell me about your job as an English teacher. What teaching and non-teaching duties do you have?

3. What does a typical day look like for you? Can you reconstruct a day of your teaching from the moment you wake up to the time you fall asleep?

4. Tell me about your relationships with students, colleagues and parents.

5. Tell me about the resources that are available for English teachers in your school.

6. Tell me about the opportunities for continual learning and professional development in your school.

7. Given what you have said about your life before you took the PGDE and given what you have said about your work and context of teaching, how do you understand teaching in your life? What does it mean to you?

8. Are there any other comments that you would like to add?

   Thank you very much for attending this interview. I wish all the best.

Appendix 8: An Extended Transcript of an Interview

Level 1 Codes, Memos, and Transcript Text **from Interview 2 with Fatima /**

Female

Raw #	Memos for Table of Memos & Level 1 Codes for Table of Codes	Transcript Text
1.		**Researcher**: Based on what you said in the previous interview and what you have said in this interview so far, how do you understand teaching and what does it mean to you in your life?
2.	[1] TEACHING AS A MORAL ACTIVITY [2] ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF TEACHING **Other participants also shed light on the economic benefits of teaching. Yasser and Osama have to work in the evening to make ends meet as their salaries are 'not enough'. Ahmed, though he doesn't like teaching, says that the only thing that keeps him in teaching is the salary.** [3] TEACHING IS TO IMPART KNOWLEDGE	**Participant**: [1] Of course, teaching is a mission more than anything else. [2] **For us, however, it's a source of living, indeed, for thousands of teachers in Bahrain, but should be a mission.** [3] [On the one hand], it's not just how to deliver the idea or the information in a language that you (Incomplete sentence) or the subject matter that you are to teach. [4] It's how you communicate with the person inside the student. [5] It's how you can cope with the current bad situation. [6]

	[4] TEACHING AS A FORM OF COMMUNICATION [5] TEACHING IS DEVELOPING RESISTANCE [6] HOW TEACHING MIGHT CHANGE LIVES	It's how you, for example, make connections with and leave a lasting impact on a student who is careless so that she can remember your words even years afterwards. It's how to make a difference in the students' lives, how to make a difference in their level. It's how much influence you have on what they do and accomplish.
3.	[1] EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO TEACHING [2] POLITICAL CONTROL IN EDUCATION [3] TEACHER BURNOUT	[1] On the other hand, teaching for us, I may say, is in a woeful situation. [2] You feel that the Ministry of Education is becoming unnecessarily militarized. The spirit of innovation for teachers is being suffocated – it is being crushed. The teacher's ability to give… (Incomplete sentence), [3] I personally know a number of teachers who were hard working but now they became dull. They tell you 'we are just waiting for nothing but the retirement.' Previously they gave peak performances to the point that [4] **they neglected their families so that they**

[4] COST OF TEACHING ON FAMILY

Striking a balance between family and work seems to pose a problem for female teachers. Many of them suspended or completely cancelled their plans to purse higher education studies or professional development courses because they have to look after their children. In our society, it is taken for granted that men are the bread winners and women are the child carers and housekeepers. However, as the family burdens increased in Bahrain, most women now work and contribute financially to the family. Practically, women are now bread winners, child carers and housekeepers! As one female participant puts it 'men can do whatever they want' while women 'can't'. Fatima also says somewhere in her interviews:

could concentrate on teaching. [5] Their attitude changed now. [6] You do not feel that if the teacher gives extra effort, he will get a reward, at least a symbolical one, which motivates him more.

