An investigation into Saudi Arabian final-year student teachers' preparedness to teach English as a foreign language

by

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Supervisor

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own unassisted work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. None of the present work has previously been submitted for any degree or examination at any other University.

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█████████████

January 2022

Date

As Candidate supervisor, I agree to the submission of this thesis.

Professor Ayub Sheik

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Dedicated to

The Souls of my mother, my brother, and my sister

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AACSP	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
ARAMCO	Arabian American Oil Company
ABET	Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology
BA	Bachelor of Arts degree
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
CELTA	Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
DELTA	Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELC	English Language Centre
DLT	English Language Department or Department of Languages and Translation
ELTPS	English Language Teachers' Professional Standards
ESL	English as a Second Language
ENL	English as a Native Language
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
ETS	Educational Testing Service (nonprofit private educational testing and measurement organization)
GCC	Gulf Co-operation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPA	Grade Point Average
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
ICDL	International Computer Driving License
IT	Information Technology
INSET	In-Service Education and Training
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
MA	Master of Arts
MBS	Muhammed Bin Salman, Crown Prince and Deputy Prime Minister
MCQ	Multiple-choice questioning
MOE	Ministry of Education
NCAAA	National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment
NCAHE	National Centre for Assessment in Higher Education
NCATE	National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education
NCTE	National Council of Teachers of English
NQF	National Qualification Framework
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PD	Professional Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
TKT	Teaching Knowledge Test
TESOL	Teaching English to speakers of other languages

QUAL	Qualitative
QUAN	Quantitative
UN	United Nations

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate final-year English major Saudi student teachers' perceptions of preparedness as well as their actual preparedness to teach English as a Foreign Language after their graduation. Previous work did not address student teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach after graduation. An interpretive qualitatively dominant approach was used to explore the student teachers' preparedness to teach English. A case study design was employed using four data generating strategies: a predominantly qualitative questionnaire; the Cambridge Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT); focus group discussions; and interviews with four teacher participants. The questionnaire and the group discussions revealed that most year-four student teachers perceived themselves as being prepared to begin teaching after graduation. Also, most student teachers ascribed their preparedness to start teaching to their teachers who helped them form their positive perceptions of preparedness to teach. Other student teachers attributed their perceptions of preparedness to teach English to the courses they studied during the four-year programme. In addition, most year-four student teachers were found to be unprepared linguistically (as per what they wrote in the questionnaire and what they said in the group discussions) to start teaching English. Student teachers' teaching ability was assessed via the TKT which proved that most of the student teachers fall into Band 2 (as per the established Band Descriptors) which means that their teaching knowledge is satisfactory. Besides, student teachers were found to be unprepared pedagogically because most of what they studied in their English language programme only related to the English language, its literature, and Arabic and English translation courses, not to teaching methods courses.

The interviews revealed that student teachers were not fully prepared to teach English as a Foreign Language. Although some of the student teachers were perceived to be prepared linguistically, most of them were perceived to be unprepared pedagogically to begin teaching. Most of the

interviewees stated that the English language programme had not adequately prepared student teachers to start teaching because its focus was on language and translation, not on teaching. Almost all interviewees suggested a training programme through which student teachers can be trained on how to teach and practice teaching. The interviewees' suggestions for student teachers ranged from doing a certificate or a diploma like Cambridge CELTA and DELTA or their equivalents and volunteering for a semester or two to observe and shadow other experienced teachers in their classes.

Chapter One -Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Due to globalization, the world has, in a sense, become a small village that uses English predominantly to communicate and do business. Not only has English become a dominant language because it is "now the global language of business" (Neeley 2012: p. 1), but it has also become the most prevalent language of the internet and social media. According to Neeley, English is spoken by 1.75 billion people worldwide, meaning that 1 in 4 people speak English around the world. Consequently, the world has adopted English as its universal language, and it has become the most prominent language of international businesses (Harmer, 2007; Khan, 2011). In his book (*Globalization and the future of German*), Crystal (2004) asserts that "a language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country" (p. 28). In this manner, English has achieved its worldwide status in the modern world and has become the language of science, technology, the internet, sports, entertainment (Nunan, 2003), media, and even social media at present.

Consequently, policymakers in the Saudi private and public sectors realized the importance of English in the field of international affairs around the world (Al-Hazmi, 2017) as English has become the world's lingua franca. English as Lingua Franca (ELF) is defined by Jeremy Harmer (2007, p. 20) as a language that is used between "two people who do not share the same language and for whom English is not their mother tongue." This kind of usage has made English the medium of communication in most countries, and it has also made English belong to whoever speaks it. That's why the Saudi Government has recognised the importance of the social, cultural, historical, and economic roles that English plays in the Saudi community as it has become the medium and the only means of communication in some sectors in social, administrative, educational, and professional fields within Saudi Arabia (Venkova, 2020). Historically, English as

a foreign language (EFL) was introduced in Saudi Arabia in 1920 (Alshahrani, 2016; Abdellah, 2013). It was then introduced as a compulsory school subject in 1925 (Alfahadi, 2012). As English is taught as an EFL in Saudi Arabia, it is pertinent to mention that Saudi Arabia falls in the outer circle of Kachru's Model of Concentric Circles of English (1992).
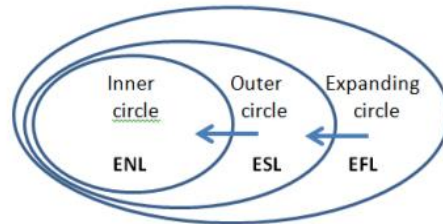
Figure 1. Kachru's Concentric Circles of English as adopted from (Ferenčík, 2012: p. 4)

Since English language teachers are the core of the teaching and learning processes, investigating and exploring student teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to teach English as a foreign language is critical in determining the efficacy of such programmes. This has implications for future students and teaching and learning processes in the English language. Also, exploring these student teachers' preparedness to teach English as a foreign language after their graduation would provide education policymakers, designers of curricula, and educationalists with insights and guidance into their work before they make decisions related to the teaching profession. Consequently, the researcher will investigate the teaching of English in the teacher education programmes to see if these programs are fit for the purpose that they were designed for, with the hypothesis that the education system in Saudi Arabia is not preparing its graduates with English and teaching competence at an acceptable level for global communication. The researcher will test this hypothesis in this study. In so doing, this chapter also aims to resolve this gap by explaining the cultural distinctions in the Saudi context and by exploring the issues facing EFL would-be teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach English as a foreign language after graduation. It

also explores in-depth the reasons for students' perceptions of preparedness as well as the effectiveness or otherwise of their teacher education programme as it pertains to English preparedness.

This chapter will cover the statement of the problem, the study's aims and objectives, and the rationale that underlies it. It will also present the setting (Saudi Arabia and its education system); and the context of this study (Teacher education programmes in Saudi universities and the English language programme of this study).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Graduates of the English language and translation programmes at Saudi universities are recruited and hired as EFL teachers as soon as they graduate. Practitioner experience suggests that, at the time of their graduation, these graduates are not adequately qualified to teach English as a foreign language, nor are they competent users of the English language. Al-Hazmi (2017, p.132) supports this point of view and says that "Anecdotal evidence suggests that a great deal of EFL teachers, especially at the pre-university level find difficulty in using English effectively in classroom tasks (e.g., lecturing, giving instructions, or explanations)." He attributes these kinds of shortcomings and failures to their "English language education programmes" (2017, p.131). Even after graduating from their respective colleges, "many teachers lack essential linguistic and pedagogic skills" (Zaid 2003; Al-Hazmi 2003, Al Gublan 2005 as cited in Al-Hazmi 2017, p.138). The problem of lack of preparation may also be ascribed to their preparation at the high school stage. For example, Abdellah (2013: p. 1) said that "Saudi English majors' level in reading achievement has been reported to be of low quality." He attributes this incompetence in reading to the few items of reading material they read at their secondary school. Al-Seghayer (2011) also agrees with these researchers and confirms that a considerable number of EFL Saudi teachers are not competent professionally and linguistically, and they do not have the required teaching methodology that will

enable them to teach EFL after graduation. He also contends that these EFL teachers have partial experience in designing educational and relevant materials and ways of applying them. This notion of the weak English language programmes and their failure is also confirmed by Fareh (2010, p. 1) who says, "Although tremendous efforts have been exerted to improve the teaching-learning process of English, EFL programmes still fail to deliver as expected, and the EFL learners' proficiency in English remains inadequate and below expectation." He also sums up the main challenge of the EFL programmes and those who graduate from such programmes as follows:

> Although many of these teachers are B.A. degree holders, most of them have no teaching certificates that qualify them for teaching. Most of them did not take any course in teaching English as foreign language. This may account for the adoption of the Grammar Translation method by most of them. A considerable percentage of the class time is run in Arabic. Such a practice minimizes the time of exposure to English and thus the learning outcomes will not be adequately accomplished. (p. 3)

Al-Hazmi (2003) also agrees with Al-Seghayer that studying only one course - which is still true up to this time - of EFL teaching methods is not enough for preparing students at the English major. A major concern, for him, is that these English major level students study courses like educational psychology, evaluation, school administration and curriculum courses in Arabic which do not meet the expected EFL teaching standards:

> Students take only one course on EFL teaching methodology, which is not enough for the diverse needs of EFL teachers. Like novice teachers in other faculties, they take, in Arabic, courses such as educational psychology, evaluation, school administration, and curriculum studies. None of these courses meets the needs of would-be EFL teachers. (p. 341-342)

Furthermore, Melibari (2016) maintains that EFL education in Saudi Arabia suffers from several problems, such as low standards and an inclination towards prescriptive and authoritarian teaching concepts. Besides, she contends that "there is no cohesive national strategy for EFL teacher training and education, and little emphasis on professional development opportunities for teachers within the EFL field" (p. 3). Zafer (2002) suggested that there should have been an agreement

among the stakeholders – the college professors responsible for the preparation and content of EFL programmes and the teachers themselves – so as to develop the Saudi teacher preparation programmes. He also proposed that such an agreement should have been submitted to the Ministry of Education as a proposal for the suggested development. He elaborated on and emphasized the areas that should have been developed such as "TEFL, teacher education, research on TESL/TEFL teacher preparation, content and linguistic competence of ESL/EFL teacher preparation courses, language teaching, practicum and ESL/EFL teaching methods, Guidelines and ESL/EFL programme components and models, and teachers' input" (p. 129). He confirms his suggestions regarding the EFL preparation programmes as he says:

> Based on the review of literature in the study, it is a must to look into EFL teacher preparation programmes in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with great care in relation to the areas mentioned earlier in order to develop them to become more effective and meet the developmental needs of the country (p. 129)

The general consensus is that these teacher education programmes do not prepare English language teachers well. They lack methods of teaching English as a foreign language and need to optimise exposure to the target language. Also, most graduates of such teacher education programmes tend to use the traditional methods of teaching like the archaic grammar-translation method through which these teachers use Arabic as the medium of instruction although they teach English as a foreign language as the target language. This view is supported by Al-Seghayer (2014: p. 1):

> Regardless of such an important status and multiple functions of the English language in Saudi Arabia, the key players, i.e., Saudi EFL teachers, are inadequately trained to prepare students to be good English learners. It is publicly acknowledged that the proficiency level of the majority of Saudi Arabia's English teachers is insufficient to the degree that they barely understand the materials that they are attempting to teach to students."

Al-Seghayer (2014: p. 1) also said that " the current programs are inadequate for the preparation of Saudi EFL teachers, especially with regard to disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and technological pedagogical knowledge." The four-year teacher education

programme of this study focuses mostly on literary and translation courses rather than on language teaching and its acquisition. This study is set to investigate these graduates' preparedness to teach English as a foreign language as well as their language ability in the target language. Also, this study explores the reasons behind these student teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach English as a foreign language. Additionally, this study examines the effectiveness of the teacher education programme as it pertains to teaching EFL.

1.3 Aims of the Study

This study intends to investigate Saudi Arabian final-year student teachers' (English Major) preparedness to teach English as a foreign language (in schools) after graduation. It is envisioned that this study would inform curriculum designers and education policymakers as to the efficacy of EFL teaching at a Saudi university. It would also give insight into the challenges Saudi EFL teachers face, if any, and suggest possible solutions if required.

1.4 Rationale

As an experienced EFL teacher (about 30 years of teaching English as a foreign language) and head of recruitment (for more than five years), I used to interview teachers from all over the world, including almost all nationalities (native and non-native speakers of English; Saudis and non-Saudis). I noticed that most Arab teachers, especially Saudis, were not qualified enough to teach English as a foreign language although most of them have a B.A. in English language and translation, and some of these candidates have an M.A. in teaching English as a foreign or second language. We also used to give all candidates the TKT (which is a test that was developed by Cambridge University) in addition to the interview to determine how good they were at teaching EFL. I also noticed that most of the new graduates lack language proficiency as well as teaching skills. Consequently, I decided to investigate the reasons for their weakness in teaching as well as

their language deficiencies. This study explored year-four students (who are supposed to work as EFL teachers after their graduation) of the English Language and Translation Department in one of the state universities in Saudi Arabia. This study was set to investigate their language efficiency and their preparedness to teach English as a foreign language after graduation. In addition, the study explored the effectiveness of their teacher education programme and its components, as well as the relevance of these courses to preparing these candidates to teach English as a foreign language.

1.5 Theoretical Approach

This case study is mainly qualitative in nature. Creswell & Creswell (2018: p 55, 56) define a case study as:

> a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Cases are bounded by time and activity. and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time.

This case study mostly employs the qualitative approach in the form of a qualitatively-dominant questionnaire, focus-group discussions and interviews. The only quantitative part is represented by the TKT test (Teacher Knowledge Test), which was developed by Cambridge ESOL. Consequently, this study falls into the mixed-method approach. Mixing the two broad approaches of data collection (qualitative and quantitative) is said to have many benefits. For example, it is said that it increases the strengths, and it eliminates the weaknesses of research as "researchers can bring out the best of both paradigms" (Dörnyei, 2007: p. 45) because it is believed that the strength of one approach or method can compensate for the weakness of the other. Besides, mixed methods research is also believed to provide 'multi-level analysis' for complex issues and phenomena (Dörnyei, 2007) as a better understanding of such phenomena can be gained by "converging numeric trends from quantitative data and specific details from qualitative data" where "words can

be used to add meaning to numbers and numbers can be used to add precision to words" (Dörnyei, 2007: p. 45). In addition, mixing two approaches provides robust "validity to the research outcomes through the convergence and corroboration of the findings" (Dörnyei, 2007: p. 45). The mixed-method approach is also said to yield favourable final results which "are usually acceptable for a larger audience than those of a mono-method study would be" (Dörnyei, 2007: p. 46). Accordingly, the best of both approaches can be achieved through the mixed methods research or triangulation which "allows us to see more than what any one method can reveal on its own, but that in itself is not enough" (MacIntyre et al., 2010, p. 4). In other words, the two approaches can eliminate the limitations of each other. Triangulation is also defined by Cohen et al. (2007, p. 141) "as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behavior." On the other hand, Marshal & Rossman (2014: p. 35) affirm that "qualitative research is pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experiences of people". They claim that designing qualitative research is always flexible, whether before or throughout the process of research itself. Taylor et al., (2015, p.29-30) discussed qualitative research and its design, and they affirmed that "although qualitative researchers have a methodology to follow and perhaps some general research interests, the specifics of their approach evolve as they proceed." They (2015, p.29-31) also claim that "a good qualitative study combines an in-depth understanding of the particular setting investigated with general theoretical insights that transcend that particular type of setting." Their advice (2015, p.31) to qualitative researchers who start their research with pre-conceived and well-formulated assumptions and ideas is "to not hold too tightly to any specific interest, but to explore phenomena as they emerge during their studies". Qualitative research is also defined by Creswell (2009: p. 4) as "an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem." According to Creswell, the procedures of the qualitative mode include "emerging questions", themes and processes that

require the researcher to analyse data inductively from specific ideas to general ones. The role of the researcher in qualitative research is to interpret and analyse the meaning of the produced data. Also, the researcher runs the research herself/himself. She/he is considered an insider. Data are always analysed subjectively in qualitative research. For example, he interviews the candidates, runs the focus-discussion groups and collects data from documents, if any.

On the other hand, Creswell (2009) also defines quantitative research "as a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables" (p. 4). The role of the researcher is to use tools to measure and analyse the set of variables statistically. Also, the researcher in this kind of inquiry tests data deductively. The researcher is considered an outsider. Data are always analysed objectively in quantitative research. As for the mixed-method mode, Creswell looks at it as an approach "that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms" (p. 4). In this form of inquiry, the researcher uses both words, meaning and numbers to report his or her set of data. She/He analyses data inductively and deductively. Moreover, this study adopts the interpretive paradigm as it is mainly based on understanding and interpreting "the world in terms of its actors" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 26), the researcher used this paradigm to investigate and assess student teachers' preparedness to teach EFL after graduation. Specifically, he used the interpretive paradigm to understand, analyse, and assess the perceptions of preparedness of student teachers to teach EFL through focus group discussions and a qualitative-dominant questionnaire.

This case study investigated final-year (English Major) student teachers' preparedness to teach EFL. Yin (1984, p. 13) defines the scope of a case study as an "empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context: especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident." Therefore, a case study is in keeping with this study as it tries to investigate and question student teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach EFL.

This study employed four data-collecting tools. The first tool was a qualitatively dominant questionnaire. The second tool is a quantitative test called TKT (Teaching Knowledge Test). This test was developed by Cambridge English, Language Assessment, University of Cambridge. It measures the teaching ability as well as the language ability of the candidates. Tests are used as indicators of students' learning as well as to determine how effective their teaching is. The test used is a parametric test that has been published officially and is commercially available internationally. Past exam papers can be obtained online as well from the official website of Cambridge Assessment English. Cohen et al. (2007, p. 415) define parametric tests as

> published tests which are commercially available, and which have been piloted and
> standardized on a large and representative sample of the whole population. They usually
> arrive complete with the backup data on sampling, reliability, and validity statistics which
> have been computed in the devising of the tests.

They also contend that these tests enable "the researcher to use statistics applicable to interval and ratio levels of data." (ibid.) The researcher used past exam papers which can be found and downloaded from the internet for free. These past exam papers have already been piloted and standardised. They are also reliable and valid because they have been used already all around the world through the branches of the British Council. The TKT exam consists of three modules. Test takers can take them all or opt for the modules that they really need. A certificate is given after the completion of each module. These modules are designed to provide test takers with a foundation in the principles and practice of English language teaching:

- TKT: Module 1 – Language and background to language learning and teaching

- TKT: Module 2 – Lesson planning and use of resources for language teaching

- TKT: Module 3 – Managing the teaching and learning process.

