EFL Teachers' Views about their Roles in the Curriculum of the EFL Foundation Year Programme in Saudi Arabia

Dedication

To my wife Ferial and my children Sallah, Housam, Fadel and Waeel

Thank you for your patience and support

Abstract

This research is an exploratory study that investigated teachers' roles in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) curriculum within a Foundation Year Programme (FYP), at an English Language Institute (ELI) in one of the public universities in Saudi Arabia. The study focused on teachers' roles in three different stages of the curriculum: development, implementation and evaluation. The participants of the study were twenty-two expatriate and Saudi EFL teachers, male and female, with experience in teaching in the FYP. The study adopted an interpretive approach to address the issues under investigation. Three research questions were raised to address the teachers' roles in each area separately. Data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with teachers. Based on interpretative principles, data were analysed in the form of explanation and interpretation of the participants' views about their roles in the investigated stages of curriculum.

The findings indicated that EFL teachers had limited roles in the curriculum development process as they participated in only two different curriculum development tasks: the pre-use course book selection and the students' language needs analysis. In the implementation stage, teachers were more active as they reported that they had the freedom to develop and use their own supplementary teaching materials in addition to having the freedom to adopt the teaching methodology they felt was appropriate for their students. In the evaluation stage, the teachers reported different levels of involvement in the evaluation of certain curriculum elements selected by the ELI administration, namely, course books, pacing guide, tests, the module system and students' portfolios. Finally, teachers offered various suggestions for engaging them more actively in the curriculum decision-making process in the three stages of curriculum.

The study made some recommendations for improving teachers' roles in the development, implementation and evaluation stages of the curriculum for future consideration.

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Finally, I am so appreciative of the ELI teachers who devoted their time to participate in this study.

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List of Abbreviations

Curriculum development:	**CD**
Curriculum implementation:	**CI**
English as a foreign language:	**EFL**
English as a Medium of Instruction:	**EMI**
English as a Second Language:	**ESL**
English as Foreign Language:	**EFL**
English for Academic Purposes:	**EAP**
English for Specific Purposes:	**ESP**
English Language Curriculum:	**ELC**
English Language Institute:	**ELI**
English Language Institutes:	**ELIs**
English Language Teaching:	**ELT**
English Language:	**EL**
Foundation Year Deanship:	**FYD**
Foundation Year Programmes:	**FYP**
General English:	**GE**
King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals:	**KFUPM**
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:	**KSA**
Language Assessment Literacy:	**LAL**
Ministry of Education:	**MoE**
Science Technology Engineering Mathematics:	**STEM**
Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Language:	**TESOL**
University Entrance Exam:	**UEE**

1 Chapter One: Introduction to the Study

1.1 Introduction

In Saudi Arabia, English is taught as a foreign language and become one of the major priorities in the national strategy to improve higher education. In many universities, this strategy was reflected in the adoption of educational plans and policies in the area of the teaching of English as Foreign Language (EFL) for undergraduate students. In 2009, most Saudi universities adopted a new educational policy, which made English the medium of instruction for all scientific departments for undergraduate studies. This has led to establishing Foundation Year Programmes (FYP) in English Language Institutes (ELIs) in a number of Saudi universities. These programmes aim to improve English language proficiency levels of undergraduate students in order to help them cope with the requirements of their academic disciplines and their professional lives. ELIs are responsible for offering Intensive EFL courses in one academic year. Moreover, these programmes seek to accomplish major objectives, namely, to help students achieve the required level of language competence in the four language skills, communicate effectively in English and acquire basic academic skills and learning tools that are essential at university. These ELIs offer intensive compulsory courses such as English for Academic Purposes (EAP), English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and General English (GE) (AL-Murabit, 2012; Javid et al., 2012; Al-Shumaimeri, 2013). Although this can be regarded as a constructive and promising institutional change, it is vital to involve the "teachers who will be the main group for implementing the change" (Nation & Macalister, 2010: 176). Indeed, their engagement in the decision making process in terms of EFL curriculum is an essential factor that helps in achieving the intended plans and objectives of such language courses because "a curriculum is the core of educational decision activities, and outcomes of a particular settings" (Carroll, 2007: v), since the curriculum "is structured as a series of intended learning outcomes and it prescribes the result of the instruction" (Johnson, 1967:130, cited in McKernan, 2008). The role of EFL teachers in the EL curriculum is an extremely important issue in language curriculum development (Carroll, 2007) and in transmitting knowledge from the curriculum to the learners (Freeman, 2002).

Nevertheless, EFL teachers of these intensive English courses in ELIs, which is the focus of the current study, face many challenges and huge responsibilities in terms of EFL curriculum. These challenges can be attributed to three basic factors: institutional and administrative pressure, pedagogical demands and accreditation requirements. The institutional and administrative factors can be noticed through the required teaching performance that must be met by teachers in order to match the high expectations of various stakeholders including students and the teaching faculty from other university colleges who are to teach the students after they successfully pass the FYP. With respect to the pedagogical demands, teachers are required to adapt their teaching to contemporary teaching methodologies. In addition, they need to bridge the gap between their students' low levels of language competence and the required level of language proficiency expected upon completing the FYP, taking into account their contextual learning background constraints and conditions. Furthermore, students who join the FYP have different language needs and requirements depending on their future academic discipline and area of specialisation. It is a highly demanding task for teachers to address the multiple needs of thousands of students across the university colleges through the current EFL curricula of the FYPs. Regarding the accreditation requirements, the quality of teaching standards must be similar to other long-standing and well-established ELIs at university level in similar EFL contexts, in terms of professionalism, and practicality.

The aforementioned institutional challenges point to the huge tasks associated with the EFL teachers' roles in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in implementing the EFL curriculum. Moreover, the above suggests that the FYP EFL curricula in ELIs in general and the teachers' roles in the curriculum in particular appear to be a rich area for conducting research due to the recent introduction of the FYP in the country.

1.2 Institutional Experience

In 2009, I worked as an EFL teacher in an ELI in the KSA, the site of this study, in one of the Saudi universities. At that time, a new EFL curriculum was introduced in the ELI simultaneously with the implementation of the FYP for undergraduate students. Through recurrent discussions with a great number of experienced EFL teachers, I noticed that the issue of the teachers' involvement in the newly implemented EFL curriculum was a subject of concern for teachers who often seemed to reveal a certain feeling of disappointment, frustration and dissatisfaction due to their limited role in various aspects of the curriculum. For example, a number of EFL teachers seem to have experienced certain changes in terms of course books, testing, courses, teachers' evaluation and students' assessment. Throughout my personal and professional interaction with a great number of EFL teachers in this ELI, I have come to realise that they seem to express opposition towards most of the decisions taken in relation to the changes that occur in the curriculum. Consequently, numerous teachers mentioned the growing number of problems and obstacles that they experienced in implementing the curriculum in addition to their absence of engagement in terms of decision making in the curriculum. The negative attitudes of ELI teachers in this context have drawn my attention to an interesting area for exploration and gave me an initial clue for this research topic. Therefore, I was motivated to investigate the roles of teachers in the EFL curriculum through conducting the current study.

1.3 Impact of Foundation Year Programme

The introduction of the FYP was associated with new academic regulations and important changes for undergraduate students. The essential issue is that the intensive English courses in the FYP are compulsory for all undergraduate students who cannot pursue their studies at university unless they pass the FYP. This policy has put an unprecedented intensive academic burden on students who have to cope with this important requirement right in their first year at university following graduation from secondary school. It is important to realise that failure to pass the FYP can have very negative impacts on the future of a great number of students which can consequently result in serious outcomes and make their future lives more difficult at different levels: psychologically, socially,

professionally and economically. These anticipated negative outcomes can be caused by a number of shortcomings in terms of the design of the courses, the selection of materials, the testing procedures and the perception of students' actual needs in EFL. As a result, this can be reflected on students' low academic achievements in EFL and their failure to meet the FYP language requirements. Therefore, it is vital to make sure that the curriculum of the intensive English courses is designed adequately in order to help the students achieve its intended aims. This undoubtedly requires an active involvement of the teachers who are responsible for implementing the curriculum. In practice, teacher' roles are crucial in the early stages of planning, particularly when conducting a needs analysis, setting the goals and objectives of the curriculum, designing the teaching materials (Hadley, 1999) and also in the other elements of the EFL curriculum. Furthermore, EFL teachers can play a major role in implementing the learning activities in accordance with their students' interests and needs (Goodman, 1986). In that respect, I believe that involving the teachers in the areas of curriculum development, implementation and evaluation can have positive impacts on reducing any potential negative effects on the students due to their extended knowledge of the students' needs, context knowledge and experience in the field.

1.4 Personal Interests

Since I joined the EdD programme as a doctoral student, I have conducted extensive reading in the field of the Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in relation to teacher education, curriculum issues, language policy, materials design, and critical pedagogy. I have had the chance to focus on these domains and study issues from the perspectives of students, teachers, administrators or policy makers. Interestingly, the aspects that particularly caught my attention were the curriculum-related issues, which I found very interesting and practical. As a result, I was encouraged to investigate EFL teachers' perceptions of curriculum evaluation through a research study conducted as part as a preparation phase in the doctorate. However, it was a small-scale study which only focused on one aspect, namely, curriculum evaluation. This experience has prompted me to move a step further and investigate more rigorously the wider perspectives of the teachers' views regarding their roles in an EFL curriculum in my specific teaching context, that is, the KSA, in more depth and breadth.

1.5 Rationale of the Study

The rationale for this study is to identify the teachers' roles in the FYP curriculum in the three stages of curriculum: development, implementation and evaluation, in an English Language Institute (ELI) in a Saudi university, through conducting an empirical research. Consequently, it is hoped that this investigation can lead to the recognition of the potential advantages of teachers having active roles in the curriculum and the disadvantages of their lack of voices in its three stages. The main benefit of addressing this issue from the teachers' perspectives is that it provides an account of actual practices and procedures from within the field. Thus, moving from general to specific, the study seeks to achieve two essential objectives: practical and personal. The first objective is to draw some attention towards EFL teachers' roles in a FYP curriculum. Given that this is a new educational policy in the country, this research is an attempt to participate in tackling some vital areas for its improvement and success. This is because Saudi universities invest heavily in managing the FYP and spend considerable amounts of money to provide all the needed resources. The personal objective of the study is to provide the researcher with a deep knowledge and understanding about the roles of teachers in the FYP curriculum. In fact, before conducting the current study, I had limited background knowledge about the EFL curriculum of the FYP in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, I consider this study as rich and constructive experience in terms of gaining curriculum expertise. Also, it is a positive step towards my personal research development, as I intend to specialise in the field of EFL curriculum.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study could be of significant importance in Saudi Arabia, because of the lack of research in terms of teachers' roles in curriculum, as this is the first attempt in Saudi Arabia to explore together the teachers' roles in three stages of the curriculum: development, implementation and evaluation. Previous studies investigated teachers' roles in only one or two curriculum stages separately. Mullick (2013) investigated EFL teachers' perception of their involvement in curriculum development, while Shah et al. (2013) explored teachers' perspectives about the factors that influence their implementation duty, namely, their teaching practice and the techniques they used to deal with those factors. Therefore, the

study can be useful for the Saudi context as it can increase people's awareness of a recent EFL programme. It is hoped that the results of this study can provide valuable insights for curriculum policy makers and specialists in ELIs as it sheds light on the views and experiences of the research participants about the FYP. In that regard, the findings could provide them with a deeper understanding of various issues related to the nature of teachers' roles in these three curriculum stages and the lessons that could be learned from the findings for future consideration. Furthermore, the study may contribute to the literature and open the field to further enquiry; therefore, this could promote further research focusing on teachers' roles in the EFL curriculum in other similar ELIs in the country.

Additionally, this research is significant for the immediate context of the study, ELI, at different levels. The study recognises the primacy of teachers' roles and gives them the chance to share their experiences and convey their views and concerns regarding the investigated curriculum issues. Thus, this research can be regarded as a form of empowerment for the research participants as it considers their views to be the core of the research. Another significant aspect relates to the approach adopted with the participants throughout the research. Indeed, although quantitative methodologies are still dominant in the KSA, this study has highlighted the potential and the positive impact of a qualitative approach. This study has paved the ground for other qualitative studies, since such a research approach has not been previously utilised in this context with this particular topic. Lastly, the study can enhance teachers' roles in the curriculum and contribute to curriculum management reform in the current research context by sharing the findings with the ELI top management, members of curriculum committees and senior staff of curriculum units. These findings can deepen our understanding of teachers' perceptions of their roles in the curriculum and how to enhance their participation in the decision-making process. The findings can be of particular interest to the administration who may wish to revisit and improve certain institutional curriculum policies. The administration, heads of units, supervisors and coordinators are in need of the information provided by the research participants, in order to improve teachers' roles in the three stages of the curriculum: development, implementation and evaluation. Eventually, this could help in improving teaching and learning in the programme as well.

1.7 Research Questions

The study attempts to explore the views of teachers about their roles in the EFL curriculum of a FYP within an ELI in in Saudi Arabia and seeks to answer the following three research questions

1. What are EFL teachers' views about their roles in the development stage of the curriculum?
2. What are EFL teachers' views about their roles in the implementation stage of the curriculum?
3. What are EFL teachers' views about their roles in the evaluation stage of the curriculum?

1.8 Thesis Organisation

This thesis is organised in seven chapters. The current chapter has described the institutional experience, the impacts of the FYP, my personal interests, the rationale of the study, its significance and the research questions.

The second chapter introduces the context of the study by shedding light on the history of teaching English in Saudi Arabia and the history of higher Education focusing on the status of English and ELT in this context. The chapter also examines the nature of the FYPs in Saudi universities in terms of the structure of the intensive English language programmes in place. Additionally, the chapter discusses components of intensive English courses of the FYP curriculum and students' background in higher education. Finally, it also outlines EFL teachers' background in higher education.

Chapter three reviews the literature and is divided into two main sections: theoretical and practical. The theoretical part discusses the definition of the term curriculum, the approaches to curriculum and the components of an EFL curriculum. The practical part discusses in more detail the relevant concepts related to the three stages of the curriculum: development, implementation and evaluation. The curriculum development section addresses the issues of teachers' roles in this stage, while the curriculum implementation section discusses the approaches that underpin this stage, in addition to examining the literature pertaining to teachers' roles in curriculum implementation by focusing on specific research studies conducted in this domain.

Chapter four describes the research methodology adopted by the current study, its research paradigm including its ontological, epistemological and

methodological assumptions. The research participants, the sampling strategy and the site of the study are presented as well as the justifications for the data collection tool used in this study. The overall data collection and analysis procedures implemented in the study are highlighted. In addition, the trustworthiness of the study, its limitations and challenges as well as ethical issues are addressed. Chapter five reports the findings of the study and in chapter six, they are discussed in light of the reviewed literature. Finally, chapter seven summarises the major findings, presents the contribution of the study and makes a number of recommendations for further research. The chapter ends with concise final remarks.

2 Chapter Two: Context of the Study

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide the relevant background information that is essential to understand the contextual issues related to the investigated problem. It starts with a brief history of the teaching English in Saudi Arabia. Then, a short account of Saudi Arabia higher Education is presented and followed by a section that sheds some lights on the status of English in the country. The next section describes ELT in higher education in the Saudi context. The chapter contains three sections that discuss issues related to the FYP in three ways, namely, a historical overview of the FYPs in Saudi Arabia, FYP recent implementation within Saudi universities and the structure of the intensive English programmes in Saudi universities. Also, the chapter discusses components of intensive English courses of FYP curriculum. Finally, a brief account of EFL teachers' background in higher education in Saudi Arabia is presented.

2.2 Teaching English in Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia, the introduction of EFL is associated with the establishment of "the formal education in the country after the unification of the Kingdom in 1926" (Al Maini, 2002: 1). Initially, English was taught in elementary schools (Baghdadi, 1985) and later, in 1943, a change in the education policy was made with regards the teaching of English whereby it was removed from the elementary level and was introduced at a higher educational stage, namely, the intermediate levels – i.e. year thirteen to sixteen (Al-Haq & Smadi, 1996). By the time students had completed this stage, English became part of the secondary school subjects – i.e. year sixteen to eighteen. Since that time, English has become compulsory in both intermediate and secondary schools in Saudi Arabia (Al-Haq & Smadi, 1996; Al Nasser, 1999 & Al Maini, 2002). In 2004, the Saudi Ministry of Education (MoE) made changes to its policy in terms of English language teaching and decided to reintroduce EFL as a compulsory subject in the elementary stage – i.e. years four to six. This decision was based on the assumption that the younger the children start learning English, the better they learn the target language.

2.3   Higher Education in Saudi Arabia

The history of higher education in Saudi Arabia started with the establishment, in 1949, of the first college of higher education in the country: the College of Islamic law in Makkah (Baghdadi, 1985). The Ministry of Higher Education was later established in 1975 (Al Kuwaiti, 2007) and was responsible for setting both short and long-term plans and development strategies for universities. Its main role was to offer educational opportunities for Saudi students and supervise the implementation of the educational policies that consider the government's interests, regulations and needs in the universities (Abu-Rizaizah, 2010). In 2014, the Saudi Ministry of higher education was merged with the MoE and came under the direction of the MoE which is now in charge of supervising education in Saudi universities. Currently, there are twenty-five public universities all of which are linked to the MoE.

Each university has an ELI which provides English Language Teaching (ELT) and manages the EFL programme of the FYP at university. The university provides all the required support to make ELT effective in terms of facilities, academic consultations and resources that are necessary for ELIs to carry out their required mission.

2.4   ELT in Higher Education: A brief History

In higher education, English is used as a medium of instruction for all the STEM (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics) disciplines in all public universities. This policy became more appealing for thousands of students and parents after the government started offering Saudi undergraduate and postgraduate students international scholarships to study in Western universities, mainly in the UK, the USA, Canada and Australia (Dahlan, 2009; Alhawsawi, 2013; Barnawi & Le Ha, 2014). It significantly increased the status of the English language in Saudi universities and provided further justification for its current role in academia. For example, stakeholders in Saudi universities including academics and educationalists have become more convinced and determined than before to implement the policy of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI). This is because they believe that it can prepare undergraduate students for future postgraduate academic studies abroad, enabling them to work in scientific research projects along with foreign expatriate researchers in the country.

Additionally, they contend that this policy can help them join competitive international research centres, such as the newly established ones in King Abdullah University of Science and Technology in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. However, Al Dhubaib, (2007), a local researcher, disagrees with the EMI policy and promotes adopting a translation policy as an alternative for EMI, which, he believes, is as an effective method of transferring scientific knowledge to the Arabic language. He advocates the use of Arabic to teach and test students, prepare course books and to ask students to write their assignments.

English is a compulsory subject for students of other academic disciplines such as business, education, and arts and humanities. Although the Arabic language remains the medium of instruction for these subjects, they have to pass the Intensive English Course (IEC) of the FYP.

2.5 Profile of Foundation Year Programme

The establishment of the Foundation Year Programme in Saudi Universities is not a very recent policy as the King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM) founded its Foundation year programme in 1964 (McMullen, 2014). This is the first public university to introduce such a programme, compulsory for all undergraduate students. In this respect, Al Dosary & Assaf (1996: 215) provide a brief description of the programme, as in the following quotation:

"All incoming students take a one-year orientation program before enrolling in the university undergraduate programs. This program introduces them to the required English skills which will be needed for the undergraduate work, in addition to reinforcing some basic mathematics, sciences, workshops and computer literacy" (ibid).

These courses are essential in their academic disciplines as English is the official medium of instruction in the OYP and also for all the undergraduate specialties in the university (KFUPM Prep year, n.d.). Furthermore, Foundation year English programmes have been gradually established in universities across the Kingdom after 2009 (McMullen, 2014) including the context of this study.

2.5.1 Foundation Year Programme in Saudi Universities

The MoE regards the KFUPM Foundation Year Programme as an inspiring experience and a good example that deserves to be replicated in other universities due to its positive impact on the students' academic skills and knowledge. Therefore, in 2009, the government requested all other universities to implement PYPs and EMI in all undergraduate STEM disciplines. Numerous universities have founded separate deanships to manage all issues related to the PYP. This type of deanship, commonly referred to as the Foundation Year Deanship (FYD), is responsible for offering all the STEM courses and subjects, such as mathematics, physics, computer and communication skills, in addition to intensive English courses which are usually offered by the ELIs. The university where the study was conducted does not have a FYD and all the compulsory courses like mathematics, physics or statistics are offered by the relevant university departments. However, in that university, the ELI is an independent body treated as a separate deanship. Furthermore, the English programme constitutes a major component of the PYP as the stakeholders in Saudi universities consider it to be an essential indicator of the success or failure of the PYP outcomes.

2.5.2 Structurer of the Intensive English Programme

ELIs are in charge of delivering and administering the English programmes in Saudi universities and provide different intensive English courses with diverse focus aimed at all the newly-admitted undergraduate students, such as GE, EAP and ESP. These courses are provided for the three main tracks in all the universities: health colleges, engineering/scientific colleges and non-scientific majors, such as business and administration, education, and arts and humanities colleges (ELC Taibah University n.d.; King Saud University n.d.; KFUPM Prep year, n.d.). These ELIs follow two main trends in offering these courses: traditional and quarter. Most ELIs implement the former one where these intensive courses are offered for different levels, 1-4 or 1-6, and are taught within two academic semesters. The allocated teaching hours vary from eighteen to twenty hours per week.

In the ELI where the study was conducted, the intensive English programme only provides general intensive English courses based on four levels, each of which

is taught using one particular course book (see Appendix 1). These courses are delivered following a quarterly system with four quarters in an academic year, i.e., two in each semester. Two different levels are taught in each quarter: levels one and two in quarter one and levels three and four in quarter two. Each quarter is made up of seven academic weeks and the teaching hours are eighteen per week (Kinsara, 2012). Students are placed in the above course levels depending on their language proficiency level based on their score at the Oxford Online Placement Test (OOPT) which they take after being admitted to university (ibid).

2.6 Curriculum of the Foundation Year Programme

Intensive English courses are vital components of the FYP curriculum and have certain similar characteristics that exist in all Saudi universities. Yet, some minor differences remain with regards the curriculum elements, depending on each ELI language policies or administrative trend followed by stakeholders. The intensive English courses content covers many vital and interesting elements that can be categorised under different areas, like objectives, needs analysis, teaching materials, teaching, and students' assessment and evaluation.

2.6.1 Objectives

ELT curriculum philosophy, planning or conceptualisation in Saudi Arabia is dominated by the objectives-led model, which means that the curriculum is perceived as product-oriented. English language programmes and curriculum policy makers and developers have designed pre-specified sets of objectives and specific English language proficiency levels FYP students should reach by the end of the programme. Therefore, intensive English courses in the ELIs in Saudi Arabia have multiple objectives, focusing on certain learning outcomes and tackling different angles. These objectives differ in terms of the intended achievement levels to be reached by students upon completing the intensive English courses (i.e. intermediate, upper-intermediate or advanced levels). It is noticeable, however, that these institutes did not create their own local framework of English language competence that considers the characteristics of Saudi EFL learners. In fact, all Saudi ELIs, including where the study was conducted, adopt the Common European Framework Reference implemented in language institutes in the U.K and other ones across Europe. The English language institute where this study was carried out has a set of objectives that it attempts

to help FYP students to reach, at least, the intermediate level in terms of English language proficiency accepted by the institution (Kinsara, 2011).

2.6.2 Needs Analysis

The Saudi MoE requested the implementation of new intensive English courses, along with the introduction of the PYP in Saudi universities. Nevertheless, this decision was not associated with any needs analysis investigation prior to its implementation in Saudi universities. In fact, this decision was left to the management of each ELI according to its priorities, internal policy, adopted professional practice and selected timing preference. Therefore, the ELI, where this study took place, conducted a needs analysis investigation to determine the FYP students' English language needs towards the end of the 2010 academic year. It is worth noting that the investigation was conducted more than eighteen months after the implementation of the intensive English courses in the programme. It was carried out by an intuitional internal committee, Students Needs Analysis Committee, established for this purpose. The committee suggested the implementation of certain recommendations which were submitted to the ELI top management. These suggestions were regarded as classified documents and its access was restricted to the ELI management.

2.6.3 Teaching Materials

There is a big demand for EFL teaching materials and course books, to cover the increased demand of ELIs for these essential aspects in the FYP. However, there is no local publishing house or agency specialising in developing the teaching materials and course books, according to ELIs needs. Therefore, the overwhelming majority of these institutes, including the site of the study, have to depend completely on ready- made teaching materials and course books designed and published by international publishers. These course books are produced by famous international publishers, such as Bell Education, Cambridge University Press, Pearson, Longman, or Oxford University Press. There is intense competition among these publishers to have their global course books series selected by the numerous ELIs in Saudi Arabia. These publishers also offer attractive e-learning resources, such as additional online support and practice activities for FYP students, in order to make their course book series more attractive for potential customers.

Furthermore, it is a common and expected practice in ELIs to change the course books used in their programmes, including the site of the study. Since 2009, the ELI course books were changed four times. These course books were produced by four different international Western publishers. The course books currently used at this ELI are the English Unlimited Special Edition. The series, produced by Cambridge University Press, include four different levels – beginner, elementary, pre-intermediate and intermediate – and adopts an integrated skills approach.

2.6.4 Teaching

Most ELIs have certain similar regulations and policies in term of teaching; for instance, the teaching load of EFL teachers is of a minimum of eighteen hours per week. However, they can be asked to teach more hours, depending on the availability of teachers, and are compensated for their overtime. In addition, teachers have to teach the selected course book by the institution management. They are not allowed to teach a course book they selected based on their own personal or pedagogical preferences. The context of the study also shares the above features with other English language institutes.

2.6.5 Students' Assessment

As indicated earlier (section 1.3), students are not allowed to pursue their studies at the university unless they pass the FYP. This has put pressure and significant responsibilities on ELIs testing procedures. Thus, ELIs have employed different evaluation methods to assess English language development and achievements of the FYP students during and at the end of the intensive English courses. The common assessment methods used in ELIs for each course or level are the continuous assessment, speaking tests, writing tests, quizzes, mid-term exams, progress tests and final examinations which have the highest percentage in the assessment process in all the ELIs. However, each ELI adopts its own internal policy for the distribution of mark proportion for each piece of assessment. For example, the adopted evaluation methods in the context of the study for each module are portfolio assessment (i.e. continuous assessment) which counts for 10%, two speaking tests counting for 10%, two writing tests that count for 10%, a mid-term exam equating 30% and the final exam that counts for 40% of the final

score (See Appendix 2). All the tests for all levels are standardised, including final exams, and prepared by the testing committee.

The FYP students should obtain a score of at least 60% in order to be admitted to a higher level course; if the required grade is not attained, the students must repeat the same course as scheduled during the PYP (Kinsara, 2011).

2.6.6 Evaluation

The MoE founded the National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA) in 2005. However, the Ministry did not conduct any evaluation research or investigation of the FYP offered in various ELIs in Saudi universities, and left the decision of its evaluation to the management of universities, in terms of timing, scope and procedures. They can also seek external consultations and academic assistance from experts or Western universities to conduct a professional and thorough evaluation of the offered programmes. For example, three public universities, namely Al Dammam, AL-Baha and Princess Nourah Universities have had their intensive English courses evaluated by two American universities: Texas A&M University and Sam Houston State University.   The evaluators focused on the programmes' structure, institutional academic procedures, implementation and qualifications of the teaching staff. However, the evaluations results were not published, which makes it difficult to get some insights into their conclusions.

As an insider to the ELI where this study was conducted, I have no knowledge of an evaluation of the whole FYP curriculum being conducted. Nevertheless, the ELI higher authorities, the curriculum committee and the ELI Council, select and decide on specific curriculum elements to be included in the formative evaluation process. Then, they instruct the curriculum unit to implement the evaluation procedure to improve the quality and effectiveness of the evaluated elements.

2.6.7 Students' Background in Higher Education

Saudi students joining higher Education in Saudi Arabia are usually secondary school graduates, from the state or private schools, who have already specialised in either science or arts & administration and are aged between eighteen to twenty years old. The FYP students in the context of the study share the same background. The number of newly admitted students annually in the university where the ELI is located is between 12,000 to 15,000 male and female students. These undergraduate students are divided into two main tracks: the sciences and administration & arts. The ELI offers the same English courses with different levels for both tracks; however, they are required to take other different compulsory courses, depending on their college specialities (Kinsara, 2011). The majority of students in the ELI are from state schools and a minority are private schools' graduates.

2.7 EFL Teachers in Higher Education

The ELIs context reflects the multicultural environment in higher education in Saudi universities and in other Gulf countries like the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. EFL teachers in these institutes can be categorised into two main categories: expatriate EFL teachers and local Saudi teachers. Three kinds of expatriate teachers can be identified: native speakers of English, bilingual teachers and international teachers. The native speakers are found to be less qualified and less experienced compared to other teachers and many of them do not hold postgraduate qualifications in TESOL and only have certificates in TESOL such as the CELTA (Khan, 2011). They have completed undergraduate degrees in non-related areas such as business and management, sociology or history (ibid), which do not appear to be an adequate preparation for a competent and effective foreign language teacher, especially if they are not required to have previous teaching experience as ESL/EFL teachers. The other group of EFL teachers are the bilingual teachers who mainly come from Arab countries including Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan and Syria and most of them hold relevant postgraduate qualifications in teaching English, such as Master degrees and PhDs (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). Recruiting such teachers is advantageous for universities as they are familiar with the challenges of teaching and learning English and their previous experience may help them in teaching in a similar Arab context like Saudi Arabia. The third group are the international

teachers from various countries like India, Pakistan, South Africa and Malaysia. Many of these teachers are highly qualified and hold relevant degrees in teaching English. They also have teaching experience as second language educators in their countries (Khan, 2011). Lastly, all Saudi assistant lecturers in the ELIs hold undergraduate degrees either in linguistics or literature specialties and are graduates of the English departments of Saudi universities from colleges of arts or education. In addition, few lecturers completed Master degrees in these English departments while the majority completed postgraduate studies in the UK, the USA and Australia. A number of Saudi assistant teachers and lecturers also have prior teaching experience in technical colleges or secondary schools before joining the ELIs.

EFL teachers need to attend in-service Professional Development Programmes (PDP) in order to refresh and update their knowledge and skills and gain new insights into contemporary teaching and learning issues; in doing so, they may be able to cope with teaching and learning situations in the Saudi context. Therefore, most ELIs in Saudi Arabia, including the context of the study, provide in-service PDP opportunities to their teaching staff which aim to help teachers implement innovative teaching and learning methods, enhance student-centred learning and contribute to effective learner outputs. Such PDPs usually focus on general teaching techniques pertaining to instruction techniques, learning theories and strategies, and classroom management. They also include more specific topics tackling language acquisition issues (Khan, 2011; 2012).

The majority of EFL teachers in higher education in Saudi Arabia are Arab teachers (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). In the ELI where the study was conducted, there are about three hundred EFL teachers within the male campus, most of whom are non-native speakers from international ESL/EFL contexts. The local Saudi teachers represent a minority of the teaching staff in the ELIs.

The next chapter discusses the literature review. It addresses theoretical and practical aspects of EFL curriculum. It also highlights in detail the teachers' roles in curriculum, development, implementation and evaluation with reference to relevant studies from different contexts.

3 Chapter Three: Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the literature pertinent to the topic of investigation. In order to review the relevant literature, the university of Exeter Electronic databases, such as EBSCO and Science Direct, were recurrently used. This was a systematic process that consisted in using specific keywords and phrases such as, for instance, *curriculum definition*, *curriculum concepts* or *curriculum approaches*. More importantly, because major approaches to curriculum in general education and in English Language Teaching (ELT) share the same foundations, I adopted a general to specific strategy, in terms of search and selection, whereby I usually started with a general review of the concept of curriculum in general education and then examined definitions and approaches of curriculum. It is worth indicating that the literature in general education is well-established regardless of the specific discipline. In addition and more specifically, I focused my search on terms like *curriculum as imagination*, *curriculum as product*, *curriculum as praxis* and *curriculum as process.* Then, the general education literature naturally led me to approaches of curriculum in ELT. Finally, guided by the research questions, other key keywords were used in combination with curriculum-specific terms. For instance, the phrase *teachers' roles* was searched in combination with *curriculum development*, *curriculum implementation*, *curriculum evaluation* in order to find and select relevant studies in each of these curriculum stages.

This chapter is divided into two main sections, the theoretical and practical parts. The former discusses issues related to definitions of curriculum from three different perspectives: as objectives, as praxis and as a process. Additionally, it contains approaches to curriculum and components of curriculum. The latter covers the relevant literature on the practical aspects of curriculum in three subsections. First, I will address curriculum development, teachers' roles in this development and research on these roles. Second, I will tackle curriculum implementation, approaches of curriculum at this stage, teachers' roles in curriculum implementation and relevant studies on these roles, and factors influencing curriculum implementation. Finally, I shall highlight some issues

related to curriculum evaluation, approaches of curriculum evaluation, teachers' roles in curriculum evaluation and related studies on these roles.