187

	'let's be realistic, the family pressure largely falls on women in our society' [5] TEACHER BURNOUT [6] EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO TEACHING	
4.	[1] BENEFITS OF TEACHING [2] HOW TEACHING MIGHT CHANGE LIVES	[1] But at the same time, you sometimes get incentives from teaching such as a smile in the face of a student who does a certain thing she never thought she could do. This smile is an incentive for me because I was able to give her something. [2] I was able to change her and enable her to do something she thought it was impossible but now it is possible for her, even with difficulty. For example, you make the student feel that she beat you in a discussion. Initially, you encouraged the student to negotiate because you want to give her the chance to win and increase her self-confidence. You want her to feel 'Ok, I

	^{3} TEACHING IS 'COOPERATING' WITH OTHERS ^{4} BENEFITS OF TEACHING	have beaten my teacher.' Sometimes she comes up with a piece of information that you may pretend you do not know but you don't want to tell her because you want her to feel a sense of achievement. ^{3} Other incentives are when a colleague gives you something to do and you cooperate with her, she tells you 'May Allah give you health' or 'May Allah bless your parents'. ^{4} Such incentives, I believe, are enough to help teachers pass through difficult times.
5.	^{1} DIFFICULT TIME ^{2} THE PRESSURES TEACHERS FACE ^{3} DIFFICULT TIME	^{1} Of course in the period after the midterm the work gets to its peak. ^{2} You are required to grade the midterm [exam] papers, sort the grades and check a colleague's grades. No paper is accepted unless it is checked question by question. It is as if you are remarking a new paper! ^{3} At this time, the countdown for the submission of the term's grades starts. You are in a constant movement. ^{4} **For example, a**

	[4] HELPING LOW ACHIEVERS **Other participants also mentioned that helping 'low achievers' is one of their priorities. They discussed in abundant detail the difficulty of raising the levels of these students. This issues seems to cause a challenge for teachers** [5] TEACHING IS A MORAL ACTIVITY	**certain student has a very low level and you want to give her a chance to 'push up' a little bit. I want her to work so that I could improve her grades otherwise** [5] 'I cannot give her a grade that she doesn't deserve – this is Haram (forbidden religiously)'.
6.	[1] THE PRESSURES TEACHERS FACE [2] EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO TEACHING [3] BUREAUCRACY	[1] At the same time you are required to do an enormous amount of paperwork which you personally feel irrelevant'. [2] You spend a lot of time on it and then all of this work will be filed and put aside. It's just files that are piled on top of each other and I personally feel they have no relationship or influence on the job we do in the classroom or on raising the level of the students.[3] **It's just bureaucracy** – adding extra paperwork and accumulating piles of

	[4] DIFFICULT TIME [5] ILL HEALTH	papers! [4] We almost pass though this period of time every semester where we get to the point of explosion. [5] Very often, one teacher or two fall ill once or twice. Last semester, we had a teacher whom Allah gave a new life. She had acute inflammation in the chest and was admitted to the intensive care unit for nearly 12 day!
7.		**Researcher**: What was the reason?
8.	[1] THE PRESSURES TEACHERS FACE [2] ILL HEALTH [4] TEACHERS' RELATIONSHIP OUTSIDE SCHOOL	**Participant**: [1] the reason is the effort she makes as a teacher. She was under pressure to the point that, you know, [2] her immune system collapsed. She got tired. Almighty Allah gave her another life because she was indeed in the intensive care. [4] When we visited her, we thought that's it 'she is gone!'
9.	[1] ILL HEALTH	We also had another teacher who was pregnant and had premature labor because of [1] the exhaustion and fatigue that she underwent. She stayed at home for two weeks. The

	[2] DIFFICULT TIME [3] ILL HEALTH	situation was dangerous for her and her baby. [2]These are some of the pressures we face at this period. [3] We have teachers who are sound all the course but at this period they suddenly catch the flu!
10.		**Researcher**: How about you? How did this affect your health?
11.	[1] ILL HEALTH [2] DIFFICULT TIME [3] EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO TEACHING [4] POLITICAL RESPONSES TO TEACHING	[1] I generally suffer from a health problem, so [2] in that period I cannot talk, I cannot look at people, I cannot smell certain things, and I cannot eat everything – I am in a continuous boiling state and tiredness. [3] You feel that you are going to die before the work that we do in this period finishes. It's a very exhausting period. [4] As secondary school teachers we used to have one good advantage, that's, when we finish work we get some rest but the ministry now came up with new things to fill in this time with work, so it never ends.
12.		**Researcher**: How did teaching affect