The researcher only used module one that assesses language and background to language teaching. Module one is in line with this study, as it assesses some language aspects that would activate the

schemata of student teachers' experiences and preparedness to teach EFL. The TKT serves as the trigger for the candidates' reflections once they receive their scores. After student teachers received their TKT scores, focus group discussions were held to discuss the areas of their weaknesses and strengths pertaining to their language and teaching abilities. The third datadata-collectingl was focus group discussions. Salkind (2010: p. 500) defines a focus group as "a form of qualitative research conducted in a group interview format." The focus group discussions usually involve a group of participants and the researcher who acts as "the moderator for discussions among the group members" (Salkind, 2010: p. 500). The main objective of focus group discussions is to "focus discussion on a particular issue" (Bell, 2010: p. 165). In this study, the focus group discussions aimed to investigate these students' language ability, their teaching ability and methods of teaching, how much the teacher education programme had prepared them to teach EFL, and how they would evaluate their preparedness to teach EFL. The last and fourth data collecting procedure were four interviews (two with two professors in the English Language and Translation Department; and two with two EFL expert teachers from the English Language Centre at the same university). The two professors, as well as the two EFL expert teachers, were asked questions about the candidates' (year-four student teachers') level of English and to what extent they would be prepared to teach EFL after they graduated. The interviews with the four participants produced a great deal of data, meaning that the researcher had a kind of data saturation as a result of the focus group discussions and the interviews. In this regard, Bell (2010: p. 17) maintains that once "the theoretical saturation is reached", it means "further data produce no new theoretical development." That is why the researcher did not interview more candidates – whether they are professors or EFL teachers.

The case study approach was applied in this study because such case studies "have a distinctive place in evaluation research" (Yin, 2003, p.15). A case study is also elaborated on more by Yin

(2018, p. 43,44) as, "this niche is when a "how" or "why" question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which a researcher has little or no control." The qualitative and quantitative approaches, employed in the design of this case study, try to explore the manifold aspects of the Saudi participants' context that underpinned the objectives and relevant study questions. The qualitative part - represented in the survey by the focus group discussions with the would-be teachers, and the interview with the two professors and two experienced EFL teachers- was meant to assess in-depth the preparedness of these candidates to teach English once they had graduated. The tools were also employed to assess how good the education language programme was as well as the validity of the courses studied during its four-year duration and their relevance to teaching English as a foreign language. On the other hand, the quantitative data obtained from the TKT was meant to assess the teaching ability of the study participants. For example, the TKT assesses their language ability as well as their potential teaching ability. It measures how they teach the different components of the language such as grammar, vocabulary, listening and speaking; reading and writing in addition to some testing aspects such as how to test students on those components or skills.

1.6 Objectives and Research Questions

This study sought to interrogate the preparedness of final-year student teachers to teach English as a foreign language after their graduation. It also sought to explore the perceptions beyond their preparedness and the reasons for these perceptions. It is hoped that it would give insights into the challenges that face new graduates when they start teaching. In addition, it was hoped that this study would give insight into the design of teacher education programmes and ways to improve them, if any. The main objectives of this study are summarised as follows:

1. *To examine final-year student teachers' (English Major) preparedness to teach EFL after graduation.*

2. *To explore how final-year student teachers feel about their preparedness to teach EFL and why they have these perceptions*

Research Questions:

- **Main Question:**

1. *Are final-year Saudi Arabian student teachers (English Major) prepared to teach EFL after graduation? Why or why not?*

- **Sub-questions:**

1. *Does the teacher programme at University in Saudi Arabia produce competent teachers of English as a foreign language? Why, or why not?*

2. *How do final-year student teachers feel about their preparedness to teach EFL? Why do they have these perceptions?*

3. *What are the perceptions of EFL teachers regarding the preparedness of graduate students to teach English? Why do they have these perceptions?*

1.7 Context

Due to its Islamic and cultural background as an Arab country, Saudi Arabia's culture, education, traditions, and customs differ from those of western countries. Consequently, in this section, the location of the study, which is Saudi Arabia, as well as its historical background, its status in the world of politics, its economy, and traditions will be discussed in relation to the setting of this study.

1.7.1 Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is the cradle of Islam, where two to three million pilgrims visit the sacred holy cities of Madinah and Makkah every year from around the world. Second, Saudi Arabia has a very special position in the Arab world, the Middle East and the Islamic world due to its cultural, religious, political, and economic position (Venkova, 2020). According to the CIA WORLD

FACTBOOK, Saudi Arabia is considered the native land of Islam and the home of the two most important and holiest Mosques (in Mecca and Medina) in Islam. The official title of its king is the Custodian of the Two Holy Shrines. The modern Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was founded by King ABD AL-AZIZ bin Abd al-Rahman Al SAUD (Ibn Saud) in 1932. Saudi was named after the ruling family of the country; the House of Saud, and the name 'Arabia' existed for many centuries.

1.7.1.1 Location and area

Saudi Arabia is located in the Middle East, in southwestern Asia. It is bordered on the north by Jordan, Iraq, and Kuwait; on the east by the Arabian Gulf, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates; on the south by the Sultanate of Oman and Yemen; and on the west by the Red Sea (Zafer, 2002). Its total area is 2,149,690 sq. Km. It is slightly more than one-fifth the size of the U.S. It is mostly desert, meaning that it has vast deserts. It has a lot of natural resources such as petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, gold, and copper. As per the CIA FACTBOOK, Saudi Arabia is considered the largest country in the world without rivers. Its wide-ranging coastlines on both the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea allow it to ship its crude oil via the Persian Gulf and Suez Canal to other countries in the world.

1.7.1.2 Population

The population (as of Thursday, May 21, 2020) was 35,308,732 (Population figures are estimates by Countrymeters (2020) based on the latest United Nations data). The sex ratio is 19,497,642 million for men to 15,812,659 million for women. 90% of Saudis are originally Arabs, and the rest (10%) are Afro-Asians. The median age is 29.8 years.

1.7.1.3 Language

Arabic is the only official language spoken in Saudi Arabia. It is also the language of the Holy Quran and the language of most of the Middle Eastern countries.

1.7.1.4 Economy

Saudi Arabia's economy is based on the production of oil. It is considered the biggest crude oil producer in the world. It has about 16 per cent of the world's confirmed petroleum reserves. Also, it ranks as the largest exporter of petroleum in the world, and it plays a significant role in OPEC. The oil sector alone provides about 87 per cent of Saudi Arabia's budget revenues, and 42 per cent of its GDP, and 90 per cent of its export earnings. As per the directions of the Crown Prince and Deputy Prime Minister Muhammed Bin Salman (MBS), Saudi Arabia has already listed the shares of the state-owned petroleum company, ARAMCO – as a way of increasing its revenue.

On the other hand, Saudi Arabia is trying to boost and support the development of the private sector to vary its economy and employ more nationals. Also, as a kind of economic diversification, Saudi Arabia is trying to find other sources of revenue (from power generation, telecommunications, natural gas exploration, and petrochemical sectors) other than the oil revenues that will dry up one day. Immigrants make up 38.3 per cent of its total population, as per U.N. data (2019). The kingdom is made up of 13 administrative provinces that include more than 5000 cities and villages. The main cities are Riyadh (located in the centre of the country and the capital city of Saudi Arabia); Jeddah (a megacity and a port on the Red Sea); and Dammam, a port on the Arabian Gulf (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). Some cities Yanbu, Rabigh, and Alzahran are famous because they are considered the main centres of oil and its refineries.

In the early 2000s, Saudi Arabia launched a scholarship programme (Venkova, 2020) as a kind of investment in human resources. This programme funds the education and studies of Saudi nationals at international universities to prepare them to mix in the world of the 21st Century as a way to open up the traditional and conservative Saudi community. The main objective of this educational scholarship, as stated by Venkova (2020, p. 10), is 'to upskill a new generation of Saudis and in this way to build a very highly educated, skilled, and knowledgeable nation.'

1.7.2 Education in Saudi Arabia

In Islam, which is the main religion of Saudi Arabia, education is valued. All syllabi, from the early stages of education at the elementary schools to the graduate programmes at universities, are based on Islamic values and morals (Alfahadi, 2012). Previously, religious education was the dominant education afforded in Saudi Arabia. It (religious education) was typically carried out in mosques and Quranic Schools where students learned how to write and read Arabic to recite the Holy Qur'an (Al-Liheibi, 2008; Alsharif, 2011 as cited in Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). However, it is different nowadays because, at schools and universities, all fields and subjects are taught but from the Islamic point of view, not from the secular one. In Saudi Arabia, they tend to Islamise all disciplines and fields to include the values of Islamic beliefs and laws. The language of instruction is Arabic; English is studied as a foreign language. There is sex segregation during the three phases of schooling. This means co-education is not allowed during these education phases, nor is it allowed at higher education institutions. Male students have their own schools or campuses as well as their male teachers, and female students have their own schools or campuses and female teachers (Al-Seghayer, 2011). Education is provided for free during these three education phases; however, there are some private and international schools that students can join if their parents or guardians can afford to pay the fees. There is also a pre-school stage for the ages of three to six. The following

figure (adopted from Al-Seghayer, 2011, p.38) shows all the education stages and phases- from the pre-school stage to the postgraduate stage.
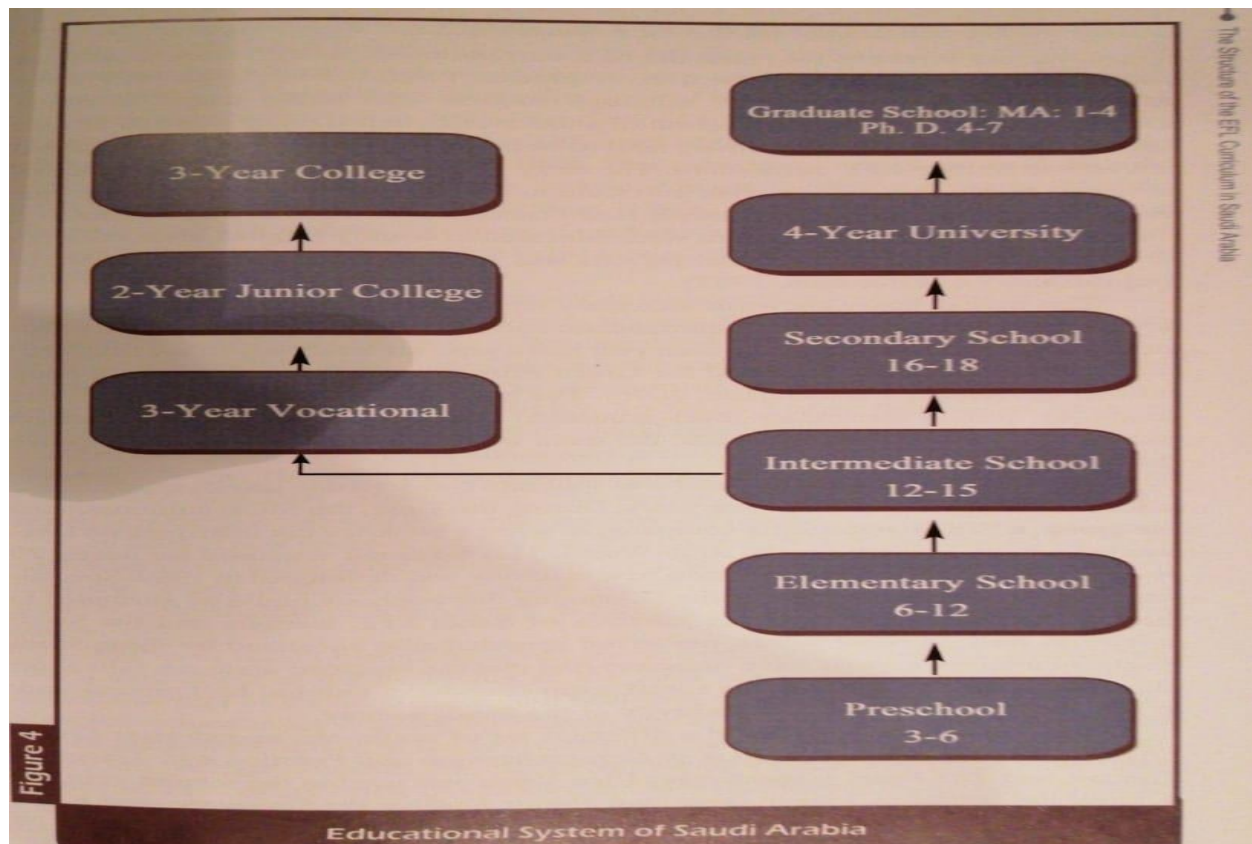
Figure 2: Educational System of Saudi Arabia

Higher education at universities is not different from the stages mentioned above. Education is Islamic-based, and it is provided for free. There are some private institutions for those who can afford to pay fees. The university phase is also sex-segregated, i.e., it is separated by gender. Some schools require a preparatory year where students study basic subjects and university skills in their respective fields of study in addition to English as a foreign language and I.T. courses like the International Computer Driving License (ICDL). Other schools, like the school of humanities, do not require their students to have a preparatory year. They can start studying their specialisation or major as soon as they join the university.

Participants of this study (year-four students) are enrolled in the English Language and Translation Department at the College of Arts in one of these Saudi universities. These students (would-be teachers) do not have to take the preparatory year. So, they start their major upon joining the university. They study English literature and translation for four years. They also study language acquisition courses. The following section will present some details about the four-year programme at the English Language and Translation Department and its effectiveness.

1.7.3 Teacher Education programmes in Saudi Universities

English language education programmes for Saudi teachers of English as a foreign language began in the 1970s (phase one) to the 1980s (phase two) (Al-Seghayer, 2011). The Ministry of Education during that time (1970-1980) designed a training programme for those who wished to become English language teachers. That programme asked those who wanted to become English language teachers to study English for one academic year after they graduated from high school. Then they sit for a comprehensive exam after that. Upon passing that exam, successful candidates are given a chance to study English language teaching at one of the British universities for 100 weeks so that they can obtain an accredited teaching certificate in teaching English. This certificate was intended to enable them to teach English at the intermediate level (Ibrahim, 1985). From the early 1980s to the present day, the English language and Translation Departments at Saudi universities have taken the responsibility to educate and train students to become English language teachers. Upon the completion of a four-year education programme, these students graduate as qualified English language teachers.

However, practically speaking, their teaching skills and their language competency still require improvement. During the four years of their study at these Departments, students study language and linguistics courses such as morphology, syntax, phonetics and phonology, English Literature

as well as Teaching Methodology courses to prepare them to become qualified teachers of English at the three stages of official Saudi schools (elementary, intermediate and secondary or high school). This list of courses may differ from one institution to another. Students in these departments are also entitled to go for some other elective. As for teaching methods courses, most of the English and language translation departments in Saudi Arabia provide from one to three courses of second language acquisition through the four years of study. Providing second language acquisition courses in these Departments is not a priority as these Departments' main objectives are mainly to provide students with translation as well as literature courses. There is only a second language acquisition course in this teacher education programme of this study through the whole period of the four years. This teacher education programme does not have any kind of teaching practice or practicums.

1.8 Background (The English Language Programme of this study)

The teacher education programme (context) of this study is called the 'English Language Programme' with a code called 'ENGL.' The total credit hours needed for the completion of this programme are 134. The award granted on completion of the programme is a B.A. in English (with 134 credit hours). This programme has been established to achieve some specific objectives. For instance, it has been established to provide the job market in Saudi Arabia with EFL teachers and translators because there is a demand for teachers of English and translators as stated in their objectives as follows:

> English is the major lingua franca in the world today. Similarly, English remains the second language in most Middle Eastern countries, taught in primary and high schools. As a result, there is a market need for teachers of English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia. Due to the large number of English-speaking people working in Saudi Arabia in different fields, there is a market need for translation services. Our graduates can satisfy both needs in terms of teaching and translation. (English Programme September 25, 2017: p. 5)

Also, providing such a degree (B.A. in English) serves the business field with its transactions as well as the diplomatic services with other countries. This adds to the economic value of the degree as well:

> Providing a degree in English will serve communication with business transactions and diplomatic services since our graduates can also find employment in banks and diplomatic circles. The degree has, therefore, economic value to Saudi Arabia. (English Programme September 25, 2017: p. 5)

On the social and cultural levels, the B.A. in English will serve as a credit for the graduates themselves as it will enable them to interact with the outside world via the internet and the social media forms and networks. This B.A. will also give students insights into the other cultures and histories:

> The English programme gives insight into the history and social structure of England, the U.S., Australia and New Zealand and an understanding of the mindset of those who live there. (Ibid)

The programme mission and goals have to be in line with the mission and goals of the College of Arts and Humanities that stresses:

> the improvement of the B.A. programmes, the establishment of a research and publication culture in arts and humanities, the promotion of civilization values and effective partnership in developing the Madina community in order to highlight its identity on the national and international levels.

> the preparation of graduates with the knowledge and linguistics skills to support the economic and educational development of KSA in the international community, and

> with the skills for employment in teaching English and translation services. The B.A. Programme will prepare skilled and proficient graduates able to compete nationally and internationally competently. (ibid)

On the other hand, the mission of this programme is stated as follows:

> The major mission of the programme is to promote the higher education of Saudi students by offering them a superb window of opportunity through which they can attain proficiency in English, professionalism in translation, appreciation of English literature and literary criticism, and most importantly, a bird's eye view of the culture of the English-speaking nations. The attainment of such academic goals will enable our students to contribute effectively and positively in any global scholarly discourse. (ibid)

In answer to this question, *Does the programme require students to take courses taught by other departments?* The answer is, 'No.' However, students in this programme will be given courses that will help them develop academically and professionally during and after their graduation from college:

> The courses taken by our students, and which are taught by other departments fit in very well into the overall academic development of the graduate. Arabic, Islamic and I.T. courses offer tremendous service to our students' skills during and after their graduation. Thanks to such courses, our graduates will be in a better off position to compete with other graduates for employment. (ibid)

The broad and major goals of the programme are presented as follows:

1. the establishment and promotion of linguistics skills;

2. the establishment of development of translation strategies skills; and

3. the establishment and development of literary and cultural appreciation.