3.2   Definition of Curriculum

Definitions of curriculum remain one of the most controversial topics among many curriculum theorists and scholars. Authors' definitions often advocate their own preferred stance towards curriculum, but some of these suggested definitions replicate approaches adopted by theorists and have created an overlap between approaches and definitions (Ornstein, 1987). This has fuelled the debate about the definitions of curriculum in the literature. Therefore, there has not been a consensus on certain common grounds or features, because definitions and conceptions can contrast according to the context of the discussion (Connelly & Lantz, 1991). This has made it difficult for curriculum theorists and specialists to agree on a convincing definition that addresses both the theoretical and practical aspects of curriculum. Consequently, it has caused continuous confusion and misunderstanding among educationalists and practitioners in the field of education and added an additional intellectual challenge, particularly for teachers, in interpreting these competing definitions of curriculum and relating them to their professional practice. In this section, I shall review some major positions advocated in the literature on defining curriculum.

In an effort to suggest an adopted definition for the term 'curriculum', I shall refer to three sorted lists of definitions and explain some aspects of their features. This approach is guided by Ornstein's (1987) assertion that categorizing researchers' intellectual views and thoughts is a demanding practice and it is not an easy task to carry out due to the potential overlap and similarities in their proposed notions about curriculum. As the literature shows, "there are many conceptions and definitions of the curriculum: as a content, learning experiences, as behavioural objectives, as a plan for instruction and as a nontechnical approach" (Lunenburg, 2011:1). I will review the literature and analyse the curriculum theorists' viewpoints towards definitions of curriculum from three major diverse perspectives, namely, curriculum as objectives, as praxis and a process.

The first group of curriculum theorists regard curriculum as objectives achieved by students (e.g. Wiles & Bondi, 1984; Ornstein, 1987; Levine, 2002), (see Appendix 3). This is also known as curriculum as product model which is

informed by a technical-behavioural ideology (Sheehan, 1986 ; McKernan,2008).There has been a longstanding but still current perception of curriculum in the literature that the objectives of curriculum have to be vital features of any logical decision in curriculum planning and development (Lunenburg, 2011). "These pre-specified objectives will determine the design of the learning experience" (Grundy, 1987:28) for teachers and expect students to achieve desired learning outcomes. According to Kelly (2009), there are three levels of objectives: a) general statements of goals that will guide the planning of the curriculum as a whole, b) behavioural objectives derived from these, which will guide the planning of individual units or courses and c) objectives that guide specific lessons. Kelly goes on to claim that these objectives have to be considered as fixed or given aims for both teachers and students which need to be achieved by the end of a programme (ibid).

Definitions that are based on the objectives stance, can lead to some undesirable practices and policies in learning environments. For example, they emphasize the concepts of power and control in curriculum at three different levels at the same time, namely, in design and development, and implementation. At the design level, objectives writers or designers have the power to decide on the content and direction of the objectives (Grundy, 1987) according to their own priorities and beliefs in curriculum. At the implementation level, they ignore essential features in teachers' professional identity, such as creativity and autonomy in teaching. For Apple (1980: 16), this means imposing certain pedagogical approaches on teachers, the teaching materials and the expected responses from students in an actual learning event or practice. At the achievement level, these designed objectives can restrict the ambitions and creativity of some students, particularly gifted ones who could achieve beyond the level of the aimed objectives. In contrast, they require them to "achieve [only] what the curriculum designers have planned" (Grundy, 1987:32), and included in the stated objectives. The issue of power relationships in curriculum continues to cause a heated debate in contemporary curriculum literature: see, in particular, Mckernan, who criticises this trend and considers it as an undemocratic educational practice (2008).

The second group of curriculum researchers perceive curriculum as praxis. This means a curriculum should be informed by a desire to emancipate human beings

and should act upon this purpose accordingly (e.g. Freire 1972; Kemmis & Fitzclarence, 1986; Grundy, 1987; Luke, 1988). Freire has been one of the key education theorists to argue for the notion of emancipation of human beings in education. He contends that teachers and students should participate actively in creating knowledge and explicitly argues for considering them as legitimate partners in constructing teaching and learning experiences in their societies. In the same vein, Grundy (1987: 102) states that liberating education requires considering the roles of teachers and students, as he states that "talk of emancipation pedagogy must, therefore, encompass the teaching-learning act within its meaning." A critical curriculum contradicts perceiving curriculum as objectives, because the former considers students as active creators of knowledge with teachers, while the latter regards students as passive receivers of knowledge and recipients of educational experience only (ibid).

Fraser and Bosanquet (2006) argue that emancipating teachers and students involves encouraging them to challenge common curriculum understanding, practices and reflect critically on curriculum policies, implementation, and evaluation matters, in order to help them to change teaching and learning restrictions in their contexts. Many researchers are of the view that there should be a strong relationship between critical reflection and actions (e.g. Schön, 1987; Grundy, 1987; Barnett & Coate, 2005; Fraser & Bosanquet, 2006; Yek & Penney, 2006). This concept has been a key to their conceptualisation of curriculum as praxis. For example, Grundy (1987: 115) explicitly highlights his understanding of curriculum as praxis:

> praxis takes place in the real, not hypothetical world. It follows, from this principle that the construction of curriculum cannot be divorced from the act of 'implementation'. If we regard the curriculum as a social praxis, not a product, then it must be constructed within real, not hypothetical learning situations and with actual, not imaginary students

Similarly, Fraser and Bosanquet contend that curriculum means "actions or practices which arise as a consequence of reflection" (2006: 280). In the same vein, Yek and Penney argue that "praxis takes place in the real world and at the centre of praxis is informed and committed action" (2006: 7).

A critical approach to curriculum was not adopted in this study, and this excluded selecting a definition reflecting a critical stance of curriculum, because social and political issues in the context of the study are perceived from a conservative view

of education and top-down approach is the dominant approach towards curriculum. Therefore, given the conservative nature of the political and cultural background of the study it is not feasible to adopt a critical view of curriculum. However, I can take the reflection element from criticality to explore teachers' views about their roles in curriculum in more depth.

The third group of curriculum researchers have a broader viewpoint about curriculum, viewing it as a mixture of multiple, diverse and interrelated processes (e.g. Cornbleth, 1990; Print, 1993; McKernan, 2008; Troudi & Alwan, 2010), (see Appendix 3). This perception views curriculum as a process: I have adopted this view because it offers a more comprehensive picture of curriculum understanding. The common impression in the literature about this concept is observed in Cornbleth's (1990) stance, as he states that the curriculum consists of continuous and different interrelated processes that reflect interrelated relationships between teachers, students, the learning environment and the implemented curriculum. Moreover, McKiernan's (2008) perspective presents a contemporary view in understanding process definitions of curriculum, as he acknowledges the mental experiences that result from learning practices, such as students' views, attitudes, skills and abilities in coping with curriculum requirements in their context. He also contends that the main advantage of the process view of curriculum in recent years is that it offers the chance for discussions for the purpose of "development and improvement […] to allow for school-based curriculum reform and improvement to re-occur" (McKernan, 2008:4).

One of the main reasons for the current contrast in curriculum definitions and concepts between the objectives and the process stance is that each one adopts or reflects an independent approach to curriculum. For example, the objectives approach represents some of the key characteristics of the objectives/ product approach, such as the attainment of objectives. Moreover, curriculum theorists' definitions or views on curriculum constructs may not be similar to the views of those who are involved in a curriculum in the field, particularly teachers. More specifically, teachers often perceive curriculum as a statement or document they are required to teach accordingly, under close supervision and direct scrutiny of the government, the school administrations, or some other officials outside the classroom context (Doll, 1996). As discussed above, each set of definitions focuses on essential elements or features of curriculum. However, each

standpoint on the definition of curriculum is still a valid one and covers an essential aspect in understanding its nature, concepts and complexity.

The definition adopted in this study is the one that views curriculum as a process, as suggested by Troudi & Alwan: "the curriculum is a term that represents the whole educational experience with its various stages, processes and outcomes" (2010:108). The rationale behind this choice is that it provides a more open-ended and comprehensive vision of curriculum, in terms of considering the entire educational experience or exposure to curriculum at any stage in an educational setting. In addition, it leaves the door open for the inclusion of all sorts of explicit or implicit interaction processes that can occur, re-occur between teachers, students and the implemented curriculum in both teaching and learning practices equally and simultaneously. Furthermore, this definition explicitly tackles the impacts of curriculum implementation, either positive or negative results, and regards them as an essential part of a curriculum. According to Mckernan (2008:4), the curriculum as a process "is really about being faithful to certain key principles of procedure in the conduct of education" in general and in curriculum aspects in particular.

3.3 Curriculum Approaches

In curriculum literature, the terms 'approaches' and 'models' of curriculum are used interchangeably among curriculum theorists and researchers who have advocated for diverse theories of curriculum (Bennett, 2006). Both terms refer to the theoretical aspects of curriculum. The former term is adopted in this study, as it is the used term by some of the prominent English Language Curriculum (ELC) specialist, like Brown, 1995; Richards, 2003; Nation & Macalister (2010).

The curriculum domain has two main elements: the theoretical and the practical. The former offers coherent justification for previous curriculum approaches. There has been a noticeable increase in the suggested curriculum approaches by curriculum theorists, which vary in simplicity and complexity in terms of principles, structures and proposed actions (March, 2009). Yet, advocates of these approaches share some common features regardless of the focus of their principles or the adopted way of thinking. For instance, a curriculum approach expresses researchers' personal views and philosophy about curriculum in different aspects, such as learning theory, the development and design of

curriculum, required knowledge in the field, the theoretical and practical principles of curriculum, and the role of the learner, the teacher and the curriculum specialist in curriculum planning (Ornstenin & Hunkins, 1998). It is not within the scope of this study to discuss all of these curriculum approaches. Nevertheless, I shall highlight the two main approaches that are relevant to the current study: the product and process approaches.

3.3.1 Curriculum as a Product

The product approach "is still a major approach to curriculum [...].It relies on technical and scientific principles" (Ornsten & Hunkins, 1998:2) and it is also referred to as the objectives or technical approach. Historically, this approach has no educational background or basis, but has been imported from technical and industrial fields (Rowntree, 1982; Smith, 2000; Kelly, 2009). The central elements of the product-oriented approach are the goals, instructional and behavioural objectives of a curriculum (Brown, 1995; Smith, 2000; Fliders & Thornton (1997). They have to be reflected in the content and teaching of the curriculum (Smith, 2000; Grundy, 1987). This approach emphasises measuring the achievement of the objectives (Grundy, 1987; McKernan, 2008; Kelly, 2009) and their successful attainment is an indication of the success in meeting the intended goals of a curriculum (Tyler, 1951, cited in Norris, 1998; Brown, 1995).

3.3.2 Curriculum as a Process

Stenhouse (1975) is considered as a key curriculum theorist and one of the main advocates of the process approach as an alternative to the objectives approach in designing curriculum in education. The literature shows that one of the major factors in the appearance of the process approach to curriculum was the dissatisfaction among some curriculum theorists with the long-standing dependence and dominance of the product approach and its inadequacy for educational settings (e.g. Smith, 2000; Norris, 2008; McKernan, 2008; Kelly 2009). The process approach offers educators the freedom to form goals and aims based on their understanding of their students' needs and make their own decisions on issues related to curriculum development, content and pedagogy. This approach also emphasises evaluating students' and teachers' progress through teachers' understanding of their roles, values and aspirations in the educational environment (Stenhouse, 1975; Grundy, 1987; Kelly, 1989; Marsh &

Willis, 2007, cited in McKernan, 2008; Norris, 2008; Kelly 2009). These aspects offer educationalists clear directions to take any required decisions or measures related to educational practice and curriculum planning (Kelly, 2009).

The above discussion has addressed the main characteristics of both the product and process approaches to curriculum. The approach which informs my understanding of curriculum is the process approach, for several reasons. First, it respects explicitly the nature of teachers as human beings and stresses that this feature should be reflected in curriculum development and planning. For example, it allows for "their individual wishes, desires or interests" (Kelly, 2009: 69) to be involved in these stages, rather than turning "educators into technicians" (Smith, 2000:5) who are supposed to serve for achieving pre-designed objectives and pre-specified outcomes set up by curriculum theorists, policy makers or other institutional officials. Second, the process approach promotes "freedom for teachers" (McKernan,2008: xii), as it considers them as contributing professionals in curriculum planning and development and offers them the chance to be productive in different aspects in relation to curriculum issues, such as developing curriculum content and structure and suggesting some changes in teaching pedagogy (ibid). Most importantly, this approach considers that "the teacher's role is central to its effectiveness" (Kelly, 2009: 81). Third, in this approach, the teachers can reach a balance in the power relationship with policy makers, administrators or external curriculum experts on curriculum issues. Teachers are encouraged to express their views, expectations, experiences of the students' contextual background knowledge or any potential strengths and weaknesses of many designed and implemented curriculum procedures and their impacts on the learning process. Fourth, it "treats learners as subjects rather than objects" (Smith, 2000: 9) and focuses on evaluating their learning experiences to meet their expectations, aiming for "more measure of continuous improvement and ongoing development" (McKernan, 2008: 86). Fifth, the main advantage of the process approach is that it can reduce to a large extent teachers' resistance to any curriculum-related institutional policies or practices that are carried out, because of their active involvement in the decision-making process at different levels. Lastly, it can help in making a smooth and effective transition from one curriculum educational policy to a new adopted one.

3.4 Components of English as a Foreign Language Curriculum

The field of Applied Linguistics offers theoretical principles of language teaching for the English Language (EL) curriculum (Johnson, 1989). A language programme is an alternative term for a language curriculum: both of them are used to refer to any structured language course either for second or foreign language teaching (Richards, 2003). According to Zohrabi (2008: 49), "any curriculum consists of several components". The language curriculum literature indicates that the formation of its components has increased gradually over time. Initially, Tyler's (1949, cited in Richards, 2003) collection of curriculum components included aims and objectives, content, organisation and evaluation. Later, Inglis (1975) suggested four similar stages with a slight difference in terms only, each having two main components: (1) Need (aims and objectives), (2) Plan of content (strategies/tactics), (3) Implementation (methods-techniques) and (4) Review. From 1980, the policy of language curriculum development gained more acceptance as it started to include vital elements in the language curriculum design process to meet the continuously increasing demands of the national English language curriculum in numerous ESL/EFL environments (Richards, 2003). Brown's (1995: xi) model of EL curriculum elements offers a set of distinct and vital elements, namely, "needs assessment, goals and objectives, testing, materials, teaching and program evaluation." Similarly, Zohrabi (2008) shares Brown's elements and adds additional ones, namely attitudes, time, students and teachers.

The importance of teachers' participation in the development of curriculum components is advocated in the literature (e.g. Finch, 1981; Johnson, 1989; Clark, 1987; Markee, 1997). Their roles have been gradually introduced and suggested by researchers to different degrees. For example, Johnson (1989) restricts the teachers' roles only to classroom implementation and teaching acts, and helping students in learning. On the other hand, Clark (1987) extends their roles to share some curriculum responsibilities with curriculum planners and to participate in evaluation elements, such as review of teaching practices and learning processes, students' assessment, teachers' evaluation practices and the in-service teacher education offered in the language curriculum. Richards (2003) justifies these limited roles due to the focus on the teaching and evaluation aspects of the EL curriculum for some time. However, in recent years, the notion of teachers' voice in the development of EL curriculum elements has improved

remarkably and some researchers have explicitly promoted the advantages of their involvement (e.g. Brown, 1995; Richards, 2003). Therefore, this study attempts to give teachers a voice and explore the nature of teachers' participation in developing FYP curriculum and identify whether they have experienced any advantages resulting from their involvement in development of curriculum elements.

It is important to put in place some measures associated with teachers' participation in curriculum development. As Zohrabi (2008) argues, the EL curriculum components should be described in detail for teachers before starting a programme or a course. Ultimately, Zohrabi suggests establishing a close collaboration between teachers and curriculum designers in all EL curriculum components as a precondition "to produce competent learners" (2008: 66). Yet, some institutional factors, such as the adopted educational system, institutional leadership and administrative support, can hinder their roles in developing EL curriculum components (Richards, 2003).

3.5 Curriculum Development

Curriculum development (CD) refers to the utilisation of various measures of planning and implementation processes involved in renewing or developing curricula (Richards, 2003; Storey, 2007). The process of curriculum development has become an essential component in a language programme design and turned into more commonly recognised practice in language teaching (Richards, 2003). Currently, many ESL/EFL language programmes need to redevelop their own curricula in order to make their programmes more professional in terms of instructions, organisation and proficiency. Each language curriculum needs to adopt certain priorities and procedures that meet its own contextual situations (Linton, 1996). The nature of the CD process involves the adoption of some diverse measures at different stages (Nation & Macalister, 2010). This requires breaking down the development procedure into different components and sub-processes (Nunan, 1988; White, 1988; Graves, 1996). Each stage focuses on one aspect and some specific curriculum elements (Graves, 1996; Johnson, 1989), such as "curriculum planning, implementation and evaluation activities" (Nunan, 1989: 13). Initially, in the development phase, three main curriculum elements are addressed: analysis of learners' needs, analysis of the contextual factors where the curriculum is implemented, and determining goals and

objectives of a targeted curriculum. It also focuses on decisions related to the planning of syllabus design, selection of teaching materials and the entire organisation of course content. Furthermore, there are four main issues that are tackled at this stage: the adopted teaching methods that are in line with the overall objectives of the curriculum, the selected methods for measuring the intended leaning outcomes, students' assessment and the professional development programmes offered for teachers. Finally, the evaluation phase is meant to develop an appropriate evaluation strategy as a means to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the language curriculum, in terms of meeting its goals and objectives (Brown, 1995; 1996; Richards, 2003; Graves, 1996; McKernan, 2008). This study seeks to explore the nature of teachers'' involvement in these elements underpinning the three stages of CD and investigates the procedures adopted in this process. In brief, the above scenario shows that CD is a complex process and a demanding task to execute, as it incorporates diverse and interrelated elements at different stages that require careful management, execution and smooth transition from one stage to another. Failure to achieve the goals of each element or mishandling of its execution can lead to incorrect input being provided for the next stage, because all the elements "depend on each other for input and output" (Dick & Carey, 1985: 2).

3.5.1 Teachers' Roles in Curriculum Development

Traditionally, curriculum developers and specialists have had an influential voice in many issues related to CD, such as in determining the purposes, designing the syllabus and developing materials. In contrast, teachers have had no role in the development stages and their perceived role has been as curriculum implementers in classrooms (Graves, 1996). However, there is a growing tendency towards adopting a different practice that promotes activating teachers' roles in the development period. This stand has been explicitly promoted by many researchers who are interested in changing this policy from dependence on outside developers, policy makers and curriculum experts to the practice of influential engagement of teachers in the process of curriculum development at different levels (e.g. Connely & Clandinin, 1988; Linton, 1996; Graves, 1996; Richards, 2003; McKernan, 2008). For instance, Cotton (2006) contends that considering teachers' knowledge and skills in any learning institution is the initial point in the development procedure that curriculum developers need to take into

account. Otherwise, it is doubtful that the curriculum will be implemented as planned (Cotton, 2006). The primary point that is highlighted in teachers' participation in the decision-making process in CD is objectives. Teachers can assist in constructing and developing curriculum objectives (Brown, 1995; Richards, 2003). Similarly, they can assist in providing reliable insights into the actual needs of learners (Mackimm, 2003) and in creating a plan for a curriculum teaching philosophy, such as its main instructional focus or the teaching methodology adopted (Brown, 1995, Richards, 2003; Sharkey, 2004). Additionally, teachers are capable of being examiners of selected teaching materials, regarded as "proof materials", in terms of selection, organisation and adaptation of teaching materials to meet the curriculum objectives (Connely & Clandinin, 1988). Likewise, they can participate in the process of decision making about the courses offered in a language curriculum, such as planning a course, modifying and pre-planning it (Graves, 1996). Finally, teachers can be engaged in discussion about students' assessment methods (ibid) and in creating criteria for evaluating a curriculum (Sharkey, 2004). The main advantage of giving teachers a chance to play an active role in CD is that it increases the possibilities for consistency between the stated policies and goals of a language curriculum and their real execution in classrooms (Linton, 1996).

However, it is essential to realise that the above roles for teachers can face some challenges or constraints in reality. For example, it can be difficult for many teaching environments in ESL/EFL contexts, which have a long history of adopting a top-down policy in CD to allow active involvement of teachers in the decision-making process. In this case, the engagement of experienced teachers who had played some roles in previous curriculum development projects can help or facilitate discussions about important areas for teachers' involvement with administration and policy makers.

Research has indicated that teachers can play essential roles and execute various tasks in the development of curriculum in their working environments. For example, Storey (2007) conducted an exploratory study at three English Language Departments in three different Japanese universities: National University, Municipal University and Prefectural University. The study explored the experiences of thirty-one university professors who had taken part in curriculum development processes over the previous five years. Storey adopted

a qualitative research design and collected his data through semi-structured interviews with the teachers. The results indicated that the highest degree of the professors' participation in the curriculum development process was in five curriculum components, namely, needs analysis, setting objectives, planning of course and syllabus design, selection and development of teaching materials, and planning for effective teaching. The second highest level of their involvement was in both assessment and evaluation.

Similarly, Nunan (1989) carried out a study in three hundred Language Centres across Australia in which 700 teachers were surveyed and interviewed in a school-based curriculum development model. The study utilised a collaborative approach to English language curriculum development between teachers and curriculum specialists. The study found that the development of task activities was the element that showed the greatest participation by teachers in collaborative curriculum development. On the other hand, they were least involved in students' assessment and evaluation. In addition, the results showed that the great majority of teachers endorsed a localised approach to CD, a bottom-up school approach where curriculum is developed and driven by local teachers. However, a minority of teachers preferred a curriculum to be developed and produced by external curriculum experts –a top-down policy of CD– as the results showed. The results revealed a surprising outcome in that some teachers indicated that curriculum issues should not be part of their responsibilities and they would prefer to implement a curriculum that was imposed on them.

Another study conducted by Linton (1996) in a foreign language programme in Arlington Public Schools (primarily, intermediate and secondary schools) in Washington DC, USA, adopted an exclusively bottom-up approach to curriculum development and teachers were entirely in charge of the development process. Participation was compulsory for all Spanish and English teachers in the schools. The main results indicated that the teachers developed curriculum philosophy, mission and goal statements and designed the content of teaching materials, such as language skills content, language forms, cultural contents and rubrics for assessment of language skills. Likewise, the results showed that teachers wrote detailed descriptive instructional features of each language level in terms of the teaching/learning process, and students' exit level goals.

In a totally quantitative study, Frederick (1988) attempted to explore the perceptions of the teachers' actual and desired degrees of participation in curriculum development at secondary school level in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, in the USA. The participants were 2054 teachers from fifteen public schools and the data were obtained from questionnaires. The study investigated teachers' involvement in four areas of curriculum, namely, goals and objectives, substance/content, implementation and evaluation levels in the last three years in their schools. The main findings indicated that the majority of teachers were directly involved in those aspects. More specifically, their highest degree of involvement was in curriculum implementation, the second highest was in designing content/substance and their involvement in setting goals and objectives was the third. Their lowest involvement was in curriculum evaluation. In addition, the findings revealed that the teachers desired to achieve a more significant degree of participation in the previous areas of curriculum than they had in the last three years.

In a small-scale qualitative study, Mullick (2013) investigated EFL teachers' perceptions of their involvement in an EFL curriculum development of a Foundation Year Programme offered in an English language institute at a Saudi public university. The study employed three kinds of qualitative data collection tools: open-ended questionnaires, semi structured interviews and document reviews. The main findings indicated that teachers were not involved in curriculum development at all and the curriculum was developed by an international publishing house. They also revealed that teachers' suggestions on curriculum development issues were rejected. Moreover, the findings revealed that teachers considered their involvement in curriculum design process was necessary at two levels: during the planning stage of curriculum and review stage of curriculum design process. Lastly, teachers thought that they should be involved in course book selection and internal curriculum committee to take part in managing curriculum matters for the offered programme.

I found the first study (Storey, 2007) similar to my own study in terms of the educational level, as it focused on tertiary education, and particularly on the ELT and methodological standpoints. There is also some similarity with Nunan (1989) through the utilisation of interviews for data collection. Moreover, my study shares three similarities with Mullick's (2013) study: both of them investigated similar

programmes in Saudi Arabia, explored teachers role in curriculum development and used semi-structured interviews to collect data from teachers, but my study is much larger in size and scope. In contrast, the studies of both Frederick (1988) and Valentine (1983) are different from the current study in terms of methodology, as they adopted a quantitative research design, which was not the case with the current study, which is qualitative. On the other hand, all of the above studies shared one feature in common in that they were limited to investigating teachers' roles only in one aspect of a curriculum, namely, the development phase. The findings of this study are unique compared with the above, as they revealed the participants' roles in two more curriculum stages: curriculum implementation and comparative evaluation.

3.6 Curriculum Implementation

Curriculum implementation (CI) is the second phase that comes after curriculum development or design in a learning environment. It is the stage where a curriculum is put into practice in its real context of teaching and learning. The common perception of CI in the literature is that it is the implementation of curriculum goals and objectives. For example, Garba's description tackles the former, as he states that it is "putting the curriculum into work for the achievement of the goals for which the curriculum is designed" (2004: 136, cited in Onyeachu, 2006). The latter element is clearly indicated in Okebukola's view, as he contends that it is "the translation of the objectives of the curriculum from paper into practice" (2004:2, cited in Onyeachu, 2006). Yet the above perceptions of CI seem to be restricted to only the achievement of goals and objectives and to ignore any reference to the implementers of a curriculum. In contrast, Brown (1996: 278) views CI as "putting in place the elements developed in the curriculum planning and making them work and fit together within the existing program in a way that will help administrators, teachers, and students". Brown's perception of CI is the preferred one in the current study, because it seems more comprehensive in terms of addressing all the planned components in a curriculum and it considers the issue of effectiveness of curriculum elements as an important feature in the implementation stage. Most importantly, it recognises the vital roles of both teachers and students as the two main stakeholders of any adopted curriculum. Teachers are the main implementers and the learners are the main targets or direct consumers of the curriculum (Kobia, 2009).

The implementation stage of a curriculum is associated with certain contentions or concepts among researchers. For instance, it is viewed as vital, unavoidable, crucial and as the most difficult phase of a curriculum to carry out in the teaching setting, as argued by Fullan (1992) and Mampuru (2001). The rationale behind this agreement is that the CI period requires the execution of multiple and different curriculum elements, such as teaching methodology, testing and teaching materials in a co-ordinated and cohesive way through involving different individuals, such as administrators, teachers and students, within a specific time scale.

3.6.1 Approaches to Curriculum Implementation

Snyder et al. (1992) argue that a curriculum has three main approaches that determine the procedure of its delivery in the teaching context: (a) fidelity, (b) adaptation and (c) an enactment approach. However, other researchers disagree and believe that curriculum is often implemented through the last two approaches only (e.g. Fullan, 1983; Altrichter, 2005). The first approach focuses exclusively on transmission of curriculum content. The second allows some opportunities for curriculum adjustment. The last advocates the creation of a curriculum in action based on students' experiences in classrooms (Snyder et al., 1992). According to Shawer (2010), adopting a specific approach can result in certain implications that shape the role of teachers. I think that the fidelity approach treats them as curriculum servants, because it ignores that teachers "turn curriculum from the institutional into the pedagogical level (experienced/enacted curriculum)" (Shawer, 2010: 174). Nevertheless, their tasks are controlled by curriculum developers or experts who determine the nature of teachers' job inside the classroom, as transmitters of prescribed curriculum content to students only. On the other hand, both the adaptation approach and the enactment approach share some features that are more positive regarding teachers' roles, through showing their potential skills and effective impacts on CI. With respect to the former, I believe it regards teachers as legitimate curriculum negotiators, who can make any needed adjustments in the curriculum that can be realised at any point of its implementation based on their contextual needs (Shawer, 2010). The latter considers teachers as potential curriculum developers who are "creators rather than primary receivers of curriculum knowledge" (ibid: 174), preceded by wide experiences in adapting and designing external supplementary materials (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992; Craig, 2006). However, there are some diverse factors that may affect and limit the efficient implementation of curriculum in a teaching context (Carless, 1998), such as the executed managerial structure, process and practices of teachers (Altrichter, 2005). Teachers are likely to face noticeable pressure in terms of teaching duties, timetables and the nature of decision-making procedures (ibid). These possible obstacles confirm that CI is not a simple and undemanding mission to carry out, and show that "the complexity of the implementation process makes predictions of success risky" (Thomas, 1994: 1852). Therefore, it is essential for all the concerned individuals,

such as curriculum developers, policy makers and teachers, "to monitor implementation with care at each stage of the process, so that remedies may be applied periodically toward coping with unanticipated difficulties" (ibid: 1852).

3.6.2 Teachers Roles in Curriculum Implementation

Onyeachu (2008:569) stresses explicitly that "teachers are the key implementers of curriculum [and] effective implementation and learning experiences will be very difficult" to achieve without them. English Language teachers adopt a wide range of set roles and responsibilities inside the classroom (Nunan & Lamb, 1999) related to the quality of their teaching performance. Therefore, teachers have to implement certain classroom teaching practices, such as providing pre-planned, guided, and clear instructions that meet students' needs in the classroom (Nunan, 1988; Nunan & Lamb 1999; Brown, 1995; Richards, 2003). Additionally, their teaching styles are expected to be dynamic and subject to change, based on students' contextual needs (Nunan & Lamb, 1999). With respect to the actual roles implemented by teachers, they are required to play many major roles efficiently. For example, teachers are viewed as observers or investigators, as they investigate the process of teaching and learning in their own classrooms. Also, they can be regarded as pacing organisers. For instance, their experiences can help them to decide when to prolong or reduce the timing of teaching content, performed skills or activities by students inside the classroom based on the nature of the tasks or the requirement of the subject. Finally, teachers are assessors: they give feedback on the performance of their students and help to integrate the testing programme into the overall curriculum (Wright, 1988; Brown, 1995; Nunan & Lamb, 1999; Harmer 2007). Nevertheless, it is vital to realise that "these roles are not discrete. Rather they overlap, which can cause complications, confusion and even conflict" (Nunan & Lamb, 1999: 134) if teachers fail to carry out their practical roles efficiently and competently. For this reason, Richards (2003) contends that accomplishing these roles is not an easy task for teachers without acquiring some essential skills and having relevant academic background. Moreover, he insists that teachers are required to have diverse sorts of knowledge backgrounds, particularly practical knowledge, content knowledge, contextual knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and reflective knowledge (ibid), along with academic and experiential knowledge (Coenders et al., 2008).

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Overall, the literature is rich with many research studies in the area of teachers' roles in curriculum implementation in TESOL. For example, Carless's (1998) study explored primary school English teachers' implementation of a Target-Oriented Curriculum (TOC) in different schools in Hong Kong using both qualitative and quantitative methodology. It sought to identify teachers' reactions towards the TOC and how they implemented the introduced innovations of the new curriculum in the classroom. The research involved a collective case study in which classroom observation, focused group interviews and questionnaires were utilised for data collection. According to Carless's findings, the teachers expressed positive attitudes towards the TOC and they demonstrated reasonable understanding of the principles and practices associated with curriculum improvement, such as communicative and task-based approaches to ELT. The findings also revealed that teachers had a chance to implement the TOC gradually in flexible time-scales and they benefited from a high degree of autonomy granted by schools' administration to facilitate the execution of the desired changes. With respect to quality of teaching, the findings indicated that the introduction of the TOC offered the teachers some opportunities to be more active and innovative in their teaching approaches, as they were able to design learner-centred activities.

Another study, conducted by Oraif & Borg (2009), investigated teachers' implementation of a new communicative English language (EL) curriculum in Libyan secondary schools. It examined the relationship between the intended plans of the EL curriculum and the actual curriculum instruction and delivery inside the classroom. The teachers were observed and interviewed later to identify their justifications for classroom practices. The main findings revealed that there was a significant contrast between the intended plans for the EL curriculum and the observed teaching routines. For example, teachers transformed all pair work or group work designed activities to teacher-led question and answer sessions, which is entirely different from the style prescribed in the curriculum. Another results showed that teachers tended to use Arabic translation to deliver the course books' activities, though the principles of the EL curriculum emphasise maximising the use of English in the classroom.

The study also investigated teachers' justifications for their classroom teaching practices. The results showed that the teachers' personal beliefs about teaching

and learning influenced the way they delivered the curriculum to meet their contextual features, in terms of students' needs and the assessment system imposed. For instance, teachers held traditional view about their roles (e.g. teacher-centred), in contrast to the ones that are demanded in the curriculum, such as guide and facilitator. The reason behind their perceptions was their contextual classroom realities, as the results revealed. Interestingly, the results indicated that teachers had negative attitudes towards implementing pair work and group work, and they failed to implement them in their lesson activities. The justifications teachers provided were that students' background in Libya, low language proficiency and lack of willingness and motivation, discouraged them from participating in pair work or group work activities. Rather, they represented a challenge for them. Furthermore, the results also indicated that there was a mismatch between the actual emphasis of English exams in secondary schools and the intended aims of the curriculum. The tests carried out focus more on grammar and reading elements than on speaking and writing ones in the exams, as the teachers stated.