		your personality, either negatively or positively?
13.	[1] BENEFITS OF TEACHING	**Participant**: [1] it affected my personality in ways that I probably became more organized because if you do not manage your time, it will be impossible to do anything. I can measure which is important and which is more important and do the more important first.
14.	[1] IDENTITY CHANGES IN RESPONSE TO TEACHING [2] POLITICAL CONTROL IN EDUCATION [3] RESISTANCE TO PRESSURE [4] IDENTITY CHANGES IN RESPONSE TO TEACHING **This part of the transcript text comes at the end of the second interview. At the beginning of the same interview Fatima said: 'the terrifying thing for me is if they transfer me to another school…'** **But here she says she 'doesn't**	[1] It unfortunately affected my personality in ways that I sometimes get to the state of carelessness. [2] The administration wants us to do the job in a certain way [3] but 'this is how I do it, and if the administration will make a problem, so what? That's it.' We got to a stage that we cannot do anything. 'Will the administration make a problem for us? Let it do so. What can it do? [4] **Will it transfer me to another school**? Let it do so – this is the last thing I care about. [5] That's it, and if they extend the argument, I will fight

		care' if they transfer her. This indicates an internal conflict within Fatima. On the one hand, the idea of her teaching in another school scares her but on the other she's ready to face this fear head-on if this means that she preserves her dignity. [5] RESISTANCE TO PRESSURE	with them, done!' We got to a stage that we have no options. They know that we are under pressure!
15.		[1] THE PRESSURES TEACHERS FACE [2] TEACHING IS 'COOPERATING' WITH OTHERS [3] THE PRESSURES TEACHERS FACE [4] RELIGIOUS RESPONSES TO TEACHING [5] EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO TEACHING	[1] As a section, we are under pressure, a lot of courses, and an enormous amount of work. [2] As I told you, working with a partner in the second semester makes it easier [3] but the first semester is 'a killer, completely a killer!' You never have a chance and you cannot complain because all sections are in a situation that only [4] Allah knows about! [5] I feel sorry for the Arabic teachers. Their exam has three separate papers, writing, listening as well as the main exam.

16.	[1] THE PRESSURES TEACHERS FACE	[1] The least job, such as, stapling students' papers takes ages to do. Very tiring! [2] As I told you, it is a tiring job but it has advantages. [3] I believe that if we go back to the essence of the job, the goal is not to show off. [4] It is not to have empty meetings that discuss philosophical matters that have actually nothing to do with the student. [5] We are ignoring the existence of problems. For example, why is the level of students in English low? The main reason is that we have 36 students in the class. I naturally cannot attend to all of them. It's only one hour! If you give me a class with 25 students, [6] even if their levels are weaker, they will naturally get better grades because the level of attention which the student receives from the teacher and her classmates is higher.
	[2] BENEFITS OF TEACHING	
	[3] POLITICAL RESPONSES TO TEACHING	
	[4] BUREAUCRACY	
	[5] POLITICAL RESPONSES TO TEACHING	
	[6] HELPING LOW ACHIEVERS	
17.	[1] POLITICAL RESPONSES TO TEACHING	[1] We need a new school but the ministry pretends to see no problem. [2] The chairs that the students sit on and
	[2] TEACHING ENVIRONMENT	

	[3] ILL HEALTH	the tables are not qualified to sit on for a long time. [3] The chairs are wooden and sitting on them hurts students' backs and makes them feel tired. [4] 'The seating you are providing to us is not suitable! – The environment is not suitable!' [5] In our school there are no facilities at all! [6] What solutions do they give you? What they give you is idealistic and imaginary solutions**Error! Bookmark not defined.** but the solutions you need are not implemented.
	[4] TEACHING ENVIRONMENT	
	[5] SCHOOL FACILITIES	
	[6] POLITICAL RESPONSES TO TEACHING	
18.	[1] THE CHALLENGES TEACHERS FACE	[1] I believe that the teacher faces a great challenge these days. The challenge of the present bad situation, the challenge of dealing with students, the challenge of dealing with parents, the challenge of working with the ministry, the challenge of working with the administration, and other challenges that come from everywhere. [2] There is no support for the teacher and at the same time,
	[2] POLITICAL RESPONSES TO TEACHING	