In the following figure, the English Department narrows down their goals, breaks them up, and makes them very specific so that they can measure them through measurable performance indicators. They also list the major strategies that are employed to achieve these objectives as follows:

Goals and Objectives	Measurable Indicators	Major Strategies
Students acquire proficiency in the English language in the four language skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.	Students' performance in oral and written quizzes and final exams as well as students' feedback in the end-of-year confidential questionnaire	During the first two years, special emphasis is placed on reading, writing, listening and speaking skills through communication drills, group work, debate, presentations and homework assignments.
Students communicate well in oral and written forms.	Students' performance in oral and written quizzes and final exams as well as students' feedback in the end-of-year confidential questionnaire	Group debate and speaking circles.
Students perform grammatical analysis of the English language.	Students' grammatical competence mirrored in their writing and speaking as well as their exams performance	Grammatical exercises that aim to develop students' analytical skills designed for different levels.
Students deal effectively with theoretical linguistics, morphology, syntax, semantics, and contrastive linguistics.	Students' performance in quizzes and exams as well as questionnaire feedback measure the major theoretical notions in these disciplines,	Group discussions, tutorials and research assignments.
Students provide an effective account of the use of language in social context.	Students' performance in quizzes and exams as well as questionnaire feedback measure students' competence in using language in different social contexts.	Group discussions, tutorials and research assignments.
Students develop effective phonetic skills.	Students' phonetic performance is reflected through their accurate articulatory, auditory and acoustic production and perception in oral and written quizzes and exams.	Display of organs of speech through colour films and illustrations supported by practical phonetic drills.
Students provide effective phonological account of segmental and suprasegmental features of the English language.	Students' phonological performance is reflected through their accurate comprehension of the phonemes, allophones and syllable structure in oral and written quizzes and exams.	Through phonological analysis, special emphasis is placed on the nature of phonemes, allophones, distinctive features and the suprasegmental features.
Students acquire effective English-Arabic-English practical translation skills.	Quizzes and exams reflect students' practical and theoretical translation skills.	Practical English-Arabic-English translation training for textual analysis, semantic investigation and cohesion system problems supported by weekly assignments.

Students solve different translation problems in various types of discourse.	Quizzes and exams illustrate students' analytical skills of different genres and ability to provide approaches to different problems.	Translation problems highlighted through different genres and different problems are tackled through distinct translation approaches
Students investigate into theoretical translation approaches critically, analytically, and textually.	Students' textual analytical skills are reflected through translation assignments and classroom discussion.	Different genres reflecting various translation problems.
Students interpret literary works of various eras in terms of theme, style and historical/cultural influence within their own historical and political frameworks.	Quizzes, exams, and assignments reflect students' awareness and sound interpretation of literary works.	Theme, style and historical/cultural influence are accounted for through debate, presentations and research assignments.

Students analyze the language and literary devices used in complex literary texts.	Quizzes, exams, and assignments reflect students' competence and accurate interpretation of various types of literary works.	Extracts from different literary works are given as exercises for literary analysis and criticism.
Students implement several forms of scholarly literary criticism to written texts.	Quizzes, exams, and assignments reflect students' competence and accurate interpretation of various types of literary works.	Extracts from different literary works are given as exercises for literary appreciation and criticism.
Students conduct independent research using both primary and secondary literary sources.	Assignments reflect students' skills in academic research and literary analysis.	Research assignments for literary analysis and criticism.
Students apply critical and interdisciplinary academic methods in both linguistics and literature.	Quizzes, exams, and assignments demonstrate students' awareness of linguistic and literary analysis of different literary works	Group discussion, debate, and presentations.

Figure 3: Goals and Objectives of the English Language Programme and their measurable indicators and major strategies (*English Programme* September 25, 2017: p. 9)

This teacher education programme consists of four levels (as shown in the following table that is adapted from their programme specifications) taught through its four years. Every academic year includes one level spread into two semesters, which means a level per academic year. Students study a variety of subjects per year and per semester. There are compulsory courses for their

graduation; and elective courses (not compulsory for their graduation). For example, students must study 'Introduction to Grammar,' which is a compulsory subject during the first semester of the first year. Its course code is ENGL 111. This subject is a compulsory subject. This means that this subject is not an elective subject- a subject that students may choose to study, yet it is not compulsory for their graduation. There are no pre-requisite courses for this subject, and it only bears two credit hours out of the total credit hours (134). In addition to the major courses such as Introduction to Grammar, Reading Strategies, Listening and Speaking skills, English Language Skills 1 and 2, Grammar in Use, Paragraph Writing, and Communication Skills and Strategies, students study other (yet they are mandatory) courses like the Holy Quran course, Arabic Language skills 1, Islamic studies: Faith and Worship, and two compulsory elective courses during the first level or year 1. During the second level (year 2), students study extended reading strategies, advanced grammar, extended essay writing, literary texts, advanced reading, advanced communication skills, extended essay writing, introduction to linguistics and introduction to literature, in addition to some other courses like Arabic language skills 2, Free elective course 1, and Islamic Studies: Features of the Prophet's Biography. Throughout the third level (year 3), students study Introduction to Translation, phonetics, introduction to poetry, the rise of the novel, morphology, phonology, applied Translation, romantic poetry, Victorian fiction, Elizabethan drama, Short Story and literary translation courses, above and beyond other courses like contemporary ideological trends (Islamic), Islamic studies: Human Rights in Islam, a free elective course, university elective requirement three and departmental elective 1. Throughout the fourth level (year 4), students study semantics, syntax, specialised Translation, literary theory, modern drama, Early 20th Century Novel (elective), Stylistics (elective), Discourse Analysis, Language Acquisition, Sociolinguistics, Comparative Literature, Contemporary Literature, Literary criticism in Practice, Pragmatics (elective), Victorian and Modern Poetry (elective) and advanced translation

courses, in addition to Free Elective Course 3, University Elective 4, Departmental Elective 2, Islamic Studies: Islamic Values and Ethics and Departmental Elective 3.

From the details and specifications of the four-year programme with its four levels, it should be noted that most courses are obligatory. Some courses are optional. Other courses are just elective courses. However, year-four students study only one language acquisition course. Most courses are language and linguistics courses. Some courses expose students to different forms of literature in English. Other courses deal with translation in both languages (English and Arabic). Some courses are about Islamic morals and principles. The following table presents the whole picture of what students of the English Language and Translation programme study throughout their four years or levels.

Level	Course Code	Course Title	Required or Elective	Pre-requisite	Credit Hours	College or Department
Level 1 Semester 1 Year 1	ENGL 111	Introduction to Grammar	R	-	3	D
	ENGL 113	Reading Strategies	R	-	3	D
	ENGL 115	Listening and Speaking Skills	R	-	3	D
	QRRS 101	The Holy Quran	R	-	2	C
	ENGL 101	English Language Skills (1)	R	-	2	C
	GS 111	Arabic Language Skills (1)	R	-	2	C
	GS 101	Islamic Studies: Faith and Worship	R	-	2	C
Level 1 Semester 2 Year 1	ENGL 112	Grammar in Use	R	ENGL 111	3	D
	ENGL 114	Paragraph Writing	R	-	3	D
	ENGL 116	Communication Skills and Strategies	R	ENGL 115	3	D

	GSE 1	Elective University Requirement	E	-	2	U
	GSE 2	Elective University Requirement	E	-	2	U
	ENGL 102	English Language Skills (2)	R	ENGL 101	2	D
Level 2 Semester 1 Year 2	ENGL 211	Extended Reading Strategies	R	ENGL 113	3	D
	ENGL 213	Advanced Grammar	R	ENGL 112	3	D
	ENGL 215	Short Essay Writing	R	ENGL 114	3	D
	GS 112	Arabic Language Skills (2)	R	GS 111	2	U
	ARAB 201	Literary Texts	R	GS 111	2	C
	F.E. 1	Free Elective Course (1)	E	-	2	C
Level 2 Semester 2 Year 2	ENGL 212	Advanced Reading	R	ENGL 211	3	D
	ENGL 214	Advanced Communication Skills	R	ENGL 116	3	D
	ENGL 216	Extended Essay Writing	R	ENGL 215	3	D
	ENGL 224	Introduction to Linguistics	R	-	3	D
	ENGL 236	Introduction to Literature	R	-	3	D
	GS 102	Islamic Studies: Features of the Prophet's Biography	R	عام 101	2	U
Level 3 Semester 1 Year 3	ENGL 321	Introduction to Translation	R	-	3	D
	ENGL 323	Phonetics	R	ENGL 224	3	D
	ENGL 331	Introduction to Poetry	R	ENGL 236	2	D
	ENGL 333	The Rise of the Novel	R	ENGL 236	2	D

	ISLM 335	Contemporary Ideological Trends	R	-	2	C
	GS 103	Islamic Studies: Human Rights in Islam	R	GS 102	2	C
	F.E. 2	Free Elective Course	E	-	2	C
Level 3 Semester 2 Year 3 6	ENGL 322	Morphology	R	ENGL 224	2	D
	ENGL 324	Phonology	R	ENGL 325	3	D
	ENGL 326	Applied Translation	R	ENGL 221	3	D
	ENGL 332	Romantic Poetry	R	ENGL 332	2	D
	ENGL 334	Victorian Novel	R	ENGL 334	2	D
	ENGL 336	Elizabethan Drama	R	ENGL 236	2	D
	GSE 3	University Elective Requirement (3)	E	-	2	C
	ENGL 301	Departmental Elective (1)	E	-	2	D
	ENGL 302	Short Story (Elective)	R	ENGL 236	2	D
	ENGL 304	Literary Translation (Elective)	R	ENGL 221	2	D
Level 4 Semester 1 Year 4	ENGL 421	Semantics	R	ENGL 224	3	D
	ENGL 423	Syntax	R	ENGL 322	3	D
	ENGL 325	Specialized Translation	R	ENGL 324	2	D
	ENGL 431	Literary Theory	R	ENGL 236	2	D
	ENGL 433	Modern Drama	R	ENGL 336	2	D
	F.E. 3	Free Elective Course (3)	E	-	2	C
	GSE 4	University Elective Requirement (4)	E	-	2	C

	ENGL 401	Departmental Elective (2)	E	-	2	D
	ENGL 403	Early 20th Century Novel (Elective)	E	ENGL 334	2	D
	ENGL 405	Stylistics (Elective)	E	ENGL 224	2	D
Level 4 Semester 2 Year 4						
	ENGL 422	Discourse Analysis	R	ENGL 421	3	D
	ENGL 424	Language Acquisition	R	ENGL 423	3	D
	ENGL 426	Sociolinguistics	R	ENGL 421	2	D
	ENGL 432	Comparative Literature	R	ENGL 334	2	D
	ENGL 434	Contemporary Literature	R	ENGL 334	2	D
	ENGL 436	Literary Criticism in Practice	R	ENGL 334	2	D
	GS 104	Islamic Studies: Islamic Values and Ethics	R	GS 103	2	U
	ENGL 402	Departmental Elective (3)	E	-	2	D
	ENGL 404	Pragmatics (Elective)	E	ENGL 421	2	D
	ENGL 406	Victorian and Modern Poetry (Elective)	E	ENGL 332	2	D
	ENGL 408	Advanced Translation (Elective)	R	ENGL 425	2	D

Table 1: English Language Programme's four-year syllabus (*English Programme* September 25, 2017: p. 13)

1.9 Criteria and standards of recruiting EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia

Recruiting Saudi EFL teachers - whether for the Ministry of Education (MOE) or for the Saudi universities - goes through several stages and phases and has different criteria and standards. Although there are some similarities concerning the standards and criteria according to which EFL

teachers are recruited for the MOE and Saudi universities, there are some differences. For example, as per the standards of the MOE, candidates with a B.A. in English can be recruited to work for the primary, preparatory and secondary schools. However, only candidates with an M.A. in TESOL, TEFL and applied linguistics or linguistics can be recruited for the position of EFL instructor at the Saudi universities. In this section, an overview of recruiting EFL teachers for the MOE and Saudi universities is provided in detail.

1.9.1   MOE criteria for recruiting EFL teachers

The Saudi Ministry of Civil Service sets the criteria or standards for recruiting EFL teachers for the Ministry of Education. It also differentiates between candidates fairly and according to these specific standards. Besides, it (Ministry of Civil Service) revises these standards and criteria from time to time in line with any new circumstances, changes, and according to the results of any recent studies that are executed for the purpose of setting standards. A candidate is assessed and chosen for the job through a kind of equation. First, he/she must have a B.A. in English or teaching English as a foreign language. Besides this, he/she must pass the Qiyas test (a test in teaching English as a foreign language). Also, the priority of recruitment is given to those who have been waiting for the job for the greatest number of years. For example, if there are two candidates with the same GPA in their B.A. and the same score of the Qiyas test, then the priority is given to the one who has been waiting long for the job. Consequently, the equation would have the following format:

GPA of Candidate's B.A. converted score + Qiyas (EFL teaching Test) converted score + Days or years of waiting for the job converted score

For achieving some sort of transparency and giving real opportunity for all candidates to be recruited, the Ministry of Civil affairs sets these specific criteria according to which candidates are assessed and evaluated through a computer program that adds all the achieved converted scores

and gives the final score (cumulative score) for each candidate. The following steps show how they compute the converted scores to choose the best candidates for the EFL position:

1. Candidates' GPA of their B.A.s will be converted to 40 marks as follows:

    For example, if a candidate got 4.75 out of 5 in his GPA, the equation would be like the following example:

    4.75*100/ 5 = 95%

    95% *0.4= 38

So, this candidate's GPA in his or her B.A. converted score would be 36 out of 40.

2. The score of the Qiyas test (out of 100) would be converted to 40 points. For example, if a candidate got 80 out of 100, the equation would be as follows:

    0.4*80= 32

So, this candidate's converted mark in his or her Qiyas test would be 32 out of 40.

3. The priority of graduation is also given a score out of 20. All candidates are only allowed 10 (which is 3600 days) maximum years of priority (priority here means the number of days or years a candidate waits to be recruited). If a candidate has been waiting for the job for 1363 days, the equation would be as follows:

    1363/3600*100 = 37.86111

    37.86111*0.2 = 7.572222

So, this candidate's converted mark in his or her years of waiting for the job would be 7.572222 out of 20.

4. Then the total scores are added as in the following example:

    95% *0.4= 38 (GPA converted score) +

0.4*80= 32 (Qiyas converted score) +

37.86111*0.2 = 7.572222 (Days or years of waiting for the job converted score)

So, the totals would be added in an equation like the following:

38 (GPA converted score) + 32 (Qiyas converted score) + 7.572222 (Days or years of waiting for the job converted score) = 77.57222

So, the total score of this candidate is 77.572222 out of 100 (the maximum score)

The above criteria were translated from Arabic into English by the researcher from Ministry's website ("2019 ,دليل احتساب نقاط التعيين بالمفاضلة").

To sum up, the Ministry of Education's criteria for choosing teachers support the main aim of this study as the candidate's credentials (B.A. converted score+ Qiyas converted score + Days or years of waiting for the job converted score) are considered and counted towards her/his total. This means that the candidates' GPA and Qiyas scores can affect their being chosen for the job- their language ability, as well as their teaching ability, can influence their future as teachers. In other words, are these candidates prepared to teach English as a foreign language after graduation? Are they linguistically and professionally prepared to teach English after they are offered the job? The following section is a brief summary of the Qiyas exam:

1.9.1.1 EFL teachers' Qiyas Test, its content, and its standards

The test covers the content of English language major standards that are organised according to specific areas. Each area covers one standard or more. Under each of these standards, there are several indicators. Consequently, the test questions are based on those indicators. The test involves five main areas of the English language teaching major. These areas include:

❖ Linguistics

❖ Applied Linguistics/TESOL

❖ Language Instruction

❖ Language Assessment

❖ English Literature

The following figure shows the percentage of the total mark that each area carries. For example, Linguistics carries 20 per cent of the total mark of the set standards; Applied Linguistics/TESOL carries 34 per cent; Language Instruction carries 24 per cent; Language Assessment carries 20 per cent, and English literature only carries 2 per cent. This distribution of percentages consideres the content of curricula taught at Saudi public schools and the rationale of the set standards.
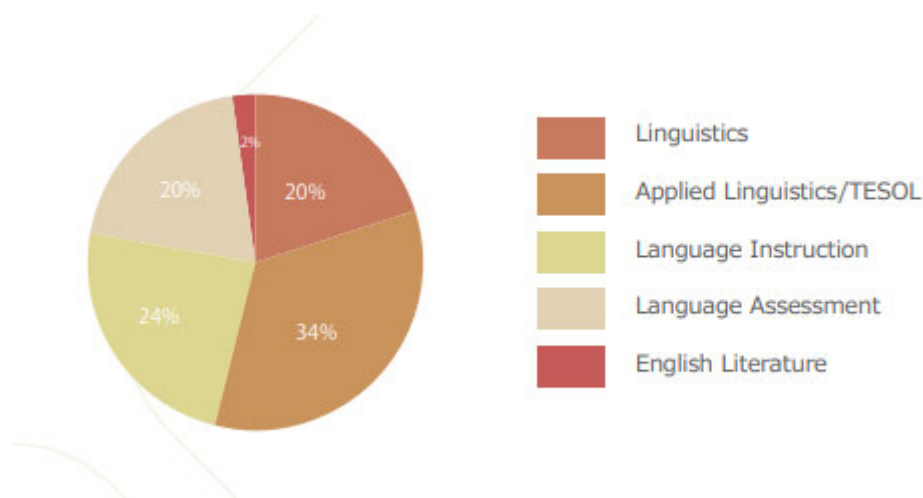
Figure 4: Qiyas Test Distribution of percentages ("2019, "دليل المتقدم لإختبار معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية).

1.9.2 Criteria for recruiting Saudi EFL teachers at Saudi universities

Criteria for recruiting EFL teachers for the Saudi universities used to be set by the Ministry of Higher Education, which is now part of the MOE. This section discusses the set criteria that have to be followed at the Saudi universities throughout Saudi Arabia as prescribed by the MOE directory. This section also gives a whole picture of the steps and the procedures followed at the English Language Centre (ELC) at the Saudi university where the study was carried out.

To begin with, during the past four years, the recruitment committee interviewed many Saudi candidates for the direct hire position for EFL teachers. Some of these new candidates have experience in teaching English as a foreign language while others do not have any kind of experience except for a practicum, during which they are asked to teach or to observe other teachers, or their colleagues teach. Usually, this kind of practicum lasts for two or three months. The recruitment committee members assess the new candidates applying for the EFL job as per the standards and guidelines set by the Ministry of Education. First, the committee interviews these new graduates and assesses their qualifications and their teaching ability as per the following form in Arabic - translated into English by the researcher.