Teachers can be classified into different categories in implementing a curriculum. This can be seen in the work of Shawer (2010), who explored EFL college teachers' curriculum implementation approaches and strategies in the classroom setting. It was an exploratory qualitative case study, using interviews and observation to collect data from teachers who were involved in teaching EFL courses in different colleges in Greece. The results indicated that the teachers implemented the EFL curriculum differently. As a result, Shawer classified them into three categories: as curriculum developers, curriculum makers or curriculum transmitters. According to the results, the first group, curriculum developers, employed diverse strategies, such as changing some aspects of the course books and replacing them with authentic materials from newspapers and leaflets. They also developed some aspects of the curriculum by making supplementary handouts and adapting teaching materials (e.g. topics, tasks) and used curriculum planning to consider their students' actual needs in designing their lessons and activities in advance.. Likewise, they expanded the curriculum somewhat by adding new and different content by writing their own materials and designing new tasks to meet students' interests. Regarding course books, the results indicated that the curriculum developers did not like sticking to the

prescribed course books in terms of content, topics, lessons and sequence. Instead, they preferred executing unit-topic skipping, lesson-topic skipping and task skipping. Shawer's results for the second category, curriculum makers, indicated that they shared the above two features with curriculum developers with regard to their strategy towards course books' content. Similarly, they employed skipping, adaptation and supplementing procedures. However, curriculum makers were more confident to the extent that they developed all their lessons. The findings of curriculum makers also revealed that they had done other things differently: they adopted a curriculum-making strategy in which they conducted needs analysis for their students that helped them to generate curriculum topics. Moreover, they introduced pedagogical topics around a theme included in the imposed curriculum and added some additional external topics. Then, they organised and sequenced these topics according to their pedagogical content. Lastly, the findings related to curriculum transmitters indicated a completely different approach to implementing a curriculum comparing with both curriculum developers and curriculum makers. These teachers depended solely on teaching the selected course books: they were bound by their content and taught each unit, lesson and prescribed task. In other words, they used students' books as a single input source of pedagogical content.

Teachers are vulnerable to various and diverse challenges in delivering a curriculum in their own workplace. This can be observed in Kobia's (2009) study, conducted with Swahili language teachers in Kenya. The study investigated challenges facing the teachers in implementing the 2002 Swahili language curriculum in secondary schools in Kenya. The researcher employed a mixed method research design to collect his data, using structured questionnaires, unstructured interviewees, classroom observation and content analysis. The relevant findings from this study revealed that the teachers encountered some major multiple impediments. First, there was not enough time to deliver the Swahili syllabus according to the allocated time-scale in the curriculum. Second, the overwhelming majority of teachers were not involved in any formal organised in-service training before the execution of the new curriculum in secondary schools. Third, there was a lack of teachers to cater for the increased number of secondary school students. Fourth, the teachers were overburdened, due to a heavy teaching load.

Shah et al. (2013) study investigated EFL teachers' perspectives about the factors that influence their teaching practice and teaching techniques they used to deal with those factors. The study was conducted in a Foundation Year Programme offered in an English language institute in a public Saudi university. The researchers utilised semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data from a group of EFL teachers. The main findings of the study revealed that Saudi undergraduate EFL students' social, cultural and conservative Islamic beliefs influenced the teachers' choice of teaching materials. As a result, teachers had to design activities that did not contradict their students' beliefs and related classroom activities to their students' local culture. Moreover, the study findings also showed that the students lacked motivation to learn English and it was a challenge for teachers to deal with the issue. Therefore, teachers adopted creativity in designing classroom activities, developed rapport with their students, and made the classroom environment friendly, entertaining and relaxed. Lastly, teachers observed that students were interested in getting high grades, but they gave little attention to genuine learning. Consequently, teachers tried to enhance students' learning by providing them with authentic learning opportunities by involving them in individual, pair work and group activities. They also made their classrooms active and interactive utilising audio, posters, photos, games, and personalised some tasks through role-plays.

The above studies explored the roles of teachers in curriculum implementation in different settings. It is recognised that teachers played diverse roles in curriculum implementation based on the results discussed above. Oraif & Borg's (2009) study is similar to the present one in two aspects: both of them belong to the EFL context and the background culture of the context of the study is the Arabic environment. Additionally, Shah et al. (2013) study is similar to this study in three aspects: both of them investigated similar programmes in Saudi Arabia, investigated the teaching experience of EFL teachers and used semi-structured interviews to collect data from teachers. However, the present study is different from all of those discussed above, except Shah et al. (2013), in terms of educational level, as it was conducted at a university level, in an English Language Institute. In addition, my study is more comprehensive than all of reviewed studies above in relation to the research findings. It reported the results

of teachers' roles in two additional areas of curriculum: curriculum development and curriculum evaluation.

3.6.3 Factors Influencing Curriculum Implementation

Curriculum researchers have indicated that there are certain factors that can influence and limit the efficient implementation of the curriculum (e.g. Wright, 1988; Fullan, 1994; Nunan & Lamb, 1999; Altrichter, 2005; Wang; 2006). One such factor is the teachers' lack of clarity about the intended goals and their attitudes towards the change or specific innovation intended in the newly introduced curriculum. Moreover, teachers may find some of the innovations introduced irritating and challenging to cope with during the implementation process. Additionally, the level of teachers' commitment and interaction patterns form other crucial contributing reasons obstructing the CI in a learning context (Altrichter, 2005). Furthermore, there might be a mismatch between teachers' expectations about the nature of students' learning process and the actual reality of their students in the classroom (Wright, 1988; Nunan & Lamb, 1999). Wang (2006) categorises the factors hindering curriculum implementation into internal and external ones. I consider all of the above four causes as internal, because they are related to internal issues within an educational institution and not associated with external influence. However, it is noticeable that all of the above four obstacles are associated with one main element in the implementation of a curriculum, the teachers. Their appearance in any English language curriculum indicates shortcomings or lack of proficiency in the execution of the development stage of a curriculum, particularly the marginalisation of teachers' voice. This problem was predicted by Altrichter in his assertion that "to bypass collaboration of teachers means to by-pass their rationality and their ingenuity, and this would not solve the implementation problem, but on the contrary make it worse" (Altrichter, 2005: 4). Regarding the fourth problem, its emergence in an EFL/ ESL teaching contexts stresses the importance of teachers' contextual knowledge before embarking on teaching in an unfamiliar context to them. For example, English language teachers who come from western countries (e.g. the UK, the USA and Canada) to teach in EFL contexts in the Gulf, such as Kuwait, Oman, UAE and other Arab countries, including the context of the study, Saudi Arabia, are highly in need of contextual knowledge and background information about the learning culture in these countries. This can help them to avoid problems in

their own expected roles in teaching in EFL programmes. Troudi (2005) and Holliday et al. (2010) confirm this notion as they indicate that TESOL teachers teaching in overseas countries, such as Arabian Gulf states are required to develop their knowledge about their students' classroom culture, namely, learning culture and linguistic experience. The previous researchers also contend that teachers' knowledge about the classroom culture is an advantageous element, as it will help them to design activities that consider students' personal differences and help them to develop their individual identities as well. In general, my view is that all the above factors represent real potential threats for an efficient and successful CI process. On the other hand, I consider their emergence in any teaching environment as opportunities to improve the implementation stage of a curriculum and the future evaluation stage to be carried out later.

3.7 Curriculum Evaluation

The field of curriculum evaluation (CE) in language education is a relatively new discipline compared to its counterpart in general education. Therefore, the latter represents the main tenets of the former: therefore, they share many core principles in common. For example, there is a wide consensus among curriculum researchers that CE has several purposes to achieve in educational settings, depending on the focus of the evaluation plan and procedure, and these purposes have been extensively and explicitly highlighted in the literature. The main ones are to improve students' learning quality, teaching materials and teaching practices. They also include providing decision makers with information to help them to make decisions about a specific curriculum in order to choose and adopt the best option with regard to curriculum (McCormick & James, 1983; Nixon, 1994; Mathews, 1989; McKernan, 2008). These purposes are also intended by educationalists, curriculum planners, policy makers and teachers to be achieved in tertiary language education in EFL/ESL environments across the globe. Consequently, some researchers have advocated certain essential features in any curriculum evaluation procedure (e.g. White, 1988; Nixon, 1994; Richards, 2003). For instance, all curriculum components need to be constantly scrutinised to identify the efficiency of their roles in the language curriculum (McCormick & James 1983; Mathews, 1989; Zohrabi, 2008; Nation & Macalister, 2010), namely, the elements included in Brown's model (i.e. needs analysis, objectives, teaching materials, teaching, testing, and evaluation). However, it is

crucial to realise that implementing a sound EL curriculum evaluation requires the adoption of a comprehensive plan to accommodate all the above elements in an orderly evaluation style in a teaching context. Additionally, it is important to evaluate curriculum components through adopting different perspectives and utilising a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods (Hogg, 1990; Alderson, 1992; Roxburgh et al., 2008), which are regarded as useful tools for executing curriculum innovation (Hogg, 1990). Most importantly, the evaluation results of each item need to be considered as guidelines for the modification of the other curriculum elements. For instance, after examining the needs analysis of a curriculum, some new learning needs for students might appear and others might require some adjustment for the purpose of improvement. These leaning needs have to be reflected in the curriculum objectives, course books, classroom teaching practices and the testing procedure implemented, and should be evaluated on a regular basis.

3.7.1 Approaches to curriculum Evaluation

Various approaches have been proposed for implementing language curriculum evaluation. For example, Brown (1989) suggests four approaches for evaluating a language curriculum: the product-oriented approach, the static-characteristics approach, the process-oriented approach and the decision-facilitation approach. The product-oriented approach focuses on investigating the accomplishment of the goals and instructional objectives of a programme (Brown, 1995). The achievement of the objectives should be measured at the end of the programme and their successful attainment is an indication of the success in meeting the programme intended goals (Tyler, 1951 cited in Norris, 1998; Brown, 1995). The static-characteristics approach is used by educational institutions for accreditation purposes. This sort of evaluation is often implemented by outsiders (e.g. evaluation experts) to inspect different external aspects in an educational institute (e.g. library facilities, number and type of degrees offered, classroom facilities and academic records (Brown, 1995). Regarding the process-oriented approach, a contrasting view is presented by Scriven, who calls it goal-free evaluation (1967). Scriven believes that all the elements of the curriculum must be evaluated, including the goals and objectives (ibid). The decision-facilitation approach aims to collect pertinent information about a programme. This trend restricts the evaluators' role to only gathering information that can help the

decision makers or administrators to make decisions about the programme (Brown, 1995; Markee, 1997). The process-oriented approach seems the most appropriate in evaluating and improving a language curriculum because it considers the revision of all elements of the curriculum through an ongoing process of evaluation. This can lead to the discovery of some weaknesses in areas related to the curriculum elements, which offers a good chance for improvement in the long term.

3.7.2 Teachers' Roles in Curriculum Evaluation

Many curriculum researchers have advocated for the centrality of teachers' voice and involvement in evaluating curriculum elements and they consider their involvement as determining factors in achieving a successful and professional CE operation (e.g. Brown, 1995; Richards, 2003; Mathews, 1989; Radnor, 1994; Levine, 2002; McKernan, 2008). Their prominent roles in CE are focused mainly on evaluating three areas: teaching materials, teaching and the entire English course. Firstly, teachers can provide sound judgments on the usefulness of the teaching materials, namely, the course books they use in their daily teaching practice, through adopting three main kinds of EFL/ESL course book evaluation procedures: pre-use evaluation, in-use evaluation and post-use evaluation (Cunningsworth, 1995; Ellis, 1997; Tomlinson, 2003; McGrath, 2002; McDough & Shaw, 2003). This step is crucial in EF/ ESL environments where there is a wide dependence on international English course books designed by western publishers for educational institutions across the globe, particularly when introducing new English course books series. Nevertheless, more attention and time have to be given to teachers' involvement in the pre-use evaluation of course books to make sure that the selected course books have the potential to meet the intended students' level and consider teachers' contextual classroom realities, which can minimise the frequency of change of the course books. Secondly, teachers need to have a voice in evaluating the teaching quality of their performance in their working teaching sites. Richards (2003) insists that teachers' roles start from planning the evaluation phase of the EL curriculum: they must be allowed to participate in setting their evaluation criteria and procedures and the ways in which their results are presented. He contends that adopting this policy can help in identifying the teachers' concerns and desires in an educational institution. Thirdly, they can monitor the offered English language course, verify

the extent to which it is effective for the intended students, and identify the obstacles encountered in its implementation, because they are legitimate "insider evaluators" (Richards, 2003: 125). However, in reality, the situation is different, as Mckernan (2008: 204) confesses explicitly that teachers "are not empowered to make decisions about evaluation". Therefore, he advocates adopting "a new strategy in curriculum evaluation which positions educators as connoisseurs of practice who have the ability and skills to reveal their qualities through evaluation" (McKernan, 2008: 22) of curriculum elements. Consequently, teachers' input in curriculum evaluation activities can lead to some positive impacts on them. For instance, it "can be a useful exercise of professional development" (Nation & Macalister, 2010: 206) and "enhance their leadership'" (Fradd & Lee, 1997: 546). Nevertheless, teachers' roles can be constrained by adopting an authoritative and directive style in managing institutional curriculum evaluation, as Kiely & Rea-Dinkins (2005) state. Personally, I believe that teachers' contribution in CE processes can be hindered by other factors, such as personal and professional issues. For example, some teachers have been teaching for a long time and they may feel that their engagement in other activities besides teaching will be an extra burden on their shoulders. Thus, they may prefer to leave the evaluation duties to external evaluators and to just implement the recommendations. Other teachers may believe that they lack the required skills to be involved in evaluating curriculum elements, due to their long experience of their marginalisation in decision-making in curriculum issues other than delivery. This can make them feel that they are incompetent and lack the self-confidence to carry out any potential roles in the CE process. As a result, they may constantly avoid any involvement in such tasks.

In recent years, curriculum evaluation has attracted increased interest among educationalists, curriculum planners and policy makers in language institutions across the globe, particularly in tertiary education in EFL/ESL environments. This practice reflects a continuous desire on the part of English Language Institutes in many countries to improve students' English language learning experience and language proficiency level, along with others, such as the curriculum development and implementation phases. As a result, this has encouraged many researchers to conduct research studies in evaluating English language curriculum elements. In these studies, researchers have tackled teachers' roles

in relation to the investigated areas of a curriculum either explicitly or implicitly. For a long time, some elements of an EL curriculum, such as course books and teaching, have been fertile and common areas for evaluation in many research studies in ESL/EFL environments. For example, Lawrence (2011) conducted a course book evaluation study for one of the English language course books, *Theme Book*, which was introduced in 2009 and used in the secondary school curriculum in Hong Kong. The study adopted a qualitative research design, employing semi-structured interviews. The researcher involved local EFL teachers as evaluators for the course book components. The results revealed that the teachers' evaluation highlighted some advantages and disadvantages in the course book content after its actual use in classroom. With respect to the advantages, the results indicated that the course book had some strong aspects: the teaching tasks were systematically designed; clear instructions and examples were given for both teachers and students; a wide range of authentic texts were provided; and the tasks included were in line with the adopted secondary school curriculum initiative approach in teaching and learning. Regarding the disadvantages, the results revealed that writing tasks failed to help students to produce written texts and most of the speaking tasks contradicted the examination requirement of the curriculum. The main results revealed that the teachers suggested an improved version for the post- use course book evaluation checklist based on their contextual needs. In contrast, AL-Mazroou's (1988) study employed a quantitative research design and revealed different outcomes. He investigated EFL teachers' perceptions about English course books and teaching at the secondary level in Saudi Arabia. The study utilised questionnaires for data collection from the participants. The main findings are those on teachers' roles in course book evaluation, which revealed that the teachers surveyed were not involved in evaluating the course books they taught. The results also indicated that teachers were not asked to provide their views after teaching the course book for some years.

In another quantitative study, AL-Nayadi (1989) investigated the views of teachers about their evaluation method in the UAE. The researcher used a questionnaire whose results revealed that the procedure implemented for evaluating teachers did not measure their competence and skills in teaching and it created a suspicious atmosphere at schools. This indirectly indicates that the

evaluated teachers were not consulted; nor did they have a role in setting the method of the evaluation of their teaching performance and quality in their workplace.

A study in which I piloted the topic of this dissertation revealed some findings on teachers' roles in curriculum evaluation. In AL-Houssawi (2010), I investigated EFL teachers' beliefs about English language curriculum evaluation in their teaching context at an English language institute that is part of a Saudi university. The findings can be summarised in that the participant EFL teachers' roles were found to be entirely absent in the only two evaluated elements of the EL curriculum in their teaching context: the English course books and teaching. Other important findings pinpointed that teachers suggested the evaluation of two more aspects of the EL curriculum - needs analysis and objectives - on an ongoing basis as a way of improving the intensive EFL courses at the FYP.

Lastly, Abu-Rizaizah (2009) conducted an evaluative study of the English language curriculum for engineering students in a Saudi Arabian university. It was based on a mixed methods research design approach, employing document analysis, questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations. The main findings from the areas related to this study are those on teachers' roles in evaluating students' needs, the goals and objectives of the English language program, course books, and outcomes of the English programme. The findings revealed that there was wide disagreement between the EFL teachers surveyed in terms of their views on the achievement of the goals of the English program: some teachers considered that certain goals were achieved, while others regarded the same goals as unachieved. Additionally, the findings revealed that students' needs were not reflected in the English programme objectives, such as presentations, report writing, reading manuals, communication skills and reading current relevant literature. With respect to the course books, the findings revealed that the *Interchange* course book content focused mainly on English for General Purposes (EGP), in contrast to the students' academic needs, English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Also, the findings pointed out that the *Interchange* course book lacked authenticity for the engineering students in terms of topics, conversations and contexts of discussion, and there was no coherence between it and the second course book used in the program, *Technical English,* in terms of themes and level of English. According to Abu-Rizaizah's findings (ibid.), EFL

teachers were not satisfied with the outcomes of the English language programme and they indicated that the English course offered in the foundation year programme failed to help the engineering students to achieve the intended programme objectives. Therefore, the participant teachers recommended the inclusion of academic reading and writing in the programme objectives, in order to improve the undergraduate students' basic language skills.

The above studies explored the roles of teachers in curriculum evaluation in different settings. It is evident based on the results discussed above that teachers played diverse roles in evaluating different elements of curriculum. Nonetheless, I find similarities between the current study and the other two studies discussed above, Abu-Rizaizah (2009) and AL-Houssawi (2010), in terms of the educational level of the site of the study and the country. All three studies were conducted at tertiary level and shared a common area of investigation: the roles of EFL teachers in curriculum evaluation at university level in one country, Saudi Arabia. However, the present study is different from the above. They explored teachers' roles in only one aspect of curriculum, curriculum evaluation, while the current study investigated teachers' roles in two additional areas of curriculum, namely, curriculum development and curriculum implementation. This means that my study is more inclusive and explicitly unique compared with those discussed above.

The next chapter details the methodology adopted in the current study. It addresses its philosophical underpinnings and explains how data were collected and analysed. It also tackles issues related to trustworthiness features of this study.

4 Chapter Four: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive description of the research methodology implemented in this study. Initially, it addresses the research aims and questions. The discussion of the interpretative research paradigm is followed by an explanation of both the theoretical framework of the research and the qualitative research approach. Afterwards, a full account is given of relevant methodological issues. Then, a detailed description is provided of the method of data collection employed in this research as well as the data analysis procedures. Next, issues related to the trustworthiness and the ethical aspects considered while conducting this research are addressed. The last section discusses the limitations and challenges of this thesis.

4.2 Research Questions

The purpose of this research was to explore the English language teachers' views about their roles in the curriculum of EFL Foundation Year Programme in an English language institute (ELI) in a Saudi university. An additional aim was to describe and analyse the nature of their actual roles in their teaching context.

The overarching research questions which guided this study are:

1. What are EFL teachers' views about their roles in the development stage of the curriculum?
2. What are EFL teachers' views about their roles in the implementation stage of the curriculum?
3. What are EFL teachers' views about their roles in the evaluation stage of the curriculum?

4.3 Interpretive Research Paradigm

Based on the interpretive nature of this study, an exploratory nature of this study, and an exploratory approach to research seemed to be a suitable selection. This decision was based on a belief that the aim of the interpretive researcher is to understand peoples' views about the phenomenon under investigation through an understanding of the multiple realities, human social interaction, and behaviours, rather than making sets of rules about human behaviours or generalising certain assumptions about human phenomena. According to Radnor, interpretive research aims "to come to an understanding of the world of the research participants and what that world means to them" (2002: 29). Its main concern is "to understand the subjective world of human experience" (Cohen et al., 2007: 21). Within this approach, social reality is constructed by individuals, based on their subjective knowledge and their own contextual situations (Radnor, 2002). Eventually, interpretive research seeks to reflect or transfer "the participants' views of the situation being studied" (Creswell, 1998: 8).

The interpretive approach in educational research considers the individuals as unique and their views as non-generalizable; people have multiple interpretations and perceptions of one single event and situation. Also, it emphasises the notion that situations or phenomena need to be investigated through the eyes of the participants instead of from the researcher's stance only (Cohen et al., 2007; Crotty, 1998). The above view applies to the current study, and it is committed to the main characteristics of the interpretive mode of inquiry set out above. Thus, the study sought to explore the participants' subjectively-held views about the nature of their roles and the associated assumptions about them in the specific context. In this study, the interpretive approach to research was used to explore the EFL teachers' views about their roles in relation to the Foundation Year Programme in three stages, namely, curriculum development, implementation and evaluation, without neglecting aspects related to the social realities encountered in their context. The main purpose was to provide a thorough description of how participants feel, to convey their apprehensions, interests and views regarding their practised roles in the investigated curriculum, as well as interpreting their social reality. In brief, the interpretive approach has the potential to help the researcher explain, from the insider's view, why things occurred (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

4.4 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework is a vital part of any study. Silverman (2001 & 2011) recommends adopting a clear theoretical framework for every study. He contends that the inclusion of a framework has two main advantages. First, it explains the researcher's paradigmatic viewpoints and his/her philosophical views of the world. Second, the theoretical framework guides the researcher to select an informed research methodology and a suitable research design in order to address the questions specifically. Crotty 1998: 7) perceives the theoretical perspective as the "statement of the assumptions brought to the research". These assumptions indicate the researcher's "view of the human world and social life within that world" and where these assumptions are located in research paradigm based on logical criterion. They should also be "reflected in the methodology" (Crotty 1998: 7). The theoretical perspective contains both the ontology and epistemology. Each one has its distinctive understanding, but they complement each other conceptually (ibid).

4.4.1 Ontological Stance

The term 'ontology' is concerned with answering the question "what is the nature of reality?" (Morrison, 2002: 18). The ontological position of the interpretive paradigm is relativism (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). In other words, it adopts a subjective view of reality (Ernest, 1994). This means that interpretive researchers contend that there are multiple realities present in our social world. These realities are socially constructed by individuals' ideological and cultural positions, and they are not ruled by natural laws, nor do they exist objectively. More specifically, the construction of these social realities is affected by social and cultural factors (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Crotty, 1998). According to Pring (2000), the observed multiple realities reflect the definitions and perceptions of people's own reality who are involved in the research. Since different people perceive things differently, there is no one single reality in our social world (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2000).

The objective of the study is to explore the views of the EFL teachers about their roles in the curriculum. This means that it is expected that different versions of teachers' realities will be identified or observed; they might contradict each other as they are socially constructed. This is because the study is informed by an

assumption that reality is not an objective phenomenon, but one constructed by teachers' own social and personal experiential realities in the curriculum which influence their practised roles. Also, other institutional factors can influence their social realities differently in their work place. My role as a researcher is to offer multiple interpretations for their declared realities. This stance reflects the interpretative research perspectives that reality is a result of people's social lives and interactions, which can be explored for the purpose of providing a sound description and interpretation for a particular phenomenon in a particular context. My stance is in line with Guba and Lincoln (1999) views that realities can be described as abstract, context-bound, and subjective.

4.4.2 Epistemological Stance

The interpretative paradigm adopts a constructionist epistemological stance. As a result, interpretive researchers consider that knowledge is constructed and gained through the interaction between the researcher and the object of the research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Therefore, interpretive researchers associate knowledge with interpretation, meaning and explanation. This means that knowledge is constructed by individuals rather than being found or discovered by them (Fox, 2001; Schwandt, 1994). This requires researchers to make some effort to understand and make sense of participants' construction of meanings in their social world (Usher, 1996). Thus, interpretive researchers aim to identify how individuals interpret phenomena (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). This suggests that meanings are constructed through human interaction with realities in our world and they do not exist without reasons (Crotty, 1998).

From an epistemological perspective, as a researcher, I believe that an appropriate procedure for understanding the social world of certain people requires investigating their views of the social world they live and work. The aim of this study was to understand the social world of my participants. This required me to make a significant effort to understand and merge with their social world. Consequently, I was able to construct some meanings as a result of my active interaction with them. Moreover, I took into account the different factors that influenced the construction of teachers' realities of their roles in the curriculum at the development, implementation and evaluation stages in their teaching context. From this perspective, my aim was to identify and report the realities which were constructed in the minds of the participants being investigated.

4.5 Qualitative Research Approach

The term 'interpretive' is associated mainly with qualitative research methods (Ernest, 1994; Robson, 2002; Dornyei, 2007; Creswell, 2013). Creswell (1998: 15) defines qualitative research as "an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting". The goal of qualitative research is to understand the encountered social realities in their own terms, to provide rich descriptions of people and their actual interactions in natural setting (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997). According to Anderson and Burns (1989: 67), in qualitative research "the subjective meaning of action for humans is legitimate content of study" such as participants' subjective opinions, experiences and feelings about the context that is being studied (Punch, 2005). A quantitative research approach was not suitable for the current study because it "stands for objectivity, measurability, predictability, controllability and constructs laws and rules of human behaviours" (Dash, 1993: 2), which were not the purposes of the current research investigation. More specifically, the goal of this research was to understand and interpret the phenomena and make meaning out of the obtained data at the end of this investigation.

Many qualitative researchers emphasise the researchers' impact on a qualitative study (e.g., Miles & Huberman, 1994; Eisner, 1991; Haverkamp, 2005; Punch, 2005). For example, Guba (1990) contends that the role of the qualitative researcher is to be more personally engaged in a social setting along with the participants as the only source of reality. The major common perspective among qualitative researchers is that they "believe that a single phenomenon is having multiple interpretations" (Dash, 1993: 2).They can use different instruments to carry out their research studies, such as "observe, interview, record, describe, interpret, and appraise settings as they are" (Eisner, 1991: 33). Finally, "the researcher is essentially the main 'measurement device' in the study" (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 7).

The nature of research questions of this study led me to use the qualitative research approach, which is more appropriate in exploring subjective meanings, understanding views and attitudes and interpreting the associated social realities generated among the participants. The content of the reviewed literature above

was on my mind during the research process, mainly during interviews. Consequently, I felt inspired to be involved actively with the participants, and I had the determination to dig deeper and scrutinise all issues and elements that were relevant to teachers' roles in the curriculum in order to obtain as rich and thorough data as possible in the context of the study.

On the basis of the above discussion, the qualitative research approach contributed to my study in the following ways:

- It guided me to give my participants the chance to express their subjective feelings, conflicting views, opinions and attitudes freely and to regard them as essential components of my research.
- It encouraged me to seek multiple understandings, views and standpoints for one particular phenomenon; in this study, it is teachers' roles in the curriculum and how teachers experienced dealing with these roles and teaching in their work place.

4.6 Research Methodology

Crotty (1998: 3) defines methodology as "the strategy, plan of action, process, or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes". Its main purpose is to describe, evaluate and justify the use of particular methods (Wellington, 2000). A researcher's choices about a methodology or particular methods are likely to be influenced by some factors, such as the nature, context, objectives of the study, and the amount of time devoted to the research (Creswell, 2005; Robson, 2002). The exploratory nature of qualitative research is perceived as a useful and effective method of exploring new issues or areas where very little is known about a phenomenon (Eisenhardt, 1989; Perry, 2005). The current study adopts exploratory research methodology to "investigate a phenomenon or general condition" (Dörnyei, 2007: 152). The study explored the phenomenon of EFL teachers' roles in the FYP in three stages, namely, development, implementation and evaluation at a tertiary education institution. My decision to use the exploratory methodology stemmed from the ontological assumption of interpretive research, which implies that "reality is multiple as seen through many views", as Creswell (2013: 21) advocates. These realities can convey different and conflicting views. Yet, they are considered valuable and efficient ways to

obtain a broader understanding of people and the world (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Therefore, I was keen to get different and contradictory views from the participants about the phenomena under investigation as a way of identifying the world of teachers' roles in the curriculum. Then, I developed their views as themes and tried to identify why the participants held these different views in the findings of my study.

4.7 Participants

The research population of this study included both male and female EFL teachers in an ELI in one of the public universities in Saudi Arabia. The participants were 17 male and 5 female teachers, 22 in total. They can be categorised into two groups for both the male and female teachers: Saudis and expatriates. The expatriates come from 10 different nationalities. Regarding the male teachers, I interviewed 17: Saudi Arabia (2), Algeria (2), Egypt (1), Tunisia (2), Palestine (1), Jordan (1), Syria (1), Pakistan (5) and Britain (2). With respect to the female teachers, I interviewed 5: Saudi Arabia (1), Egypt (1), India (1), Pakistan (2).

The participants from both groups were involved in teaching the Foundation Year English language curriculum for undergraduate male and female students in the ELI where this study was carried out. They had a diverse range of years of teaching experience in the context of the study, from 3 to 15 years. I sought to collect the data from both male and female teachers, aiming to capture any differences that could enrich the data, description and investigation. When quoting the participants, I refer to them using pseudonyms.

4.7.1 Sampling Method

The quality of any research depends on the adequacy of the sampling strategy adopted by the researcher (Morrison, 1993), and the selection of a suitable sampling plan is a vital decision procedure in qualitative research (Cohen et al., 2007; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007.) The sampling strategy used in the current study was a purposeful one guided by theorists' suggestion that purposive sampling is used widely in small-scale qualitative research studies (e.g. Cohen et al., 2007; Bryman, 2008; Creswell, 2013). Its main "concern is to acquire in depth information from those who are in a position to give it" (Cohen et al., 2007: 114). In this type of sampling, "some members of the wider population definitely will be excluded and others definitely included" (Cohen et al., 2007: 110) because there are certain specific characteristics that are represented in the chosen sample (Fowler, 2002). In other words, the researcher needs to be aware of the need for a close connection and relevance between the investigated research questions and sampling (Bryman, 2008). Therefore, most qualitative researchers recommend purposive sampling for research-based interviews (Bryman, 2008).

The purposeful sampling strategy was intentionally selected to collect the data in the present study from EFL male and female teachers through semi-structured interviews. These teachers were selected from the concerned ELI in a Saudi university. Their selection was based on one main criterion: they had been teaching at the site of the study at least for three years. It was vital to adopt this condition for many reasons. First, these teachers had enough experience in teaching the English language curriculum to allow them to reflect on it thoroughly. Second, they had in-depth practical knowledge and had experienced the problems associated with the curriculum elements. Third, they could trace the sequence of events related to teachers' roles in the curriculum and elaborate on them more accurately than could teachers who did not know or had not experienced these events for so long. Therefore, they were in a good position to elaborate upon and provide detailed accounts about any issues related to the focus areas of this investigation. Consequently, this "will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research questions" (Creswell, 2009: 114) and "ensure strength and richness to the data" (Cohen et al., 2007: 114) obtained about the phenomenon under investigation.

4.8 Gaining Access

After I had arrived at the context of the study, I started the procedure of gaining access to participants. Initially, I had a brief meeting with the administration staff. The main purpose of that meeting was to ask for an official approval for interviewing the ELI members of the teaching staff, both male and female. Then, I informed the ELI officials, namely, the academic director, heads of unit, senior supervisors and senior coordinators about the study to facilitate interviewing the teachers. After that, I went to the teachers' academic affairs unit and obtained an updated list of all male English language teachers who were involved in teaching the FYP English during the time when the study was to be carried out, in order to select my sample of the interviewees. Next, I selected my participants and prepared a preliminary list based on the sampling strategy adopted in the study.

I contacted the teachers and introduced myself to them. I had a brief discussion with each one individually. In our conversations, I told them about my area of research and I asked each of them to take part in my research through semi-structured interviews. Teachers who agreed to be interviewed were included in the final list. Following this step, I organised my interview schedule based on the teachers' commitments and preference of time and location.

Regarding the female participants in the ELI, there were some cultural and religious reasons which prohibited direct contact with all the females, students and teachers, even for members of staff in educational settings. As a result, I was unable to visit the female campus and meet the officials and the female teachers themselves there personally to ask them to take part in the research study. Therefore, I had to find other practical means to help me to overcome these cultural reservations. As Shaw (1994) indicates, research methodologies should consider cultural sensitivities. Therefore, I asked the Vice Dean for Postgraduate Studies in the ELI male campus to help me to have   access to the female teachers. Additionally, I asked a female friend, who was a part-time Masters student in TESOL at University of Exeter and an EFL teacher in the ELI's female campus, to provide me with the contact details of some teachers who would be willing to be interviewed. Then, I contacted them and devised their interview schedule based on their free time. The female teachers were interviewed over the phone.

4.9 Data Collection Method

"Qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their normal settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011: 3). In general, data in interpretive research are collected in their natural setting (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Holliday, 2002). Thus, many qualitative data collection methods have been developed to allow the investigation of phenomena in their natural settings (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). There is a common belief among qualitative researchers that qualitative data collection methods "can provide a deeper understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative methodology" (Creswell, 2013:25). In educational research, qualitative researchers deal with a wide range of data collection methods. For example, they can use observation; recorded interviews; various types of texts, namely, journals and diaries, records, and documents; audio-visual data and images (Eisner, 1991; Dornyei, 2007; Creswell, 2013), to "describe, interpret, and judge settings as they are" (Eisner, 1991: 33). However, it is the researcher's responsibility to choose the right tools for collecting his/her data, which should be based on the purpose, nature and context of the study.