		when there is a problem, it will fall on the head of the teacher. Even if It is the administration's problem, the teacher at the end will be blamed! There is no support for the teacher, no psychological support, and of course, no financial support. Even if you go to get a maker (pen), you act as if you are begging not as if you are getting a pen that you will use to explain to students. They make you feel as if you would steal it and take it home and use it for your own benefits. They always remind you that 'we gave you workshops!' Fine, 'Why do you remind me? Is it going to benefit my life? Will I use it outside the school? It will eventually serve my work, so you cannot consider it a favor because in the end it will benefit the work.'
19.	[1] EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO TEACHING [2] RELIGIOUS RESPONSES TO TEACHING	[1] The situation is generally harsh – but there is no life with despair. [2] God willing, [3] there is hope for a breakthrough and in a better future.

	[3] FUTURE OF TEACHING	There is hope that somebody will wake up at the end and says 'Oh most of the work we are doing is nonsense!' Let us focus on a real and tangible project of change rather than this worthless paperwork.

Appendix 9: Tables of Codes, Memos, and Indices

Summary of Level 1 Codes of Transcript Text from Interview 2 with Fatima / Female

TABLE OF CODES

FIGURE 7: Table of Codes

199

TABLE OF MEMOS

Other participants also shed light on the economic benefits of teaching. Yasser and Osama have to work in the evening to make ends meet as their salaries are 'not enough'. Ahmed, though he doesn't like teaching, says that the only thing that keeps him in teaching is the salary...........4

Striking a balance between family and work seems to pose a problem for female teachers. Many of them suspended or completely cancelled their plans to purse higher educational studies or professional development courses because they have to look after their children. In our society, it is taken for granted that men are the bread winners and women are the child carers and housekeepers. However, as the family burdens increased in Bahrain, most women now work and contribute financially to the family. Practically, women are now bead winners, child carers and housekeepers! As one female participant puts it 'men can do whatever they want' while women 'can't'. Fatema also says somewhere in her interviews: 'let's be realistic, the family pressure largely falls on women in our society'..5

Other participants also mentioned that helping 'low achievers' is one of their priorities. They discussed in abundant detail the difficulty of raising the levels of these students. This issues seems to cause a challenge for teachers 8

This part of the transcript text comes at the end of the second interview. At the beginning of the same interview Fatem said: 'the terrifying thing for me is if they transfer me to another school...' But here she says she 'doesn't care' if they transfer her. This indicates an internal conflict within Fatema. On the one hand, the idea of her teaching in another school scares her but on the other she's ready to face this fear head-on if this means that she preserves her dignity. 12

FIGURE 8: Table of Memos

CODE DOCUMENT INDETX

FIGURE 9: Code Document Index

Appendix 10: Ethical Approval

UNIVERSITY OF
E**X**ETER

Graduate School of Education

Certificate of ethical research approval

DISSERTATION/THESIS

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, and then have it signed by your supervisor and finally by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site: http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications and view the School's Policy online.

FIGURE 6: Table of Codes

IPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). **DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND**

Your name: Mohamed Hasan Mohamed Hasan

Your student no: 610031291/1

Return address for this certificate: Flat 1, Bldg 1596, Road 5159, Block 551, Alqurraya, Bahrain

Degree/Programme of Study: Doctorate of Education in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (EdD TESOL)

Project Supervisor(s): Dr Phil Durrant & Dr Alexandra Allan

Your email address: mhasan201@exeter.ac.uk

Tel: 973 39265542

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my thesis to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.

I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.