ملاحظات	مؤشر السلامة الصحية	مجموع الدرجات	معايير المفاضلة الأخرى						معايير المحاضرة العلمية والمقابلة الشخصية				بيانات الماجستير				بيانات البكالوريوس				تاريخ الميلاد	اسم المرشح والسجل المدني	م
			الوضع الوظيفي*	معيار التميز	التجانس بين المرحلتين	الخبرات والمهارات السابقة	المعدل الماجستير*	معدل البكالوريوس*	الإمتحان بالمظهر والسمات الشخصية	الثقافة العامة	مهارات التواصل والحوار	المحاضرة العلمية	المعدل التراكمي*	التقدير العام	التخصص	جهة ومدة التخرج	المعدل التراكمي من (5)*	التقدير العام	التخصص	جهة ومدة التخرج			
			2%	3%	5%	10%	20%	15%	5%	5%	5%	30%										الاسم	1
		0																				السجل	

Figure 5: Teacher Assessment Form in Arabic

Notes	Physical health	Total	Differentiation Criteria						Interview and Lecture Standards				MA details				BA details				Date of Birth	Name of candidate and ID number	م
			Employment Status	Standard of Excellence	Consistency between BA and MA	Previous experience	MA Percentage	BA percentage	Personal appearance and traits	General Knowledge	Communication skills	Lecture	GPA	Grades	Major	University and year of graduation	GPA	Grades	Major	University and year of graduation			
			2%	3%	5%	10%	20%	15%	5%	5%	5%	30%										Name of candidate	1
		0																				ID number	

Figure 6: Teacher Assessment Form Translated into English by the researcher

The form includes the candidate's name and I.D. number. It also gives details about her/his B.A. and M.A., the university where the candidate graduated, the year of graduation, the grades (score as a percentage), and their GPA. The candidate is assessed as follows:

- Giving a lecture = 30 per cent. (This means if she/he gives a successful lecture, they get 30% or less)

- Communication skills = 5 per cent (If they have excellent communication skills, they get 5%.)

- General knowledge = 5 per cent (This means they get 5% if their general knowledge is perfect)

- Personal appearance and traits = 5 per cent (They get 5% if their appearance and personal characteristics are outstanding)

- B.A weight = 15 per cent (If their GPA is 4 out of 4 or 5 out of 5, they get 15%)

- M.A weight = 20 per cent (If their GPA is 4 out of 4 or 5 out of 5, they get 20%)

- Teaching experience = 10 per cent (If they have teaching experience, they get 10%)

- B.A and M.A consistency = 5 per cent (If the major in both degrees is consistent (in teaching TESOL or TESL, they get 5%)

- Standard of excellence = 3 per cent (If the candidate has ever done an outstanding task or has taken out a patent, she/he gets 3%)

- Employment status = 2 per cent (If the candidate does not have a job, she/he gets 2%)

- Total = 100%

  Figure 7 is a real example of candidates' scores and their totals; however, their names and I.D. numbers were removed. Because Arabic is written from right to left, we can notice that the totals are on the left side of the table. To clarify, the first candidate got 27.4/30 in the lecture, 4.8/5 in the communication skills, 5/5 in the general knowledge, 5/5 for

personal appearance and traits, 12.66/15 for B.A, 19.45/20 for M.A, zero out of ten for experience, 5/5 for consistency of B.A and M.A, zero out of three for excellence and 2/2 for not being employed. Consequently, the candidate's total is 81.31 out of 100.

م	اسم المرشح والسجل المدني	تاريخ الميلاد	بيانات البكالوريوس له: جهة وسنة التخرج	التخصص	التقدير العام	المعدل التراكمي من (5) *	بيانات الماجستير: جهة وسنة التخرج	التخصص	التقدير العام	المعدل التراكمي *	المحاضرة العلمية 30%	مهارات التواصل اللفظي والحركي 5%	الثقافة العامة 5%	الإهتمام بمظهر والسمات الشخصية 5%	معدل البكالوريوس 15%	معدل الماجستير 20%	الخبرات والمهارات السابقة 10%	التجانس بين التخصصين 5%	معيار التميز 3%	الوضع الوظيفي 2%	مجموع الدرجات	مؤشر السلامة الجسدية *	ملاحظات
6	الاسم / السجل	1409/1/15	طيبة 1432	اللغة الإنجليزية	جيد جدا	84.4	أمريكا 1437	النطق اللغة الإنجليزية	استيفاء	97.25	27.4	4.8	5	5	12.66	19.45	0	5	0	2	81.31		
7	الاسم / السجل	1409/8/10	طيبة 1434	اللغة الإنجليزية	جيد جدا	82.4	أمريكا 1438	لغويات تطبيقية	استيفاء	95.5	28.25	5	4.75	5	12.36	19.1	0	5	0	2	81.46		
8	الاسم / السجل	1407/10/18	طيبة 1431	اللغة الإنجليزية	جيد جدا	82	أمريكا 1436	المناهج والتدريس	استيفاء	100	22	3.5	4	4	12.3	20	0	5	0	2	72.8		
9	الاسم / السجل	1410/5/9	طيبة 1433	اللغة الإنجليزية	استيفاء	91.6	أمريكا 1438	لغويات	جيد جدا	87.25	23.4	4	3.2	5	13.74	17.45	0	5	0	2	73.79		

Figure 7: A real example of teacher assessment with scores and totals

Assessing candidates in the way as shown above was not enough evidence for the candidates' teaching ability and language ability, so the committee decided to give these candidates a TOEFL test (paper-based), a TKT and a writing task. Also, the committee gave weight for each tool of assessment. For example (and as shown in the figure below), TOEFL carried a weight of 30 per cent of the total marks, the TKT carried a weight of 20 per cent, the writing task carried 10 per cent, and the interview carried 40 per cent. For instance, the second candidate got 26.8 out of 30 at the TOEFL, 18 out of 20 at the TKT exam, 10 out of 10 at the writing and 36.9 out of 40 at the interview. So, this candidate's total is 91.1 out of 100.

#	Name	GPA (BA)	GPA (MA)	Degree Equivalency	TOEFL Average	TKT Scores /79	Correlation To IELTS	CEFR	Writing /6	Interview Average/ 68	Average Rating	TOEFL Average %	Weight 30%	TKT Scores %	Weight 20%	Writing %	Weight 10%	Total	Interview Average/ %	Weight 40%	Total
1	A015	Good	3.83/4	YES	648.3	70.0	7.5-8	C1	Absent	Absent	Absent	95.8	28.7	88.6	17.7						
2	B015	Very Good	4.82/5	NA	605.0	71.0	7.5-8	C1	6	62.7	Excellent	89.4	26.8	89.9	18.0	100.0	10.0	54.8	92.2	36.9	91.7
3	C015	Very Good	80/100	YES	573.3	72.0	6.5-7	B2-C1	5	61.7	Excellent	84.7	25.4	91.1	18.2	83.3	8.3	52.0	90.7	36.3	88.3
4	D015	Very Good	3.82/4	YES	568.3	64.0	6.5-7	B2-C1	6	52.3	Good	83.9	25.2	81.0	16.2	100.0	10.0	51.4	76.9	30.8	82.2
5	E015	Very Good	3.94/4	YES	555.0	58.0	6.5-7	B2-C1	3	53.3	Good	82.0	24.6	73.4	14.7	50.0	5.0	44.3	78.4	31.4	75.6
6	F015	Pass	3.82/4	YES	551.7	64.0	6.5-7	B2-C1	6	48.8	Satisfactory	81.5	24.4	81.0	16.2	100.0	10.0	50.6	71.8	28.7	79.4
7	G015	Excellent	4.79/5	NA	545.0	69.0	5.5-6	B2	3	47	Satisfactory	80.5	24.2	87.3	17.5	50.0	5.0	46.6	69.1	27.6	74.3
8	H015	Excellent	4.59/5	NA	543.3	64.0	5.5-6	B2	5	41.5	Satisfactory	80.3	24.1	81.0	16.2	83.3	8.3	48.6	61.0	24.4	73.0
9	I015	Very Good	3.91/4	YES	541.7	62.0	5.5-6	B2	6	57	Good	80.0	24.0	78.5	15.7	100.0	10.0	49.7	83.8	33.5	83.2
10	J015	Pass	3.73/4	YES	530.0	63.0	5.5-6	B2	3	62.3	Excellent	78.3	23.5	79.7	15.9	50.0	5.0	44.4	91.6	36.6	81.1
11	K015	Excellent	4.89/5	NA	518.3	70.0	5.5-6	B2	4	63	Excellent	76.6	23.0	88.6	17.7	66.7	6.7	47.4	92.6	37.1	84.4
12	L015	Good	4 of 4	YES	518.3	62.0	5.5-6	B2	3	33.7	Unsatisfactory	76.6	23.0	78.5	15.7	50.0	5.0	43.7	49.6	19.8	63.5
13	M015	Excellent	4.86/5	NA	496.7	74.0	4.5-5	B1-B2	5	57.7	Good	73.4	22.0	93.7	18.7	83.3	8.3	49.1	84.9	33.9	83.0
14	N015	Good	3.4/4	YES	495.0	32.0	4.5-5	B1-B2	5	35.7	Unsatisfactory	73.1	21.9	40.5	8.1	83.3	8.3	38.4	52.5	21.0	59.4
15	O015	Good	3.85/5	YES	480.0	57.0	4.5-5	B1-B2	4	55.5	Good	70.9	21.3	72.2	14.4	66.7	6.7	42.4	81.6	32.6	75.0
16	P015	Good	3.08/4	YES	476.7	42.0	4-4.5	B1-B2	3	49	Satisfactory	70.4	21.1	53.2	10.6	50.0	5.0	36.8	72.1	28.8	65.6
17	Q015	Excellent	3.81/4	YES	470.0	45.0	4.0	B1	5	56.7	Good	69.4	20.8	57.0	11.4	83.3	8.3	40.6	83.4	33.4	73.9

Figure 8: Teacher Assessment Form (GPAs, TKT, TOEFL with correlation to CEFR and Totals)

The TOEFL test was given to these candidates to assess their language ability. Also, the committee gave them the TKT (Teacher Knowledge Test that was developed by Cambridge ESOL) to assess their ability to teach English as a foreign language. In addition, and as per the requirements and standards set by the Ministry of Higher Education, these new candidates have to have a B.A. and an M.A. (with a score of at least 'very good' in both degrees as shown in the university screenshot advertisement in Arabic that was posted on the university's website at the beginning of 2019) in teaching English as a foreign or second language. If the new candidates meet the requirements mentioned above, they are then entitled to attend the interview and sit for the other assessment tools. Moreover, the excel sheet shows their GPA scores of their B.A. and M.A. as well as their scores in TOEFL, TKT, and their correlation to IELTS; and their correlation to the CEFR (Common European Framework Reference).

التخصص	الدرجة العلمية	الجنس	المقر
اللغة الإنجليزية وطرق تدريسها	مدرس لغة (المستوى السادس)	رجال	المقر الرئيسي بالمدينة + (فرع الجامعة بينبع – العلا-بدر)
اللغة الإنجليزية وطرق تدريسها	مدرس لغة (المستوى السادس)	نساء	فرع الجامعة بينبع – العلا

الشروط:
أن يكـون المتقدم/ة حاصـل/حاصلة عـلى درجـة البكالوريوس في اللغة الإنجليزيـة وطـرق تدريسـها مـن جامعة معتمـدة انتظامـا، عـلى الا يقل التقدير العـام عـن جيـد جـداً.
أن يكـون المتقدم/ة حاصـل/حاصلـة عـلى درجـة الماجسـتير في اللغة الإنجليزيـة وطـرق تدريسـها مـن جامعـة معتمدة انتظاما، عـلى الا يقل التقدير العـام عـن جيـد جـداً.
ألا يكون المتقدم موظفاً حكومياً.
معادلة الشهادة إذا كانت صادرة من جامعة غير سعودية.
أن يكـون المتقدم/ة حاصل/حاصلة حديثـاً عـلى 6,5 درجـات في اختبـار IELTS او مـا يعادلهـا في اختبـار TOEFL و STEPS، عـلى ألا يكـون أنقضى عـلى الاختبـار أكـثر مـن سـنتين.
ويجب أن يتضمن الوثائق التالية:
السجل الأكاديمي (كشف الدرجات) لدرجة البكالوريوس.
السجل الأكاديمي (كشف الدرجات) لدرجة الماجستير.
المؤهل للبكالوريوس.
المؤهل للماجستير.
بطاقة الأحوال المدنية او بطاقة العائلة.
توصيات علمية.
السيرة الذاتية متضمنه الخبرات العملية.

Figure 9: Requirements of the EFL position (advertisement in Arabic)

The following section provides details for the procedures of recruiting EFL teachers at the ELC (one of the centres at the university where the study was conducted).

1.9.2.1 Procedures for recruiting EFL Saudi teachers at the ELC

First, the university posts an advertisement for the EFL job in the university's official website and one of the local newspapers. Then, candidates must apply for the job through the university's website. Once the deadline was reached, we collected the candidates' details and sorted them according to the highest grades they got in their bachelor's and master's degrees. This means that priority was given to those who scored highly in their bachelor's and master's degrees. After filtering their details and credentials, successful candidates were shortlisted, and they were given the opportunity for the competition. It was a kind of competition because sometimes candidates are equal in their grades and experiences, but after they go through all the assessment process, we choose the best even if they are academically and professionally equal. The excel sheet mentioned above presents the data for 17 Saudi shortlisted candidates who were interviewed, and their

interview scores, their TKT scores, and their TOEFL scores were computed and given a percentage that adds to the total final score. Also, these candidates' scores in the TOEFL test were correlated with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and with the IELTS band scores. At the beginning of the recruitment process, we had to make sure that all candidates had a B.A. degree (with at least a very good grade or GPA) with a major in English, and an M.A. degree (with at least a very good grade or GPA) with a major in English language teaching field like TESOL, TEFL, EFL or linguistics. First, these candidates were interviewed by the committee that included a head and three other members. Then, they were given an institutional TOEFL paper-based test. After that, they were given a TKT test so that we could detect their teaching skills. For example, if we look at the grades of candidate no. 12, we find that she had a good grade in her B.A., an excellent grade in her MA (4 out of 4), she had a TOEFL score of 466.7/677, and her interview score is 33.7/68. TOEFL correlation to IELTS (5.5-6), and CEFR, we could find a gap (a problem) between these scores and her B.A. and M.A. scores. The following figure shows the recruitment collected data in 2016. The criteria for recruiting EFL teachers at this university justifies the main aim and objectives of this study because candidates had to go through the whole process of assessment that included an interview, a TOEFL test, a TKT test and the other mentioned tools of differentiating among candidates. All the assessment tools attempted to prove the language ability and the teaching ability of the new candidates. All these assessment tools sought only one main aim- were these candidates able to teach English once they graduate? Also, are they linguistically and professionally prepared to teach English as a foreign language when they graduated? The following two figures show how candidates' data were collected, computed, and how correlations were generated.

#	Name	Sec. 1 List.	Conv. Score From:	Conv. Score To:	Sec. 2 Gram.	Conv. Score From:	Conv. Score To:	Sec. 3 Read.	Conv. Score From:	Conv. Score To:	Lower Score	Higher Score	Score Range From:	Score Range To:	TOEFL Average	CEFR	IELTS Equiv.	TKT(%)
									TOEFL ITP SCORES FOR SAUDI CANDIDATES - JULY 2016									
1	A016	49	64	68	34	59	61	45	62	64	185	193	616.7	643.3	630.0	C1	7-8	88%
2	B016	42	56	58	36	63	68	37	55	56	174	182	580.0	606.7	593.3	B2	5-6.5	70%
3	C016	46	59	62	34	59	61	36	55	56	173	179	576.7	596.7	586.7	B2	5-6.5	88%
4	D016	46	59	62	31	56	58	33	53	54	168	174	560.0	580.0	570.0	B2	5-6	70%
5	E016	44	56	58	34	59	61	32	51	52	166	171	553.3	570.0	561.7	B2	5-6.5	79%
6	F016	38	52	54	32	56	58	30	51	52	159	164	530.0	546.7	538.3	B1	4-5	70%
7	G016	32	49	50	30	56	58	34	53	54	158	162	526.7	540.0	533.3	B1	4-5	55%
8	H016	38	52	54	30	56	58	29	49	50	157	162	523.3	540.0	531.7	B1	4-5	70%
9	I016	45	59	62	30	56	58	18	41	43	156	163	520.0	543.3	531.7	B1	4-5	76%
10	J016	37	52	54	24	50	52	35	53	54	155	160	516.7	533.3	525.0	B1	4-5	55%
11	K016	36	52	54	24	50	52	24	47	48	149	154	496.7	513.3	505.0	B1	4-5	69%
12	L016	31	49	50	27	53	55	26	47	48	149	153	496.7	510.0	503.3	B1	4-5	61%
13	M016	32	49	50	26	50	52	28	49	50	148	152	493.3	506.7	500.0	B1	4-5	65%
14	N016	36	52	54	18	45	47	25	47	48	144	149	480.0	496.7	488.3	B1	4-5	76%
15	O016	29	48	49	21	48	49	29	49	50	145	148	483.3	493.3	488.3	B1	4-5	38%
16	P016	28	48	49	23	48	49	21	44	46	140	144	466.7	480.0	473.3	B1	4-5	63%
17	Q016	28	48	49	16	42	45	29	49	50	139	144	463.3	480.0	471.7	B1	4-5	75%
18	R016	35	51	52	20	45	47	14	31	35	127	134	423.3	446.7	435.0	A2	<4	64%
19	S016	27	48	49	14	38	39	20	41	43	127	131	423.3	436.7	430.0	A2	<4	46%