In educational research studies, the nature of the research questions determines the kinds of methods to be used by the researchers. In this study, I decided to adopt one qualitative method of data collection. It was semi-structured interviews as they served the purpose of the research, because the main aim of the study was to obtain an in-depth understanding of the EFL teachers' roles by investigating their personal views about their roles in the curriculum of the FYP in an English language institute.

4.9.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

A semi-structured in-depth interview was chosen for the current study to elicit data for a number of reasons. Generally, in a semi-structured interview, researchers already have a general idea of what they want from the interview: that is, they are guided by a set of general themes to encourage the interviewees to respond and clarify their views regarding these specific areas (Radnor, 1994). With respect to the structure of a semi-structure interview, "the interviewer will ask the same questions to all the participants, although not necessarily in the same order or wording, and would supplement the main questions with various

probes" (Dornyei, 2007: 136). This approach is practical as it considers the individual differences between teachers in terms of comprehension for the same posed questions. Furthermore, a semi-structured interview is rewarding as it gives the interviewees the chance to offer any unexpected responses and allows themes to emerge naturally (Kvale, 2009). This feature was advantageous in the present study, as it allowed the participants express their distinctive views or raise any controversial stances regarding their roles in the curriculum that they had dealt with throughout their experiences. Lastly, a semi-structured interview gives the interviewees more freedom to express their points or views (Flick, 2002). This approach gives the participants the autonomy to reveal their views and provide examples, and to recall events and discuss them in their own way or style. They can also choose the level of language in which they want to speak, which can vary from simple to complex. In other words, this approach respects people's cultural differences in conversations in terms of showing their facial expressions, emotional feelings or gestures.

4.10 Piloting the Study

Piloting research instruments helps researchers to increase validity and practicability (Silverman, 2001). Consequently, I piloted the interview questions to make sure that they were valid, clear, eliminate any vague questions, and to find out the time it would take. To achieve this, I arranged with two of my colleagues, who were TESOL doctoral students, to pilot the interview questions. Each one was individually interviewed at St Luke's campus. Their comments, questions and suggestions were taken into account and amendments were implemented. After piloting, I found that each interview lasted for approximately 50 minutes. This would help me when arranging the interview times with the research participants in the context of the study. I also analysed the interview questions to identify if they would provide the information to answer the research questions. Finally, the piloting stage provided practical validity for using my interview questions in the real study context.

4.11 Interviews Procedure and Atmosphere

All participants were given total freedom to choose the location of the interviews, to make them feel comfortable and secure enough to express their views privately. Thus, they selected different places for conducting the interviews: in their own classrooms, in the meeting room in the ELI main building, in my temporary dedicated office, or in a multi-purpose room in other university buildings. I felt that this step helped make them feel at ease during the interviews and encouraged them to express their views without any interruptions or reservations. All the interviews were conducted in a convenient and informal environment. To make the atmosphere friendly and encourage social interaction, at the time of the interviews, refreshments were provided. I also devoted about 10 minutes, before each interview, for social discussion as a warm up for upcoming interview discussion.

4.12 Recording Interviews

The use of interview as a main data collection method in this study required the implementation of essential ethical procedures for the protection of the participants. For example, at the beginning of all the interviews, I informed the participants of the expected time scale of the interview. I was also aware that it is entirely unethical to record any discussion with participants without obtaining their permission in advance (Maykut & Morehouse, 2002). Therefore, I obtained permission from each participant in advance to record his/her interviews on a digital recorder. The interviews ranged in time between fifty to sixty minutes each. Furthermore, the participants were assured that the recording would be kept securely and would be transcribed by myself. Additionally, the participants were informed that they would be able to have access to the research findings after completion if they desired.

4.13 Informal Meetings

During my data collection, I had informal meetings with ELI administration, heads of committees, supervisors, coordinators to understand the background, the changes that happened in curriculum and involvement of teachers in curriculum issues. Our discussions also covered curriculum policies, regulations, and the changes that happened in the curriculum in the last few years. This helped me to explain and interpret the data in light of the context of the study.

4.14 Interview Analysis

In data analysis stage of the current study, I was keen to feel thoroughly familiar with the data; therefore, the recorded interviews were saved in different electronic files. Each file contained the whole interview transcription of one participant. Afterwards, I read the transcription of each interviewee many times, as I wanted to have deep understanding of the content of all the responses and became immersed in the data as recommend by both Riley (1990) and Rubin and Rubin (1995). This helped in getting some preliminary understanding of some major patterns, concepts and thoughts from the data. During the reading process, some notes were taken in each of the interview transcription to consider during the data analysis process. Some of them helped me to describe codes, and think about major topics and patterns. They also guided me to analyse the relationships between topics and prepare my initial themes. I followed Miles and Huberman (1994) suggestion that memo writing is a useful analytical method for data analysis process.

Next, codes were generated from the data. This step consisted of reducing the large amounts of data into smaller sections through the process of coding the interviews. Coding involved selecting certain words, sentences, paragraphs or sections from the texts that seemed to capture the key concepts or thoughts expressed by the participants (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Then, labels were given to describe the coded segments extracted from the data. I coded interesting and relevant extracts which could form the foundation for potential categories (see appendix 3). As recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994), a researcher could find or extract segments from the coded data related to a particular research questions or theme. Categories and subcategories were generated from the coded data. In forming the categories, internal consistency was carefully considered. This was achieved by making sure that all the codes were interrelated, meaningful and were located under suitable categories.

The following step involved looking for themes which meant grouping of categories that were appropriate to establish themes (see appendix 4). In doing this, internal homogeneity of the themes was deliberate, which was achieved by making sure that all the categories in each theme were interrelated and meaningful (Patton, 1990). Likewise, in this process in order to avoid repetition, some overlapping themes were merged together to make the data more

comprehensive and rich. In other words, the data were organised into meaningful groups (Tuckett, 2005).

Finally, it was important to review all the generated themes and this was carried out at three levels. First, all the themes were reviewed to ensure that appropriate quotations were selected and that they conveyed the essence of the themes, and represented the core themes (Thomas, 2006). Second, it was important to ensure that the presented themes contained sufficient data to support them and that the data were not too diverse (Braun & Clark, 2006). Third, I had to make sure that all the themes were interconnected and clearly conveyed the story of my participants. Thus, it was necessary to ensure that all developed themes were presented logically, complemented each other and contained distinctive data that provided a relevant account of the phenomenon under investigation.

4.15 Research Trustworthiness

The study adopted an interpretive/qualitative research approach. As a result, it was necessary to implement a set of criteria to ensure its quality. This type of research requires the researcher to evaluate his/her research through establishing a trustworthiness feature. Trustworthiness is defined as "a set of criteria advocated by some writers for assessing the quality of qualitative research". (Bryman, 2008: 700). In the same vein, Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that researchers need to explain the precautions they have taken in order to develop the trustworthiness of the findings of their studies. Therefore, I shall provide an overview of three trustworthiness criteria, namely, credibility, transferability and conformability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Guba & Lincoln, 1994) that have been used to evaluate the quality of my research study.

4.15.1 Credibility

Credibility focuses on asking the question: how congruent are the findings with reality? (Merriam, 1998). It aims to confirm that the realities reflected in the researcher's interpretation of data mirror the ones provided by the research participants. As part of establishing credibility in the current research, I implemented the member-checking/ respondent validation procedure recommended by theorists, who regard it as a valuable measure in achieving this criterion in qualitative research (e.g., Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Holliday, 2002; Bryman, 2008). More specifically, member-checking "is the

process whereby a researcher provides the people on whom he/she has conducted research with an account of his/her findings" (Bryman, 2008: 377). I emailed each participant a soft copy of his/her interview transcript and asked them to review the content of their transcripts. I considered all the transcripts in the final data analysis only after I had received confirmation from each participant that he/she was satisfied with the accuracy of my transcription and had no objection on any transcribed views. I adopted this procedure guided by Lincoln and Guba's stance that member checking is "the most crucial technique for establishing credibility" (1985: 314).

I also took a further step to establish credibility through another procedure recommended by theorists who advocate seeking peer reviews for the purpose of providing an external assessment of the research (e.g. Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998). I asked my colleague, a PhD holder in the ELI to provide me with his critical questions and comments on various areas of the research throughout its diverse stages.

4.15.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of qualitative research can be applied or transferred to other similar contexts (Given, 2008). Some researchers argue that it is not appropriate to generalise findings of qualitative studies to other contexts because they are based on particular contexts and participants. Also, the aim of qualitative research is to investigate and describe a particular phenomenon or experience, not to generalise the finding to others contexts (Sandelowski, 1986; Krefting, 1991). However, other researches disagree with this notion as they contend that the findings of a qualitative research study are likely to be transferred to other contexts that have similar characteristics to those of the researched context and participants (e.g. Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Schwandt, 2001). I strived to provide detailed description of the context of the study, participants, data collection and analysis procedure, so the "readers [can] establish the degree of similarity between the case studied and the case to which findings might be transferred" (Schwandt, 2001: 258). Therefore, readers and other ELT researchers, in the Saudi context, who may read this study might find the obtained findings and recommendations about teachers' roles in the curriculum useful for them. They may transfer my findings, discussion or any section that they feel is relevant to them. In other words, they can infer some

similarities and select from my study what they think is useful and appropriate to understand their contexts better or inform their own research accordingly, given the description and detailed nature of the study.

This assumption is based on the fact that the ELI, the context of the study, shares some key features with other ELIs in Saudi Arabia. First, the overwhelming majority of the universities in Saudi Arabia are governmental, and they are controlled by one administrative body, namely, the Ministry of Education. Consequently, they are required to implement a unified educational policy and administrational guidelines in ELIs. Second, the majority of the EFL teachers in all ELIs in Saudi universities are expatriate teachers who come from different countries, while the Saudi teachers represent a minority among them. Third, these ELIs depend on international publishers to provide them with the main curriculum elements, like teaching materials, course books, learning resources, tests and professional development programmes for EFL teachers.

4.15.3 Confirmability

"Conformability is concerned with ensuring that the researcher has acted in good faith. In other words, it should be apparent that he/she has not overtly allowed personal values or theoretical inclinations manifestly to influence the conduct of research and findings deriving from it" (Bryman, 2008: 379). This means that the declared findings and interpretations are based on the views, beliefs and experiences of the research participants, not the personal preferences of the researcher him/herself (Shenton, 2004; Given, 2008). As part of the quest for establishing conformability in the current study, I applied a respondent validation procedure as recommended by many qualitative researchers (e.g., Bloor, 1997; Bryman, 2008). In this regard, I emailed some of the interview transcripts to the participants from whom I had collected the data, to validate results of the data analysis and the interpretation of the data (Silverman, 2001 & 2011). This helped in confirming that my personal interpretations were consistent with participants' views (Radnor, 2002).

Furthermore, I used an 'audit trail' method as a way of confirming my research process. I involved an independent reviewer to review the implemented research procedures at each stage to verify that these steps were consistent at both the literature and methodological stages. The reviewer is an EFL teacher in the ELI

and he is currently in his final year of his PhD. I believe he provided useful insights, thanks to his research background.

4.16 Ethical Considerations

Ethics are located at the heart of educational research. According to Wellington, "the main criterion for educational research is that it should be ethical" (2000: 54). Therefore, the process of data collection is ruled by some ethical codes of conduct to guarantee that participating in a study does not harm the respondents in any way (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000; Oppenheim, 1996). More specifically, Creswell (2003) stresses that the ultimate commitment of ethical research is to protect research participants from different sorts of harm, including physical, psychological, social, economic or legal. In this regard, Miller and Brewer highlight areas of ethical requirement as they state that "ethical responsibility is essential at all stages of the research process, from the design of a study, including how participants are recruited, to how they are treated through the course of these procedures, and finally to the consequences of their participation" (ibid ,2003: 95). I put in place procedures to meet ethical rules adopted by University of Exeter to guarantee participants' rights. I filled the Certificate of Ethical Research Approval, signed by my supervisor and by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee of Exeter University (see Appendix 5). I have also taken the following steps to safeguard the research participants:

The research aims should be conveyed to the participants who are taking part in the study (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Radnor, 2002). Reflecting this code of ethics in practice, all the participants were informed verbally and in writing before they were interviewed about the nature of the study, the research topic, its purpose, and the main areas of investigation. Several participants raised some questions which were answered thoroughly to give them clear background information about the research study. I also briefly reminded the participants about the purpose of the research before each interview.

Participants had the right to decline to be involved in a study. This right was extended even if they have already started participating; they still had the right to withdraw at any time they desired (Punch, 2005; Silverman, 2001; 2011). To comply with this recommendation, I informed all the participants that their participation in the study would be highly appreciated and would contribute to the

development of their working site, but they could withdraw from the interview whenever they wished, even during the interview. Consent forms were submitted to all participants, and they were asked to sign them which included the aim of the study and confirmed the confidentiality and anonymity of the data (see Appendix 6).

Research participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and were informed that they would be given pseudonyms. Participants were also assured that their identity and the information received from them would be kept confidential and would be used only for the purpose of this research. In addition, participants were given assurances that nobody would have access to their data except the researcher, and that no personal information about any participant would be disclosed. It was expected that some participants might express their views or information that may be against the institute or the university. Thus, some quotations which refer to particular incidents or actions that could reveal the identity of some of the participants were excluded from the data in order to maintain the anonymity of those participants.

4.17 Limitations and Challenges of the Study

As is any other study, this research has its own share of limitations. One obvious limitation was the use of only one research method, semi-structured interviews, to collect data from the participants. Curriculum documents can provide useful historical insights, background information and an understanding of issues that are not available from other sources (Hopkins, 2002). However, they were not made available to me by the administration as they were regarded as classified documents. They could have helped in gaining a greater understanding of the nature of teachers' roles in the curriculum of the FYP. Moreover, such document could have helped in highlighting the extent to which the curriculum policies and practices of the ELI support teachers' roles in the development, implementation and evaluation stages.

The accomplishment of this study was not an easy task. Unexpectedly, I collected the data during a visit of an American accreditation team as part of the ELI accreditation application procedure. This visit consisted of a number of classroom observations which involved the selection of certain participants. Other participants were busy helping the ELI administration with various tasks related

to the accreditation process. Consequently, the participants were somewhat busy, under pressure and, therefore, some interviews were cancelled. It was difficult to find suitable time and reschedule their interviews again as it required making frequent changes to the planned interview schedule.

4.18 Conclusion

This chapter described the overall research design of the study, discussed the research questions and the theoretical justification for the research paradigm adopted in the study. It also discussed the sampling strategy followed, the data collection method, the setting up and outcomes of the pilot study, the interview analysis approach, the measures employed for assuring research quality and the limitations and challenges of the study. The following chapter will present the findings of the study.

5   Chapter Five: Findings

5.1   Introduction

This chapter presents the obtained findings from the participants about their roles in the FYP curriculum in three different stage, development, implementation and evaluation. The findings are displayed in three separate sections and each one address one aspect of the curriculum.

5.2   EFL Teachers' Views about their Roles in the Development Stage of the Curriculum

This section reflects EFL teachers' views about their roles in the development stage of the curriculum. The data from the participants are presented in three major themes, namely, the nature of teachers' involvement, the reasons for teachers' involvement & non-involvement and suggestions about teachers' roles. Table 1 below presents the themes along with their related categories and subcategories.

	Major themes	Categories	Subcategories
1	Nature of teachers' involvement	1. Teachers' individual involvement in course book selection 2. Teachers' involvement with curriculum unit in course book selection	• Participants' satisfaction with course book selection involvement • Participants' dissatisfaction with course book selection involvement
		3. Teachers' involvement in students' language needs analysis.	• Participants' satisfaction with needs analysis involvement
		4. No involvement in curriculum development tasks	

2	Reasons for teachers' involvement & non-involvement	1. Reasons for teachers' involvement in pre-use course book evaluation and selection:
		   a) Dependence on Oxford University Press
		   b) Lack of trust in teachers
		   c) Teachers' background (non-native speaker teacher)
		2. Reasons for teachers' involvement in students language needs analysis investigation
		   a) Teaching experience and qualifications
		   b) Academic background in research and trust of the administration
		3. Reasons for absence of teachers' involvement in curriculum development tasks:
		   a) Institutional engagements
		   b) Marginalisation by curriculum unit.	

3	Suggestions about teachers' roles	1. Students Learning Outcomes 2. Reading circles 3. Curriculum unit	

Table 1: Themes, categories and subcategories related to teachers' roles in curriculum development

5.2.1 Nature of Teachers' Involvement

The participants were asked whether they had any role in the development of any element of the FYP curriculum. The obtained data revealed two different kinds of involvement by the participants: course book selection and needs analysis investigation. They also mentioned no involvement in curriculum development.

5.2.1.1 Course Book Selection Involvement

The data revealed that the majority of the participants were involved in the preliminary selection of the course books in the ELI. They were asked by ELI administration to choose one series of English course books offered by different international publishers after attending a public presentation for these course books, by responding to a survey designed by the ELI afterwards. Fadel's interview statement is an example of the nature of participants' involvement:

> A few different companies like Longman and Oxford gave presentations to all the teachers about the materials that they can provide to students. After that, a survey was distributed to us and we had to vote for or against the presented course book. The survey items were about which course book or a publisher you prefer and why. So we voted either for Oxford or Longman course books.

Participants Nedhaal and Azaam stated that they were members in the curriculum unit and they were asked to carry out a second phase of course book selection. Azaam's statement explained the process of the selection procedure in the curriculum unit:

> I was a member in the curriculum unit and we were distributed into groups, each one was given an assignment to nominate a course book based on their experience, based on their research…etc. So there were different groups headed by different experienced people. We had enough time to find a proper course book that would fit the needs of our students.

It seems that the ELI administration adopted a two-level strategy for the development of some major curriculum elements internally and externally. The administration appears to depend on international publishers, like Oxford University Press (OUP) or Pearson and Longman publishers to provide the institution with English course book series. They were invited to present their course books products and other additional teaching materials to all the ELI teachers. It appears that teachers were invited to conduct pre-use course book evaluation through responding to a questionnaire designed for this purpose and

they were required to select one course book series for the FYP afterwards, as a first phase of evaluation and selection. It seems that the teachers were asked to evaluate textbooks and see if they would serve the goals and objectives of the FYP curriculum. This academic procedure is consistent with many researchers' stance in ELT material evaluation who emphasise the importance of engaging teachers in this process (e.g. Cunningsworth, 1995; Ellis, 1997; McGrath, 2002, Tomlinson, 2003; McGrath, 2013). Also, it appears that there was a second phase of course book selection, which involved the unit evaluating and selecting an international course book series to be used in the FYP.

The data revealed that the participants had mixed feelings regarding their involvement in course book selection only. Some participants were satisfied with their limited participation in course book selection. For example, Housam said that he was satisfied with his involvement in course book selection only, due to avoiding any additional work load and other institutional involvement, as her quote shows:

> I'm satisfied with my previous contribution in course book selection process because any other official engagement would mean extra responsibilities, extra work which can be a burden on me as a teacher.

Likewise, Noha reported that she was pleased with her minimal contribution to the course book selection and feared that further involvement could hinder her current satisfaction, due to her heavy teaching load:

> I'm satisfied that I was involved in choosing course book only because when I think that I'm a teacher who works for 18 hours per week. Yes I'm satisfied. I can't take more. If you want to get involved in many issues besides teaching, you cannot teach 18 hours.

On the other hand, a few participants were dissatisfied with their involvement in the course book selection only. For example, Sallah said he wanted to learn more in other areas, as his quote indicates:

> I am not satisfied at all that they limited my input in course book selection only […] I think I could have learned much more if I had been given the chance to work with senior and confident people in other areas, along with them, I could have learned a lot, but they do not ask for our views.

Meanwhile, Najwaa's source of dissatisfaction was her desire to participate in more challenging tasks, such as course book design, as her statement indicates:

> I'm not satisfied with my previous role in course book selection. I would love to participate in more difficult interesting tasks or engagement. Basically for me I would love to walk that extra mile, or to extend my role beyond course book selection. I wish I could be part of course book design and development, in order to keep them up to date. I wish I could bring something related to students' lives in our taught course book.

As the above quotes suggest, a number of participants reported their satisfaction with being involved in course book selection only. It seems that involvement in any additional duties related to any aspect of the curriculum development has an element of obligation for ELI teachers. It is likely that the ELI administration require them to attend several meetings with members of related unit, doing some tasks at work or at home. Also, it appears that teachers are required to attend their office hours and fulfil their teaching responsibility as well. Based on these circumstances, a number of participants were convinced that a minimal participation in course book selection was the right level of involvement.

Participants Sallah and Najwaa were intrinsically motivated and eager to participate in the additional curriculum development. For example, Sallah's desire for being involved in additional curriculum duties seems to be influenced by a positive feature in the ELI context. ELI teachers come from different educational backgrounds and they have varied practical experiences in curriculum. Sallah though that working with these people could give him the chance to improve his own skills and increase his experience in the field of curriculum development. With respect to Najwaa's enthusiasm for more challenging curriculum tasks, her desire reflected her professional ambitions that could be fulfilled by participating in developing other curriculum elements, especially as she had the contextual background knowledge to build on in this process. Najwaa's stance confirms Shawer's (2010) view that some teachers have different approaches towards a curriculum adopted in their teaching context, compared with their colleagues, as they desire to develop and create something useful in the curriculum based on their students' experiences.

5.2.1.2 Teachers' Involvement in Students' Language Needs Analysis

Participants Mohsen and Jafer reported that they were involved in this project conducted in the ELI. Mohsen described his membership in a committee formed especially for that purpose, as his interview statement shows:

> We did one needs analysis. There was a committee; few people were members in this committee. I know them, because I was one of them. We were five people, five teachers

As the interview continued, Mohsen highlighted the purpose of the needs analysis mission: "It was basically a needs analysis investigation for the language needs of our students in the Foundation Year Program."

Jafer was keen to talk about his participation in the needs analysis procedure:

> I worked in the needs analysis committee three years ago. We worked in that committee for three months. We collected data from the ELI teachers and the students. We analysed the data, we gave our recommendations to the Dean and we sent a copy to all concerned people in the ELI.

Additionally, participants Mohsen and Jafer expressed their satisfaction with their previous participation in the needs analysis investigation conducted in the ELI. They said that their involvement gave them chance to use their research skills in this institutional task. Jafer's interview statement reflects both views: "I am more than satisfied with my contribution in needs analysis task because I had the opportunity to put in practice my academic background in research in that project."

It seems that ELI administration wanted to investigate the language needs of FYP students; therefore, an internal team of few members of staff was formed to help to accomplish this mission. It appears that the team had a task of gathering data based on the actual experiences of both teachers and students and provide their recommendations to the administration afterwards. The ELI procedure in this regard was consistent with needs analysis literature. For example, needs analysis researchers emphasise that a sound and reliable needs analysis should include two main groups, namely those already working in the target institution, the teachers (Tarantino, 1988; Tartone & Yule, 1989; Richards, 2003; Brown, 1995) and the intended learners (e.g. Dickinson, 1987; Hawkey, 1983; Brown, 1995; Richards, 2003). The ELI administration has met these essential conditions and included these two important groups in the conducted investigation.

Jafer's satisfaction for taking part in the needs analysis investigation seems to indicate that the ELI had a strategy of selecting specific people with certain skills or competence, such as research, to offer their services for the ELI. Jafer's satisfaction also showed that using his research skills in research based context helped in creating personal and professional self-satisfaction.

5.2.1.3 No Involvement in Curriculum Development Tasks

In contrast with the above findings, a few participants said that they did not participate in any tasks related to curriculum development and Saggad's statement is an example of their views: "I did not participate in any task related to curriculum development at all. I never took part in the development of anything in our curriculum."

Saggad's quote indicates that not all ELI teachers had then chance to participate in curriculum development tasks. It seems that the curriculum unit did not invite all of the teachers to take part in these curriculum duties and the big number of teachers in the institution might have led to such policy.

5.2.2 Reasons for Teachers' Involvement & Non-Involvement in Curriculum Development

5.2.2.1 Reasons for Teachers' Involvement in Pre-Use Course Book Evaluation and Selection

68% of the participants in my study took part in the pre-use course book evaluation and selection process only, as part of their involvement in the development stage. The participants who took part in this process, as their only contribution in curriculum development, reported different reasons for their limited involvement in this task, namely dependence on Oxford University Press, lack of confidence in teachers and teachers' background (non-native speaker teachers).

5.2.2.1.1 Dependence on Oxford University Press

A few participants attributed their limited involvement in the course book selection to the role of OUP in developing some of the FYP curriculum. Murad's quote is an example of their views:

> I participated in text book selection only because the administration depended on Oxford University Press to design some important things in our curriculum. They designed our text books, students learning outcomes and placement tests. I'm sure Oxford University Press consultants helped in developing other curriculum areas.

Murad's quote indicates that some major curriculum elements of the FYP, such as students learning outcomes (instructional objectives), the course book and students' English language placement tests were not developed locally by ELI staff members, through in-house curriculum development. It seems that the ELI sought help from the OUP to develop these elements. It can be said that the ELI policy of curriculum development reflects Brown's (2012:50) statement that "traditionally, native speakers of English have controlled [EFL] curriculum either by writing text books or guiding/ controlling local curriculum development".

5.2.2.1.2 Lack of Trust in Teachers

Participants Waeel and Housam indicated that restricting their involvement only to course books selection was due to a lack of trust in teachers and perceiving them as unqualified to be involved in further curriculum tasks. Waeel's interview statement is an example of both views:

> To be honest with you, they did not take teachers into confidence or they underestimated teachers' skills […] they thought we could not handle any other curriculum items properly. I think they believed we weren't qualified to participate in the process of taking the curriculum into the right direction […] so they asked me and many other teachers to participate in selecting text books only.

Waeel's quote indicates that teachers interpreted their involvement in selecting course books only as an evidence of negative attitude towards them. It appears that teachers were not informed about their expected level of participation in curriculum development and the reasons for that policy, such as a lack of academic background in curriculum development or previous experience in this field. Consequently, some of the participants had shared a negative common reason for not being involved, such as being considered as unqualified teachers, as suggested by Waeel's quote above.

5.2.2.1.3 Teachers' Background (Non-Native Speakers Teachers)

Participants Zeyad and Sallah said that their background as non-native speakers of English was the main reason for excluding them from some important committees overseeing curriculum development elements. Sallah's interview statement reflects both views:

> I would like to stress on one solid reason is that I'm not a native speaker of English and here the majority of the people who were in different slots doing something they were mostly native speakers holding key positions in different committees in the ELI. The administration thought that they were more qualified than us who are considered as non-native speakers. As a teacher, your background makes a difference here. I think if I was a native speaker, this scenario would be a different one, I could be asked to do some other curriculum jobs besides selecting text books.

It is likely that the ELI administration does not insist on holding TESOL/Applied Linguistic qualifications as a pre-condition when nominating heads of departments, unit members and any other key decision-making positions related to curriculum. It appears that the decision is left to the ELI administration and heads of units to select and assign any member of staff to any particular unit or committee.

5.2.2.2 Reasons for Teachers' Involvement in Students' Language Needs Analysis Investigation

Participants Mohsen and Jafer who were involved in the needs analysis investigation reported some positive reasons for their additional involvement. For example, Mohsen explained that his selection, along with his colleagues, was driven by a combination of both teaching experience and qualifications, as his quote shows:

> Our leader in needs analysis was actually a native speaker, the guy chose us himself. Actually, our qualifications were considered, as well as experience. I think our nomination was based on our teaching experiences at tertiary level and relevant qualifications. I think those two elements played a significant role in our selection.

Uniquely, Jafer offered three distinctive reasons, namely, personal proficiency, academic background in research and institutional perception factors, as his interview statements show:

> You can see it is probably my nature that I don't do things half-heartedly. When I take responsibility, then I put my heart and soul in that. I don't believe in half-hearted attempt. So Whatever I am assigned a task and I accept that, then I work very hard to do it efficiently.

As the interview continued, he said: "I was probably more involved than other teachers, because of my academic background in research and because of the trust that the administration has on me."

It seems that the ELI administration considered the needs analysis investigation a high priority project and gave it a special attention. Therefore, they apparently selected and assigned teachers with theoretical and practical experience in research to utilise their expertise in a complex area such as the needs analysis investigation which requires such kind of background. Jafer's justifications for his involvement in needs analysis task suggests that teachers' work-related personal attitudes are considered and can help in assigning a teacher to more advanced and important institutional curriculum tasks, as they can facilitate completing any assigned tasks successfully.

5.2.2.3 Reasons for Teachers' Non-involvement in Curriculum Development Tasks

Participants who were not involved in the development of any curriculum elements proposed different reasons. For example, Ferial and Sara'a reported two institutional commitments which precluded their involvement. Ferial said she had accreditation committee responsibilities, as his quote shows:

> I have not been engaged in any curriculum development issues. Personally, I have been involved in the accreditation process which has taken a lot of time and we are not allowed to enter any other area or committee.

Sara'a said she was involved in the students support committee: "I had other commitments with the students support committee and research committee. I think that was the reason for not asking me to take any other duty."

However, one participant, Saggad, said that he was ignored by the curriculum unit and clearly felt bitter about this:

> I wasn't asked to participate in the development of a single thing in curriculum, even in the course selection. I was marginalised because the administration gave curriculum unit the responsibility of supervising and developing the curriculum. The curriculum unit

selected certain teachers and ignored others like me in whatever related to curriculum development.

It seems that the ELI has a policy which oversees the level of teachers' engagement in internal units and committees. This policy appears not to allow members of teaching staff to join or participate in more than one unit or committee at a time. In other words, teachers are expected to focus their efforts in one team which can help in achieving the active participation of its members. This regulation was the reason for not engaging both Ferial and Sara'a' in any of the curriculum development tasks discussed earlier. With regards to Saggad's position, it seems to indicate that, being a member of teaching staff in the ELI does not give a teacher a direct right to participate in curriculum development assignments, even at a minimum level. It appears that the curriculum unit can determine the nature and level of teachers' involvement in any curriculum development tasks.

5.2.3 Suggestions for Teachers' Roles in Curriculum Development

The participants were asked to provide some suggestions related to teachers' roles in the development of the FYP curriculum for future consideration in the ELI. Based on the obtained data, the participants advocated for active involvement of teachers in different aspects of the curriculum, namely, in Students' Learning outcomes (instructional objectives), reading circles and curriculum unit.

5.2.3.1 Students' Learning Outcomes

Participant Eyaad suggested that teachers can be involved in organising and distributing the instructional objectives for each of the four levels independently in the ELI, named as Students Learning Outcomes:

> I think the teachers' role is to decide which students learning outcomes go to which level, because they know their students well, they are the people who are in the field and indirect contact with the students, so they know that this learning outcome can be achieved by level one, or level 2 or level 4. They just give us all the students learning outcomes, they can be mixed, and then we can classify them according to our students needs in each level.

Eyaad's recommendation suggests that the Students Learning Outcomes (i.e. the instructional objectives) for all the four levels in the FYP are incompatible with the students' actual English language capabilities at each level. It seems that the designers of the instructional objectives were probably too ambitious and

developed them higher than the students' actual English language competence. As a result, Eyaad realised that they were difficult for the FYP students to achieve by the end of each module. In this regard, many curriculum researchers emphasise the advantages of setting the right level of instructional objectives in a language programme. For example, Nation and Macalister (2010:71) contended that instructional objectives are "useful for monitoring and assessing learners' progress".

5.2.3.2 Reading Circles

Participant Waeel advocated that teachers could have more voice through selection of reading circles for their own students:

> I would just ask the teachers here to come up or to suggest a number of the stories or reading texts from different sources, such as Internet and short authentic texts from journals. Then we discuss them and select the ones that are more useful for our students. I think when you give teachers choice, they are more motivated to do it. Also, they are more responsible, because it is their choice.

Waeel's suggestion is aimed at changing the roles of teachers from implementing the reading texts in class, to giving them responsibility for choosing appropriate reading texts for their students. Thus, this can foster enthusiasm and positive motivation in teachers, because they selected the texts themselves, so it is their responsibility to deliver them well.

5.2.3.3 Curriculum Unit

Participant Fadel suggested involving more teachers in curriculum units, as his quote indicates:

> In the curriculum unit, there are only two people teaching half load and working in this unit. They are facing extreme difficulties to cope with the unit work load requirements and they are moving very slowly. The administration should increase the staff by forming a team of teachers to work in the curriculum unit.

Fadel's suggestion seems to indicate that the curriculum unit is understaffed. In other words, the unit appears to rely on limited number of teachers who are assigned two simultaneous responsibilities: teaching half load and dealing with the unit's daily curriculum duties. Curriculum unit members seem to be in charge of various issues related to curriculum development, implementation and evaluation issues. Fadel's suggestion aimed at helping the unit members to

improve their productivity and efficiency, in order to cope with the unit responsibilities and demands.

5.3 EFL Teachers' Views about their Roles in the Implementation Stage of the Curriculum

This section shows EFL teachers' views about their roles in the implementation stage of the curriculum. The obtained data from the participants are presented in five major themes and related categories/subcategories, as it is shown in Table 2 on the next page.