Signed:..date: 09/04/2013

*NB For Masters dissertations, which are marked blind, this first page must **not be included** in your work. It can be kept for your records.*

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
updated: April 2012

Certificate of ethical research approval
DISSERTATION/THESIS

Your student no: 610031291/1

Title of your project: An Exploration of Bahraini English Language Teachers' Beliefs after Their PGDE Programme: Towards an Informed Knowledge Base in Teacher Education

Brief description of your research project:

This study asks Bahraini school teachers of English, who completed an in-service post-graduate diploma in education (PGDE) programme, to reconstruct their life histories before and after they took the PGDE and to provide details of their experiences with life in the contexts of their teaching. In addition, it explores how the teachers understand teaching to be and what sense it makes to them in their life. What is more, it tries to elicit the teachers' assessment of how the PGDE prepared them to do their work. It also aims to identify how the teachers' experiences with life in their contexts of teaching impact their integration of the skills and knowledge they acquired in the PGDE programme. Finally, it seeks to identify how these experiences interact with the teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning.

Possible Benefits

By taking part in the research, the participants will have the chance to be listened to. They will have the chance to discuss whatever issues related to their life histories, professional coursework as well as their current experience with teaching at government schools in Bahrain. The implications of the research are hoped to offer insights into the planning and designing of an informed knowledge base for teacher education that could help teachers to work within and around the settings in which they are situated. In appreciation for their participation, the participants will have the chance to enter a raffle draw and win an iPad upon the completion of the interviews.

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
updated: April 2012

Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):

The participants of the research consist of 15 Bahraini English language teachers at government schools in Bahrain, 10 females and 5 males, who have completed a PGDE programme. Their ages are above 25 years old.

Give details (with special reference to any children or those with special needs) regarding the ethical issues of:

a) <u>informed consent:</u> **Where children in schools are involved this includes both headteachers and parents). Copy(ies) of your consent form(s) you will be using must accompany this document.**

In my research, I will follow the ethical protocol of the University of Exeter for undertaking research and I will acquire the ethical approval from the university to carry out this research. All the participants will be informed about the purpose of the study and the likely consequences of its findings, and will be requested to sign a consent form (See attached blank consent form). As the interviews will be conducted in the teachers' private time (i.e. after school time), no permission of the school head teachers will be sought.

b) <u>anonymity and confidentiality</u>

I will make it clear to the participants that all the information provided in the interviews and follow-up emails and phone calls will be used for my dissertation and publication purposes. The participants will be given the right to withdraw from the research at any time because their participation is completely voluntary. The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants' real names and their schools will also be reassured. Pseudonyms will be used to refer to the participants instead of their real names. Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that no output (e.g. thesis or conference presentation) will provide information which might allow any participant to be identified from names, data, contextual information or a combination of these.

Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:

Data Collection Methods:

In-depth interviewing will be used to collect the research data. Each participant will attend three 90-minute interviews that build on one another. The first interview provides contextual background from the teachers' life histories by asking them to reconstruct their life before

and after they took the PGDE programme. The second interview seeks to explore the contemporary experiences of teachers by eliciting extensive details about what they actually do in their work and what their experience of life in their teaching context is like. Finally, the third interview asks teachers to reflect on the meaning of their life histories and experiences with life in the contexts of their teaching.

In-depth interviewing can be problematic if it is not conducted with care. For example, open-ended questions in the interviews can cause problems to participants especially if these questions are deep, ambiguous and sensitive. I am aware that participants might feel 'uneasy' and may develop strategies to avoid answering deep questions. Therefore, the research questions in this study will be made as brief and simple as possible to make participants feel comfortable. A pilot on the research instrument will be carried out to check if the questions need to be reworded and simplified. Additionally, after each actual interview, reflection and evaluation of how it went in terms of questions and how the participants felt about the questions will be conducted to avoid repeating mistakes in subsequent interviews.

Data Analysis:

In order to do justice to the data, the analysis in this research will go through three stages: description, analysis and interpretation. In the description stage, data will be presented with constant reference to the participants' own words to provide an account that is very close to the participants' views of the situation and to allow readers understand the background against which my claims will be based at later stages. Where necessary, some data, such as the participants' demographic information, will be quantified and presented statistically and visually in tables or diagrams. As with the analysis stage, this will try to tie up the described data and provide the reader with a picture of the participants and their context. The final stage will give a synthesized account of what the story of the research means and implies with reference to the research data, the literature, and the personal knowledge of the researcher. From this thorough interpretation, insights into teacher beliefs and context will be made in order to illuminate not only the particular context of the study but also to exceed it to other contexts (i.e. generalizability/transferability).