Figure 10: Candidates' data and scores collected during 2016

#	Name	BA Score %	University	Grad. Date	MA Score %	University	Grad. Date	Major	TOEFL	IELTS	STEP	Experience
1	A018	91.2	Taibah University	1428/1429	98.7	California State University,San Bernardino	1437/1438	TESOL		7		4
2	B018	92.7	King Faisal University	1429/1430	100	California State University,San Bernardino	1437/1438	TESOL		6.5		0
3	C018	91.6	Taibah University	1429/1430	94.5	Adelphi University	1435/1436	TESOL		7		1
4	D018	90	Taibah University	1428/1429	85	Essex University	1431/1432	TEFL		6		0
5	E018	95.6	Taibah University	1431/1432	97.8	Taibah University	1436/1437	Curriculum and Instruction			89	1
6	F018	84.4	Taibah University	1431/1432	97.5	Eastern Washington University	1436/1437	TESOL	92			2
7	G018	82.4	Taibah University	1430/1431	95.7	California State University-Fullerton	1436/1437	Applied Linguistics	76	2012		1
8	H018	82	Yanbu University College	1430/1431	100	Middle Tennessee State University	1435/1436	Curriculum and Instruction			94	0
9	I018	91.6	Taibah University	1432/1433	87.2	california state university,fullerton	1437/1438	Linguistics		6.5		2
10	J018	89.2	Taibah University	1431/1433	97.2	Taibah University	1437/1438	Curriculum and Instruction		6		1
11	K018	84.2	King Saud University	1431/1432	100	Texas Tech University	1436/1437	Applied Linguistics		7		2
12	L018	82.6	Hail University	1431/1432	100	Cleveland State University	1436/1437	TESOL			93	1
13	M018	93.8	Al-Jouf University	1431/1432	93.2	University of West Alabama	1436/1437	Education			91	1
14	N018	80.6	Taibah University	1437/1438	97.2	University of North Carolina at Greensboro	1437/1438	Education	95			1
15	O018	89.2	Taibah University	1431/1432	99.2	The university of Western Ontario	1432/1433	Linguistics		6		1
16	P018	89	Shagra University	1430/1431	100	Murray State University	1436/1437	TESOL		6.5		1
17	Q018	93.2	Taibah University	1427/1428	88.7	University of South Florida	1433/1434	TESOL		6.5		1
18	R018	81.6	Tabuk University	1432/1433	92.7	Central Michigan University	1437/1438	TESOL		6		0
19	S018	90.6	Taibah University	1432/1433	97.5	California State University,San Bernardino	1436/1437	TEFL		6		1
20	T018	83.4	Taibah University	1428/1429	99.2	Duquesne University	Pittsburgh, PA	1433/1434	TEFL	80	6		0
21	U018	83.9	Princess Noura University	1432/1433	94.2	King Khlaid University	1435/1436	Applied Linguistics		6		0
22	V018	88	Taibah University	1432/1433	99.2	California State University, East Bay	1437/1438	TESOL		5.5		1
23	W018	75	King Abdul Aziz University	1431/1432	95.5	MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY- MANKAT	1436/1437	TESOL		6		
24	X018	79.5	Baha University	1431/1432	93.2	Winthrop University	1437/1439	Curriculum and Instruction		7		
25	Y018	76.6	Qassim University	1431/1432	96	Umm Al-Qurrah University	1437/1438	Curriculum and Instruction		7		
26	Z018	75.8	Imam Mohammed University	1436/1437	84.5	Winston Salem State University	1436/1437	TESOL		6.5		
27	A1018	75	King Abdul Aziz University	1434/1435	83.4	Imam Mohammed University	1437/1438	Linguistics		6		
28	B1018	75.6	Taibah University	1432/1433	93.5	Gonzaga University	1437/1438	TESOL		6.5		
29	C1018	79.6	King Abdul Aziz University	1432/1433	89.2	Indiana State University	1437/1438	TESOL		6		

Figure 11: Candidates' data and scores relative to the data collected in 2018

1.9.2.2 Correlation of CEFR to IELTS and other Cambridge English Qualifications.

The recruitment committee at the ELC used to correlate the tests (proficiency tests) - that they gave to the new candidates – with the CEFR, IELTS, and TOEFL scores. These days, new

candidates are required to provide an official IELTS score of 6.5 out of nine instead of the institutional TOEFL test, which used to be given to previous candidates. They also correlate the IELTS score with the CEFR score using the following standardised Cambridge Assessment Scale.
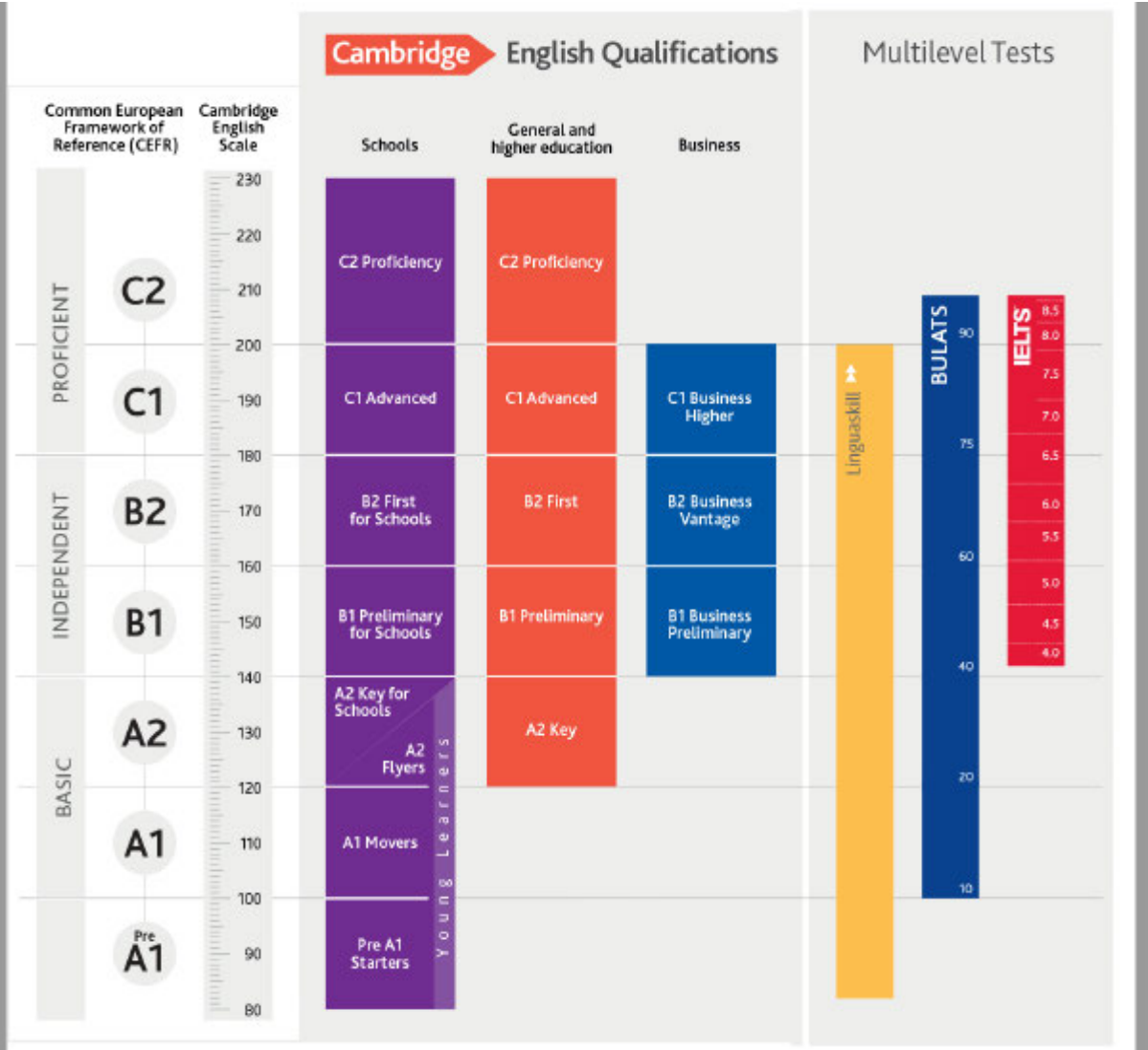
Figure 12: Cambridge Assessment Scale and its correlation to Cambridge exams (CEFR, 2020).

CEFR has been set to "stand as a central point of reference, itself always open to amendment and further development, in an interactive international system of co-operating institutions ... whose cumulative experience and expertise produces a solid structure of knowledge, understanding and

practice shared by all." John Trim (Green in press 2011: xi) (Trim, as cited in University of Cambridge, 2011).

Also, the committee accepts the Standardised Test for English Proficiency (STEP), and they correlate it to TOEFL and IELTS. The following section provides a summary of the STEP. The subsequent section gives an outline of the STEP test.

1.9.2.3 Standardised Test for English Proficiency (STEP)

This standardized test (STEP) is also designed by Qiyas, and it is mainly designed to measure job seekers' and students' proficiency in English in Saudi Arabia. The test includes 100 questions that assess candidates' proficiency level in four areas: reading comprehension, sentence structure, listening comprehension, and composition analysis. The assessed skills bear the following percentages:

1. Reading Comprehension   40%

2. Sentence Structure   30%

3. Listening Comprehension   20%

4. Composition Analysis   10%

STEP serves as:

1. an admission test for students applying for English Departments in the universities;

2. a verification tool for students' exemption from specific courses in English language programmes (course waiver);

3. a placement test for English Department applicants; and

4. a measuring instrument of English language proficiency for students seeking to apply for teaching positions, higher studies, businesses, or any other professional field.

This is an example (one of the ELC candidates applying for an EFL position at the ELC) of STEP certificate that is given to the candidate once they pass the test:

٦ ربيع٢٠ ١٤٤٠ هـ ٢:٢٣ ص

المركز الوطني للقياس
National Center for Assessment
أحد مراكز هيئة تقويم التعليم

اختبار كفايات اللغة الإنجليزية – اختبار محوسب

رقم السجل المدني : 1081768382
اسم المختبر : الهنوف عبدالكريم نايف العبدلي
تاريخ الاختبار : 1439/12/25
درجة الاختبار : 89
درجة التوفل المكافئة لدرجة الاختبار : 519

Figure 13: Real STEP Exam Certificate

The certificate is given in Arabic. It shows the candidate's details: her name (crossed out); her I.D. number, the date of the test; the mark of the test (89/100); and its correlation to the TOEFL (519). Consequently, if a candidate's score is 100 out of 100, The committee accepts it as a 6.5 score in IELTS, and then they (the committee) offer them the job after they satisfy the other criteria and meet the other requirements. Some universities correlate STEP to TOEFL and IELTS like the University of Magmaah, as shown below:

TOEFL			IELTS	STEP
PBT	CBT	IBT		
550	213	79-80	6	97
525	196	69-70	5.5	90
500	173	61	5	83
475	153	53	4.5	75
450-453	133	45-46	4	67
400-403	97	32	3.5	52

Figure 14: Correlation of STEP Exam to TOEFL and IELTS (University of Magmaah, Saudi Arabia)

The criteria mentioned above for recruiting EFL teachers for the MOE and for Saudi universities comply with the main aim and objectives of this study. The MOE standards and criteria for recruiting EFL teachers require the candidates to have at least a B.A. (in English) plus a pass in the Qiyas test in addition to the days or years they waited for the job as mentioned in the previous sections. The Saudi universities require the candidates to have a B.A. in English, an M.A. in teaching TESOL alternatively TEFL, an IELTS score of 6.5/9. Criteria for choosing the best candidates depend on the total scores they achieve by the end of the recruitment process and procedures. When there are clear standards and criteria for recruiting EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia, curriculum designers and policymakers can act professionally regarding the set recruiting criteria when designing teacher preparation programmes. Also, teachers and student teachers can have a whole picture of their preparation for these programmes. They (the teachers) can reflect on their preparation, and they can also act accordingly on whether to further their education or to start teaching after their graduation. So, incorporating the criteria for recruiting EFL teachers in this study resonates with its main aim and objectives.

1.10   Chapter Summary

This introductory chapter provided the statement of the problem, the aims of the study, the rationale for conducting this study, the theoretical approach, as well as the objectives and the research questions. This chapter also gave details of the study's context, of education in Saudi Arabia, of the teacher education programmes in Saudi universities and the English Language Programme background where this study was carried out. Criteria and standards for recruiting EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia were also discussed in this chapter. For example, a summary of the set criteria for recruiting EFL teachers for the Ministry of Education and Saudi universities was also explained in detail. Specifically, details of the EFL teachers' Qiyas test with its content and standards were presented. In addition, procedures for recruiting EFL Saudi teachers at the English Language Centre, and the correlation of CEFR to IELTS and other Cambridge English Qualifications, as well as Standardised Test for English Proficiency (STEP), were also discussed in this chapter.

1.11   Preview of forthcoming chapters

Chapter Two presents the 'Literature Review', and it gives a detailed background for this study. Its main objective was to provide a synopsis of the relevant literature to see what other researchers and scholars – in the Saudi EFL context – have thought, said, and found out about the complicated phenomenon under scrutiny. It starts with an outline of the teacher education or preparation programmes in Saudi Arabia and some implications concerning these. This is followed by the importance of old and current learning theories and approaches as well as the methods of teaching EFL for EFL Saudi teachers. The last section of this chapter discusses the status of English language competency in Saudi Arabi in general.

The Theoretical Framework chapter (Chapter Three) discusses philosophies and theories that underlie this study. It shows how this case study is carried out under the umbrella of Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory. Consequently, its design as a case study, its methodology, and the data collection procedures reflect and draw on this theoretical framework. Therefore, this chapter gives a full account of the methods used and the data collection procedures employed. In addition, it discusses in detail this study's conceptual framework which is guided by Mezirow's transformative learning theory, and how it draws on and informs this study.

Chapter Four, which is titled 'Methodology', looks into the theoretical framework of this study. It begins with the objectives and questions of this study. This is followed by the theoretical underpinnings that outline the research paradigm, Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory, and the mixed-method approach that underpins this study. It also discusses the meaning of a research paradigm and why a researcher must base his/her research on a specific research paradigm. This chapter also provides details on the interpretive paradigm – with reference to its ontological, epistemological, axiological and methodological perspectives and rulings - and how it was used to inform and underpin this study. Thereafter, the research approach and its design and the research setting of this study are discussed. Moreover, this chapter gives details about the participants involved in this study and about its duration. Data-collection techniques, data-collection procedures and ways of analysing these data are also discussed. Furthermore, a section on ensuring data quality – quantitative and qualitative data- is discussed in detail. Lastly, this chapter discusses the limitations of this study.

Chapter Five presents the findings of this study. First, it begins by introducing the qualitatively dominant questionnaire findings with its four sections. These four sections include the participants' biographical details, teaching specific aspects of English, general aspects of teaching, and open-ended questions. Then, this chapter proceeds to the quantitative part – the Cambridge TKT– which

assesses the teaching ability as well as some English language aspects of the participants. This is followed by two focus group discussions with the student participants from the English Language and Translation Department in the Saudi university, where this study was conducted. The fourth section presents the findings of the four interviews with two EFL expert teachers and two professors from the English Language and Translation Department. The two EFL teachers are also from the English Language Centre (ELC) at the same university where the study was conducted.

Chapter Six critically examines the most relevant findings of the four methods used for collecting data: the predominantly qualitative questionnaire, the TKT, the focus group discussions as well as the four interviews with two EFL teachers from the ELC and the two professors from the English Language and Translation Department. A better understanding of the preparation of EFL prospective teachers for their English education programmes and their perceptions of their preparation to teach English after their graduation was one of the most prominent features of this chapter. This feature emerged and was shaped by synthesizing data -triangulation – from various sources and perspectives. Also, the obtained findings through triangulation and coding techniques strengthen the credibility of the study's conclusions and the method of inquiry employed by it. Moreover, the results of this study were analysed according to Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory. Chapter Seven, which is titled 'Conclusions', presents the study's set of conclusions and recommendations that were based on the study's findings. The chapter draws on the study's conclusions that serve as the basis for future studies and recommendations for application in the Saudi EFL context. This study's conclusions were built on the incorporation of the study findings that include prominent themes, analysis, interpretation, and synthesis of the methods of data collection used.

<center>**Chapter Two**</center>

<center>**Literature Review**</center>

Investigating Saudi final-year student teachers' preparedness to teach English as a foreign language after their graduation is a challenging task. It entails exploring the validity of their English education programmes, their linguistic ability, and their pedagogical preparedness as well. Previous scholarship has to be reviewed to ascertain a possible gap and to validate the need for this study. The central purpose of this chapter is to preview the literature as it pertains to teacher preparation programmes (where would-be teachers' or final-year student teachers are prepared to teach English), teachers' linguistic ability and their instructional or pedagogical competence in an ESL context. In so doing, a deeper and better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation may be achieved. Consistent with the interpretive paradigm, the Islamic standpoints are interwoven into this case study. In that way, this chapter reviews literature that relates to previous studies that discuss the efficiency of the teacher education programmes, the effectiveness and competency of Saudi EFL teachers, and the preparedness of would-be teachers to teach EFL. This chapter will also evaluate the literature related to student teachers' (who were main participants in this study) perceptions of preparedness to teach English after their graduation. Note that this literature review is organised thematically.

2.1 Introduction

Since English has become an international language, it has been adopted by the Saudi government to serve as the basis for their development and their relations with the world. In this regard, Alrashidi and Phan (2015) stated a lot of reasons for this adoption:

> Saudi students must learn English effectively to ensure they operate optimally. Some of
> the reasons for learning effective English include English's place as an internationalised
> language, the important role English plays in the Saudi Arabian economy, the utilisation

<center>**[47]**</center>

of English in the labour market, the importance of English as the language of globalisation and information technology, and the religious duty of Muslims to communicate effectively with pilgrims and spread the message of Islam. (p. 40)

In Saudi Arabia, English is taught in government schools as a foreign language. Students start studying English formally in grade six at the primary school for two hours per week and four hours per week for grades seven, eight, and nine. It is also four hours per week for each year of the three years of the secondary stage (High School). At the university level, students must study English as a foreign language for two semesters (an academic year), and it is a prerequisite for enrolling in most of the university Schools or Departments (Al-Seghayer, 2011).

At the university level, students who want to study English Language and Translation must study English literature, translation, grammar, reading, writing, and speaking as key modules. It takes these students four years or eight semesters to graduate. After these students graduate, they can work as interpreters or translators or work as EFL teachers. However, they are expected to be competent English language users who are at least at the level of near-native speakers of English to be able to teach English as a foreign or a second language at schools if they choose to work in the teaching sector. However, some researchers such as Al-Saadat,1985; Zafer, 2002; Al-Hazmi, 2003; Al-Osaimi, 2014; Al-Seghayer 2014; Al-Nasser, 2015; Fareh, 2010; Alhaisoni, 2013; Mitchell & Alfuraih, 2017; and Alshumaimeri & Almohaisen, 2017, seem to agree that graduates of the current English Language and preparation programmes seem not to be proficient users of English nor are they near-native speakers of the language. These graduates also do not have enough teaching skills to enable them to teach English as a foreign language after they graduate. In addition, there is consensus among most researchers in the EFL Saudi context that teacher preparation programmes in Saudi Arabia are not effective enough to produce well-prepared EFL teachers. An investigation into this problem forms the basis of inquiry for this research.

Consequently, the main aim of this study is to explore Saudi Arabian final-year student teachers' (English Major) perceptions of preparedness to teach English as a foreign language (in schools) after graduation and the factors that underpin their perceptions. It is envisaged that this study will inform curriculum designers and education policymakers in the EFL teaching context in Saudi Arabia. It should also give insight into the challenges Saudi EFL teachers face, if any, and suggest possible solutions if required. So, conducting this study should fill the gaps and weaknesses in the Saudi EFL context as reflected in student teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach English.