	Major themes	categories	subcategories
1	Freedom and feelings in teaching involvement	1. Freedom to design or bring additional teaching materials	
		2. Meeting lessons objectives 3. Freedom to select any teaching methodology 4. Following Students Learning Outcomes	Satisfaction with freedom in teaching.
2	Restrictions on teaching strategies	1. Arabic is not allowed in class	

3	Challenges in teaching involvement	1) Reading circles related challenges
		   a) Students do not read texts
		   b) Students do not like to do reading exercises and find reading difficult and uninteresting
		   c) Reading is not encouraged and developing reading culture as a challenge
		2) Students' related challenges:
		   a) Teaching level on students
		   b) Lack of motivation	

4	Teachers' involvement in tests development and their feelings	1. Lack of freedom in tests development	• Participants' satisfaction with not designing writing and speaking tests • Participants' dissatisfaction with not designing writing and speaking tests • Participants' dissatisfaction with having many tests
		2. Preparing achievement tests by testing committee 3. Teachers' involvement in developing tests samples for the testing committee	

		4. Teachers 'advanced involvement in tests development:
		   a) Multi-tasks engagement related to tests development
		   b) Participation with E- testing unit
			• Satisfaction with contribution in E testing unit.

5	Suggestions about teachers' roles	1. Giving teachers the authority to manage their teaching time. 2. Granting teachers the authority to write both the speaking and writing tests. 3. Involving teachers in piloting any taught element before its introduction 4. Offering training for ELI teachers in students' evaluation 5. Encouraging teachers to research the things they teach in the ELI	

Table 2: Themes, categories and subcategories related to teachers' roles in the curriculum implementation stage

5.3.1 Freedom and Feelings in Teaching Involvement

The participants were asked about the areas of autonomy that they had experienced in terms of implementing the curriculum in their classroom. Interestingly, the data revealed that the majority of the participants had the freedom to design or bring additional teaching materials for their students. An example of their views is reflected in Ferial's interview statement:

> I have the absolute freedom to use materials from outside the course book, I can use and I am using the material which is not given in the book or the workbook. Well, we are allowed to make our own worksheets that are good things where many of us have prepared our own worksheets, our own exercises and our own instructional materials.

However, a few participants reported that they had to follow specific guidelines whenever they brought any extra teaching materials, as they should meet the lesson's objectives. Housam's statement offers a brief explanation: "teachers can bring any extra activities or materials, as long as they are in line with the objectives of the lessons and they are reflected in the activities at the same time."

Additionally, the data showed that the majority of the participants had the freedom to select their own teaching methodology and an example of their views is shown in Ferial's quote:

> The way we teach students, for example the methodology, pair work or group work and those kinds of things are left to us. Yes, I have the freedom to be able to implement any teaching approach in the class. We aren't monitored strictly for how we deliver our lessons.

The participants spoke about their satisfaction regarding their level of freedom in implementing the curriculum. Some of the participants were happy with the level of freedom they had in teaching. For example, Taoufeeq emphasised the fact that he was not forced to adopt any particular teaching methodology and this granted him a certain sense of satisfaction. Taoufeeq's quote is an example of their positive views:

> I am satisfied, of course every teacher has his own teaching style and they do not impose one teaching style on all teacher […] I'm happy there is no one single teaching or pedagogical style that is imposed on me as teacher.

The participants' happiness with the autonomy they had in teaching seems to be a reflection of the ELI policy in teaching. They felt that they were treated as professional teachers who have the experience to select any appropriate

teaching method that suits the nature of the course they teach and their students' learning culture and style. Another aspect that made teachers satisfied was that they were allowed to use additional teaching materials they liked in class, should the need arise. While this is common in perhaps most ELT contexts, in a top-down managerial approach like the one in the context of the study, an increased independence and freedom in pedagogical decision-making were viewed by the teachers as a sign of being treated as professionals.

The data showed that there was some consideration for the Students' Learning Outcomes (SLOs) as one of the main tenets of the FYP curriculum to be focused by the teachers. This issue was reflected in Jafer's statement, as he highlighted the impact of SLO in guiding the teachers to exercise their freedom in selecting any teaching methodology they feel is appropriate for their own students learning style and level, in the following quote:

> You see we have students' learning outcomes, so following the students' learning outcomes we can make our own activities and we can adapt our teaching according to the level of the students.

The data showed that teachers were allowed to use different kinds of extra teaching materials, whether designed by the teachers themselves or developed by others. One possible contributing factor for this policy was to compensate any shortcomings in the course book or reinforce some important learning needs. It is likely that the administration considers that ELI teachers have enough contextual knowledge and teaching experience which help them to use this freedom to enhance students' leaning inside the classroom. Also, it appears that the administration regards teaching methodology a fertile area where teachers need to have freedom in delivering the lessons the way they wish in their class. Therefore, they did not issue any strict guidelines for teachers to follow or adopt a specific pedagogical approach or strategy.

Jafer's quote showed that there were some guidelines for teachers regarding the way they should use the freedom they enjoy in teaching in order to meet the FYP goals. Also, it seems that the teachers were required to consider the students' learning outcomes (the instructional objectives) as main guidelines in designing extra teaching activities or adopting a specific teaching approach. It appears that students' learning outcomes provide a description of what students will learn or be able to do with the language for the purpose of achieving the FYP goals. It

can be said that the status of the instructional objectives in the FYP is in line with the views of many curriculum researchers, who emphasised the essential role that instructional objectives play in a language programme. For example, Nation & Macalister contend that instructional objectives have some advantages, such as providing guidance for planning an efficient instruction, and describing for the teachers what they want to accomplish in their regular teaching in class (2010). They also "provide a basis for the organisation of teaching activities [and] describe learning in terms of observable behaviour or performance", as Richards (2003: 123) indicates.

5.3.2 Restrictions on Teaching Strategies

The data showed that the participants faced a restriction in one aspect, namely, the use of Arabic language in class. For example, some participants reported that the use of Arabic was entirely unauthorised and a prohibited practice in English teaching classrooms in the ELI context, as Azaam's comments illustrate:

> One of the top administration people said, "Arabic is not permitted inside the classroom. […] a ban on using Arabic in class became one of the main teaching principles or guidelines here that was adopted by the new ELI administration. So Arabic is not permitted inside the classrooms at all.

As the interview continued, Azaam added: "I cannot use Arabic to simplify anything for my students in any lesson, no matter how difficult it is for them."

Najwaa was very keen to describe the impact of the restriction on her teaching practice, as his quote shows: "I'm not allowed to use even a single Arabic word in class. They don't like us to translate English words to Arabic for our students and they are so serious about it."

The data also revealed that the restriction on the use of Arabic was imposed strictly on all the ELI teachers, even on those who are not speakers of Arabic language as their mother tongue. Mohsen experienced this scenario, as his quote indicates:

> As you know, Urdu is my first language, not Arabic, but my coordinator kept on reminding me not to use Arabic in class repeatedly, although we come from the same country.

Mohsen's statement showed that prohibiting the use of Arabic was introduced as a rule and it was imposed on all the ELI teachers, whether Arabic is their first language or not. Nevertheless, many Applied Linguists and ELT researchers

disagree with prohibiting L1 use in ESL/EFL classrooms. Also, they have challenged adopting monolingualism and they consider it as unjustified and unsound pedagogically. Their position is supported by Auerbach (1993: 9) who emphasises that "evidence from research and practice is presented which suggests that the rationale used to justify English only in the classroom is neither conclusive nor pedagogically sound."

The quotes above show that ELI administration put in place strict restrictions on teachers with regards to the use of L1 (Arabic) in class at any level and they were very transparent in conveying this massage to all the ELI teachers. There are some potential reasons for this policy. It seems that the administration think that the use of Arabic by ELI teachers does not help the students to take advantage of essential opportunities of English input inside the classrooms. Also, it appears that the administration expect some teachers to rely more on translation in their teaching practice rather than using English in explaining things in English for their students.

A possible contextual factor that can explain the above results is that there are many non-Arab multilingual EFL teachers in the ELI, who outnumber the monolingual Western teachers (native speakers) from English speaking countries, such as the U.S.A, the U.K or Canada. Many of these non-Arab teachers are Muslims and come from different Islamic countries. It seems that the ELI administration expect that some teachers will be eager to speak Arabic, as it is the language of the Holy Quran. This phenomenon is unique to Saudi Arabia because of the presence of the Holy Mosque and other important religious Islamic sites in the country. The same desire can be also shared by few Muslim Western monolingual teachers as well. It appears that the ELI administration expect that some teachers from both groups will take the opportunity of being in Saudi Arabia, teaching Arab students, to practise speaking Arabic with their students in class to improve their Arabic speaking skills. It seems that the ELI has taken the decision to ban the use of Arabic in order to avoid such situations.

5.3.3 Challenges to Implementing the Curriculum

The participants were asked whether they faced any challenges in terms of implementing the curriculum in classroom. The data showed that they experienced two major challenges: reading circles and student related challenges, namely, teaching Level One students and students' lack of motivation.

5.3.3.1 Reading Circles as a Challenge

A number of participants reported that students often did not do the required reading which created a challenge for them to deal with in class. Ferial's quote is an example of their views:

> Our biggest challenge in the reading circles is that students don't read the texts they are supposed to read at home. We have been facing this scenario ever since the reading circles were introduced in the course.

Additionally, Eyaad indicated that students did not like doing the post-reading activities in class which created an additional challenge for teachers, as his quote demonstrates:

> The reading circles contain graded materials given to students where they have to do some readings at home and they are required to complete some tasks afterwards in class they don't like to do the post-reading tasks exercises in class. I think they are finding them difficult and uninteresting, which makes our job more difficult whenever we have a reading lesson.

Exceptionally, Taoufeeq pinpointed that students' cultural background in reading was the main challenge for him to deal with while doing the reading circles, as his quote indicates:

> Let me be honest with you, the challenges that we face in the reading circles is that in the Arab world we don't encourage reading or the habit of reading. Although the first word in the holy Quran is read, unfortunately not many Arabs read on daily basis, except newspapers or the Internet. In the reading circles, you are not simply encouraging the students to read in English. You need to develop a new culture for them, which is a very challenging thing to adapt. It's a new habit, it is something that doesn't run in their blood and you want to install in them a new habit.

It seems that additional reading materials, named as the reading circles, were introduced to improve the FYP students' reading skills, encourage their positive reading habits and increase their interest in reading English texts. However, Ferial and Eyaad statements indicate that the FYP students had negative interaction with the reading texts which caused some challenges and created

unpleasant teaching experiences for their teachers. Also, the reported challenges above by the participants show that the implementation process of the reading circles did not go as smoothly as expected, which made it more difficult for the teachers to achieve the set objectives for improving the reading skills of their students. Lastly, Taoufeeq's quote aimed at showing the importance of that FYP students' reading culture in their first language as a major contributing factor behind their lack of interest in reading in English.

5.3.3.2 Students' Related Challenges

The participants reported two kinds of challenges related to FYP students, namely, teaching Level One students, due to their low levels of English proficiency, and the lack of motivation of students, in general. Regarding the first challenge, some participants considered teaching of Level One students as challenging experience for them. Sara'a's following statement is an example of their views:

> I have been struggling with teaching 101 students ever since I started teaching in the foundation year programme. I'm talking about level one students. It is a big challenge to teach this group of students because their actual language proficiency level is lower than level one students.

Concerning the second one, a few participants shared the view that teaching de-motivated students, like Arts students, was a challenging teaching experience for them. Nedhal's statement reflects their views succinctly:

> I have to admit that teaching demotivated students has been a big challenge for me, I mean level one students When they come here and start the foundation year program, they are not motivated to learn English in the first few weeks. Then after that most of them stop learning. In fact, most of them refused to learn, especially Arts students.

Since the reported challenges above focus on a specific group of students, Level One ones, it is essential to highlight their background. Level one students are the ones who score the lowest results in the placement test and they are assigned to the lowest course level in the programme. These students usually join non-scientific faculties, in particular Arts and humanities. Moreover, Sara'a's statement shows that a common feature among level one students is that their English language competence does not meet the expected language proficiency of level one students in the programme. This discrepancy between the two levels presented a teacher like Sara'a with significant challenges. Nedhaal experienced

a different issue with this group of students and that is their lack of interest in the programme.

5.3.4 Teachers' Involvement in Tests Development and their Feelings

The participants EFL teachers were asked whether there were any areas where they had no freedom in the implementation stage of curriculum. The data revealed that the majority of the participants reported that they did not have freedom in writing any tests for their own students whom they teach regularly in their everyday teaching practice. For example, Housam reflected on the marginalization of his involvement in tests development along with his colleagues. Housam's quote is an example of their views:

> Teachers aren't responsible for writing the tests for all the four levels. We don't write tests here, whether it is speaking, writing, even the mid-module exam or the final one. I don't have a role in testing. I wasn't allowed to write my own tests since the Foundation Year Programme started here the ELI. Let me tell you that this is another area that teachers do not have freedom or power to exercise their expertise in this area here.

Additionally, there was consensus among the participants that all the ELI formal achievement tests were prepared by the testing committee; Murad's quote is an example of their views: "tests are all done for us. Teachers don't need to prepare test at all."

As the interview continued he added:

> All the achievement tests are done by the testing committee in the ELI. I think that they formed the exams from the E- testing bank that they are in charge of and they used to design MCQ questions which are now electronically designed by computers, especially for the mid-term and final tests.

Moreover, the data also revealed that the participants reported mixed feelings (happy and unhappy) regarding their involvement in test development. For example, few participants were happy that they did not design writing and speaking tests for their students. They indicated that their satisfaction was because of the extra work load that can result from involvement in this task. Ferial's quote is an example of their views:

> I am happy that I do not write my own writing and speaking tests. I think it adds extra burden and work on me, especially as I would have to produce four tests in each module, two for speaking and two for

writing. You know it takes a lot of time to produce a good test, so it is better for me to stay away from it.

Sallah felt it was appropriate that the central testing unit should produce the tests, in order to ensure all students had the same experience:

I'm happy that all the tests, writing, speaking and mid-term and the final one are all prepared by the testing unit. I'm not allowed to write my own test and that's fine. I know why…I guess, if I were allowed to write these tests, maybe my tests would be easier or more difficult than others. Maybe the lack of freedom is a good thing? At least I feel that it is better to have our tests unified to make it fair for every student.

It seems that teachers faced some institutional circumstances that made them happy not to be involved in writing tests for their students. It appears that teachers were occupied with their daily teaching preparation, bearing in mind that the teaching pace is very fast, due to the short duration of each module. Therefore, teachers like Ferial would prefer to avoid having additional tasks, such as witting tests.

Sallah's quote showed his preference for giving the testing unit the authority to produce all the tests, because he was concerned that his students would score low grades compared with others in case he wrote difficult tests. He expected that other teachers might write easy tests enabling their own students to score high grades. His statement indicates that he considered it is unfair for many other students taking the same course, but taught by different teachers. This situation reflects Shohamy's view that tests taken can be associated with some negative features that can affect students' results, like unfairness or injustice (2001). Hence, this potential outcome made Sallah feel that it is better to have a standardised test policy to make all the formal tests fair for all the FYP students.

However, a few participants were unhappy with the lack of autonomy given to them in terms of tests development and they wanted to devise their own writing and speaking tests for different reasons. For example, Eyaad believed that designing tests of their own could grant the teacher certain authority that impacted positively on students' learning. Eyaad's quote is an example of their views:

I'm not happy, I have no freedom in writing my tests; I do not write my own writing or speaking tests. Sometimes we see our colleagues enjoying this authority, because students know that they passed; all their failure is in the hands of the teachers which can force them to

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work very hard in order to pass. So a teacher enjoys the authority, superiority can be a good advantage for improving students' learning.

Ferdous expressed her lack of freedom in test writing and revealed her dissatisfaction regarding this issue. She also believed that designing her own tests could influence the sense of trust in the teacher on the part of the administration:

> In terms of testing, I'm not happy, that is because I'm not allowed to write my own writing or speaking tests for my students. I could make up my own test and quizzes but they don't let me do that…I know it's a lot of work, but it's up to me. I want more freedom in tests, because that makes me feel I'm trusted by the administration as a professional who is capable of writing good tests for his students.

Another unsatisfactory area related to test development is the large number of tests that students are required to pass. Some participants believed that the number of tests affected their level of freedom in teaching. Murad's statement is an example of their views:

> I'm not happy with the testing policy here. I think there is an issue of over testing and our students are always tested for marks and not enough time has been given for real learning. They should reduce the number of tests to give teachers more time in teaching. We should not be restricted by tests.

It appears that there are other contextual reasons that led to the dissatisfaction of the second group of participants. For instance, it is likely that the ELI standardised tests, mainly writing and speaking, are not particularly challenging and students find them relatively easy because they are standardised for each level. Therefore, many of them do not work hard, because they know that they can get good grades. This scenario made teachers, like Eyaad to be eager to write their own tests, in order to enhance students' learning process. This implies that if the students know that it is highly likely that their teachers would write more difficult questions than the ones included in the standardised tests, they would try harder. Moreover, it can be said that not giving the ELI teachers the chance to write their own tests created a negative feeling among teachers like Ferdous. It made her feel that the administration might regard her as less competent and trustworthy. It also made her assume that she was not asked to write writing or speaking tests because she cannot cope with the requirement of writing formal tests or handle dealing with the associated responsibilities, such as confidentiality. Finally, it seems that the ELI testing policy caused a feeling of dissatisfaction for

teachers like Murad. His above quote shows that having too many tests in the programme made teachers unhappy with this practice. He realised that the adopted testing policy influenced the quality of teaching and learning in the FYP. In the literature related to assessment and testing, the impacts of tests have been widely discussed. For example, Shohamy (2001) argues that tests have noticeable power in educational settings and it is natural to experience some problems related to their execution.

Although some participants bemoaned a lack of involvement in test design, the data revealed that the majority of the participants reported that they were asked to develop test samples for the testing committee as part of the implementation for the ELI testing policy. They said that they responded positively by sending some test samples as instructed by the ELI academic administration. Azaam's quote is an example of their statements:

> Teachers have to send tests samples to the testing committee that is an order for all the faculty teachers to do so […] my previous co-ordinator asked me personally to write some writing questions for level 3 and I sent them for him. I think I sent 6 topics. I think they probably chose some of them and they excluded some of them, but after all I feel I took part in writing the tests.

A small number of participants reported that they had advanced involvement in test development. For example, Jafer pinpointed that he was involved in multi-tasks engagement related to tests development as his quotes shows:

> The testing committee asked me to cooperate with them in tests development and other stuff. So I developed some exams for them, I reviewed some of the exams and sometimes I get some stuff to proof read and critically proof read and I suggest some changes in different intervals.

The data showed that the ELI administration assigned the task of developing all the formal achievement tests only to one unit, namely, testing unit. It seems that the testing unit has a hierarchical system including few coordinators who coordinate testing issues for teachers. It appears that the ELI implements strategies for involving teachers in tests development in two phases, as it can be noticed throughout the highlighted tests involvement reported by the participants in different aspects above. In the first phase, it is mandatory for all the teachers to develop tests, based on the requirements of the testing unit, as Azaam's statement indicates. In the second phase, few teachers were selected and assigned more demanding tasks in different aspects of tests development, as it

can be observed by the nature of involvement of Jafer, above. The potential reason behind the advanced involvement of these particular teachers in these tasks can be that they had previous experience in testing, or they have certain good skills in writing tests compared with other teachers. Eventually, the testing unit receives all the test samples from the teachers and develops a set of questions to be used in the formal achievement exams.

Moreover, the data also revealed a few participants had more responsibilities in tests development. For example, Noha and Najwaa were members of two ELI internal committees. Firstly, Noha reported that she took part in E-testing unit:

> I was involved in the E- testing unit. They wanted to create a bank, like an E-testing bank of questions. We were sent a certain format and we used to follow this format to form multiple-choice questions… For example, I would do some multiple-choice questions in a certain area like grammar and other teacher would do other questions in a different area. Then we proofread each other's work. After that, we'll send it to another coordinator who is in charge of E-testing committee.

She clearly valued this involvement, as her comment below illustrates:

> I was pleased with my contribution in the E- testing unit. I think it was a very rich experience, personally speaking. I think I developed more professionally in terms of writing tests, because now, when I look at some tests, I would think that this test is not well written, because maybe you would have many multiple choice questions and you might have more than one right answer for the same question.

Najwaa, too, was a member of the testing unit, as her statement reveals:

> I am a member in the testing committee [unit] at the ELI. Basically my role is to work in producing test items for the test bank that we have […]. I write tests elements for certain skills. For example, if it is a vocabulary test items, I go to objectives of the chapters, and then try to from some questions about vocabulary. […] I am doing the computer test based and a lot of the work focus on performing the mid-term and final Tests.

Najwaa said that she was happy with her involvement and she offered a suggestion for further improvement for the current MCQ adopted in the ELI. She saw her input in widening the variety of questions as having a possible positive impact on her students; it was a way to challenge the students as well as making the test more interesting:

> I'm happy right now with my role in writing tests, because it enriches my experience in test development. However, I hope we have more elements instead of the Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ), like questions that are based on gap filling […] we only have MCQ tests. I

> think if we have more questions or a variety of questions, then it can
> be more interesting and challenging for the girls.

It seems that certain teachers are invited to join ELI units, e.g. the testing unit, along with their existing teaching duties. It is likely that the reason for this policy is that it is very difficult for the permanent members of each unit to carry out all the allocated duties on their own. Thus, a unit can seek the help of some cooperative teachers to handle routine unit requirements. With regards Noh's and Najwaa's satisfaction with their involvement in the E- testing unit, it appears that this was because each unit includes some experienced members who have been working in this unit for some time. They are also familiar with executing the unit tasks and responsibilities efficiently. Therefore, new unit members, who are less experienced, will get some guidance and support from their senior colleagues on how to handle the unit job requirements. This can increase their knowledge and understanding and it is part of an ongoing professional training and development.

5.3.5 Suggestions for Teachers' Roles in Implementing the Curriculum

The participants were asked to propose ideas in relation to teachers' roles in curriculum implementation stage. They offered various suggestions addressing different aspects of curriculum delivery. Firstly, Zeyad advocated giving the teachers the authority to manage their teaching time according to their students' needs, as his comment shows:

> I think they should give teachers more importance. I mean they should
> give teachers more freedom in timing their lessons' delivery. If they
> want me to cover these materials and this set of skills, they should give
> me the freedom to use my time and to divide my time, as I want,
> depending on the needs of my students.

It appears that teachers are not allowed to allocate more time to teach the required materials, regardless of the actual teaching and learning circumstances in class, or the current level of their students' language proficiency. It seems that teachers are required to cover a certain number of chapters or other teaching materials based on specific time scale. Zeyad's suggestion aimed at having more freedom and flexibility by allowing teachers to allocate more time to cover the chapters and materials considering his students' learning situations, instead of delivering them according to the scheduled time scale of the pacing guide.

Secondly, participants Eyaad and Dheya suggested granting teachers the authority to write both the speaking and writing tests: Eyaad's quote reflects both views:

> I should be given the right to design my listening and writing tests. I don't mind following any guidelines or instructions from the testing committee in writing my tests, but I want to give my students the tests that I personally designed, not developed by some people in the testing committee.. I wish they will give all the teachers the chance to develop their own tests in the next module.

The participants' stance reflected by Eyaad's above statement indicates that they were not happy with the ELI testing policy in place, which gives the testing unit the absolute authority to impose both the speaking and writing tests on all teachers in the ELI. In addition, their stance shows that they wanted the ELI to replace the current policy and give teachers the right to develop their own speaking and writing tests. Moreover, Eyaad's suggestion aimed at making the ELI administration to recognise his knowledge and skills in test development. He wished that this policy would be changed enabling EFL teachers to write listening and writing tests.

Thirdly, Mohsen suggested involving teachers in piloting any taught elements in the course before including them in the implementation process:

> Teachers should be given the opportunities to pilot anything before asking us to teach it. If a coordinator prepared something and we just implement it. It's not like that. I'm talking about the reading circles; they should ask teachers to pilot teaching them initially for a short time. Then, they can get teachers' views about the adequacy of the reading circles content prior taking a final decision for their implementation.

It seems that new taught items or teaching materials developed and recommended by members of the coordination unit are implemented immediately, without piloting them in the course. It appears that teachers have experienced this scenario in the introduction of the reading circles for the FYP students, as Mohsen's quote indicates above. His suggestion aimed at introducing a piloting phase, as a pre-condition, before implementing teaching items in class.

Fourthly, in contrast, Fadel suggested offering training for all ELI teachers in student evaluation in order to improve the quality of evaluation of students' tests, especially the speaking and writing ones, , as his statement indicates:

> I think all teachers here should get training in students' evaluation in the oral and writing exams, because I get the sense that marks are

> usually inflated specially by the class teacher. It is always the case that the second evaluator tends to give fewer marks than the class teacher.

The ELI administration developed and adopted an internal institutional policy for students' evaluation, in particular the speaking and writing skills. All teachers have to assess their own students' class with another teacher. However, there remains an inconsistency or a noticeable difference between the two evaluators in assessing the same students in the oral and writing tests, as Fadel's quote shows above. It is likely that ELI teachers were not marking according to the actual evaluation rubrics supplied to them by the testing committee. It is also possible that the marking rubrics were not clear enough for teachers to follow in evaluating both the speaking and writing skills. Therefore, Fadel's suggestion aimed at improving the teachers' practices in students' evaluation, and therefore to reduce their subjectivity.

Lastly, Waeel's interest in research has influenced his views as he encouraged teachers to research their teaching practice in the ELI:

> I wish they will encourage teachers to research what they do. For example, they can encourage the teachers to come up with suggestions. For example, a group of teachers would like to research the reading circles. They would do little research and then present their findings. […] I think they should encourage them.

Waeel's quote indicates that there is no research policy or strategy in place that encourages teachers to research curriculum issues or problems that they have experienced in class and motivate them to seek some solutions based on research findings. It seems that curriculum elements are introduced in the programme directly without any research behind them. It is likely that reading circles were not introduced in the programme based on a preliminary research with the involvement of ELI teachers, either as researchers or as participants.

5.4 EFL Teachers' Views about their Roles in the Evaluation Stage of the Curriculum

The ELI adopts annual formative evaluation for the FYP curriculum. It aims to achieve two major purposes, namely, to improve the curriculum elements and to make the curriculum delivery a smooth process based on the information obtained from the ELI teachers. The gathered data from the participants about their roles in the evaluation phase of the curriculum are reflected in three major themes and related categories/subcategories as in Table 3 below.

	Major themes	Categories	Sub-categories

1	Nature of teachers' involvement in curriculum evaluation	1. While-use course book evaluation:
		  a) Evaluation of strength and weakness of course book
		  b) Evaluating the cultural content of Headway course book
		  c) Course book evaluation focused on potential reduction of chapters
			• Participants' satisfaction with while-use course book evaluation:
			  a) A course book as an important part of the curriculum
			  b) Considering a participant's voice in evaluating the Headway course book
			• Participants' dissatisfaction with while-use course book evaluation:
			  a) Exclusion from evaluating other curriculum areas
			  b) Missing a valuable experience to participate in evaluating additional curriculum elements.

		3) Pacing guide evaluation	• Satisfaction with involvement in evaluating pacing guide: a challenging nature of the pacing guide and a desire for its improvement
		4) Multiple curriculum elements evaluation	• Satisfaction with involvement in evaluating various curriculum elements.
		5) Tests evaluation	• Satisfaction with evaluating tests, due to significance of tests in the curriculum, administration and students. • Dissatisfaction with evaluating tests because of providing written responses only.
		6) No involvement	• Dissatisfaction with no involvement in evaluating anything in curriculum, due to feeling of exclusion from the evaluation process.
2	Impacts of teachers' involvement	1. Introduction of Headway Plus special edition course book 2. Reducing course book units 3. Introducing slight changes in the pacing guide 4. Ignoring a personal view on the new pacing 5. Disregarding a suggestion to reintroduce the semester system	
	Suggestions about teachers' roles	1. Students learning outcomes 2. Focus groups interviews 3. Teachers' evaluation 4. Female teachers' roles in the curriculum unit	

Table 3: Themes, categories and subcategories related to teachers' roles in the curriculum evaluation stage

5.4.1 Nature of Teachers' Involvement in Curriculum Evaluation

The participants were asked whether they were engaged in evaluating any elements of the FYP curriculum. The data revealed that 54% of the participants were involved in evaluating various areas of the curriculum at different levels, namely, ongoing current course book evaluation, teachers' evaluation, pacing guide evaluation, multiple curriculum elements evaluation, students learning outcomes evaluation and tests evaluation. A few participants mentioned no involvement in curriculum evaluation.

5.4.1.1 While-use Course Book Evaluation

Some of the participants reported that they took part in evaluating the course book currently used in the programme. Osamah's quote reflects their views:

> I took part in evaluating the course book through an emailed questionnaire. I was asked to give my feedback about the current course book, Headway Plus. They asked teachers about the strength and the weaknesses of the course book. The questionnaire contained both open-ended and closed ended questions.

Additionally, the data also revealed that there were two other evaluation processes for the course book where few participants had the chance to participate. For example, Nedhaal reported that he took part in evaluating the cultural content of the *Headway* course book used in the ELI. Nedhaal's explains that explicitly, as follows:

> There were certain things in new Headway plus course book that were not culturally suitable for Saudi Arabia. Many teachers complained about them once we started teaching it. Then the administration asked some teachers to review the book and locate these problematic areas and to suggest some modifications in the course book content for the publisher. I was selected with some other teachers to evaluate the course book. Then we submitted our recommendations to the ELI administration.

Najwaa indicated that she was also involved in evaluating the adequacy in terms of the number of chapters included in Headway Plus as well as the course book for the module system:

> Last term, the curriculum unit gave us like an online questionnaire of how we felt towards the course book. For example, is it good to reduce the number of the chapters? Is it good to omit some chapters because of the six weeks period that we have? I gave them my honest views based on my classroom teaching experience.

Moreover, the data showed that some of the participants who took part in the current course book evaluation reported mixed feelings (happy and unhappy) after their involvement in this process. For example, Waeel said that he was satisfied with his role because he felt he was involved in evaluating what he considered as an important part of the curriculum, as his quote shows:

> I feel happy that I participated in evaluating the Headway course book because it is an important element in our curriculum. I emailed my feedbacks and I'm happy with my role in this area.

Fadel held the same view, but his satisfaction was due to the fact that he felt his voice as a teacher was being heard and taken into account. He also considered his role as a teacher as central to the curriculum:

> I'm quite happy that they asked for my views on our course book. I felt I was respected when I was invited to evaluate the Headway course book, because I'm the one who is teaching it for the students and that my voice was appreciated.

English language course books are essential components of the FYP curriculum, because both teaching and learning depend on them. It seems that they help in offering unified and coherent instruction for all the intended students, in terms of determining the taught topics, lesson sequence as well as using the content as part of the students' assessment. Many contemporary ELT researchers of teaching materials have confirmed the crucial role a course book plays in ESL/ EFL environments. For example, Hashemi & Borhani (2012) advocate that English course book is a very important element in language teaching and learning in the second / foreign language classroom. Therefore, a teacher like Waeel realised that his opinion was sought and valued in evaluating such essential curriculum element in his teaching context which created a positive feeling afterwards. Moreover, Fadel was pleased with his role in the current course book evaluation because he has been teaching the *Headway* course book for some. This has made him feel that he had enough experience to provide his views on the course book and expected to be involved in the process of evaluation. These features have made Fadel satisfied with this type of involvement and it was sufficient for him at this stage.

However, both Osamah and Zeyad reported a contradictory view and shared their dissatisfaction with their minimal involvement in the course book evaluation only.

Osamah was dissatisfied because he felt he was excluded from evaluating other curriculum areas, as his quote reflects their views:

> I don't feel happy at all that I was asked to take part in evaluating Headway course book only through emailed questionnaire. I feel that I was excluded from taking part in evaluating other things in the curriculum. This makes me feel dissatisfied and uncomfortable with that institutional procedure.

Dawood felt that he missed an opportunity to gain valuable experience by not being requested to participate in evaluating additional curriculum elements. As a result, he expressed a general feeling of discontent due to the fact that all the curriculum-related decision-making process is rather centralised in the hands of the curriculum unit. This also raises the issue of teacher voice within the curriculum:

> I'm not content with my previous role in evaluating headway course book, because I wasn't asked to evaluate other things which could have given me more experience in evaluating other curriculum items in the future. I feel that the evaluation process is centralised in the curriculum unit and that I don't have much voice.

There are some contextual issues that can make teachers dissatisfied with their limited role in the current use book evaluation. It seems that the curriculum unit and coordination unit decide on the nature of involving ELI teachers in evaluating each curriculum element as it was mentioned above. Then, the curriculum unit takes the practical measures of involving them in evaluating the curriculum elements at different levels. It appears that the ELI teachers are not given the choice of which aspects of curriculum they want to evaluate and this matter is entirely a managerial decision as explained above.

5.4.2 Pacing Guide Evaluation

Some of the participants reported that they took part in evaluating the pacing guide (i.e. teaching progression guidelines which tell teachers the required covered chapters and other taught materials weekly in class). Ferdous's quote is an example of their involvement views:

> At the end of the last module, we were sent an online survey by the curriculum unit. We were asked to respond to it. In this survey we were asked few questions regarding the pacing guide. I wrote whatever I thought was the problem about it. I pointed out the things that I thought should be done or things that were missing. I did my best and I indicated to areas of weaknesses, some cross points and everything I thought was causing a headache for teachers in that pacing guide.