After transcribing all interviews, data in this research will be broken down into excerpts and arranged and rearranged in different ways in order to promote a better understanding of what it represents. Word-Processing and Excel Spreadsheets will be used to classify, sort,

reconnect and facilitate the search for certain data and the movement of text from one category to another. The analysis will also capitalize on other techniques of organizing data such as the use of cards, coloured pens and scissors to physically engage with the data.

The process of arrangement and rearrangement will be based on the themes derived inductively from the data itself, the theoretical framework of the research as well as the research objectives. Although I will not try to come to the transcripts looking particularly for certain aspects, I will, if these aspects are available in the transcripts, be alert to relationships, patterns, tensions or conflicts either between people or within a person, shared beliefs and common narratives in the data. With a content analysis approach to discourse, I will then explore the rest of the data to confirm the preliminary themes and to look for common threads in the data. Because it is impossible to include everything in the analysis, the data will be reduced into manageable groups of themes that are based on the interest of the research.

In the interpretation stage, I will explain how I understand the connections in the transcripts, what I understand now that I did not understand before the interviews, how the data confirmed pervious understanding, and how the interview findings are consistent or inconsistent with the literature. Additionally, I will discuss how my research experience was like, how I understood it and made sense of it.

Reflexivity:

In this research, I acknowledge that my reflection on the research data is subjective, and therefore, the research is not exempt from criticism, because complete impartiality is 'impossible' to achieve in interpretive research. I also acknowledge the power I have as a researcher through reconstruction of the participants' world according to my interpretation.

Despite the fact that I am aware of my stance vis-à-vis the relationship between teacher beliefs and teacher education and contexts, I will not try to enforce these views in the data. This is because I am adopting an exploratory approach to data analysis of the interviews instead of having pre-determined judgements about how the results might look like.

Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project (e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires or special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.):

All recorded interviews will be stored in the researcher's personal computer which is password protected and cannot be accessed by other people. Audio data will be downloaded from recording devices at the earliest possible opportunity, and then deleted immediately from those devices. The list of participants' names, contacts and pseudonyms will be stored on the university U-drive. Any hard copy date- e.g. participants' signed consent forms- will be stored in a locked filing cabinet / drawer / cupboard'.

Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):

As teachers will be free to talk about their context of teaching and experiences, they may bring up political issues that relate to the environment in their schools and outside their schools which could cause problems for the teachers. Hence, I will make sure that if my research were to discuss these issues, the participants' personal identities and their schools' names will be completely concealed.

This form should now be printed out, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's Research Support Office for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.

N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

---

This project has been approved for the period: 10/5/13 until: 30/9/15

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature): ..P.L.D................. date:..............................

N.B. To Supervisor: Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occur a further form is completed.

GSE unique approval reference:...............D/12/13/24

Signed:.............NKirkwd.............................date:......8/5/13........
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
updated: April 2012

FIGURE 10: Certificate of Ethical Research Approval

Appendix 11: Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

BRIEF DISCRIPTION OF MY RESEARCH

Bahraini English Language Teachers' Beliefs and Experiences

My research aims to understand teachers' beliefs and life experiences. It asks Bahraini school teachers of English, who completed an in-service post-graduate diploma in education (PGDE) programme, to reconstruct their life histories before and after they took the PGDE and to provide details of their experiences with life in the contexts of their teaching. It also asks them to reflect on the meaning that they make of their life histories and experiences.

CONSENT FORM

Who, How Long, and How?

You are invited to take part in interviewing research on the Beliefs and Experiences of Bahraini English language teachers. The process involves three separate interviews: the first on life history, the second on the details of your experience in teaching at school, and the third on the meaning to you of your experience. The interviews will last 90 minutes each, spaced normally over a week or two. All interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed by the researcher.

To What End?

The reason for doing this research is to provide an opportunity for Bahraini English language teachers to talk about their life histories, professional coursework and lived experiences so as to make their voices heard. I intend to use this research for my doctoral dissertation.

For whom?