Literature Review

In her qualitative case study, Sheokarah (2018) investigated final-year English Major student teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach English and the reasons behind such perceptions. She used an interpretive paradigm using a qualitative approach. She used three tools of data collection: a questionnaire, visual representations, and focus group discussions. Her study showed that most participants were found to be prepared to teach literature, but they were not ready to teach grammar. Also, the participants were found to be prepared to teach the English content in general, but they were not prepared to deal with the English classroom's policy implementation, administrative tasks, and classroom management. The quality of instruction and instructors and the relevance of modules taught in the teacher education programme were found to be the main reasons behind such perceptions of preparedness. She concluded that teacher education programmes in South Africa should concentrate on sufficient and efficient student teachers' preparation. Besides, their educators (student teachers' educators) should be well-prepared to be able to prepare them on how to teach competently and professionally. This study owes a factual and interpretive debt to Jennifer Sheokarah's study on the preparedness of student teachers to teach ESL.

Luaran & Zakaria (2013) investigated the competency of novice English language teachers to teach in schools. They employed the TKT exam with its three modules to assess these novice teachers' teaching knowledge level, their competency in teaching in the classroom as well as their teaching knowledge in relation to the classroom. Their research applied a descriptive research structure. For sampling, they selected 41 novice English language teachers. They also employed class observations and semi-structured interviews with nine of these teachers based on their TKT exam scores. The findings of their study showed that these novice English language teachers had adequate teaching knowledge as per TKT exam scores. However, they did not apply their learning in their teaching. This implied that these novice teachers were incompetent in some teaching aspects such as choosing appropriate teaching methodology as well as sticking to time management schemes. They hoped that their findings would be a cornerstone for fixing the teacher training programmes offered in Malaysia. The studies mentioned above establish a warrant for this study to assess student preparedness to teach EFL after graduation as well as to help EFL student teachers in the teaching of English as a foreign language. This study also intends to pinpoint the areas of weaknesses and strengths of the English Language and Translation programme and to suggest ways for such a programme to incorporate training courses, practicums, or new subjects that could produce efficient EFL teachers.

When teacher education programmes are accredited and efficient, prospective teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach and enter teaching should be positive. For example, Darling-Hammond et al. (2002) examined data from a survey – of nearly 3000 beginner teachers - in 1998 in New York City concerning these teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach or to enter teaching. Their study was based on whether the teacher education influences what teachers feel prepared to do when they enter the classroom; and whether there are differences in teachers' experiences of classroom teaching when they enter through different programmes and pathways.

The findings indicated that certified and licensed teachers who were educated and prepared in accredited and efficient teacher education programmes felt significantly better prepared - across most aspects of teaching - than those non-licensed or certified teachers who were educated and trained in unaccredited alternative programmes. In sum, certified teachers felt better prepared than noncertified teachers.

As for the Saudi EFL context, one of the first researchers to explore the in-service training needs of EFL Saudi teachers and their perceptions of training was Al-Saadat (1985). He investigated the perceptions of 272 participants – 234 teachers, 11 inspectors and 18 teacher trainers –through a questionnaire that involved 71 competency items that were identified as necessary for the preparation of effective EFL teachers. The 71 items were listed under seven categories: General, English Language Proficiency, Academic Areas, Teaching Techniques, Methods and Approaches, Cross-Cultural factors, and Other Professional Skills and Competencies. The findings showed that all participants agreed that EFL teachers needed in-service training that incorporated all these professional competencies. Both teachers and inspectors decided that the 'Teaching Techniques' competency was the greatest in-service training need. There was also an agreement among participants that the most needed professional competency was 'Using the Language Laboratory' and the least needed one was 'History of English language'.

Another researcher who concurs with Al-Saadat is Alansari (1995), who used a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the perceptions of EFL teachers, EFL inspectors, and EFL teacher-trainers concerning the advantages of the Saudi INSET (In-Service Education and Training) programmes. Participants were also asked questions about their opinions as to what a teacher training programme should cover. The findings showed that there was a gap between the provided INSET programmes, at that time, by the Ministry of Education and the

desired and standardised INSET programmes. Furthermore, the findings showed that the INSET preparation provided was of quite a low standard. Alansari (1995) finally proposed that for Saudi Arabia to improve the quality of EFL instruction at schools, it was necessary, as a first step, to enhance the competency of inadequately trained teachers.

Similarly, Zafer's study (2002) investigated the topics and university faculty roles that should be emphasised and practised in undergraduate EFL teacher preparation programmes in Saudi Arabia. He collected his data through a 67-item survey from eight cities where such programmes were conducted. Three hundred and ninety-five participants (335 EFL school teachers, 30 English and linguistics college professors, and 30 EFL college professors) took part in the survey. The study showed that topics that relate to the practical application of classroom teaching skills- by EFL school teachers- were considered very important while the issues that relate to pedagogy and academic specialisation were considered less important. Also, linguistic and psycholinguistic topics were found to be more important than culture and literature topics. Besides, EFL teacher preparation programmes were criticised by some of the study participants due to their content, lack of practice and misunderstanding of teachers' needs and the lack of educators who could help prospective teachers.

Al-Hazmi (2003) contends that EFL teacher preparation programmes (B.A. and associate degrees) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are nonsystematic and inadequate. So, he suggests a 1-year TEFL diploma as a minimum requirement for newly hired teachers. This is in line with this study's hypothesis that EFL teacher education programmes lack the capacity to prepare EFL teachers professionally to teach English after their graduation.

In her study in Almadinah (a city in Almadinah region in Saudi Arabia), Al-Osaimi (2014), investigated the level of teaching knowledge background of 60 EFL secondary school female

teachers by giving them a modified version of the TKT (Teaching Knowledge Test designed by Cambridge ESOL) and compared its results with their class performance results. She found that the level of EFL secondary school teachers in teaching knowledge is below average as their average score was 47.8 per cent (with a mean score of 11.95 out of 25). She also found that there was a very weak correlation between their performance average which was 93.5 per cent (with a mean score 93.52 out of 100) and their TKT results which was 47.8% out of 100% (with a mean score 11.95 out of 25). Surprisingly, these teachers' years of experience mean was 11.73 years, and they were B.A. graduates of the English Language and Translation Department of a university.

Likewise, Fareh's study (2010) found that insufficient preparation of English teachers, learners' lack of motivation, teacher-centred approaches adopted by teachers, and inadequate assessment practices constitute the factors for poor EFL programmes. He noted that although many of the EFL teachers were holders of B.A. degrees, "most of them have no teaching certificates that qualify them for teaching" (p. 3). He also concludes that most teachers tend to use the Grammar Translation Method. So Arabic is the dominant language in the teaching of English. He recommends that only teachers with an accredited certificate in teaching English together with a B.A. in English language and literature should teach English in Saudi.

One of the problems in the Saudi EFL context of teaching is addressed by ur Rahman & Alhaisoni (2013). In answer to the question, "Are the teachers well qualified and properly trained?", they said, "Many a time, it has been observed that people have been selected for English language programmes with no professional training, no classroom experience, and little or no knowledge of the subject." (p. 5) They go on to suggest that EFL teachers should:

1. have proper knowledge of English language;
2. be well aware of how to teach English; and
3. understand how his or her students learn and what it takes to teach them effectively.

In this regard, Al-Seghayer (2014) states that Saudi EFL teachers are not well trained to the extent that they cannot teach their students to be good language learners. He also contends that the proficiency level of these teachers is so low that they are not able to understand the syllabus they teach, nor are they able to teach it.

In a recent study, Alrabai (2018) contends that Saudi EFL teachers should be provided with good quality pre-service and in-service training that should incorporate extensive school practice. He maintains that these training modes should "involve partnerships with local, regional, and international training centres" (p. 14). He also believes that such partnerships would strengthen and broaden Saudi EFL teachers' qualifications and skills. Finally, he suggests that these teachers ought to obtain thorough training – during their in-service and pre-service programmes- on how to apply the latest teaching methods and modern technology.

Other researchers - like Al-Nasser (2015) - assess Saudi EFL teachers' competency through evaluating their students' productivity or performance. In his study (*Problems of English language acquisition in Saudi Arabia: An exploratory-cum-remedial study*), Al-Nasser stated that after students (in Saudi schools) spend nine years studying English as a foreign language, they are unable to communicate effectively in English. He blames this on the quality of teachers and the methods they use in their teaching. He contends that if students cannot produce a correct sentence, then their teachers are responsible for this failure. Consequently, he considers this problem as a major one that faces English language teaching in Saudi Arabia.

Similarly, Alghamdi (2017) contends that although Saudi students study English for seven years (from Grade 6 till they graduate from high school), their English is insufficient. She maintains that these students' learning outcomes are linked to negative teachers' perceptions about teaching. She contends that students' learning outcomes are affected by their teachers' perceptions of the

curriculum they teach. The purpose of her qualitative study was to describe how EFL instructors perceive and implement the curriculum of the university programme that they teach, and to investigate how they perceive English teaching and learning. She also investigated how the context could shape and affect these teachers' perceptions of the curriculum and its implementation. Her sample included nine EFL female teachers. Her study findings show that EFL teaching and learning – according to EFL instructors' perspectives - are affected by time, curriculum, policy and power, motivation, support, voice and choice, culture, and the resources available. She contends that EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia are seen as passive contributors in the curriculum implementation, and their roles are undervalued. For her, teachers have neither voice nor choice in designing their own curriculums that are imposed on them. In addition, teachers do not have enough time to implement the assigned curriculums. For her, the teacher is considered as "technician, consumer, receiver, transmitter, and implementer of other people's knowledge" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999, p. 16), not just as a person whose main task it is to teach the curriculum imposed on him/her. So, teachers are not motivated because they do not participate in designing their own curriculums, they lack important learning opportunities and resources, and they do not get enough support from higher administration. She posits that if these EFL teachers are given a chance to voice their views and to choose what they teach, and they are given fair training opportunities as well as the necessary resources, their competency would improve.

Mitchell & Alfuraih (2017) investigated the needs of ESL students in an ESL programme. This was focused on the linguistic requirements in teaching the four English language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). For example, 1,114 candidates (44.65% of the sample) said that they need training in these skills – and in how to teach them. However, only 312 candidates (12.51%) could identify their training needs in pedagogy; only (16.79%) grammar; and (21.24%) in vocabulary. Consequently, the most dominant skills that teachers need training in is teaching

the four skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking, meaning that their education programmes did not prepare them well enough to teach the necessary language skills.

Another problem - which affected their proficiency particularly- for EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia was that they could not decide which professional development (P.D.) activities would be of benefit to them, and which would not. In their study, Alshumaimeri & Almohaisen (2017) investigated how often Saudi EFL teachers engage in P.D. activities and how useful these activities were to them for their professional teaching practices. The findings showed that *"discussing lessons with the supervisor and sharing ideas informally with colleagues about teaching"* (with a mean of 3.77) was considered to be the most useful P.D. activity for them. On the other hand, "Traveling to other countries for professional development purposes and attending international conferences" (with a mean score of 1.52) was rated the lowest in terms of P.D. development. The study also revealed that two-thirds of the participants were not satisfied with the P.D. activities they had at school. For the participants, P.D. meant "Ways and programmes to develop teachers' methods, skills, strategies, and ways of teaching". However, "Getting better degrees and diplomas" was the least important for them, which also means that these teachers do not understand their training priorities.

On the other hand, Khan (2012: p. 1) claimed that EFL Saudi teachers "are qualified, experienced and the infrastructural facilities including e-resources are available for their utilisation as per the pedagogic needs. However, the outcomes are not up to the mark." Such researchers contradict themselves when they assume that EFL Saudi teachers are perfect, qualified, and experienced, and that the educational context with its infrastructural facilities and e-resources are favourable, yet the outcomes are not commensurate with a favourable context. In determining the cause of this deficiency, he stated:

It is felt that most of the professionals (teachers) are not appropriately trained in their areas of specialties such as ELT/EFL/ESOL. Thus, it is inevitable to consider the relevance and feasibility of teacher development programs in a place like Saudi Arabia where the achievement of ELT is not up to the marks and the quality is usually at stake. (p. 1)

He concludes that these teachers are not adequately trained in their areas of specialty, and he goes on to suggest that further teacher development programmes should be introduced to compensate for the deficit in their current teacher education programmes.

Other researchers tend to identify the factors that affect the EFL teaching in Saudi Arabia. For example, in their exploratory study on the EFL Saudi Arabian context, Shah et al. (2013) identified the main factors that have an impact on the EFL teaching, as shown in the following chart:
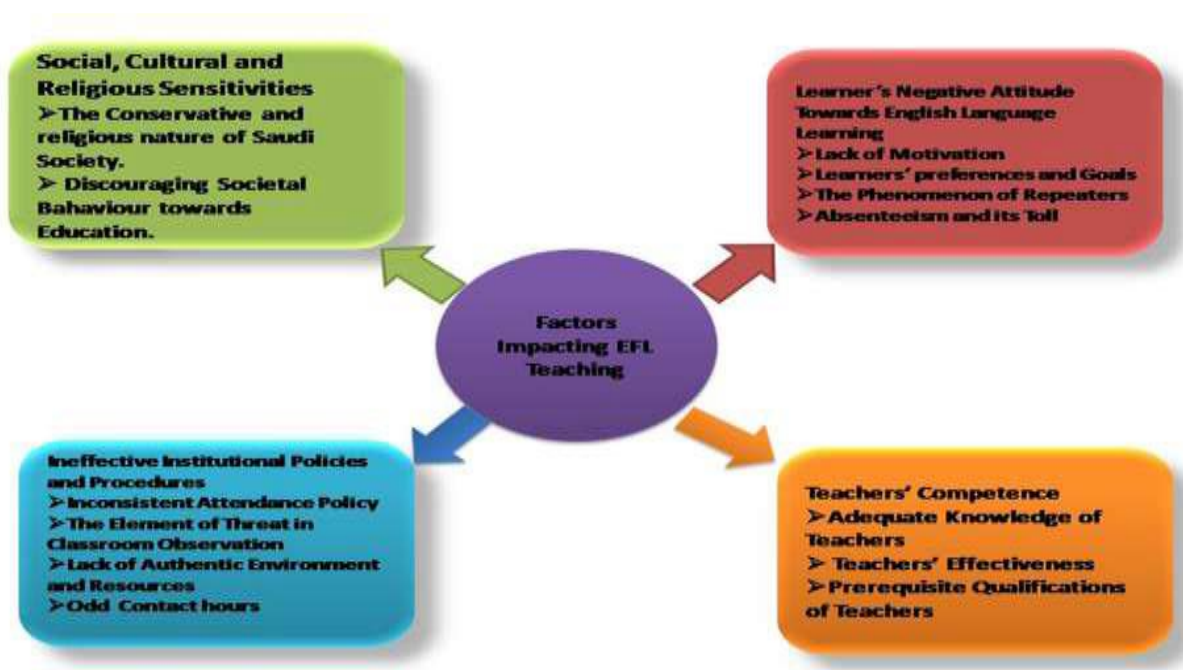
Figure 15: Factors impacting EFL Teaching (Shah et al., 2013: p. 9)

As shown in the above figure, these factors include the social, the cultural, and the religious sensitivities; lack of learners' motivation; and unfavourable institutional policies and procedures. However, the most prominent factors (that were relevant to this study) were the teachers' incompetency and their inadequate knowledge of the subject matter as well as their effectiveness.

These factors were found to be essential because the participants in their study believed that their relevant "teaching qualifications earned them self-confidence and enabled them to experiment with new things in classrooms to achieve their teaching objectives" (p. 20). Also, the participants were found to be adept in English, and that they abided by state-of-the-art knowledge of EFL teaching methods as claimed by Drew et al. (2007, as cited in their study) who believe that teachers' knowledge, their competency, and their effectiveness have an explicit impact on their classroom practices and their students alike. This study proved that hiring and using highly qualified EFL teachers with relevant experience (5 qualified teachers with recognised teaching qualifications like CELTA, PGCert TESOL, TESOL/TEFL diploma, M.A. of TEFL/TESL/TESOL/Applied Linguistics) would yield positive pedagogical outcomes contrary to the adverse results produced in Khan's study (2012).

Even teachers themselves could identify their training needs. For instance, in their qualitative and quantitative study that examines the perceptions of Saudi EFL teachers about their teacher training programmes, Fatimah Oudah & Sultan Altalhab (2018) found that Saudi EFL teachers seem to be looking forward to attending P.D. training programmes that are provided by qualified educators and trainers. Besides, these teachers needed training programmes on how to teach English at the primary school level. They (Saudi EFL teachers) also want to learn about reflective skills in teaching. It is clear that teachers need qualified trainers to train them to teach EFL at the primary stage and how to reflect upon their teaching.

An unpublished study (2004) conducted by the Saudi Ministry of Education (as cited by Al-Seghayer, 2011; Al-Seghayer, 2014) found that both intermediate and secondary school English teachers, who were graduates of colleges, were incompetent in English and did not know how to teach it. Also, the results of the study showed that the TOEFL mean score of these teachers was

only 430. Also, while their mean score in lesson planning (how to plan a proper lesson) was 60 per cent, their mean score in classroom management was only 64 per cent. They only scored 54 per cent in language assessment; and 52 per cent in language teaching methods.

Alrwele (2018) investigated the extent to which the English Language Teachers' Professional Standards (ELTPS) were applied by the English language female teachers at Al-Imam Muhammed Ibn Saud Islamic University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. She used a descriptive method approach in her study, which targeted 126 participants (EFL senior female student teachers). She used a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire (ranging from "incompetent" to "highly competent") to collect her data. The participants were given questions that assessed their competencies in the English language as well as in teaching the language. The findings showed that these student teachers considered themselves to be highly competent in the use of the English language. Overall, these student teachers see themselves as competent when it comes to their English proficiency whilst they are uncertain about competence in the theoretical application, language pedagogy, and curriculum design.