Participant Mohsen expressed his satisfaction with his involvement in evaluating pacing guide because of its challenging nature for teachers and his desire for its improvement, as his statement shows:

> Well I sent my feedback on the pacing guide to the curriculum unit and I'm satisfied with my involvement, because the pacing guide is a challenge for everybody here. I really want it to be modified and improved. I'm happy that I let curriculum unit knew my concerns about the pacing guide.

5.4.2.1 Evaluation of Multiple Curriculum Elements

Participant Azaam reported that he was involved in focus group interviews as part of the curriculum evaluation. He said he was interviewed by the curriculum unit and he discussed various curriculum elements with the unit's members, as his quote indicates:

> I was invited once by the curriculum unit to take part in teachers' focus group. We actually discussed different aspects of the curriculum, what is good and what is bad about it, about the module system, about the pacing guide, about testing, about portfolios.

As the interview continued, Azaam reported that he was pleased with his involvement in teachers' focus group interviews and he had a chance to reveal his concerns, as his interview statement shows:

> I'm happy that I was invited once to take part in a focus group interview. As I   told you earlier we had a constructive discussion about different aspects of the curriculum, about the materials. I'm very pleased because I was given the opportunity to voice my concerns very openly about different aspects of the curriculum.

5.4.2.2 Tests Evaluation

A few participants reported that they were involved in evaluating the executed tests in the ELI. Ferial's statement is an example of the nature of their involvement:

> The tests are one of the things that are evaluated here by a general questionnaire that is actually sent to us. I answered one related to the tests. We were asked to put our general input, what we thought of the tests, are tests difficult or easy for our students and something like that

Tests evaluation is another area that reflected a discrepancy in feelings among the participants. For example, Ferial said that she was satisfied with her tests evaluation involvement, due to the significance of tests in the curriculum, as his quote shows:

> I'm entirely pleased with my role in the task of evaluating the tests. Although it was done through questionnaires only, I felt my feedback was really valued as it was sought about tests which are the most important element in the curriculum for the administration and students.

However, Eyaad expressed his dissatisfaction which was caused by providing written responses only. According to him, written feedback was not sufficient to address the issues related to testing. The following quote reflects a feeling of regret for not being able to provide face-to-face feedback to the curriculum unit:

> Even though I emailed my views on testing and I gave them my honest remarks, but I'm not happy and convinced with providing written answers only. I felt I had a lot to say, I wish that I had been interviewed by testing unit face to face, in order to fully state my opinions.

The ELI management gives very high importance to tests because students' results will determine those who will be allowed to graduate from the programme and join their faculties in the next academic year. Also, they may require some students, those who fail, to continue in the programme until they pass all the tests successfully. It appears that the second scenario represents a burden on the administration too. This is because it has to deal with the academic and financial impacts on the institution later on. These circumstances would make teachers happy to participate in evaluating the executed FYP tests, due to their serious impacts on both the students and the administration, as Ferial's statement indicates above. However, Eyaad felt responding to a questionnaire only was not enough for him, because he thought it restricted him from providing a thorough feedback. Therefore, he hoped that he would be interviewed by the testing unit staff, because it would give him some advantages. For example, it would give him the chance to discuss and interact with curriculum unit people, so that he can raise and explain his concerns on testing issues more clearly and to provide a more detailed feedback.

The ELI management assigned the curriculum unit with the responsibility to evaluate the FYP curriculum elements. It seems that the unit had concerns regarding some specific aspects of the curriculum and decided to focus on evaluating them, namely, the course book (i.e. while-use evaluation), the pacing guide, portfolios, the module system and tests. It used both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to collect feedback from teachers on these curriculum elements by means of emailed questionnaires and focus groups with

the teachers. It appears that the questionnaires were used as the main method for getting teachers' views and feedback, while the focus groups were used as a supporting instrument.

5.4.2.3 No Involvement in Curriculum Evaluation

A few participants reported that they were not invited to take part in evaluating any curriculum elements. Dheya's interview quote demonstrates that: "I was not involved in evaluating anything in the curriculum […] I wasn't asked officially to take part by any mean." Similarly, Sara'a said: "I didn't receive an email inviting me or asking me to provide my feedback regarding any of the curriculum things."

Regarding the involvement of participants in the curriculum evaluation process, it seems that ELI teachers do not have a direct right to participate in evaluating curriculum elements, because they are members of teaching staff. It appears that teachers have to receive an official invitation from the curriculum unit or coordination unit to determine the nature of their involvement, in order to take part in any role in curriculum evaluation procedure.

Additionally, participants Dheya and Sara'a mentioned their dissatisfaction because they were not invited to take part in evaluating any curriculum item. Dheya's following statement reflects a certain feeling of exclusion as a result of non-involvement in curriculum evaluation. His quote reflects both views:

> Absolutely, I'm not pleased that I was not invited to participate in evaluating anything in the curriculum. I 'm disappointed that they selected certain teachers to give their feedback on some curriculum areas and excluded others like me.

Dheya's quote indicates that teachers who were not invited to participate in the process of curriculum evaluation felt disappointed and jealous, because they realised that they were marginalised compared with other teachers who were involved in evaluating curriculum elements at different levels. As a result, these excluded teachers would feel annoyed and disrespected, as they believed that their views would be useful for their teaching context, but they were not given a chance to offer them.

5.4.3 Impact of Teachers' Involvement in Curriculum Evaluation

The participants were asked whether their involvement in evaluating the curriculum elements had any impact. The data showed that there were some

positive changes that appeared later in some of the evaluated curriculum elements. For example, Nedhaal reported the introduction of *Headway Plus Special Edition* course book as an evidence for the positive impact for his involvement, along with some other teachers in evaluating the cultural aspects in Oxford University Press course book, *Headway*. His quote explains that explicitly:

> The ELI gave our feedback on Headway course book to the OUP, and OUP developed a new course book. It is called New Headway Plus Special Edition. That was developed purely because of feedbacks from the ELI teachers. They made a special edition that was the result of the feedbacks from us initially

Additionally, the data revealed another positive change related to the course book. For example, a few participants reported a reduction in the required course book coverage in the pacing guide in each module. Ferdous's statement is an example of their views:

> I have to say that the curriculum unit implemented one of our complaints about the pacing guide and they changed it slightly this year. They reduced the number of units that we had to cover each module, so now we have to teach 9 units out of 14. Of course it happened because of our continuous complaints and criticism to the curriculum unit for forcing us to teach many chapters in a short time. I think the pacing guide this year is much better than last year. It gives the teacher more time to teach.

On the other hand, the data revealed that some of the participants' suggestions were not fully addressed and considered in different aspects of the FYP curriculum. For example, Murad suggested reducing the teaching content in the pacing guide, but the introduced change was not satisfactory for him. His quote showed that briefly:

> After our complaints about the pacing guide, they have extended the module by only one week. Also, they have freed up the pacing guide slightly so that we have more space for covering the teaching materials. However, I still think it is not enough. There is still too much to do in each module. I still believe that the amount of materials that we are supposed to cover in each module should be reduced more.

Similarly, Osamah reported that his suggestion for giving more time in the new pacing guide was ignored, as his quote indicates:

> I think the new pacing guide still needs some more major changes. This is because we still have the feeling that we don't have enough time to recycle and consolidate the materials that we are teaching. I'm sure I included this point in my previous feedback, but my view wasn't reflected in the new pacing guide.

Azaam experienced a similar situation, in relation to his suggestion to reintroduce the semester system into the ELI curriculum:

> I personally said to one of the curriculum unit staff in an interview that the module system like six weeks teaching for one level wasn't suitable for our students. I suggested returning to the semester system. I'm sure many teachers said the same thing. Yet, the module system is still in place, as if teachers said nothing about it or we didn't criticise it or indicate to its failure.

Nedhaal's quote indicates that teachers' feedback were constructive and led to design of *New Headway Plus Special Edition* which was introduced in the programme later on. However, the participants experienced partial changes in the pacing guide and module length, but no positive change was experienced in the structure of the programme. There are some contextual issues that can explain these diverse outcomes. It seems that teachers' feedback on curriculum elements can be fully accepted, partially accepted, modified or rejected. It appears that any introduced changes need to be approved by the ELI top management and the curriculum unit.

5.4.4 Suggestion about Teachers' Roles in Curriculum Evaluation

When the participants were asked to offer suggestions in relation to teachers' involvement in curriculum evaluation issues, the obtained data revealed that they offered some suggestions related to different aspects of the ELI curriculum, namely, students learning outcomes, focus groups interviews, teachers' evaluation and female teachers' roles in the curriculum unit.

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5.4.4.1 Students' Learning Outcomes

Ferial's desire focused on engaging teachers in evaluating the Students Learning Outcomes (SLO), as her quote shows:

> teachers should be involved in evaluating the SLO by the end of every module for each level to check whether these SLO's are realistic and appropriate to the levels that we have or not.

It seems that the nature of the students learning outcomes (i.e. instructional objectives) is so ambitious that they might be higher than the actual English language competence of the FYP students. Therefore, Ferial's suggestion aimed at involving teachers in evaluating these learning outcomes, because they know the actual language level of their students in each level, and what they are capable of achieving from these planned learning outcomes by the end of each lesson and module. She intended to modify these learning outcomes, in order to make them more realistic so that they meet the students' actual language competence.

5.4.4.2 Focus Groups

Participant Murad recommended increasing the number of teachers involved in the focus group interviews, as his quote indicates:

> I suggest doing more focus groups and more surveys after every module for faculty members. I personally believe that the ELI administration needs to conduct as many focus groups as possible and increase the number of interviewed teachers in these focus groups for all of the four levels.

The curriculum unit conducted focus groups sessions with few teachers who were also selected to take part in evaluating some of the curriculum evaluation items. Some institutional factors can determine the number of teachers who can be invited to participate in focus group interviews. For example, there are large numbers of teachers in the ELI, the availability of teachers at certain times, teachers' teaching schedule, whether they teach extra classes or not, tests schedule and the timing of the focus group sessions. It seems that these practical reasons made it difficult for the curriculum unit members to interview a big number of teachers so they had to select a small sample of teachers in order to collect the qualitative data.

5.4.4.3 Teaches' Evaluation

A few participants recommended involving teachers in teachers' evaluation process, namely, in peer observation. Sara'a's quote is an example of their views:

> The policy of peer observation seems to be a good option, why not to give a chance to ELI teachers to evaluate each other. It should be a policy that one teacher is going to evaluate some of his colleagues, give them his feedback and have a discussion with them about their teaching performance afterwards. Then, he submits all his feedback to the teachers' evaluation committee. Later on, the committee should check the submitted feedback from all teachers about all the evaluated teachers and ask them to develop certain areas if needed, instead of depending just on certain observers and coordinators' subjective evaluation.

The ELI administration established a coordination unit to evaluate all the teaching staff based on specific evaluation criteria set by the unit. The unit members, the coordinators, are assigned to carry out this task. Every teacher is observed twice a year, his/ her teaching performance in class is evaluated, and is given an evaluation grade afterwards. It seems that teachers' evaluation depends on the observers' subjective perception of their performance inside the class.

5.4.4.4 Female Teachers' Roles in Curriculum Unit

Noha emphasised the importance of assigning more active roles for female teachers in the curriculum unit in the female campus, as her quote indicates:

> I think the curriculum unit at the female campus does not have enough power in curriculum evaluation issues compared with the other one on the male campus. Maybe it should play a bigger role other than designing tasks sheet only or quizzes. It should have a bigger role that reflects the female teachers' views in the curriculum, not only reflecting the male curriculum unit staff perspectives.

Noha's suggestion aimed at empowering the curriculum unit in the female campus, by allowing members of this unit to play active roles in evaluating various curriculum elements. Her view intended to give the female teachers the chance to use their skills and experiences in the evaluation process of the curriculum.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented an analysis of the data based on the research questions of the study. The first section presented the data regarding the first research question focusing on the EFL teachers' views about their roles in the development stage of the curriculum. The second one showed the data concerning the second research question tackling the EFL teachers' views about their roles in the implementation phase of the curriculum. The last section presented the data reflecting the EFL teachers' views about their roles in the evaluation phase of the curriculum. The following chapter will discuss the findings.

6 Chapter Six: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide an insight into the most important findings of the current study. The chapter discusses the key findings relevant to teachers' roles in the three different stages of curriculum: development, implementation and evaluation. The presented findings will be discussed with reference to the literature and other studies dealing with similar issues. The discussion thus will include a critical synthesis of the existing literature and the findings presented in the previous chapter.

6.2 Course Books Issues in Curriculum Development

As it has been indicated in the results chapter, teachers took part in pre-use course book evaluation and selection through responding to a questionnaire sent by the ELI administration. This is in line with Low's stance who recommends teachers "to screen teaching materials, in order to predict their suitability for particular classes" (1987: 21). The findings echo Nemati's (2009) study conducted among twenty-six secondary school teachers who were asked to evaluate an English pre-university text book 'Enable', before its final adoption in state schools. The teachers were asked to offer their opinions about the adequacy of the book for the intended students.

Pre-use evaluation is used to examine the apparent suitability and anticipate the potential problems of a course book before it is taught to the intended students. It is usually conducted to check how far a course book meets the objectives of the language course as well as the needs of the learners (Tomlinson, 2003). Researchers have suggested some essential measures that teachers need to apply in evaluating a course book. For example, teachers are supposed to identify to what extent the course books are useful or appropriate for the intended teaching context, in terms of the language content, pedagogical approach and the students' interests and aims (Garinger, 2002; McGrath, 2013; Richards, 2014).

The findings imply that the ELI adopts what seems to be a bottom up approach in the pre-use course book selection by giving teachers a chance to evaluate and select one course book series. Nevertheless, none of the participants indicated

that the course book series which received the highest number of votes from teachers had been selected by the administration or that the one that received the lowest number of votes had been rejected. Based on my knowledge of the context, this does not seem to be the case; the teachers' positive evaluation of a specific course book series does not guarantee that their choices can be accepted and adopted by the ELI administration. It is very likely that their choices can be ruled out or disregarded. This is in line with McGrath's (2013: 54) statement that "in many [English language] contexts teachers do not themselves select the course book they use". Additionally, McGrath contends that various factors can influence the course book selection process in an educational setting, such as, for instance, political issues (Byrd, 2001) or getting educational support and offers from publishers (Inal, 2006). The latter factor seems to be relevant to the context of the study. More specifically, major additional issues can influence the ELI administration to ignore or differ with the teachers' choices: the competitive nature of each publisher's offer and package and the extent to which course book can address the FYP curriculum needs. In other words, if a publisher expresses willingness to meet the ELI curriculum demands in any area that might emerge later on within the course of the academic year, it is very likely that addressing these needs will significantly increase the likelihood of the publisher to secure a deal with the ELI administration and have their course book selected regardless of the teachers' preferences. This also confirms Gray's (2013) view who states that UK ELT publishers market the course books through offering, directly or indirectly, a wide range of other ELT products such as courses, tests or dictionaries.

Personally, I believe that teachers' involvement in pre-use course book evaluation and selection in ESL/ EFL contexts in general is a useful and practical activity that teachers need to experience. This is because it can have some positive impacts on the teachers themselves. More specifically, it can be part of their own ongoing professional development, as it can help them to become knowledgeable about vital features they need to focus on in course book evaluation. This view is shared by Hashemi & Borhani (2012) who argue that this kind of involvement can make teachers familiar with the contemporary trends in international English language instruction materials.

The course book plays a crucial role in the professional lives of a large number of the ELI teachers in all the curriculum areas. In fact, teachers can probably not conceive of a curriculum without a main course book to the extent that the curriculum cannot be separated from the course books. In addition, they conceive the current course book series –the students' book and workbook– as a tangible evidence of effective language teaching and learning. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the importance teachers give to the course book has not occurred in a vacuum; in fact, there are some reasons behind such a perception. More specifically, the course book provides them with guidelines for lesson planning and extra materials and its exercises can be used for test items. The special status that the teachers give to the course book is not specific to Saudi Arabia; it is actually in line with contemporary ELT research on course book. For example, MaGrath (2002: 8) maintains that a course book for teachers means a "recipe, holy book, compass and survival kit". In other words, it represents an institutional curriculum, constitutes the syllabus, signifies core teaching materials for the course of a study, provides content, pedagogy and assessment materials (Shawer 2010; Harwood 2014). Therefore, these features have encouraged Mohammadi and Abdi (2014) and Matsuda (2012) to emphasise the essential role that the course book plays in ESL/EFL settings insofar as they consider it as a vital component of English language teaching. Byrd (2001:415) goes further and claims that "few teachers enter class without a text book." Considering the status of course books in ESL/EFL settings, the study argues that it can be very difficult to convince teachers or students that effective language teaching and learning can take place without the use of a course book.

Curriculum development aims to improve a curriculum, which may require changes and modifications at different levels. It can involve the implementation of various degrees of institutional change from simple, moderate modifications to major changes in an educational context (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991). For example, curriculum change can require selecting a new course book series, introducing higher levels of teaching standards, a new programme structure, more courses and a new testing system. I believe it is unrealistic to expect all teachers to accept all the introduced changes in a curriculum without explicitly or implicitly voicing their concerns. In other words, teachers may resist curriculum change imposed on them either by the authority of an educational institution or

by external curriculum developers. This attitude is common among teachers during curriculum change as noted by many researchers (e.g. Fullan, 2001; Lamie, 2005; Campbell, 2012; Carl, 2012). Certain reasons can explain teachers' resistance to change; for example, teachers may expect that change can create additional challenges and work load in terms of preparation, teaching or testing. Therefore, it is vital for stakeholders and curriculum policy makers in an educational setting to involve faculty members in in-service Professional Development Programmes (PDP) and engage them in the curriculum development process. These programmes may include areas related to curriculum development tackling all intended changes in a curriculum through workshops. In this regard, Castro (2013) emphasises the advantages and the importance of providing in-service training for teachers because it prepares them to implement a new programme or curriculum. In my view, PDP can have positive impacts on teachers at two levels: preparation and implementation. In terms of preparation, PDP provides a suitable opportunity for the institution to explore teachers' views about the introduced changes. In addition, they can help in making teachers aware of new curriculum changes and the potential positive outcomes for the programme.

Teachers need to be aware of the reasons for curriculum change in order to accept and implement the changes in reality (Lasky, 2005). With respect to implementation, PDP may encourage teachers to embrace the change, which might minimise their resistance at the implementation stage. These potential positive outcomes are in line with Troudi and Alwan (2010: 117) who suggest that "training and support should be of great help in reducing the stressful effects of change during implementation". In brief, this study argues that establishing a strong correlation between curriculum development and PDP can empower teachers and help them become agents of curriculum change rather than curriculum implementers only (Lasky, 2005).

6.3 The Relationship between the Centre and Periphery

The findings revealed that one of the offered justifications for minimal involvement of teachers in the curriculum development of the FYP was due to the dependence of the ELI on Oxford University Press to design major elements of the FYP curriculum. This finding confirms some researchers' views including Canagrajah (1999), Auerbach (1995) and Gray (2002; 2013) who contend that what they label as 'Centre Agencies' represented by ELT expertise develop the majority of the ELT teaching materials and ESL/EFL curriculum needs for the 'periphery'. Therefore, most of the ELT materials imported from the UK and the USA to the periphery are in great demand and perceived as a vital aspect in these contexts (ibid).

This finding can be related to the ELI history. The English language programme was first established by the British Council in the English Language Centre in 1975 (as the ELI was then called). The British Council used to manage and cater for all the English language needs within the Centre, in terms of the undergraduate courses offered to students, the general courses as well as the ESP courses. In other words, historically, the ELI built a form of dependence on external professional expertise with regards the English language curriculum needs while the ELI teachers had one role to play: teaching the offered courses. This situation of dependence on inner circle ELT expertise is common in a number of countries and especially in the Arabian Gulf. In this regard, Pennycook (1994) maintains that the UK use the British Council to strengthen its influence and establish a long-term relationship with countries in the periphery by sending British experts to provide ELT support around the globe. He also indicates that ELT is controlled by two main countries in the centre, namely, Britain and the USA, and the need for ELT consultants is increasing to meet the demand of the periphery countries in various ELT areas.

The inner circle countries from the West exercise a form of authority over the periphery using major ELT tools such as teaching materials, teaching methodology and teacher training (Phillipson, 1992; Holliday, 2005; 2009). The inner circle countries practices seem to contribute to an uneven or unbalanced relationship with periphery countries. The former are in a position of authority, as they are the main providers of essential ELT products around the globe. On the other hand, the periphery have traditionally been consumers of these products

and developed consumerist habits to fulfil their ELT needs. One of the factors that seem to contribute to this ELT consumerist culture in the periphery can be related to the inner circle countries' policy in dealing with ELT as a product or a service to market globally. As Pennycook (1994) indicates, ELT has become internationally business-driven. Some researchers agree with Pennycook's analysis that the ELT has adopted this trend. For example, Gray (2010) observes that British publishers often sell a global course book that has been successful in a specific context to other new markets in ESL/EFL settings. They design new editions introducing some changes to suit the new setting's requirements (ibid). Also, they have been competent and successful in finding new markets for international course book series that were underselling in some countries and market them in other ones in the periphery (Thomas, 1999).

As a result, the inner circle countries have successfully managed to take advantage of the need for learning English in the globe and promoted their expertise to offer this service using professional marketing skills to market their ELT products, consultancies and teacher training programmes. However, certain factors within the periphery appear to help in maintaining their weak position such as, for instance, policies adopted by those in charge of ELT management and administration. As Nayar (2002) maintains, TESOL programme managers and administrators contribute to the ELT dominance of the inner circle countries in some periphery contexts. For example, ELT managers and stakeholders' desires and preferences seem to play a noticeable role in shaping their intuitions policy. Their say is very crucial in this issue, as they have the power to encourage their institutions to develop gradual independence on ELT issues or adopt policies that increasingly dependent on foreign external ELT assistance. It is essential that TESOL programme managers realise that there are some advantages for having more independence in ELT matters in their contexts and encourage local curriculum development by engaging local ELT professionals and teaching staff in this process. Their views are essential because ELT curriculum development issues are often centralised and controlled by programme managers and administrators as they are the key decision makers in educational settings (McGrath 2013). Thus, their positive stance on this policy is extremely helpful because the more convinced they are with minimising their reliance on inner circle ELT expertise and the more they believe in the empowerment of the ESL/EFL

contexts in the periphery, the more support they may provide for their institutions, namely, teaching staff, to achieve that purpose.

It is also important for TESOL programme administrators and managers in the periphery countries to trust their local ELT professionals, regard them as potential contributors in the curriculum development process and treat them as reliable partners. They also need to realise that engaging teachers in EFL/ESL curriculum development at different levels can be a very useful practical experience. As Carl advocates, "curriculum development is an educational process and the teachers should be involved with it" (2012: 217). This means that teachers can benefit from taking part in this process. Their involvement in this field can increase their knowledge of theoretical aspects of curriculum development, offer them practical experience in curriculum design and prepare them professionally to participate in curriculum development based on their knowledge of the local context. In other words, teachers' participation in curriculum development is a form of empowerment because they can make a valuable contribution to this field (ibid).

6.4 Teachers' Roles in Needs Analysis

As mentioned in the previous chapter, few participants investigated the FYP students' language needs in the ELI one year after the programme had already started. In this regard, the study contradicts some previous studies, such as Eslami (2010), Dehnad et.al. (2010), Holi & Salih (2013) and Mahmoud (2014), in that the participants of the current study were members of the team in charge of investigating the language needs of the FYP students amongst both teachers and students and provided their recommendations afterwards. Conversely, the participants from the above studies reported their views on students' language needs to the concerned researchers. It is widely accepted in the literature that needs analysis can take place in three possible periods: before the start of a course, during the course delivery and at the end of a course (Richards, 2003; Inceçay & İnceçay, 2010; Nation & Macalister, 2010). The ELI needs analysis timing was in line with West (1994) who claims that needs analysis has become an on-going process and that it is now widely accepted as good practice in language teaching to conduct it during the course.

The ELI procedure in this process has met some of the essential features recommended by a number of researchers including Ali & Salih (2013) who

advocate involving insider analysts, such as teachers, who are part of the institution when conducting a needs analysis investigation. This is because they are familiar with the context and the students, which can help in executing an effective needs analysis inquiry. Additionally, the ELI used the needs analysis for evaluation and renewal of the programme as advocated by Richards (2003).

Needs analysis not only investigates essential aspects related to students' learning needs, such as identifying their learning priorities, weaknesses and wants, but also focuses on identifying students' desires in learning (West, 1994; Brindley, 1994; Kandil, 2003; Nation & Macalister, 2010). Teachers can be regarded as legitimate and major partners or contributors in this mission because of their background knowledge of students' proficiency levels in English, their knowledge of the programme requirements and the nature of their teaching context. In other words, they are regarded as a preponderant group of professionals who can provide important information regarding students' language needs in an ESL/EFL curriculum. Many researchers have emphasised the importance of teachers' involvement in needs analysis (Jones, 1991; Brown, 1995; Richards, 2003). In practice, they can be part of a team assigned to carry out needs analysis in their teaching institution (Richards, 2003). They can participate in collecting quantitative or qualitative data from students focusing on language needs, lacks, wants or other learning aspects. Their participation is beneficial as they can help in explaining or rewording any complex questions or clarifying vague statements in a questionnaire that might be difficult to understand. Additionally, using teachers as interviewers can help in obtaining rich data from students because they are familiar with them, they are more aware of their personalities and can explain interview questions. Then, students may feel more comfortable to give examples of their language learning difficulties, answer teachers' questions honestly and express their learning needs more openly. In practice, teachers can be involved in investigating the main language requirements as well as the aims and objectives of the programme. They can also report students' lack of knowledge or low language proficiency in certain language skills such as speaking or writing, observe classrooms or provide useful information based on previous tests results.

Moreover, teachers can be asked questions about students' language learning priorities in needs analysis (Brown, 1995) and can be regarded as a reliable

source in this area. For example, they can be asked about the scope and focus of the language skills of a course and the amount of new vocabulary for each level. Also, they can provide information about important topics that need to be reflected in the teaching material and can indicate the extent to which it is important to expose certain groups of students to authentic materials. However, it can be difficult to reach a consensus among teachers on all language learning priorities because they may have different perspectives regarding an issue depending on, for instance, their teaching experience or their seniority in an institution. Thus, it is important to grant senior and more experienced teachers the chance to discuss with their colleagues the different views about the main priorities in terms of their learners' language needs. Then, they can ask their institution to reflect their views in the developed elements of the curriculum.

Learning strategies are important aspects in needs analysis (Tarone & Yule, 1989). As insiders, faculty members in an institution can be a useful source of information about students' preferred learning strategies or styles. Therefore, curriculum developers ought to consider this issue when developing curriculum elements in terms of the teaching methodology of a course in order to suit the teaching and learning context. Tackling another area, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) regard institutional learning constraints as a major issue to conduct a sound and effective needs analysis. Considering the teachers' knowledge of their environment and their familiarity with it can help in identifying the potential learning obstacles or challenges that students may encounter. Teachers can also raise their concerns about potential problematic aspects of the programme to those in charge of curriculum design in their institution. For example, they can report the inadequacy of a specific area that might not meet the students' learning culture or pinpoint unreliable curriculum plans that may contradict the purposes of learning English in the institution.

As pointed by Richards (2003: 59), "in some language programmes, informal needs analysis is part of a teacher's ongoing responsibilities". This means that teachers can do informal needs analysis in their routine teaching practice. They can also ask their students either individually or in groups about their learning experiences and challenges in order to get a clear picture of their language leaning needs. This is a good practice because classroom environments do not reflect fixed types of language needs for all students. Teachers may notice that

some of their students develop new language needs as the course progresses; as Cook (2003) argues, a classroom is an unsettled setting that brings different learning needs. Thus, teachers need to be encouraged to perform individual personal and informal needs analysis on a regular basis to identify learning needs, evaluate them and act upon them. This seems to indicate that teachers' roles in needs analysis is not only limited to identification; teachers are also supposed to do their utmost to find the most appropriate solutions to address students' language needs. Teachers' involvement in informal needs analysis seems to indicate that ELT is a progressive speciality because it requires teachers to spend time and effort searching for the best for their students (Ali & Salih, 2013).

Many curriculum researchers have focused on the involvement of teachers in investigating language learning needs. However, it is also important to give them a chance to explore other aspects such as non-language learning needs issues. I believe that teachers can provide valuable help in exploring other essential areas that can affect the quality of the learning process, notably in terms of students' feelings, attitudes and emotions. More specifically, teachers can be invited to collect information from their students by investigating their attitudes towards learning a foreign language, their feeling towards introducing new English courses, either as optional or obligatory requirements of their course, identifying the motivational factors that can enhance, or hinder their learning and have impact on their learning experience. In addition, they may ask them about the advantages of learning a foreign language. This point has been raised by Brindley (1994) who explains that needs analysis needs to consider issues that focus on the learners as human beings in the learning environment. As a result, based on the obtained data, teachers raise curriculum developers' awareness of students' feelings, which can help in addressing the reasons behind any dissatisfactory feeling or concern about the programme.

Lastly, I believe that teachers' involvement in executing needs analysis has some advantages for the institution as well as for the concerned teachers. For example, with regards the institution stakeholders, it represents an opportunity to benefit from certain individuals who possess the necessary research skills for conducting in-house research investigation to identify teachers' and students' views on various areas of the FYP curriculum for the purpose of improvement. In addition, teachers' involvement in needs analysis can help them exchange ideas with other

colleagues, which adds to their practical knowledge as well as their professional experience. Likewise, it may encourage them to conduct further research on language needs analysis. In doing so, decisions pertaining to students' language learning needs may be based on research, rather than on some faculty or committee members' personal assumptions and bias.

6.5 Reading Culture

The findings of this research indicate that the teachers faced some challenges in teaching reading. Students found the reading materials difficult and uninteresting, which constitutes a challenge for teachers in class. This result echoes previous research such as Al-Nafisah and Al-Shorman (2011) who found that Saudi EFL teacher college's students considered that the English reading materials courses were difficult for them and did not meet their interests.

A contextual cultural factor that relates to the Saudi society's reading culture can explain this finding. Reading in Arabic is not part of the regular habitual acts of Saudi students and it is not a common practice in society. In addition, they are unlikely to have witnessed their parents, siblings and friends read as part of their daily routine. Many of them may read newspapers or magazines, but it is rare for Saudis to read other reading materials, such as novels or other books. This idea has been confirmed by Fawaz (2013) who indicates that a majority of Saudis lack interest in reading, which he considers as a social and cultural phenomenon in society. As a result, this can have a noticeable impact on the FYP undergraduate students' reading skills and competence in English. This is in line with Mourtaga (2006) who believes that one of the contributing factors behind Arab EFL students' weakness in reading in English is their lack of reading in their first language. Therefore, it can be very difficult for EFL teachers to foster a culture of reading among their students since reading is not part of their usual practices. Furthermore, this might be similar in other Arab societies and other ESL/EFL contexts sharing the same reading culture. This understanding is guided by Yacoub (2012: 1) who states that the reading culture is not widely spread in the Arab world and that perhaps a majority of Arabs are not frequent visitors of libraries. For example, "an Arab individual on average reads a quarter of a page a year", as indicated in the Arab Thought Foundation's Fikr fourth annual cultural development report (cited in Yacoub, 2012: 1).

The relationship between L1 and L2 reading has been the focus of research that attributes reading problems in L2 to students' background. For example, Alderson (1984: 4) believes that students' background has a significant impact on their reading ability and states that "poor reading in a foreign language is due to poor reading ability in the first language", which corresponds to the challenges faced by many L2 readers in various EFL contexts. These views are supported by Chuming and Luxia's (1991) findings which revealed that students' second language reading problems are related to their L1 reading background. More specifically, they found that the reading speed can be transferred from L1 to L2, which means that slow L2 readers will be weak in comprehension and have poor English proficiency levels. Also, the study reported a correlation between L1 and L2 reading efficiency for all the participants. Consequently, this can have a significant impact on students' attitude towards reading. Learners' reading attitude can make them like or dislike reading and influence their reading ability and engagement as well (McKernna et al., 1995). These results may indicate that ESL/EFL students who experience a lack of reading practice in their L1 might face challenges in reading in English as well. Therefore, it is highly important for curriculum developers, curriculum committees and teachers to consider the ESL/EFL students' reading background in L1 when developing reading materials or setting reading objectives. In addition, they ought to pay attention to the selection of additional reading materials, including authentic materials, which requires them to set clear, comprehensive instructional guidelines to allow teachers to handle potential reading problems that might arise in class and find instructional remedies to cope with students' reading challenges.

A successful L2 reading requires discussing the roles of educators in teaching, such an essential language skill in ESL/EFL contexts. In this regard, O'Brien & Stewart (1990) maintain that many teachers resist using the reading materials imposed on them and may regard them as useless for their students. The teachers' role is obviously central to improve L2 readers' reading skills and general performance. It is essential to explore and identify teachers' views about the quality of the reading materials used because they are the ones using them in class. Hedge (2003) emphasises the involvement of teachers in selecting reading texts for their students and also contends that teachers' help needs to be sought in selecting interesting reading texts; teachers must also be invited to

suggest various exciting topics for their students. I think that teachers' views are a legitimate and useful source of information about their students' interests, desires and needs, which are important features in improving L2 reading skills.