This research is carried out for my doctoral dissertation. My name is Mohamed Hasan and I am from Bahrain. I am a full time self-sponsored doctoral student in Education in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) at the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom. I earned my BA in English and Translation from the University of Bahrain (UOB) in 2007 and MA in TESOL from the University of Essex in the UK in 2009. I used to work as a part-time English teacher at the University of Bahrain (UOB), Bahrain Training Institute (BTI) and Delmon University. I also taught Arabic to American students at the University of Pennsylvania in the USA as part of my Fulbright Teaching Assistantship (FLTA) between 2007 and 2008.

Risks, Discomfort, and Vulnerability

The process of the interviews could cause discomfort at times but I will work to minimize such occasions. When your words are used in the research report, I will take all reasonable steps to protect your anonymity.

Voluntary Participation and the Right to Withdraw

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You have the right to drop out of the study at any time during the interviews and within a specified time after you are completed.

1

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Possible Benefits

By taking part in this research you will have the chance to be listened to. You will have the chance to discuss whatever issues related to your life histories, professional coursework as well as your current experience with teaching at government schools in Bahrain. The implications of the research are hoped to offer insights into the planning and designing of an informed knowledge base for teacher education that could help teachers to work within and around the settings in which they are situated. In appreciation for your participating in this research, you will have the chance to enter a raffle draw and win an iPad upon the completion of the interviews.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

The information provided in the interviews and follow-up emails and phone calls will be used for my dissertation, which might include publications. All your recorded interviews will be treated confidentially. They will be stored in the researcher's personal computer which is pass-word protected and cannot be accessed by other people. The anonymity of your real name and your school will also be reassured. Pseudonyms will be used to refer to the participants instead of their real names.

Consent

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.

I understand that:

> there is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation

> I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me

> any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications

> all information I give will be treated as confidential

> the researcher will make every effort to preserve my anonymity

........................…………………….   ……………………………
(Signature of participant)   (Date)

…………………….
(Printed name of participant)

One copy of this form will be kept by the participant; a second copy will be kept by the researcher(s)

Contact details of the researcher (Mohamed Hasan): Telephone: (973) 39265542 / Email: (mhmh201@exeter.ac.uk) or (quraia2002@hotmail.com).

2

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact:

My First Supervisor, Dr. Philip Durrant , Email: (P.L.Durrant@exeter.ac.uk) / Telephone: (+44 (0) 1392 72 4974).

OR

My Second Supervisor, Dr. Alexandra Allan, Email: (A.J.Allan@exeter.ac.uk) / Telephone: (+44 (0) 1392 72 2881).

Data Protection Act: The University of Exeter is a data collector and is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as required to do under the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for research purposes and will be processed in accordance with the University's registration and current data protection legislation. Data will be confidential to the researcher(s) and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties without further agreement by the participant. Reports based on the data will be in anonymised form.

FIGURE 11: Consent Form

Appendix 12: Exeter Letter for University Enrolment

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

11 January 2013

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that the student detailed below is currently enrolled with the University of Exeter for the purpose of studying on the programme specified below:

Name:	Mr Mohamed Hasan Mohamed HASAN
Student No.:	610031291/1
Date of Birth:	17/May/1979
Permanent Address:	Flat 1, Bldg 1596, Road 5159, Block 551, Alqurrya, Bahrain
Correspondence Address:	As above
Programme:	Doctorate of Education in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (EdD TESOL)
Programme Start Date:	01/Oct/2011
Submission Target:	30/Sep/2014
Completion Deadline:	30/Sep/2015
Status:	FULL TIME
Supervisor 1:	Dr Phil Durrant
Supervisor 2:	Dr Alexandra Allan

Mr Hasan has completed the modular, pre-thesis stage of the EdD programme and is currently working on the thesis of approximately 50,000 words. His working thesis title is "A critical investigation of the pedagogical knowledge of EFL teachers in Bahrain schools".

Yours sincerely

Jenny Andrews

Jenny Andrews
Graduate Research School
College of Social Sciences and International Studies

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER
College of Social Sciences and International Studies

FIGURE 12: Exeter Letter for University Enrolment