Faez & Valeo (2012) examined novice ESOL teachers' perceptions about their preparation and efficacy to teach English as a Second Language (ESOL) in adult classrooms. They sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the novice teachers' sense of preparedness to teach in adult ESOL classrooms after completing a TESOL induction programme?
2. What are novice teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy to perform various teaching tasks in adult ESOL classrooms after completing a TESOL induction programme? (p. 454)

The findings of their study suggest that novice teachers (in answer to their sense of preparedness to teach in adult ESOL classrooms after completing a TESOL induction programme) felt most prepared: to manage their classrooms effectively (M = 8.2, SD = 1.7); to select suitable material to use in their classrooms (M = 8.1, SD = 1.6), and to write lesson plans effectively (M = 8.0, SD = 1.7). However, they felt least prepared: to teach ESL literacy (M = 6.1, SD = 3.0); to teach

English for academic purposes (M = 6.5, SD = 2.7); and to teach English in a foreign language setting (M = 6.6, SD = 2.7). Their mean score (out of 10) to develop tests for the classroom was (M = 7.0, SD = 2.2); to teach pronunciation (M = 7.4, SD = 2.0), to teach international students in Canada (M = 7.4 2.4), to teach grammar (M = 7.5, SD = 1.9), to teach listening skills (M = 7.6, SD = 1.9), to use a variety of teaching methods (M = 7.7, SD = 1.8), to teach writing skills (M =7.7, SD = 1.8), to develop appropriate material to use in the classroom (M = 7.9, SD = 1.8), to teach speaking skills (M = 7.9, SD = 1.8), to teach reading skills (M = 7.9, SD = 1.8), to design practical lesson plans (M = 8.0, SD = 1.7). All participants were found to be in favour of the practicum as it was a hands-on experience for real teaching. Also, participants thought that their instructors were knowledgeable, experienced, and helpful. Participants stated that the least useful features in their TESOL programme were the theory of instruction which included theories of second language acquisition and theoretical linguistics.

The context -ESL versus EFL- in which teachers are educated and trained may also have an influence on their phonological competence in the target language. For example, Al-Arishi's study (1991) investigated the quality of the phonological input of 20 Saudi Arabian teachers of English as a foreign language in their classrooms. Ten out of the 20 teachers were educated and trained in an ESL context. The other ten were educated and trained in an EFL context. The study was established to answer two questions:

> "Does the quality of the teacher's phonological command of the language differ when trained in an ESL environment (those trained in the United Kingdom) compared to one trained in an EFL environment (those trained in Saudi Arabia)? Does this phonological competence differ between a group of teachers assigned to an area with limited extra-classroom opportunities to reinforce their English and a group assigned to an area with more avenues for English interaction?"

As a way of assessing these teachers' phonological input quality in their classrooms, phoneme addition, phoneme omission, phoneme substitution and incorrect stress were analysed. The study

findings showed that the teachers who were educated and trained in an ESL context produced fewer phonological errors than those who were educated and trained in the EFL context. However, the number of phonological errors did not differ among the groups of teachers in both areas - a group of teachers in a rural area with limited extra-classroom opportunities to reinforce their English and a group assigned to an urban area with more avenues for English interaction.

Khalid et al. (2017) investigated the pre-service teachers' opinions regarding their educational preparation in one of the universities in the UAE. They explored six areas, specifically: planning and preparing for lessons, classroom environment, professional responsibility, teaching skills, the time allotted for learning different subjects, and time allotted for acquiring specific skills in the programme under investigation. In addition to investigating these domains, they also explored these pre-service teachers' demographic details such as their gender, their pre-service majors, and the level of the school they were assigned to teach in, for example, Basic schools versus Secondary schools. Furthermore, the study investigated the extent to which the six domains anticipated the teaching skills of these pre-service teachers. The study showed that those pre-service teachers have complimentary views regarding their pedagogical preparation. Most of those pre-service teachers thought that they were 'highly prepared' or at least 'well prepared' during their programme. No statistically significant differences were found pertaining to their gender and teaching majors.

Al-Abiky (2019) maintains that the current EFL teacher preparation programmes in Saudi Arabia are under attack because they have already failed adequately to prepare efficient EFL teachers who can meet the requirements of schools and world standards. He also blames these teacher preparation programmes for the Saudi students' low standards and performance in international proficiency tests like TOEFL. He says:

> With consistent poor performance of Saudi students in multiple English proficiency tests, English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher preparation programs in Saudi Arabia are now

under scrutiny for the failure to adequately prepare teachers for the demand of the modern school and global competition. (p. 3)

Similarly, Al-Seghayer (2014: p.1, 2) also stresses the training inadequacy of Saudi EFL teachers and their inability to prepare their students to be 'good English learners'. He contends that most Saudi EFL teachers are not efficient "to the degree that they barely understand the materials that they are attempting to teach to students."

Moreover, Al-Seghayer (2014: p.2) maintains that it is 'publicly acknowledged' among researchers in the Saudi EFL context that most EFL Saudi teachers' proficiency level is so poor that they can barely understand the materials they teach.

Overall, almost all the studies mentioned above – except for the first three non-Saudi studies - question the linguistic and instructional competency of the Saudi EFL teachers, prospective teachers, the validity of the English language preparation programmes, and the pre-service and in-service training programmes. However, none of the above-mentioned studies investigated the would-be teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach English after their graduation. Also, none of the above-mentioned studies explored the reasons and factors that lie beyond and that shape these prospective teachers' perceptions and why they have such perceptions. Consequently, this case study was set to investigate the preparedness of student teachers (the product of teacher education programmes) to teach EFL after their graduation, the efficacy of the English language programmes as they pertain to preparing student teachers to teach EFL and to assess their language and pedagogical abilities. Consequently, after surveying the available literature, the researcher found a gap that should be filled by investigating the student teachers' preparedness to teach English after their graduation and the factors that affect their perceptions of preparedness. This gap provides the warrant for this study.

2.2 Teacher Education or Preparation Programmes in Saudi Arabia

Student teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach are always shaped by the teacher preparation programmes they attended. In spite of the varying qualities of these programmes, many of the prospective students graduate with a questionable competence in their relevant fields (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002). Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow (2002: p. 13) also maintain that "many teachers do not feel that their programmes adequately prepared them for certain teaching tasks, such as using technology and teaching English language learners." Deacon (2012: p. 22) questions the validity of the teacher education programmes as he says that

> "teacher education programmes are the focus of intense scrutiny, especially with regard to their quality and relevance, and the capacity and skills of the teachers they are educating."

He (Deacon) also maintains that;

> "in many countries, teacher education programmes are too often seen as failing to meet the ever-increasing expectations of graduates, not to mention employers and society at large" (p. 22).

Sayed, Badroodien, Salmon & McDonald (2016) agree that there is a contradiction between what is taught in the teacher education programmes and what is practised at South African schools. They speculate that:

> the preparation of student teachers is often less about what is taught in ITE programmes and more about the many stark realities of schooling in South Africa. Preparing student teachers in South Africa to be the teachers of the next generation often sits very uncomfortably alongside the need to help them to simply cope within the ambit of public schooling. (p. 12-13)

In Saudi Arabia, colleges of Arts and Colleges of Education are the primary providers of teacher education or preparation programmes. Colleges of Arts mainly provide English Language and Translation programmes in the form of a four-year B.A. degree. Colleges of Education used to provide English Language and Education programmes in the form of a four-year B.A. degree, but nowadays, these colleges of education only offer TESOL MAs and diplomas via the Department of Curriculum and Teaching Methods. Students in the English Language and Translation

programmes go through four years of eight semesters. Graduates of these programmes are supposed to teach English as a foreign language after their graduation, or they can work as translators or interpreters. However, there are some differences between graduates of colleges of arts and graduates of colleges of education. For example, year-four students at the colleges of education were given the opportunity to practice teaching (through a practicum) during the last semester of their four-year programme. However, the current teacher preparation programmes do not provide their students with a chance to practice teaching throughout their years of study. The content and graduates of these programmes are under scrutiny and criticism. The question is: Are all these teacher education programmes internationally recognised, or are they in line with international standards? Or at least: Are these teacher preparation programmes recognized or accredited at the national level? Also, are graduates of these programmes qualified enough to teach English after their graduation? Similarly, have graduates of such programmes been prepared well for their future jobs? The same question is raised by Thibeault et al. (2011: p. 1) as they wonder if prospective teachers (as per the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001*) have "a license, certificate, or another credential that identifies a given teacher as a qualified English Language Development (DLT) specialist", and they also stress the importance of having "highly qualified teachers" who can "apply best educational practices to help" English Language Learners "(ELLs) reach their potential in an academic environment". Larson et al. (1976) point out that teachers' qualifications will be different from one teacher to another because of the kind of students they teach. However, these teachers will need the same qualifications if they deal with children of all ages. Also, they contend that obtaining these qualifications is a continuous process through which teachers obtain conditional or permanent certification. However, this process should go on throughout their careers. Zahfer (2002) maintains that EFL programmes share a common ground as they are under one big umbrella which is the main domain or paradigm that all stakeholders

(EFL teachers, college professors and even the whole EFL Saudi community) stick to. This shared

paradigm concerns what EFL teachers should be taught in their programmes. He states the problem

of the EFL teacher preparation programmes as follows:

> "Despite the lengthy history of teaching English in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, there are no publicly published documents or available publications in relation to any national TEFL standards that may act as a guideline for existing EFL teacher preparation programs." (p. 4)

Subsequently, throughout the Saudi universities, each EFL teacher preparation programme

(whether in the Faculty of Arts or in the Faculty of Education) is designed according to its own

standards, course specifications and syllabi according to the perspectives of the programme

designers or staff members and the needs analysis they perceive to be right. In 1986, the National

Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) in the United States asserted that the preparation of

teachers – in any field - was an ongoing, long-lasting process. The Council also stated that

obtaining a certificate or a qualification in the field of teaching or even signing a contract for a job

did not mean the end of preparation to be an efficient teacher because those qualifications could

be developed through the real teaching that happens in the classroom:

> "This document, like the 1976 Statement and earlier NCTE recommendations, takes for granted that the education of teachers of English language arts is a continuing, lifelong process. No prospective English language arts teacher can attain, through an undergraduate teacher education programme or even a programme leading to permanent certification, a total command of the art and science of teaching; therefore, teachers should not consider their preparation ended when they receive permanent certificates and tenure in their jobs. Teaching involves the growth of an individual as a professional, as a scholar, and as a human being, growth which develops only through experience in teaching and through lifelong learning." (p. 10)

Later, the 1976 statement was revised, and new guidelines were written. Those guidelines were

meant to propose proper capabilities for teachers of English and to help State Departments of

Education to assess a) programmes for the preparation of teachers offered by institutions seeking

accreditation, and b) individual applicants for certification. In addition, those guidelines also

helped colleges and universities to improve and to assess teacher education programmes that used to prepare elementary and secondary school teachers. Moreover, the guidelines were set to encourage institutes to pick out and recruit competent teachers for teaching. Also, the Council (NCTE) developed guidelines for the preparation of teachers of English language arts. That Council was concerned with developing recommendations regarding varying educational conditions, new insights into the nature of English education, as well as the evolving views about the subject matter and measures in teacher education programmes. It also "offers new perspectives which derive from a dynamic educational environment." (p. 7). The guidelines developed by that Council served as a cornerstone for teachers of English as well as English language programmes around the globe. Nevertheless, the Standing Committee of Teacher Preparation and Certification (1986: p. 10) differentiates between "pre-service and in-service education." It (the committee) is of the view that the

> "pre-service teacher education programme should initiate and develop certain knowledge, pedagogical abilities, and attitudes which will be the foundation for the teacher's subsequent professional career for the English language arts teacher as scholar, decision-maker, and agent of curriculum change."

While these arguments are mainly based on the U.S. system, many of them are applicable to the Saudi context. For instance, this study is primarily addressed to high officials of national departments of education, and to accreditation bodies (like NCAAA committee) that are responsible for institutions and teacher education programmes' accreditation. It is also addressed to those who are responsible for planning pre-service and in-service programmes for teachers as well as for the EFL teachers themselves in addition to the public. In sum, this study is addressed to all the stakeholders in the Saudi EFL context. Zafer (2002: p. 6) maintains that:

> "EFL pre-service teacher education programmes in the KSA should initiate and develop knowledge, abilities, and attitudes in the teacher to enable him to act as a scholar, decision-maker, and an agent of EFL curriculum change."

[66]

In this regard, Smith & Abouammmoh (2013) maintain that Saudi universities are trying to obtain international accreditations for their academic programmes through accreditation bodies like AACSP and ABET. These universities are also subject to the scrutiny and accreditation from the National Commission for Academic Assessment and Accreditation (NCAAA) and the National Centre for Assessment in Higher Education (NCAHE) that have been founded by the Saudi government to guarantee that all Saudi universities achieve the national quality standards. Smith & Abouammoh (2013) maintain that Education in Saudi Arabia has four controlling features: an Islamic-focused syllabus and teaching, a centralised educational system of control and support, state-funded education (which is free at all stages in Saudi Arabia) and a gender-segregation policy. In Saudi Arabia, segregation of males and females at all stages of education is regulated by *Article 155 of the Saudi Arabia Education Policy* which necessitates a firm separation between both sexes with four exceptions: kindergartens and nurseries, some private schools and universities in addition to some medical and science schools at state universities (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013). Almost all curricula at all levels of education in Saudi Arabia, in terms of their content, are geared towards religious content and Islamic studies. Furthermore, rote learning, which is a memorization technique that is based on repetition, is "the most dominant pedagogical approach for teaching and learning" (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013: p. 2). Melibari (2016) also confirms the idea of rote learning and contends that "it is still evident that repetition and memorization are seen as key tools for teaching language, despite research to the contrary" (p.38).

NCATE (2008) also set some standards for Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) Programmes in which NACTE also shows what an ESL teacher must know and be able to do as shown in the snapshot below.

Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) Program Standards:
WHAT AN ESL TEACHER MUST KNOW AND BE ABLE TO DO

ESL teachers understand that language is a comprehensive and complex system for communication and interaction. They use this knowledge to help students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds acquire and use English for both social and academic purposes.

ESL teachers understand the nature and role of culture and cultural group identity in language development and academic achievement. They draw on this knowledge to construct environments that support student learning.

ESL teachers understand and can use standards-based practices, strategies, materials, and technologies to plan, implement, and manage ESL and content instruction that support students in accessing the core curriculum.

ESL teachers understand various issues and concepts of assessment and their effect on student learning. They are aware of and can use a variety of standards-based language proficiency and academic assessment tools to inform instruction and demonstrate student growth

ESL teachers know the history of ESL teaching and current research, as well as public policies and regulations in the ESL field. They provide support and advocate for students and their families and work collaboratively with school staff to improve teaching and learning for students.

Figure 16: Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) Programme Standards (Professional

standards Accreditation of Teacher Preparation Institutions, 2008: p. 73)

Similarly, there are some standards, for educators in general, set by the Department of Education in South Africa (2000). These standards serve as the basis for teachers and their seven roles in the classroom. These standards present the roles of the teacher as:

- A learning mediator;
- An interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials;
- A leader, administrator and manager;
- A scholar, researcher and lifelong learner;
- A community, citizenship and pastoral role;
- An assessor; and
- A learning area/subject/discipline/phase specialist

The above American ESL programme standards and South African standards are essential to mention in this study as they would serve as the basis for standardized EFL programmes within the Saudi context. They would also assist with a better and more in-depth understanding of the qualities that student teachers should be equipped with and they should obtain by the end of their

teacher education programmes. Besides, prospective teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach EFL would be affected positively if international standards are considered and applied in the Saudi EFL context. In addition to the previous criteria, teachers and prospective teachers - throughout the world, not only in Saudi Arabia - are expected to obtain specific standards of teaching competence. These standards must be "sufficiently common and uniform to constitute a basic benchmark of what constitutes a quality teacher and quality teaching" (Deacon, 2012: p. 14-15). For Deacon, these standards require teachers to:

- have expert knowledge of the subjects they teach,
- be aware of the characteristics, needs and learning capabilities of the children that they are teaching,
- to employ appropriate pedagogical techniques and ways of managing the learning environment,
- to utilize various forms of assessment which ensure that learning takes place,
- to reflect on and improve their everyday practices,
- to work alongside of and in concert with others and to conform to official and professional norms (p. 15)

This section also provides a warrant for this study as the English education or preparation programmes are the context in which prospective teachers are prepared to teach English after their graduation. These programmes also shape the would-be teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach. In other words, proving that these programmes do not work professionally as per the international standards, and they do not prepare these student teachers linguistically and pedagogically well provides another justification for this study to be carried out.

2.3 Learning theories and approaches

Teachers will not be able to be good teachers unless they are exposed to old and current learning theories and approaches such as learning styles, multiple intelligences, Bloom's Taxonomy framework of learning as well as the five common learning theories: behaviourism, cognitivism,

constructivism, humanism and connectivism. There are some differences among these approaches of learning; however, they sometimes overlap.

2.4 Status of English competence in Saudi Arabia

Through the overall scores of the TOEFL, IELTS and PISA in Saudi Arabia, it is noticed that EFL Saudi learners' language competency is low as compared to countries around the world. This may mean that these learners are weak in general or the syllabi they study are not efficient to prepare them to excel in the English language, or this may mean that their EFL teachers are not efficient enough to help them compete worldwide. Another reason is that English is not taught intensively in Saudi Arabia as it is taught as a foreign language, not as a second language. This may also affect the general English competency of Saudi students or test takers negatively, as noticed through the mean scores of the IELTS, TOEFL and PISA. This notion relates to the objectives of this study because EFL Saudi learners' low competency could be attributed to their teachers' incompetency. It is also worthy of mentioning that most Saudi EFL teachers and current prospective teachers were taught the same way as their students, meaning that they studied English as a foreign language during the four stages before they started university. This may also be a reason for the low quality of the Saudi EFL teachers and the graduates of the English language programmes around Saudi Arabia. The following two sections give more details through statistics from the IELTS, TOEFL and PISA websites to show how Saudi Arabia is placed at a low competency level as compared to countries worldwide and in the Middle East. These two sections show how EFL Saudi students do not meet the criteria of the international levels and standards as per the standards set by these international assessment bodies. These two sections are essential to mention in this study as they tell part of the story of the low level of competency of Saudi students, which in turn gives a true picture of Saudi EFL teachers' linguistic and teaching competence and how professionally they are prepared.

2.4.1   IELTS and TOEFL mean scores for Saudi Arabia in 2019

In 2019, the IELTS statistics, as per their website, show Saudi Arabia (represented by Saudi IELTS test takers) as one of the least competent (English wise) countries worldwide as it achieved a total mean score of 5.4 out of 9. This 'Academic mean performance by nationality' (5.4/9) is even better than its (Saudi Arabia's) 'General Training mean performance by nationality' as it achieved the last position worldwide with a total mean score of 5.0 out of 9. This indicates that the linguistic competence of Saudi test-takers of IELTS is not as good as in other countries like Germany (with an overall academic mean score of 7.5/9), or even as in Egypt, as a Middle Eastern and Arab country, with an overall academic mean score of 6.4/9, and a general training mean score of 6.6/9. Even the TOEFL total mean score of Saudi Arabia, as per ETS statistics shown in their website:, in 2019 is lower (74 out 120) than other countries in the Mideast region and worldwide. For example, Bahrain achieved a total mean score of 91 out of 120, which is better than Saudi Arabia's. Also, Saudi Arabia's TOEFL total mean score comes third worldwide after Lao, People's Democratic Republic (67 out of 120) and Tajikistan (69/120). TOEFL and IELTS total mean scores of Saudi Arabia correlate and show that Saudi test takers' linguistic competence is one of the weakest worldwide and in the Middle East region in particular. This low or weak linguist competence of Saudi EFL learners may be due to the fact that they study English as a foreign language, which is taught through the four stages before university. Also, EFL Saudi learners' low competence may be attributed to the low proficiency of their teachers, which is in line with the main objectives of conducting this study. In other words, if their teachers (Saudi EFL teachers) had been competent and professional enough, they would have helped them achieve high scores on these two international tests. Consequently, mentioning the low linguistic competence through the IELTS and TOEFL mean scores gives validation for conducting this study which is established

to question the preparation of prospective EFL teachers and their perceptions of their preparedness to teach English as a foreign language in an EFL context.