Motivation is a vital issue in reading and demotivated students are unlikely to be reading (Khreisat & Kaur, 2014). This means that teachers need to exert efforts to motivate their students to read and put in place strategies to achieve this purpose adopting different procedures. In this regard, Kim (2011) maintains that teachers can utilise different techniques to increase reading motivation for L2 readers. For example, teachers need to make their students realise that reading has some non-academic advantages, such as learning about new experiences, new topics, life challenges, achievements and factors that may change peoples' lives. Thus, through reading, students may gain some practical learning expertise from the outside world. This idea has been developed by Khreisat & Kaur (2014) who claim that reading may help students gain a better understanding of the real world outside classrooms, which may motivate them to have positive attitudes towards reading and encourage them to read texts and acquire new experiences. Furthermore, many students may have a negative reading experience in L2 classes. As a result, they have become de-motivated students and have lost interest in reading (Grabe, 2009). Thus, the teachers' role is central as it can influence positively their students' L2 reading experience and motivation by taking into account their voice and views in the reading class. They can further engage the students by giving them the opportunity to express their views about the reading texts and have mutual discussions about them. Moreover, they ought to encourage their students to bring their personal experiences, expectations and imagination in the discussion rather than focusing on answering the pre- and post-reading activities that their students might find boring.

Peacock (1997) argues that authentic materials have positive effects on students' motivation in an L2 environment. This notion has been implemented in the context of the study (see section 5.3.1). The ELI gave teachers the freedom to select teaching materials to enhance their students' learning. Teachers need to have the freedom to select reading materials that they find interesting or useful as this can trigger constructive discussions in class and not limit themselves to the reading texts included in the course book. This is particularly true given that a majority of students prefer non-textbook materials to textbook ones (Bacon &

Finnemann, 1990; Allen et al., 1988) and reading materials that have been produced for the purpose of authentic communication, not for language teaching only (Nunan, 1999). Teachers can use their skills and experience in teaching reading to select short reading materials from newspapers, magazines, advertisements and leaflets that address various socio-economic or educational issues and contemporary technological matters. They can select topics that suit the students' ages, interests and problems and encourage them to express their views about the reading texts. However, teachers need to be careful in dealing with authentic reading materials and must make sure they select culturally and linguistically suitable texts for their students. In addition, they need to consider individual differences in their classes.

6.6   Attitudes towards L1

The findings revealed that teachers were not allowed to use the Arabic Language (L1) in the FYP classes. My findings contradict two other previous studies conducted in Saudi Arabia (Al- Nofaie, 2010; Alshammari, 2011). The first one was conducted in an intermediate school and the second one in two technical colleges. The findings also contradict Mohamed's (2012) study conducted in Sudanese tertiary education. These studies revealed that teachers were allowed by their departments to use the students' L1 (Arabic). They also showed that teachers do use Arabic in their English language classrooms for specific purposes and in certain situations. The main reason for such contradiction is that there were no strict and explicit institutional rules that forbid using Arabic in the English language classrooms in the contexts of these studies. In addition, the findings of the current study also contradict the view of many researchers who argue for the usefulness of using the L1 in EFL/ESL contexts. For example, Macaro (2001) suggests that the use of the learners' L1 is regarded as a natural cognitive technique that language teachers depend on whenever the need arises. For example, the L1 can be advantageous in three different aspects: to facilitate teacher-student communication, teacher-student rapport and students' learning (Harbord, 1992). In many contexts, teachers consider adopting the L1 as one of the efficient strategies in class because it allows them to manage more efficiently the time spent in explanations (Atkinson, 1987). This is true as it can help teachers to use the spare time in covering other important activities, reexplain difficult tasks for weak students or reinforce the main learning objectives and skills.

The CLT explicitly emphasises on using English only in ESL/EFL classes and does not regard the use of the mother tongue as good practice in EFL teaching and learning (Mackay, 2003). In other words, this approach gives importance to using the target language in classroom interaction and communication (Nunan, 1991; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In this regard, Phillipson (1992) criticises and opposes the monolingual approach in ELT that is considered as the best way of learning English in ESL/EFL contexts. He goes further and perceives it as a new form of colonialism that uses ELT scholars to promote specific views of teaching and learning English to maintain the Western hegemony over the periphery contexts.

A contributing factor behind the obtained findings could be that the ELI administration might have been convinced by the CLT approach towards the L1 and have acted upon this accordingly. Another possible reason for their decision could be that they might not be aware of research findings in foreign language learning which stress on the advantages of using the L1 in ESL/EFL contexts. Moreover, the administration might have assumed that prohibiting the use of the L1 policy can help in achieving many of the advantages advocated by the CLT approach. It offers them opportunities to develop both accuracy and fluency to strengthen their communicative competence in English (Richards, 2006). Additionally, the administration might have expected that the dominance of English in the FYP classes provide the students with opportunities for communicating in English with their teachers and with their peers. Eventually, this can improve the English proficiency level of the students since they need to use English in various university colleges, especially in scientific fields, after finishing the FYP.

It is possible that adopting an extreme version of the CLT, monolingual approach in ESL/EFL settings can lead to contradictory perceptions (i.e. positive and negative) for Western EFL teachers, bilingual and multilingual EFL teachers. More specifically, banning the use of the L1 can give a positive perception about monolingual Western EFL teachers as they can be regarded as ideal teachers and more beneficial to their students in these contexts. On the other hand, this policy can perpetuate the already existing negative perceptions about bilingual and multilingual EFL teachers as they can be regarded as non-ideal teachers or less advantageous for these students. This is in line with Phillipson (1992; 1999)

who argues that the idea that the native speaker is the ideal teacher of English is associated with the notion that English is best taught monolingually. This is because monolingual Western EFL teachers enjoy innate characteristics, having the capacity to produce fluent, spontaneous discourse in English and being able to use English language creatively (Medgeys, 1994). As a result, the administration and stakeholders of some of English language programmes in the periphery contexts may have assumed that these features offer good learning opportunities for learners of English, either as a second or foreign language, because they have to communicate with their teachers only in English in every class. Consequently, students may perceive the latter group of teachers as second rate EFL professionals. In other words, bilingual and multilingual EFL teachers can be perceived as not ideal teachers, second-class EFL teachers or not as good as their monolingual Western colleagues. My views are supported by Cummins's (2009) statement that implementing the monolingual approach in English teaching emphasises an unproven, controversial and problematic assumption that native speakers are better English language teachers than non-native ones.

The CLT approach has been widely adopted in many English language curricula around the globe and most course books used in ESL/EFL settings reflect its principles (Adamson & Morris, 1997; Ismail, 2012; Vaezi & Abbaspour, 2014), which means that the use of English-only instruction is a common policy and practice in many English language programmes. Consequently, this practice may have some negative effects on the recruitment policy of bilingual and multilingual EFL teachers in some of ESL/EFL contexts. This notion is corroborated by Cummins' (2009) view that the monolingual teaching approach is associated in many countries with discriminatory practices against non-native EFL teachers. For example, the recruitment policy of some English language Institutes in ESL/EFL contexts can be influenced by this concept reflecting Cummins' views. Those who are in charge of recruitment in these programmes may give preference to monolingual Western teachers of English, even when they are less qualified with, for instance, one-month TEFL qualifications with non-relevant Bachelor degrees or inexperienced in teaching English in either ESL or EFL contexts. In contrast, their counterparts, the bilingual and multilingual EFL teachers, are required to have previous teaching experience, a relevant degree,

namely a Bachelor's in English, applied linguistics or literature, a Master's in TESOL, or applied linguistics. I personally believe that adopting such discriminatory practices is a kind of professional injustice against these teachers. This practice can have a negative impact on the feelings of the teachers who were fortunate enough to be hired. For example, they might become demotivated when they realise and reflect on the discriminatory recruitment practices they have encountered. This can also have negative impacts on their teaching performance as well as on the quality of the students' learning. In the same vein, Yeh anticipates that demotivation can make teachers "experience some sort of psychological imbalance affecting their performance and attitude towards work" (2002: 50). Consequently, "a school will inevitably suffer the consequences" (ibid: 50) and students may experience the same scenario as well. Yeh's former notion has been confirmed by Braine's unpleasant feeling experienced when he was teaching in one of the ESL contexts: "I experienced the full impact of the term non-native speaker", namely, the undesirable "psychological baggage" associated with this term and "no issue is more troubling than of discrimination in employment" (1999: xvi).

The CLT approach, as adopted in the context of this study, in terms of L1 use might have some considerable implications for the EFL/ESL classroom and it can create challenges for both teachers and students. For example, it prevents teachers from using the L1 to explain certain items that impede their teaching, especially when teaching low-level students. Teachers sometimes need to use the L1 in vocabulary and grammar, to clarify classroom instructions or homework and to give instructions related to exams (Tien & Liu 2006, cited in Mohamed, 2012). In addition, this rigid interpretation of the CLT approach seems to ignore the right of weak students to use their mother tongue to support their learning of English. In the same vein, Jenkins (2010) criticises the monolingual approach because it disconnects students from their cultural background and requires them to leave their identities and life experiences outside their English classes. As a result, students may feel frustrated or de-motivated to learn, which can affect negatively the outcomes of their learning in general. Therefore, it is important to allow English language teachers to use the L1 when necessary, but the L2 has to be given priority in the classroom since it is a second/foreign language-learning environment. I think implementing this practice requires open discussions

between all parties in an English language programme, namely, heads of committees, head teachers, supervisors and teachers, in order to develop practical and effective guidelines that recognise the use of the L1 in the EFL/ESL classroom and at the same time considering the importance of L2.

6.7 Language Assessment Literacy

The findings revealed that teaching and learning have been affected by testing. This is consistent with Ramesaney's (2014) study which showed a strong influence of the University Entrance Exam (UEE) on teaching and students' learning. The UEE made teachers modify the teaching content based on the priorities of the exam; teachers spent a great amount of time on test-related activities in order to prepare their students for the UEE. As a result, the UEE affected students' learning because students focused more on learning to take the UEE instead of focusing on real English language learning.

Tests are not isolated actions in educational settings; rather, they are associated with various aspects that can affect curriculum and language knowledge (Messick, 1981). These factors are related to the learning process in terms of the students' practices towards learning (Manjarres, 2009). In light of this view, the students' attitude towards learning could have contributed to a testing culture in the context of the study. For example, it is very likely that the university students' evaluation policy has been developed and adopted based on some assumptions about Saudi undergraduate students' learning culture. It seems that this policy stems from the belief that the more tests students have, the more they study, the harder they work, the more importance they give to their courses and eventually, the more they learn. In other words, it is common for students to study harder, pay more attention and devote more time to their studies during examination periods. Thus, The ELI administration may assume that these expected positive outcomes can be achieved by administering as many tests as possible.

Teachers devote about thirty to forty percent of their time in class assessing their students (Stiggins, 1999), which shows the importance of Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) and knowledge of how to implement its principles. However, researchers have pinpointed teachers' low competence in assessing their students. In this regard, Alderson (2005: 4) indicates that "tests made by teachers are often of poor quality" as they have a partial understanding of assessment

issues. Some studies have also reported teachers' lack of knowledge in assessment principles and practices; for example, Vogt & Tsagari (2014) found that teachers had limited knowledge in LAL and basic skills in language assessment and test development. In addition, Alkharusi et al. (2012) reported that teachers were lacking in competence in analysing assessment results. Other interesting findings from Plake & Impara (1992) revealed that teachers were insufficiently professionally prepared to evaluate their students' learning achievements.

TESOL teachers have to implement assessment methods and procedures in a professional manner in their teaching context. Therefore, it is essential to offer in-service training in language assessment whereby teachers are made aware of assessment principles as well as effective and appropriate assessment practices. By developing their assessment knowledge and competence, many positive aspects can be achieved for teachers, students and educational institutions. Thus, LAL in second language education is a fundamental issue for teachers (Scarino, 2013). Language teachers need effective instruments for analysing tests and assessment data in order to make informed decisions about their teaching practice (Coombe et al., 2012). This emphasises the importance of LAL for TESOL teachers, which is a useful and beneficial area for teachers. Assessment-literate teachers can implement assessment methods effectively in the classroom. Furthermore, LAL can help them analyse the assessment data to identify their students' understanding of the intended learning goals and objectives and introduce changes in teaching based on the students' assessment outcomes. Most importantly, the assessment data obtained from teachers literate in language assessment can be regarded as reliable as they can help their teaching contexts to make informed decisions related to various institutional issues such as the adopted teaching policy, students' learning challenges, students' learning achievements and progress. For Khadijeh and Amir (2015), it is vital for teachers to develop language assessment literacy in order to prevent serious negative impacts on students' learning. This implies that knowledgeable and competent language teachers in assessment can minimise the chance of demotivating ESL/EFL students or developing negative attitude towards learning a foreign language which may arise due to the poor quality of assessment tools and assessment practices.

It is a common practice within the profession that EFL teachers deal with standardised and classroom-based assessment (Vogt & Tsagari, 2014). In this regard, teachers' knowledge and competence in LAL have another advantage as it may enable them to explain their students' assessment results in detail covering their strengths and weaknesses in a more professional and effective manner than their non-literate colleagues. At the same time, they can keep their students motivated and encouraged to improve their performance in the future. Moreover, teachers' assessment skills can help them to provide solutions to students' learning problems and improve their performance in upcoming assessments.

Another useful aspect of the LAL is that it can empower teachers, even in ESL/EFL contexts where teachers are not involved in assessment decision making, neither in development nor in approach. It might help teachers improve their image of mere receivers of ready-made tests through revealing their knowledge and expertise to those in charge of assessment policy and development in their teaching contexts. For example, LAL can enable them to diagnose test-related problems more effectively, evaluate achievement tests and critique assessment methods or approaches developed by testing committees or test developers. In my view, TESOL teachers ought to reflect on the assessment methods and practices of their teaching context; in that respect, LAL can increase their confidence by relying on their assessment knowledge and competence in the field. Therefore, they can utilise their expertise and provide their views and feedback on the quality of assessment methods and procedures in use in their institutions. Their comments can contribute positively to maintain higher standards in the quality of assessment. This is because assessment literate teachers are more capable to identify effective assessment (Stiggins, 1995). Likewise, they can also suggest further adjustments to continuous assessment methods adopted in their institution. Their contribution may enhance the quality of their intuitional assessment procedures.

According to Vogt & Tsagari (2014), teachers with sound background knowledge in assessment can act as test advisors and prepare their students for international English language proficiency tests such as the TOEFL or IELTS. Similarly, this role can also be extended to other less experienced and knowledgeable colleagues who can act as internal assessment consultants; this is particularly true for novice teachers who may need more assessment guidance and practice.

In the same vein, Scarino (2013) contends that assessment literate teachers are required to transfer their knowledge within their professional institution practice. This can be a good opportunity for them to hand over their skills and expertise, either individually or in groups, and help in transforming their teaching intuition into a learning community. In the long term, it may also encourage other teachers to develop expertise by acquiring more theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of students' assessment. This is in turn can raise the quality of assessment standards within their institution and meet the expectations of all stakeholders.

6.8 EIL: a new Era in Global Course Book

The findings of the current study highlighted that teachers participated in evaluating the cultural content of *Headway* course book after it had used in the programme. It was found that the course book contained some Western cultural aspects inappropriate for the Saudi society. This concurs with the findings of two previous studies (Al-Houssawi, 2010; Alfahadi, 2012) which recommended adopting a new cultural policy by including both local and international cultures and traditions of speakers of English.

The administration chose a course book series which includes some arguably offensive cultural contents. It appears that there were some contextual factors that might have led to the obtained findings. The findings indicate that there were some shortcomings in the selection and evaluation procedure. For example, the evaluation tool was probably not adequately developed and perhaps the whole evaluation procedure was not systematic. It seems that there was a lack of competence and effective training in global course book selection and evaluation. In other words, those who were involved in this task probably lacked the experience, as well as theoretical and practical background knowledge in this field. Richards (2003) anticipates that teachers' experience and level of training in material evaluation can affect the quality of their evaluation outcomes. Therefore, the findings suggest that before embarking on this task, the ELI probably did not offer them professional development programmes on the principles and practice of the selection and evaluation of ELT materials.

Argungu's (1996) maintains that Muslim students in particular face many undesirable cultural shocks from ELT textbooks because of some issues common to Western cultures, such as references to alcoholism and drunkenness,

cigarettes and smoking, pre-marital relationships and Christian representations or values. The negative impacts of these Western cultural aspects can be noticed easily on the spirit of Muslim learners of English, in conservative societies, and in class (ibid). It is worth mentioning that in Saudi Arabia, Islam has a strong influence on people's beliefs, behaviour and attitudes and affects all aspects of life, including education. Islamic principles are determining factors in Saudi students' acceptance or rejection of inappropriate Western cultural references included in course books and the Arab culture is another important factor with a similar impact. Therefore, the FYP classes can be turned into learning environments of passive learning or resistance in case Saudi students feel that their religious principles and local Arab culture are not respected or neglected in their English course books. It appears that the students may have expressed their rejection of a number of offending Western cultural items to their teachers who then conveyed these messages to the administration. Thus, the ELI probably had experienced considerable pressure from teachers and students to deal with the cultural shortcomings of the course books, which could be one of the main reasons behind the evaluation of the cultural items of the course books afterwards. In the same vein, Elyas (2008a), a local Saudi researcher, found that some of the Western cultural content of the English course books was perceived as unfamiliar to Saudi students who believed it was disrespectful for their local culture and Islamic identity. He confirms that the Islamic religion has a noticeable influence on the teaching and learning of English in Saudi Arabia and plays a significant role on shaping identities of Saudi students (Elyas, 2008a; 2008b). It can also influence the way students interact in classroom settings. Tackling the same issue from a different perspective, Holliday (2005) maintains that the Western cultural models presented in many global course books are sometimes offensive and disrespectful of the students' home culture. As a result, students feel that their culture is being challenged, which has a negative influence on them and their learning; they can become irresponsive or not eager to learn and interact in the classroom. As result, this can turn the classroom environment into a counterproductive setting.

TESOL course books often act as a cultural carrier of the Western culture (Kumaravadivelu, 2002) and many of the current global English course books focus largely on the representation of both American and British cultural aspects

(Prodromou, 1988; Kumaravadivelu, 2002; Matsuda, 2006; Gray, 2013). For Phillipson (1992), it is another form of linguistic imperialism and ELT plays a significant role in imposing Western values, culture and beliefs on non-Western contexts. However, the dominance of Western culture contradicts the contemporary use of English language among its users. Today, the English language has become an international language, which has led many researchers to consider this feature in ELT. In this regard, Mackay (2002; 2003) promotes the ideas of reflecting on the current status of English as International Language (EIL) in ELT and introducing changes that recognise this dimension in terms of cultural content. She goes further to advocate adopting EIL as a basis in English language curriculum development. This growing movement in ELT aims to change the traditional views that consider English native speakers' cultural models and the target culture of inner circle countries as the dominant source of cultural content of ELT teaching materials and resources. Mackay's stance is a legitimate and convincing one because the nature of ELI implies that cultural models of inner circle countries only represent one single group of English speakers. There are two other larger groups, speakers of English as a second and foreign language, that have the right to have their cultures represented in ELT materials. It could be argued that the English language does not belong anymore to inner circle countries. This notion has been expanded by Widdowson who asserts that "the fact that English is an international language means that no nation can have custody over it" (1994: 385).

TESOL researchers such as Cortazzi & Jin (1999) have suggested a logical approach in terms of cultural representation, advocating its implementation in language course books and other ELT resource materials. To address cultural issues in English language course books and materials in the context of EIL, they promote adopting three different kinds of cultural models. The first one is the source culture, drawing on learners' own culture as content. The second one entails the target culture materials reflecting the culture of a country where English is spoken as a native language (i.e. L1). The last one is international target culture reflecting a great variety of cultures of English and non-English speaking countries around the world. One of the advantages of the inclusion of the leaners' own culture is that they may feel encouraged to share their personal beliefs and views about their home culture and identity which can be unknown to

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their teachers. They can also be enthusiastic to express their views about the micro cultures that exist within their home countries as well. As a result, classroom discussion might raise students' interest and motivate them to exchange views, as well as reflect on their own culture in terms of its similarity or difference with other cultures. As Peirce (1995: 26) argues, "the lived experiences and social identities of language learners need to be incorporated into the second language curriculum".

The global spread of English encourages English language learners to raise their cultural awareness about other cultures because of the inclusion of English and non-English cultures in ELT materials. Since ESL/EFL students are expected to meet and interact with people from different cultural backgrounds, including the ones in the context of the study, cultural awareness helps them gain a better understanding of different cultures and reflect on their similarities and differences. In the same vein, for Baker (2012: 65), cultural awareness "stresses on the need for learners to become aware of the culturally based norms, beliefs, and behaviours of their own culture and other cultures". Byram (1997) maintains that individuals' knowledge of certain features of specific cultures improves their communication skills. Furthermore, the study argues that intercultural communication helps in facilitating people's relationships and contacts with different cultures and also enables them to examine any preconceived stereotypes about other peoples, communities, ethnicities, nations or religions; as a result, they may change their perspectives. As Byram, (1997) and Cutting (2015) contend, cultural understanding plays a significant role in preparing English language learners for successful intercultural communication. Importantly, many English language classrooms are multicultural by nature and they include students from different cultural backgrounds (Cutting, 2015).

Schmitt (2009) stresses that cultural issues in TESOL can be used as an enlightening element, which means that teachers have the moral and professional responsibility to achieve this purpose. Therefore, they have to play an active role in addressing cultural issues in the classroom in terms of the materials they use with their students. For example, they need to make some efforts in tackling any offensive contents or stereotypes related to different cultures, religions and ethnicities. Teachers ought to take this opportunity to emphasise the positive aspects of the diversity of cultures around the globe and

raise their students' cultural awareness, emphasising that each culture has something useful to offer. Teachers' eagerness and enthusiasm to do so can contribute to global cultural understating.

6.9 Teachers' Portfolios

Findings of the current study pointed to the need for teachers' involvement in peer observation as part of their involvement in the curriculum evaluation process. This finding can be supported by a number of studies which share the same conclusion. For example, Kumrow & Hlen state that "there is a need to change the traditional evaluative process that treats teachers as supervised workers rather than collegial professionals" (2002: 238). In addition, this finding can be supported by Yon et al. (2002) who revealed that peer observation reports were regarded as important components in evaluating teaching efficiency. They further concluded that the peer observation reports were considered as valid and that they were included in a faculty member's record as an evidence of their evaluation performance, in addition to other documents, such as students' evaluation and annual reports. Additionally, the findings of the current study are similar to Mento et al. (2002) who found that the participants wished that peer observation were adopted and conducted more regularly according to a systematic schedule within their departments.

A possible contextual factor that might have contributed to the obtained finding is that observers' evaluation reports are considerably threatening for the teachers. They can have a significant negative impact on them, in case a teachers' evaluation report is negative or if it indicates that a teacher's performance is not up to the ELI required standards. It can lead to serious consequences, such as transfer to another campus (a branch in different towns), warning letters or even contract termination. Therefore, I believe that this finding suggests that teachers aimed for additional methods of teacher evaluation. In other words, their involvement in peer observation is an attempt to provide a different perspective and a more balanced picture on their teaching performance. The participants might have assumed that adopting peer observation can transform teachers' evaluation into a smoother, more flexible and less threatening process for the ELI teaching staff and provide better job security in terms of career within the institute. However, teachers' involvement in the peer observation process might not be an effective or ideal option or policy, as it can be influenced by different contextual

factors. This view relates to Pomson (2005) who states that introducing peer observation can encounter some institutional challenges. For example, teachers may not give a fair account of their colleagues' teaching performance because of various issues, such as friendship, collegiality or chauvinism. In other words, they may overlook or ignore each other's weaknesses. On the other hand, they may become biased due to professional jealousy, considering the other as a threat or considering good teachers as potential competitors, which may result in unfair evaluation reports and unreliable observations.

Classroom observation is a major method in teacher evaluation, but it is not the only effective tool for evaluating teachers (Alwan, 2007). Other methods such as Teaching Portfolios (TPs) can be utilised to evaluate teachers. In a portfolio, teachers use multiple evidence to demonstrate their teaching performance and effectiveness in improving students' learning (Oakely, 1998). TPs commonly include a collection of various documents presenting the teacher's approach in terms of his/her philosophy and teaching strategy. The portfolio may also contain a course syllabus, lesson plans, assignment examples, a reading list, students' homework and students' graded work (Klenowski, 2000; Devanas, 2006). Additionally, Troudi & Rich (2012) suggest including extra teaching materials as other useful components of TPs, designed by teachers for various purposes, such as to support the main course book, widen their educational perspectives and help to form their intellectual curiosity.

TPs represent an opportunity for teachers to show their creativity in designing teaching aids, extra teaching materials or homework catering for different levels and abilities. They also show teachers' reflective skills in terms of the course objectives and lesson plans. Bird & Owasis (2004) advocate that TPs serve two major purposes. First, they aim to improve teaching by encouraging teachers to collect and organise evidence of good and efficient teaching practice. Second, they are used for the purpose of formative evaluation to offer a fair and balanced perspective on teachers' performance (ibid). It is important for educational stakeholders to bear in mind that the above two purposes need to be sought as a whole in order to benefit from the advantages of TPs.

TPs have a positive impact on teachers as they can help them to self-reflect on their teaching practice, develop a sense of professionalism and improve their teaching effectiveness (Anderson, Du Mez & Peter, 1998; Klenowski, 2000;

Alwan, 2007). In addition, TPs encourage teachers' professional development (Braskamp & Ory, 1994). The positive effects of TPs have been confirmed by some empirical studies such as Alwan (2003b) who reported that using TPs as tool for teachers evaluation helped EFL teachers to develop professionally in their teaching context. Likewise, Vavrus & Collins (1991) revealed that teachers became more reflective about their teaching practice, especially through critiquing the usefulness of their methods in addressing students' individual needs. Similar results were also reported by Snyder et al. (1998) who indicted that experienced teachers benefited from the introduction of TPs as an evaluation method. They felt that they developed advanced self-reflection skills in their teaching practice. Moreover, a longitudinal study conducted by Trucker et al. (2003) found that teachers' portfolios included relevant and important samples focused on the fulfilment of their teaching responsibility. Teachers were successful in selecting meaningful documents demonstrating their work in four major areas: instruction, assessment, management, and professionalism. The above study also showed that portfolios contributed to teachers' professional growth as they helped them to identify their areas of weakness and strength. The portfolios also improved their teaching practice and helped to introduce changes in teaching styles and strategies. This result mirrors Devanas (2006) who considers TPs as a useful tool for improving teaching performance.

Based on the above benefits of TPs, this study argues that TPs ought to be considered as an additional method of teachers' evaluation in education settings, beside classroom observations. Indeed, TPs give teachers a voice and help them to be considered as legitimate partners in the process of teacher evaluation within their own teaching institution. In addition, TPs take into account teachers' intelligence, their views and choices in selecting the relevant documents that they believe best reflect their teaching effectiveness and contribution in improving the learning outcomes of their students. In other words, a teacher is just like an artist; he designs his portfolio to demonstrate his teaching talent (Doolittle, 1994).

6.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the findings of the study in relation to its context and the relevant literature. I have also highlighted various contextual factors that might have influenced teachers' roles in the investigated issues and discussed the findings considering global perspectives. In the final chapter, I will discuss the

contribution of this study to the field of teachers' roles in EFL curriculum. I will also make some recommendations for future research.

7 Chapter Seven: Recommendation for Further Research

7.1 Overview of the Chapter

This chapter draws together the threads of the study and consists of seven sections. Section one presents a summary of the major findings. Section two focuses on the contribution of the study to the field of EFL curriculum. Section three discusses the recommendations of the study in terms of the curriculum development phase while in section four, the issue of curriculum implementation is addressed. Section five outlines curriculum evaluation, section six makes a number of suggestions for future research and the chapter ends with some personal reflections.

7.2 Summary of the Main Findings

This study explored EFL teachers' views about their roles in the curriculum of the FYP and focused on investigating their roles in the three stages of the curriculum: development, implementation and evaluation. The study has shed light on the different levels of teachers' participation in curriculum insofar as they had a limited involvement in the development stage, but they were more involved in the evaluation phase. Also, teachers appeared to be more involved in the implementation phase than the two previous phases.

This study has revealed that teachers played a limited role in the curriculum development process as they took part in only two different curriculum development tasks. Teachers were involved in the pre-use course book evaluation and students' language needs analysis investigation. Teachers who had been involved in evaluating the *Headway* course series expressed the view that their minimal involvement in this task was explained by internal institutional and external issues. Regarding the former, they indicated that the ELI underestimated their skills to take part in further curriculum tasks and that there was a preference for native-speaker English teachers to deal with curriculum development issues in different institutional committees. With respect to the latter, teachers reported that the reliance on external help from the OUP to develop certain curriculum elements had an impact on the nature of their involvement. Additionally, the study exposed teachers' feelings regarding the level of their participation in curriculum development tasks. Teachers who only participated in

the course book evaluation and selection had negative feelings due to their limited role in the curriculum development process.

With respect to the curriculum implementation stage, teachers experienced a certain level of autonomy in their teaching practice at two levels. They had the freedom to develop and use their own extra teaching materials and they also had the freedom to adopt the teaching methodology they felt was appropriate for their students. Nevertheless, teachers faced some challenges in the teaching of reading. In addition, they were not allowed to use the Arabic Language (L1) in class. Furthermore, teachers pointed out that teaching and learning had been affected by the large number of tests in the programme.

The findings also showed that teachers had an active involvement in three levels of involvement in test development. First, it was mandatory for all ELI faculty members to provide the testing unit with test samples. Second, certain groups of teachers were far more involved as they were required to develop tests for different language skills (speaking, writing, reading and grammar) in addition to proofreading the tests. Finally, a specific group of teachers were members of the E-testing unit and the testing committee and carried out different tasks related to each unit responsibilities.

As far as the evaluation stage is concerned, teachers played an active role in evaluating some elements of the FYP curriculum. The current use book evaluation was a major aspect of their involvement in this phase as they evaluated three components of the *Headway* course book series: its strength and weaknesses, the cultural content and the adequacy of the number of chapters for the module system implemented in the institution. Moreover, the data revealed that a group of teachers took part in evaluating the pacing guide, the tests, the module system and the portfolios.

Moreover, the study showed the impact of teachers' participation in the curriculum evaluation process. In that regard, it appears that their participation in the current use course book evaluation resulted in some positive changes. Their feedback helped the OUP develop the *New Headway Plus Special Edition* adapted to the Saudi cultural context and reduced the required course book coverage in each module. However, the teachers' feedback on the pacing guide was not fully taken into account in the amended version of the pacing guide.

Moreover, they suggested replacing the current policy of teachers' evaluation, which was based on classroom observation, with peer observation which they considered as a better approach to teacher evaluation.

7.3   Contribution of the Study

The current study contributes to the field of curriculum in a number of ways. It has contributed to the understanding of the FYP in the Saudi context and made a significant contribution in three different areas: theory, methodology and pedagogy.

7.3.1   Contribution to the Saudi Context

The current study contributes to knowledge with regards the FYP in several respects. As explained in Chapter One (section.1.4) it fills a gap in the literature pertaining to the EFL teachers' roles in the FYP curriculum in the Saudi higher educational context. This is, to my knowledge, the first study conducted in Saudi Arabia that investigated the roles of EFL teachers in the curriculum in an English language higher education institution. Therefore, this study might be beneficial to the Saudi higher education authorities as it sheds light on various important issues in terms of their views of their roles, challenges, preferences and suggestions with regards to curriculum issues, which can have a significant impact on improving their roles in the Foundation Year Programmes currently offered in Saudi universities.

Previous research studies, as the review of literature has revealed, investigated certain aspects of teachers' roles in the EFL curriculum in the stages of development, implementation and evaluation separately. Yet, none of the studies, to the best of my knowledge, has explored the roles of teachers in all these three areas at once as this study attempted to do within the context of the FYP in Saudi Arabia. Thus, it is hoped that this study has filled the existing gap in research and knowledge in TESOL about such complex processes.

7.3.2 Theoretical Contribution

Throughout reading the literature, I have learned that teachers have different perspectives and concepts of curriculum based on each context features and circumstances. The literature has addressed teachers' roles and use of curriculum at the theoretical and empirical levels, but it has not addressed an EFL curriculum as it is being experienced by some Saudi and expatriates EFL teachers in the context of Saudi Arabia. Therefore, this study has contributed to the existing literature by providing a new understanding of curriculum in its three stages, as perceived by Saudi and expatriates EFL teachers at the tertiary level in the Saudi context. Moreover, the study gave these teachers a voice by giving them the opportunity to express their views regarding the investigated issues in the curriculum. The study has also revealed that teachers had more involvement in the implementation phase and it has provided a deeper and wider understanding of various issues from the actual EFL teachers' experiences, mainly in the implementation stage. More specifically, the study showed what they were doing in the FYP curriculum, exposed their feelings and their suggestions regarding the ways in which their roles in the curriculum implementation phase could be improved.

7.3.3 Methodological Contribution

At the level of methodology, for the participants of the study this research was a first time experience as never before were they involved in a research study adopting a qualitative approach. This study has managed to show the value of qualitative research methods, such as interviews, and teachers showed great enthusiasm and eagerness to answer interview questions. Furthermore, the study gave teachers an opportunity to uncover their views and experiences on their participation or marginalisation in the processes of curriculum development, implementation and evaluation. The depth of the interviews allowed teachers to report real events, problems, challenges and feelings. In addition, the interviews helped gain breadth in the investigation, as I was able to delve deep into many issues related to the teachers' roles in various aspects of the curriculum. The qualitative approach allowed me to listen to them carefully and pay attention to every little detail. In fact, it would have been difficult to get such rich data and deep understanding of the research problems through a quantitative approach.

7.3.4 Pedagogical Contribution

The current study made a significant contribution to the area of pedagogy in three different ways. First, this study shed light on some of the challenges that the participants experienced in teaching reading to the FYP students in the ELI. Therefore, the study argues that EFL students' reading background in their L1 needs to be carefully taken into account, particularly with Arab students, when designing reading objectives, developing reading materials or selecting authentic materials for the course. The study also stresses on the importance of clear and detailed instructional guidelines to help teachers overcome students' potential reading difficulties.

Second, the study also shed light on the fact that teachers were not allowed to use the Arabic Language (L1) in class. Nonetheless, the study considered the advantages and disadvantages of using the L1 in an EFL context like Saudi Arabia in an attempt to find a solution that meets the academic features of the FYP programmes as well as the needs of teachers and students. Based on this, the study supports implementing a balanced strategy in using the L1 and calls for allowing teachers to use it reasonably, not freely, but based on specific situations, especially with low-level students. At the same time, the study stresses the importance of exposing the students to the English language. Furthermore, the study emphasises on developing useful and practical institutional teaching guidelines in terms of L1 use, in order to help teachers make the right pedagogical decisions regarding the appropriate use of the L1 in class.

The third pedagogical contribution of this study relates to the notion of Language Assessment Literacy whereby it advocates that the training of teachers in language assessment offers significant advantages. In addition to what has been discussed in the literature, the study argues that training can have a positive psychological impact on teachers as it increases their self-confidence in carrying out tests-related duties depending on their knowledge and competence in the field of assessment. Additionally, this study asserts that teachers with sound background knowledge and competence in assessment can be considered as a positive contributor to their teaching context, as they are able to transfer their knowledge and expertise to novice teachers and help them develop professionally in this field.

7.4 Recommendations for the Curriculum Development Stage

The findings of the current study have a number of important implications for future practice. It was found that there was a preference for selecting monolingual western teachers of English (native speakers) to perform different tasks in the ELI committees that were in charge of FYP curriculum development issues. Based on the findings, it is recommended that the ELI administration adopt a new institutional policy of teachers' involvement in internal units or committees. Teachers' selection should be based on qualification, merit and experience in ESL/EFL curriculum, not according to where they come from. Both bilingual and multilingual teachers of English (non-native speaker teachers) and monolingual Western teachers of English should have equal chances in the process of nomination and assigning candidates to join these committees.

The findings also revealed that some of the participants expressed their dissatisfaction with limiting their involvement in the course book selection only and wished they were given the opportunity to participate in additional curriculum development tasks. It is recommended that curriculum policy makers adopt a more inclusive policy in curriculum development by inviting teachers who are highly motivated, enthusiastic and eager to tackle advanced professional challenges in this area. Recognising their voice can also bring valuable perspectives on curriculum development issues and help in improving the quality of the curriculum in their teaching institution.

As the findings indicated, the ELI depended on Oxford University Press in developing some of the FYP curriculum elements. It is recommended that the ELI establish a curriculum development centre whose major purpose would be to develop all needed curriculum elements for the FYP. The ELI should take the advantage of having qualified EFL teachers with relevant degrees in TESOL or applied linguistics from different Western universities and involve them in the development of in-house curriculum elements addressing the FYP curriculum needs. This requires the ELI administration to have real intention and take some courageous decisions to implement both short-term and long term plans to achieve this purpose. For example, they can provide teachers with training in curriculum development addressing important tasks that they are expected to perform in the future in order to prepare them for their curriculum tasks.

The study found that some teachers interpret their restricted involvement in the course book selection as an underestimation by the administration of their skills and believed that they were not qualified to take part in further curriculum development tasks. Therefore, the study recommends the ELI administration be more transparent regarding its policy, in terms of curriculum development participation. They should inform all ELI teachers about any needed requirements such as previous experience in curriculum design, professional qualifications in this field or any other institutional criteria. Teachers also need to know about any practical factors that influence the level of their involvement in curriculum development matters.

7.5 Recommendations for the Curriculum Implementation Stage

The study found that there was an inconsistency in evaluating the students' performance in speaking and writing skills, between the two evaluators, the class and second evaluator. Therefore, it is recommended that the ELI administration provide the teaching staff with professional development courses in language assessment in order to improve their language assessment literacy and practice. The testing unit should also make sure that all teachers understand the assessment rubrics very well and are able to evaluate their students accordingly.

Moreover, one of the interesting findings of this study advocated encouraging teachers to research what they teach. It is recommended that the ELI establish a research unit to work in cooperation with other units, like the curriculum unit, the testing unit and the coordination unit. Members of these units along with a group of teachers with research knowledge can join this unit. These teachers can be encouraged to research curriculum items that are either currently implemented or that the administration intends to introduce them in the FYP curriculum in the future. Establishing a research unit has some useful advantages, such as giving teachers the opportunity to provide some suggestions and remedies for their classroom teaching and learning problems based on a research conducted in their teaching context.

As one of the findings indicated, curriculum elements were immediately implemented in the programme without a prior trial stage in the FYP classes. Based on this, it is recommended that one academic year to be adopted as a mandatory piloting period before introducing any curriculum elements in the

programme. New curriculum policies or practices should not be suddenly introduced in the programme. Instead, they must be dealt with carefully in order to be successfully implemented by staff so that they may achieve their objectives.

7.6 Recommendation for the Curriculum Evaluation Stage

The findings of the current study have a number of important implications for future practice. The study found that there were inappropriate cultural items in the course book which were reported by teachers after they had taught it for some time. It is recommended that more meticulous and rigorous criteria of pre-use course book evaluation be developed and adopted to scrutinise the course books selected for the FYP students. Therefore, the ELI should carry out an investigation to identify the reasons that affected the quality of the pre-use course book evaluation.

As one of the findings indicated, teachers voiced their dissatisfaction with their limited involvement in the course book evaluation and hoped that they would be given the chance to evaluate other curriculum elements of the institution. Therefore, it is recommended that both the curriculum unit and the coordination unit work collaboratively and invite all teachers to participate in the evaluation of curriculum elements at different levels. In other words, they should adopt a policy that requires all teachers to take part in evaluating some major curriculum elements beside the course book as a minimal level of involvement in the curriculum evaluation process.

It was found that providing written feedback on tests through emailed questionnaires was not satisfactory in the curriculum evaluation process. Therefore, it is recommended that both the testing and curriculum units attach more importance to interviewing a higher number of teachers to provide their feedback on testing matters in the programme. Furthermore, interviews provide teachers with the chance to give a more accurate diagnosis and description of the investigated testing issues; they also allow them to reflect their views, complaints, and concerns in addition to giving them the opportunity to provide more detailed accounts.

Finally, one of the key findings indicated that the introduced changes in the pacing guide were insufficient to cover the required teaching materials. It is recommended that the two higher authorities in the ELI, the curriculum committee

and the ELI Council, give the curriculum unit the authority and more freedom to consider teachers' views and implement their suggestions regarding the pacing guide. They should also help teachers make their teaching more effective by making the amount of taught contents suitable for the allocated time for learning. Teachers' suggestions need to be considered in this aspect and more focus has to be given to the quality of content instead of quantity.

7.7 Suggestions for Future Research

The current study suggests that a number of areas need to be further investigated. For example, it was found that the teachers reported facing challenges in teaching the reading circles. Based on this result, the study recommends that research be conducted to investigate the students' attitudes towards reading. Such research should aim at identifying the FYP students' reading strategies, any educational factors or practices contributing to this result, such as, for instance, the impact of their previous English learning experiences. Such research might help in understanding important issues related to the reading skill of the FYP students, which can lead to introducing some measures that could improve their reading competence in the programme and enhance their interest and motivation.

As reported in the study, the teaching and learning were affected by testing issues. Therefore, a research study should be conducted to investigate the views of both the teachers and students on the current testing policy in the ELI. The study should focus on identifying in detail their experiences in terms of the negative impact of the current testing policy on both teaching and learning. Teachers and students are important partners in this investigation as they can help in exploring the issue and suggest any possible solutions for the testing problems.

Since this research was carried out with EFL teachers, it is recommended that future research investigate the views of the students. Similar research is also needed to include institutional stakeholders, such as policy makers, ELT teacher trainers, coordinators and heads of units. They may provide a wide range of viewpoints, which could be very constructive in identifying other important issues and different perceptions regarding the investigated topic.

One of the aspects that this study explored was the roles of EFL teachers in curriculum development; however, the study did not investigate teachers' views about professional development in terms of their need to hold curriculum

development responsibilities. For example, it is important to shed light on the type of training needed as well as the essential skills required for this. Thus, further research should address this particular issue.

7.8 Personal Reflection

I started this research with the intention to investigate and comprehend the teachers' roles in the FYP curriculum. This study has contributed to my own academic development in a number of ways as it has helped me develop essential research skills. I have learned to deal with and make sense of large amounts of qualitative data. I have also managed to develop my research skills in terms of data collection, management and analysis. This significantly increased my self-confidence in conducting further qualitative research in curriculum issues in Saudi Arabia or elsewhere. Additionally, I have learned how to apply the conventions of academic writing and how to include my voice in writing using an academic style. Moreover, I adopted the habit of reading academic journals and books on a regular basis, which strengthened my ability to read in depth and breadth. Through immersing myself in the literature, I gained a deeper understanding of the issues I was investigating.

This research has enlightened my understanding of various issues related to teachers' roles in an English language curriculum. It is also fair to say that it has significantly expanded both my theoretical and practical knowledge of EFL curriculum issues. Now, I feel more informed about the roles of teachers in the FYP and other various issues related to this topic in Saudi Arabia than I was at the beginning of my study.

7.9 Final Remarks

The purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' roles in the FYP curriculum in the development, implementation and evaluation stages. The sample of this study provided many insights into their roles in these three stages. Consequently, the study revealed the nature of their roles and other various issues related to them. It has also provided some practical recommendations and suggested potential areas for future research.

This final chapter has concluded the current study; however, it opens a new chapter for further investigations. Therefore, I hope the current study will constitute a starting point for other researchers to further investigate this field in order to improve English language teaching and learning in the context of the study.

Appendix 1

Foundation Year English language course Structure

The Foundation Year English language programme is comprised of four core language courses. With the beginning of each module, students are provided with detailed course description with the expected student learning outcomes for the courses they are assigned to study at the ELI.

ELI offers four language courses in the Foundation Year Programme as follows:

- ELI -101 (Level 1-CEFR A1) Beginner: 0 credit
- ELI-102 (Level 2-CEFR A2) Elementary: 2 credits
- ELI-103 (Level 3- CEFR) A2-B1) Pre-intermediate: 2 credits
- ELI-104 (Level 4- CEFR B1) Intermediate: 2 credits

The total number of credits assigned to these ELI courses is six, the largest allocation of credit units given to a course in the KAU Foundation Year Programme.

ELI is currently using the OUP New Headway Plus Special Edition (2011) textbook series, which employs an integrated-skills approach. The textbook titles for each level are as follows:

ELI 101	New Headway Plus, Beginner, Special Edition, 2011, with Beginner workbook and practice DVD-ROM
ELI 102	New Headway Plus, Elementary, Special Edition, 2011, with Elementary workbook and practice DVD-ROM
ELI 103	New Headway Plus, Pre- Intermediate, Special Edition, 2011, with Pre-Intermediate, workbook and practice DVD-ROM
ELI 104	New Headway Plus, Intermediate, Special Edition, 2011, with Intermediate, workbook and practice DVD-ROM

Source: ELI student Handbook (P 15)

Appendix 2

Methods of students' evaluation

The ELI assesses students based on their performance over duration of the module, which is six to seven weeks for each level. The following table illustrates the variable methods of evaluation and their weight in determining the course grade based on 100%.

Method	Format	Weight
Portfolio assessment	Portfolio assessment is conducted through a range of assignments, including writing tasks and reading circles tasks	10%
Two speaking examinations	The format ranges from basic interviews with leading questions-for lower levels- to short interactive presentations in class. Time allowed is 5-10 minutes.	10%
Two writing examinations	Writing assessment format ranges from constructing simple sentences at the beginner level to writing short essays with multiple paragraphs at the intermediate level. Time allowed is 30-40 minutes.	20%
Mid- Module examinations	Multiple-choice questions with focus on comprehension, both reading and listening, as well as grammar, usage, and vocabulary form units covered in the first week of the module. Time allowed is 90 minutes.	20%
Final examinations	Multiple-choice questions with focus on comprehension, both reading and listening, as well as grammar, usage, and vocabulary form units covered in the entire module. Time allowed is 105 minutes.	40%
Total		100%

Appendix 3

Interview 1

Coded extracts from an interview with a native speaker teacher (Fadel)

Curriculum development stage

Did you have any role in the development of the FYP curriculum?

"a few different companies like Longman and Oxford gave presentations to all the teachers about the materials that they can provide to students. After that, a survey was distributed to us and we had to vote for or against the presented course book. The survey items were about which course book or a publisher you prefer and why. So we voted either for Oxford or Longman course books." *(Personal involvement in course book selection)*

Were there any factors that determined the level of your role at the development stage of the curriculum?

"I really do not know why I was asked to participate in only the course book section task. I do not have any idea why I was selected for that duty." *(Unknown specific reason)*

Can you offer any suggestions in relation to teachers' roles in curriculum development for future consideration?

"In the curriculum unit, there are only two people teaching half load and working in this unit. They are facing extreme difficulties to cope with the unit work load requirements and they are moving very slowly. The administration should increase the staff by forming a team of teachers to work in the curriculum unit."*(Increasing curriculum unit staff)*

Curriculum Implementation stage

Have you faced any challenges in terms of implementing the curriculum in classroom?

"A major challenge that I have been experiencing in class is to teach level one students. These students are not motivated and eager to learn English. Therefore, I find it difficult to teach them anything" (*teaching demotivated students as a challenge).*

How much freedom do you have in terms of implementing the curriculum in your classroom?

"I always have the freedom to bring any additional materials to my classes. I have the freedom to develop my own exercises or instructional tasks and use them along with the course book." *(Freedom to use additional materials)*

"Teachers have different teaching styles and the good thing here is that they do not enforce one teaching style on all teachers. As a teacher, I have the freedom to implement any teaching pedagogy that I like in class. I have full freedom to do so all the time "(*freedom in teaching strategies)*

How happy are you with the level of freedom you have in teaching?

"I am pleased that they have considered teachers' autonomy in class. I have the freedom to apply any pedagogical approaches in class and I am pleased with this policy as it acknowledges my pedagogical choices in classroom." *(Satisfaction with freedom in teaching strategies)*

In which areas do you not have freedom?

"The ELI testing policy here does not give us much freedom. I do not have the freedom to write speaking or writing tests. In addition, this policy has been extended to include both mid-term and final tests" (No freedom in writing test).

"Teachers are not asked to write tests at all. The testing committee provides teachers with all formal tests. They are in charge of writing speaking, writing, mid-term and final tests." *(Role of testing committee)*

How happy are you with the level of freedom you have in testing?

"To be honest with you, I am pleased that I do not have to write speaking and writing tests. It would be an additional work on my shoulder. I am happy that they have taken this responsibility from us and it became part of their duty." (*Satisfaction with not writing tests*)

Can you offer any suggestions in relation to teachers' role in curriculum implementation?

"I think all teachers here should get training in students' evaluation in the oral and writing exams because I get the sense that marks are usually inflated especially by the class teacher. It is always the case that the second evaluator tends to give fewer marks than the class teacher." *(Involving teachers in language assessment)*

Curriculum Evaluation

To what extent have you been engaged in evaluating any elements of the curriculum?

"I answered some questions about the pacing guide included in a questionnaire sent by the curriculum unit. I indicated some of the negative aspects in that pacing guide. I also suggested some changes to its guidelines, in order to make our job easier."*(Involvement in evaluating pacing guide)*

Have you noticed any impact or changes after your involvement in evaluating the pacing guide?
"This academic year the curriculum unit has introduced a minor change in the pacing guide guidelines. Now we are asked to teach only 9 chapters out of 14 in each module. I think this outcome has been the result of our feedback on the pacing guide." *(Slight change in pacing guide)*

Interview 2

Coded extracts from an interview with a bilingual teacher (Saggad)

Curriculum development stage

Did you have any role in the development of the FYP curriculum?

"Let me be honest with you; I was not assigned any responsibility in development of the curriculum of Foundation Year Programme. In fact, I was excluded from designing anything. I had a zero role and that was my experience here in the ELI." *(Lack of involvement in curriculum development)*

In general, are you satisfied with the level of your involvement with the development stage of the curriculum?

"Of course, I am not satisfied that they excluded me from taking part in developing something useful for our students. I am not happy that I was not asked to put my teaching experience in practice to develop any aspect in our curriculum…" *(Dissatisfaction with lack of involvement in curriculum development)*

Were there any factors that determined the level of your role at the development stage of the curriculum?

"I was marginalized because the administration gave curriculum unit the responsibility of supervising and developing the curriculum. The curriculum unit selected certain teachers and ignored others like me in whatever related to curriculum development." (Personal marginalization by curriculum unit)

Curriculum Implementation stage

Have you faced any challenges in terms of implementing the curriculum in classroom?

"I really find it hard to teach reading circles. Our students do not like to read the required reading materials and do any other activities based on the reading tasks. *Therefore, I struggle to teach this important aspect of our curriculum in class*." *(Teaching reading as a challenge)*

How much freedom do you have in terms of implementing the curriculum in your classroom?

"I have the freedom to design additional supplementary materials for my students. I am not restricted to do only the exercises given in the course book. I can bring any useful materials to my class." *(Freedom in using additional materials)*

"We enjoy the freedom in teaching here. There are no strict regulations regarding teaching policy in class, so I have the freedom to apply teaching approaches that I think can improve the learning process (Freedom in teaching strategies).

How happy are you with the level of freedom you have in teaching?

"I am pleased with the freedom I have in teaching, I like having the freedom to choose and implement any teaching approaches in class and that is something good." *(Satisfaction with freedom in teaching strategies)*

In which areas do you not have freedom?

"The testing policy here does not allow me to write tests. I mean I do not have the freedom to develop formal tests, like writing, speaking, mid-term and final tests." *(No freedom in writing tests)*

"The testing committee is in charge of writing all tests on behalf of teachers. They develop all the tests for teachers." *(Role of testing committee)*

"We have clear instructions that Arabic is not allowed in the Foundation Year Programme classrooms. I am not allowed to use Arabia in class at all and it is not permitted for any purpose. " *(Arabic is not allowed)*

How happy are you with the level of freedom you have in testing?

"To be frank with you, it is difficult to answer your question. I do not have an answer to this question. I do not know my feeling towards the current testing policy." *(No known feeling)*

Curriculum evaluation stage

To what extent have you been engaged in evaluating any elements of the curriculum?

"I was involved in evaluating Headway course book series once. The curriculum unit asked me to give them my opinion about it. I indicated positive aspects in the course book and the negative ones, especially inappropriate cultural aspects." *(Involvement in course book evaluation)*

Have you noticed any impact or changes after your involvement in evaluating Headway course book?
"I think the administration considered teachers feedback on Headway course book and asked Oxford University Press to introduce a new special edition for our students. This edition was developed based on our remarks and comments on the unsuitable western cultural aspects in the previous version." *(Introduction of new special edition)*

Interview 3

Coded extracts from an interview with an international teacher (Housam)

Curriculum development stage

Did you have any role in the development of the FYP curriculum?

"Yes, I had only one role in the development of foundation year programme curriculum. I was among the ELI teachers who participated in course book selection task. I reviewed all the presented course book series by international publishers and I selected the one that I felt was the most useful for the ELI students. Then, I emailed my feedback to the curriculum unit…" (*Personal involvement in course book selection)*

Were there any factors that determined the level of your role at the development stage of the curriculum? For example your background, any professional requirements or institutional factors.

"The administration believed that teachers were not qualified to go beyond course book selection. In other words, they did not trust us to participate in more advanced curriculum development tasks. I think that perception was behind my participation in only selecting course book. It was an issue of trusting our skills." *(Teachers are not qualified for advanced curriculum development tasks)*

Can you offer any suggestions in relation to teachers' roles in curriculum development for future consideration?

"Well, I don't have specific ideas about teachers' roles in curriculum development to discuss with you now. I mean I do not have certain development tasks for teachers to suggest for you." **(***No suggestion given)*

Curriculum Implementation stage

Have you faced any challenges in terms of implementing the curriculum in classroom?

"I really find it difficult to teach level one- students. I have taught this level for three consecutive years. I find it difficult to teach these students simply because their English language level is so low. It is actually hard to teach them based on my personal experience." (*Teaching level one students as a challenge).*

How much freedom do you have in terms of implementing the curriculum in your classroom?

"I have the freedom to develop supplementary materials and use them at any time in class. I usually make my own materials and use them along with ones in the course book." *(Freedom in using additional materials)*

"In the ELI, teachers can bring any extra materials, as long as they are in line with the objectives of the lessons and they are reflected in the activities at the same time." *(Considering lessons' objectives in selection of additional materials)*

"I have the freedom to teach my lessons the way I want. The administration does not ask us to apply certain teaching approaches in class. I have the freedom to select any teaching approaches I find useful in my class." (*Freedom in teaching methodology*)

How happy are you with the level of freedom you have in teaching?

"I am pleased with the freedom I have in teaching and I have the freedom to teach the way I wish in class . I am glad that they do not ask me to implement any specific teaching approach in class." (*Satisfaction with freedom in teaching*)

In which areas do you not have freedom?

"I am not in change of writing all sorts of tests for my own students. For example, I do not write speaking, writing, mid-term and final exams. I do not have the freedom to write these tests in our programme." *(No freedom in writing tests)*

"Testing committee prepares all tests for teachers. It means that teachers get ready made tests here." (*Role of testing unit*)

How happy are you with the level of freedom you have in testing?

"I am happy that I am not asked to write any kind of test, especially speaking and writing ones. I think writing tests is an additional work for myself, consumes time and energy in every module. I am glad that I do not write tests here." (*Satisfaction with not writing tests*)

Curriculum Evaluation Stage

To what extent have you been engaged in evaluating any elements of the curriculum?

"I did not participate in evaluating any aspect of our curriculum. I was not asked formally or informally to evaluate any of the curriculum contents" *(Non-involvement in curriculum evaluation)*

Can you offer any suggestions in relation to teachers' roles in curriculum evaluation?

"I suggest implementing peer observation in the ELI, instead of considering observers' subjective views on teachers' teaching performance. For example, a teacher can evaluate some of his colleagues and discuss with them their teaching performance in class. Then, he writes a report about that and submits his feedback to the administration. I think many teachers can do that well here." *(Involvement in peer observation)*

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Appendix 4

Sample of data analysis: Curriculum Development stage. Table 1 (Theme 1)

Step.1	Step2	Step3	Step 4	Step4
Quotations	**Codes**	**Categories**	**Sub-themes**	**Themes**
"I was asked to answer a questionnaire containing questions about the presented course books by few international publishers in the ELI. I answered them, nominated one course book series for the programme and sent my feedback to the curriculum unit" (Taoufeeq).	Personal involvement in course book selection	Teacher's individual involvement in course selection	Course book selection involvement	Nature of teachers' involvement
"I took part in selecting a course book. The ELI administration wanted to change North Star Course book so they asked teachers to participate in selecting a new course book series for the programme" (Dawood).	Personal involvement in course book selection	Teacher's individual involvement in course selection		
"A survey was distributed to teachers and they had to vote for or against the presented course book. The survey items were about which course book or a publisher you prefer and why. So we voted either for Oxford or Longman course books. "(Fadel).	Personal involvement in course book selection	Teacher's individual involvement in course selection		
"I was a member in the curriculum unit and we were distributed into groups, each one was given an assignment to nominate a course book" (Azam).	Involvement at a group level to nominate a course book with curriculum unit	Group involvement with curriculum unit in course book selection		
I worked with the curriculum unit and we were asked to evaluate few course books and choose on course book series for the foundation year programme" (Nedhaal).	Involvement at a group level to nominate a course book with curriculum unit	Group involvement with curriculum unit in course book selection		

"We did one needs analysis. There was a committee few people were members in this committee […] I was one of them (Mohsen).	Active participation in needs analysis	An involvement in students' language needs analysis	Teachers' involvement in students' language needs analysis	
"I worked in the needs analysis committee three years ago… We collected data from the ELI teachers and the students" (Jafer).	Collecting data for needs analysis	An involvement in students' language needs analysis		
"I was not assigned any responsibility in curriculum development of the Foundation Year Programme. In fact, I was excluded from designing anything. I had zero role and that was my experience here in the ELI" (Saggad).	Lack of involvement in curriculum development	No involvement in curriculum development tasks	No involvement in the curriculum development process	
"I did not participate in any task related to curriculum development at all" (Saraá)	Lack of involvement in Curriculum development	No involvement in curriculum development tasks		
"I have not been engaged in any curriculum development issues'' (Ferial).	Lack of involvement in Curriculum development	No involvement in curriculum development tasks		
"I had a zero involvement in developing foundation year programme curriculum" (Osamh).	Lack of involvement in Curriculum development	No involvement in curriculum development tasks		
"I was not part of the curriculum development process. I had nothing to do with it (Eyaad).	Lack of involvement in Curriculum development	No involvement in curriculum development tasks		

Table 2 (Theme 2)

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
Quotations	Codes	Categories	Sub-themes	Theme
"I participated in text book selection only because the administration depended on Oxford University Press to design some important things in our curriculum. They designed our text books, students learning outcomes and placement tests" (Murad).	Limited involvement due to external factor	Dependence on Oxford University Press	Reasons for teachers involvement in pre-use course book evaluation and selection	Reasons for teachers involvement & non-involvement
"The curriculum unit restricted my participation only in course book for two reasons. First, The ELI management relied on Oxford University Press to develop some major curriculum components, such as, course book. Thus, I was invited to participate in that task only" (Osamah).	Limited involvement due to external factor			
"I think I was selected for only course book selection simply, because Oxford University press staff were in charge of developing Foundation Year curriculum" (**Saoud)**).	Limited involvement due to external factor			

"The administration believed that teachers were not qualified to go beyond course book selection. In other words, they did not trust us to participate in more advanced curriculum development tasks task. I think that perception was behind my participation in only selecting course book.. "(Housam).	Teachers are not qualified for advanced curriculum development tasks	lack of trust in teachers	Reasons for teachers' involvement in pre-use course book evaluation and selection	Reasons for teachers' involvement & non-involvement
"They did not take teachers into confidence or they underestimated teachers' skills [……] they thought we could not handle any other curriculum items properly […] so they asked me and many teachers to participate in selecting text books only (Waeel).	Underestimating teachers' skills for advanced curriculum development tasks			
I would like to stress on one solid reason is that I'm not a native speaker of English and here the majority of the people who were in different slots doing something they were mostly native speakers holding key positions in different committees in the ELI […] As a teacher, your background makes a difference here. I think if I was a native speaker, this scenario would be a different one, I could be asked to do some other curriculum jobs besides selecting text books" (Sallah).	Impact of a teacher's background on assigned curriculum development tasks	Exclusion of a teacher from curriculum committee due to his background as a non-native speaker teacher	Reasons for teachers' involvement in pre-use course book evaluation and selection	

"I was not nominated for any of the ELI committees related to curriculum because I am not a native speaker. It is the case that native speaker teachers hold important posts in these committees. I am sure that my background limited my involvement in only course book selection here. If I was a native speaker they would have selected me for additional curriculum development tasks in one of these committees" (Zeyad)	Impact of a teacher's background on assigned curriculum development tasks	Exclusion of a teacher from curriculum committee due to his background as a non-native speaker teacher	Reasons for teachers' involvement in pre-use course book evaluation and selection	Reasons for teachers' involvement & non-involvement
"Actually, our qualifications were considered, as well as experience. I think our nomination was based on our teaching experiences at tertiary level and relevant qualifications. I think those two elements played a significant role in our selection" (Mohsen).	Influence of teaching experience & academic qualifications	Positive factors for personal involvement in students' language needs analysis	Reasons for teachers' involvement in students' language needs analysis	

"You can see it is probably my nature that I don't do things half-heartedly. When I take responsibility, then I put my heart and soul in that. I don't believe in half-hearted attempt. So Whatever I am assigned a task and I accept that, then I work very hard to do it efficiently' I was probably more involved than other teachers, because of my academic background in research and because of the trust that the administration has on me."(Jafer).	Influence of personal proficiency at work, academic background & trust of administration	Positive factors for personal involvement in students' language needs analysis	Reasons for teachers involvement in students' language needs analysis	
"I have been involved in the accreditation process which has taken a lot of time and we are not allowed to enter any other area or committee" (Ferial).	Restrictions on a teacher involvement due to commitment with accreditation committee	Impact of involvement in internal institutional committee		Reasons for teachers' involvement & non-involvement
"I had other commitments with the students support committee and research committee. I think that was the reason for not asking me to take any other duty." (Sara'a).	Restrictions on a teacher involvement due to engagement with other committees	Impact of involvement in internal institutional committee	Reasons for teachers' non-involvement in curriculum development tasks	
"I was marginalized because the administration gave curriculum unit the responsibility of supervising and developing the curriculum. The curriculum unit selected certain teachers and ignored others like me in whatever related to curriculum development." (Saggad)	Personal marginalization by curriculum unit	Authority of curriculum unit		

Table 3 (Theme 3)

Step1	Step2	Step3	Step4
Quotations	**Codes**	**Categories**	**Theme**
"I think the teachers' role is to decide which students learning outcomes go to which level [….] they just give us all the students learning outcomes, they can be mixed, and then we can classify them according to our students needs in each level." (Eyad).	Teachers' roles in prioritising students learning outcomes	Organizing and distributing students learning outcomes according to their needs and levels	Suggestions about teachers' roles
"I would just ask the teachers here to come up or to suggest a number of the stories or reading texts from different sources, such as Internet and short authentic texts from journals. Then we discuss them and select the ones that are more useful for our students." (Waeel)	Team-work to select reading materials	Teachers' voice in selecting reading texts for their students	
"In the curriculum unit, there are only two people teaching half load and working in this unit. They are facing extreme difficulties to cope with the unit work load requirements and they are moving very slowly. The administration should increase the staff by forming a team of teachers to work in the curriculum unit. "(Fadel).	Increasing curriculum unit staff to deal with work load	Involving more teachers in curriculum unit	

Appendix 5

Certificate of Ethical Approval

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

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.

READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). **DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND**

Your name: Hussain AL Houssawi

Your student no: 590013010

Return address for this certificate: 78 Greyfriars Road- EX4 7BS- Exeter

Degree/Programme of Study: EdD in TESOL

Project Supervisor(s): Dr. Sallah Troudy

Your email address: hma205@exeter.ac.uk

Tel: 07985328880

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my dissertation / thesis (delete whichever is inappropriate) 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:...Hussain AL Houssawi...........................date:...7-11-2012........................

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: 590013010

Title of your project:
EFL teachers views about their roles in the curriculum of the EFL Foundation Year Program in a Saudi Arabian University.

Brief description of your research project:

The research aims to investigate the roles that the EFL teachers play at different stages of the curriculum, namely at the development, implementation and evaluation phases.

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

The research sample will involve EFL teachers at tertiary education in Saudi Arabia.

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

a) **informed consent:** 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. a blank consent form can be downloaded from the GSE student access on-line documents:

Neither children nor those with special needs are involved in this research.

b) **anonymity and confidentiality**

A careful consideration will be give to ethical issues to assure that ethical matters are implemented during the research procedure. Before conducting this study, consent forms will be sent and obtained from all the participants involved in the study. These forms will cover an explanation of the aims of the study and request for their permission. They also indicate their right to withdraw from the study at any time throughout the research process. Additionally, the letters will contain assurances of both confidentiality and anonymity, along with promises that the gained information from participants will be used only for the purposes of this research.

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:

In this study, the method I will use for data collection are semi structure interviews and document analysis. Data will be analysed qualitatively (themes and categories). The participants will not experience any harm, stress or unpleasant involvement by giving them the choice to avoid providing answers to questions that they feel sensitive. Another procedure is that all the participants will be able to check their responses before analysis. In the analysis stage, participants' names will not be used. instead, I will use pseudonyms to make sure that their identities are kept confidential.
.

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.):

I will use a voice recording device to record all the conducted interviews and they will be stored in a memory stick afterwards. Then, I will transfer all the recorded interviews into my personal computer and save them in data collection file. For security purposes, I will put a password for this.. After transcribing all the interviews, I will put all the interviews documents in a secure place, a locked filling cabinet.

All the collected data, recorded and transcribed will be destroyed properly after completing this research.

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):

I am aware of any exceptional factors or issues that may raise ethical issues at this stage. In case I feel that potential issues are likely to raise, a new form will be completed and submitted to the related office at the University of Exeter for approval.

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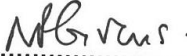
N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

This project has been approved for the period: 12-11-2012   until: 30-1-2013

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature): .... date: 9/11/2012

*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/12/13/8 ....

Signed: .... NfGivens . ...date: 25/1/2013.
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

Appendix 6

Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

CONSENT FORM

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
>
> If applicable, the information, which I give, may be shared between any of the other researcher(s) participating in this project in an anonymised form
>
> all information I give will be treated as confidential
>
> the researcher(s) 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 phone number of researcher: (Local-055579677)   (0447985328880 – U.K.)

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

hma205@exeter.ac.uk

Hussain AL Houssawi

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.

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