2.4.2   PISA Report on Saudi Arabia

PISA is a kind of triennial survey (of 15-year-old students around the world) that assesses students' key knowledge and skills that are essential for full participation in their societies. Also, the survey assesses students' proficiency in reading, mathematics, science in addition to another innovative domain which was global competence, as well as students' well-being

When we have a look at the Programme for International Student Assessment's (PISA) report in 2018 on Saudi Arabia, we find that the results of reading, science, and math of Saudi students who are 15 years old are lower than the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average.

After comparing the OECD average (Figure 17 below), it was found that a small proportion of Saudi students were placed at the highest levels (Level 5 or 6) of proficiency in at least one subject. Also, a small proportion of students could only achieve a minimum level of proficiency (in level 2 or higher) in all the three assigned or tested subjects.

Figure 1. Snapshot of performance in reading, mathematics and science
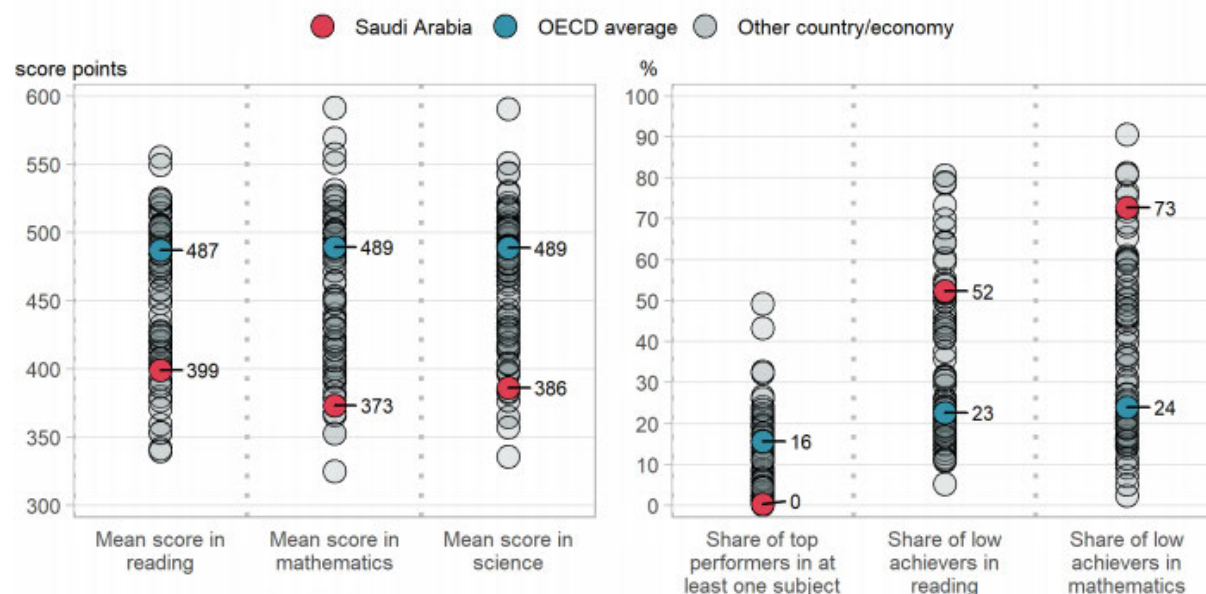
Note: Only countries and economies with available data are shown.
Source: OECD, PISA 2018 Database, Tables I.1 and I.10.1.

Figure 17: Performance in reading, mathematics and science in Saudi Arabia

From the above PISA results, it is evident that (even at the lower stages of education in Saudi Arabia) Saudi students do not meet the criteria of the international levels and standards, which in return will definitely affect the level they reach when they graduate from colleges. In other words, if Saudi students learn a sufficient number of courses during their early stages, graduating with international standards and levels is compromised. Results of PISA also give a valid reason to investigate final-year students' preparedness to teach English as a foreign language after their graduation. Besides, the results of such tests may question the competency of current EFL Saudi teachers as well.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the relevant critical reviews of the previous studies that relate to the main focus of this study as it pertains to student teachers' preparedness to teach English after their

graduation, their English education programmes and their language and teaching competencies. It also gave an outline of the current English preparation programmes in Saudi Arabia, their effectiveness in preparing EFL student teachers for their future jobs as well as their international status as it pertains to their accreditation locally and internationally. This was followed by the status of English competence in Saudi Arabia in general - where IELTS and TOEFL mean scores for Saudi Arabia in 2017 and PISA Report on Saudi Arabia were discussed. All the sections in this chapter were geared towards the gap in the literature that could be filled through investigating student teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach English and the factors that affect their perceptions of preparedness. So, this review suggests a gap that had not been investigated in the literature which warranted this study.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the philosophies and theories that inform this study. The theoretical framework is the setting in which the problem of the research study is viewed and discussed. This study adopts three levels of analysis, macro, meso and micro. At the macro level, different perspectives in philosophy are investigated. At the meso level, a research paradigm - the mixed-method approach with its interpretive nature – is adopted and used to inform this study (as discussed in Chapter 4). However, at the micro-level, Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory (1978 -2014) is used to guide this study. In sum, this chapter will discuss Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory and how it serves as the theoretical framework for this study.

3.2 Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory

3.2.1 Background and history of Transformative Learning

Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory was informed by Kuhn's (1962) paradigm which incorporated frames of reference, meaning perspectives and habits of mind. It was also influenced by Freire's (1970) conscientization that included the so-called disorienting dilemma, critical self-reflection and habits of mind as well. Besides, his theory was influenced by Habermas's (1972) domains of learning which tackled learning processes, perspective transformation, meaning schemes and meaning perspectives. The key concepts of those practitioners served as the basis for Mezirow's transformative learning theory with its ten facets. The notion of Transformative Learning originated mainly from a qualitative study done by Mezirow and his team of researchers (1978a, 1978b) who investigated the extent to which US women, who were resuming their education, underwent a kind of progress (transformation) during their re-entry programmes. Mezirow and his team of researchers found that the women had experienced a 'personal

transformation' and had gone through 10 phases of transformation (Kitchenham, 2008). Transformative learning theory has already become a paradigm because "it has explained many of the unanswered questions about adult learning and created its own group of specialized practitioners." (Kitchenham, 2008: P. 4).

3.2.2 Critical evaluation of Mezirow's theory

This study - which investigates prospective teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach English as a foreign language – draws on Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory. An exploration of this theoretical framework and a critical evaluation is provided in this section. Moreover, links will be drawn between Mezirow's theory and this case study within this chapter while giving details of this theory's main components. Transformative learning theory was developed by Mezirow (1978 - 2018) as well as by other theorists like Brookfield, 2000; Cranton, 2002; Taylor & Cranton, 2012, 2013; Dirkx, 1998, 2006, 2012; Taylor, 2006, 2017; and Dirkx et al. 2006. This theory "provides such an organizing framework for social work education, both as an explanatory theory of learning and as a guide for educational practice" (Jones, 2015: p. 268).

Moreover, Mezirow's transformative learning theory is similar to the European Bildung notion, which refers to learners' transformation "through interpretation and appropriation of knowledge" (Fuhr, 2017, as cited in Buttigieg & Calleja, 2020: p. 2).

It is also based on personal and self-reflection through which one starts to integrate new perspectives into one's life. Although there are a lot of proponents of transformative learning as an effective learning theory, there are also some opponents who think that this theory is no more than a way of learning. For example, Newman (2012: p. 3) contends that there is no such theory called transformative learning, and it does not exist as it is just another form of good learning (from the side of the learners) due to "well-resourced and competently delivered programmes", and 'good educational practice' from the side of the educators. Newman also suggests that we have to

forget the term 'transformative learning' and approve the simple term 'good learning' because, for him, the word 'transform' has a strong meaning. He says that, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, this term "means to change the form of, to change into another shape or form, to change in character and condition, to alter in function or nature, to metamorphose" (p. 37). In addition, some of Mezirow's ten phases of transformative learning have been critiqued and challenged. For example, Nohl (2015: p. 11) contends that dilemmas and crises are not needed to trigger the so-called transformation because it (transformation) "may begin unnoticed, incidentally, and sometimes even casually, when a new practice is added to old habits". Moreover, Buttigieg & Calleja reminds us that:

> "in some instances, a disorienting dilemma may be the trigger, and in others, transformation will occur as an accumulation of smaller encounters with the different and other." (2020: p. 6)

3.2.3 Definition of transformative learning

Transformative learning is defined as a process through which individuals - adults in particular-can reflect on their existing beliefs, assumptions, points of view, habits of mind and experiences. Then they adopt new points of view and perspectives, make changes to their old perspectives and take decisions that may change their future action or plans (Khabanyane, Maimane & Ramabenyane, 2014). So transformative learning "develops autonomous thinking" (Mezirow 1997: p. 1). It is also "the process of effecting change in a frame of reference" Mezirow, 1997: p. 1). For Kitchenham (2008) and Taylor & Cranton (2012), transformative learning is a transfer in one's thoughts, assumptions, feelings, and even actions that help him/her accommodate and consider new beliefs and assumptions. Jack Mezirow developed the Transformative Learning Theory in 1991. He explained how adults - through education - can transform their perceptions of the world, their beliefs; and make sense of their experiences and habits of mind (Hicks, 2012; Howie & Bagnall, 2013). Mezirow (2003: p. 58-59) defines transformative learning as:

"…. learning that transforms problematic frames of reference—sets of fixed assumptions and expectations (habits of mind, meaning perspectives, mindsets)—to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change. Such frames of reference are better than others because they are more likely to generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action."

For Mezirow, the main aim of adult education and transformative learning is

"to help adult learners become more critically reflective, participate more fully and freely in rational discourse and action, and advance developmentally by moving toward meaning perspectives that are more inclusive, discriminating, permeable, and integrative of experience" (1991, pp. 224–225).

That is why this study incorporated different assessment tools that would work as the trigger or spark for adding to, forming and transforming the main participants' (student teachers) present perceptions of preparedness to teach English after graduation. It is hoped that their existing perspectives and experiences would be transformed from being narrow and limited to become broad and wide. This transformation is also expected to help them shape new perceptions of preparedness to teach through engaging in rational discourse and critical reflection. This way, these student teachers are expected to be able to evaluate their current experiences, beliefs and assumptions in light of new perspectives that are broader and wider than their own confined ones. Besides, another objective of transformative learning is "developing more reliable beliefs, exploring and validating their fidelity, and making informed decisions" (Laros et al. 2017: p. 17). that are essential for the adult learning process that ends up in "constructing and appropriating new and revised interpretations of the meaning of an experience in the world" (Laros et al. 2017: p. 17).

The theory of transformative learning is concerned with adults and how they learn. It is based on the assumption that human communication serves as the basis for a shift that happens through

"the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (Mezirow, 1996, p. 162).

According to Dirkx (1998: p. 1-2),

"adult learning is understood largely as a means of adapting to the needs and demands of the broader, socio-cultural context".

Transformative learning is always accompanied by a disorienting dilemma that challenges individuals' existing beliefs, assumptions and experiences. The emergence of such a disorienting dilemma would eventually put these individuals or people into 'conflict' with their prior beliefs and assumptions. Ultimately, this conflict would make them consider the likelihood of looking at their existing perceptions and "experiences from a different angle" (Sifakis and Kordia, 2019: p. 185). The notion of the disorienting dilemma – as a catalyst for transformative learning - is also supported by Laros & Košinár (2019: p. 147) when they stated

"it became visible that crises can have the force to irritate students' meaning perspectives. In the process of accepting and engaging with such deep irritations, transformative learning processes can occur."

However, they contended that

"transformation of meaning perspectives is not automatically accompanied by professionalization" (p. 148).

Besides, this dilemma can be "stressful, painful, and can push the individual to question not only assumptions but the very core of her [their] existence" (Buttigieg & Calleja, 2020: p. 6). It is assumed that this study's student participants may face a dilemma or crisis after they go through the questionnaire, the TKT test, and the focus group discussions. In general, individuals or students who experience or go through transformative learning may go through the ten phases of transformation stipulated by Mezirow. The following section will discuss the ten phases of Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory and how the theory can be used to underpin this study.

3.2.4 Frames of reference and transformative learning

Transformative learning involves a frame of reference that includes "habits of mind and meaning perspectives, which lead to a perspective transformation" (Kitchenham, 2008: p. 4). Frames of reference are referred to as 'meaning perspectives' which involve assumptions and expectations

that are developed through individuals' experiences in life (Kitchenham, 2008; Hatherley, 2011; Hicks, 2012). Mezirow (1997, p. 1) contends that adults acquire "a coherent body of experiences" that are in the form of "associations, concepts, values, feelings, conditioned responses" that fall under the so-called "frames of references that define their life world". For him, frames of reference are the set of assumptions that help adults understand their experiences. These frames of reference do not allow a lot of freedom for adults to choose. However, they restrict and shape their existing assumptions, perceptions and set of beliefs to the extent that they do not allow adults to accept new ideas or other people's views. This means that adults fail to accommodate or accept any new ideas or thoughts that are contradictory to their own to the extent that they reject these new ideas that do not fit into their perspectives. Furthermore, adults also label those new ideas as "unworthy of consideration—aberrations, nonsense, irrelevant, weird, or mistaken" (Mezirow, 1997: p. 1). Transformative learning occurs when these adults allow for some sort of critical reflection or rational discourse. Sometimes rational discourse leads to critical reflection. This is what happened to the candidates of this study. In the beginning, student teachers (the study's candidates) were given a questionnaire that questioned their readiness to start teaching. This questionnaire was like a starter that questioned their preparedness to start teaching after graduation. It questioned their preparedness to teach some specific as well as general English components. It also questioned the content of their English language programme and the efficiency of their teachers. Second, they were given the TKT (a test that was designed by Cambridge) which assessed their teaching knowledge and some of the prevailing teaching terminology in the EFL context. This TKT test was the real and most effective tool that affected how the study's student teachers critically reflect on their own preparedness to teach, the efficacy of their English language programmes, and the efficiency of their teachers as well. These critical reflections were evident through the focus group discussions that were held after they were given the results of their TKT. The TKT results were

part of the group discussions where student teachers were given a chance to reflect on their real preparedness in light of their TKT results which guided their real transformation. The questionnaire and the TKT exam served as the actual challenge that questioned their existing perceptions of preparedness as well as their perceptions of their English language programme. Consequently, the student teachers went through a kind of rational discourse (focus group discussions) through which they were encouraged to engage in discussions about their preparedness to teach English as a foreign language after their graduation. Those focus group discussions served as the trigger for their critical reflections about their preparedness to start teaching after graduation. In other and more specific words, their frames of reference were attacked and challenged through these two tools. Also, it could be said that the questionnaire and the TKT results worked as the disorienting dilemma that dismantled and exposed their perceptions of preparedness. This means that "the context of adult learning has to do with critical reflection of assumptions" (Mezirow, 2015, 1:01). These taken for granted assumptions or perceptions have to be challenged to be changed or at least modified. Consequently, these fixed or built-in assumptions can be challenged, changed or modified through critical reflections and rational discourse with others and

> "when circumstances permit, transformative learners move toward a frame of reference that is more inclusive, discriminating, self-reflective, and integrative of experience" (Mezirow, 1997: p. 1).

Frames of reference involve two broad domains: habits of mind and points of view (Mezirow, 1997; Santalucia & Johnson, 2010; Hatherley, 2011; Hicks, 2012).

3.2.4.1 Habits of mind

For Mezirow (1997: p. 5-6), frames of reference involve "cognitive, conative, and emotional components", and they consist of two broad domains: habits of mind and points of view. Habits

of mind are "ways of thinking, feeling, and acting" that are "broad, abstract, orienting, habitual". These habits are affected by fixed assumptions that "constitute a set of codes" that could be "cultural, social, educational, economic, political, or psychological". Habits of mind can be evident in the group of beliefs, judgments, attitudes, and feelings that shape and guide individuals' interpretations. Habits of mind of the student teachers of this study is a target, meaning that it is hoped by the end of the questionnaire, the TKT exam and the focus group discussions, these candidates' habits of mind are hopefully changed, modified, and affected so that they can consider and appropriate other people's perspectives.

3.2.4.2 Points of view

On the other hand, a point of view is less durable than a habit of mind as it is subject to constant change as individuals keep reflecting on "either the content or process" through which they "can solve problems and identify the need to modify assumptions" (Mezirow, 1997: p. 6). This occurs when these individuals try to interpret others' actions that do not cope with the way they predicted. In this case, these individuals try to try out other people's points of view and appropriate them. As points of view can be influenced easily, student teachers are hopefully affected through the focus group discussions as they would be exposed to other points of view that are different from their own.

3.2.5   Experiences

Individuals' experiences lead to critical reflection about their misconceptions, and the result could be a change in their frames of reference (Mezirow, 1997, Taylor, 2009; Santalucia & Johnson, 2010; Hicks, 2012). Consequently, these individuals can become "more tolerant and more accepting" and less biased of other people's perceptions. If this is repeated (change in frames of reference because of experiences), it can result in "a transformation by accretion" in their perspectives (Mezirow, 1997: p. 7). Also, experiences with others play an essential role in the

process of transformation of perspectives and frames of reference (Taylor, 2009; Santalucia & Johnson, 2010). So, individuals' experiences with other people may act as a catalyst or a trigger for transformation in their frames of reference that includes habits of mind and points of view. This is expected to happen to the student teachers of this study when they share their experiences and points of view with the researcher. This means that their domains are faced, challenged and sometimes questioned through the focus group discussions' questions, hoping that their experiences and misconceptions about their being prepared to teach English are changed or modified. In this case, transformation through new experiences during the group discussions and even during the questionnaire is instilled and transformation of their perceptions is expected to happen.

3.2.6   Disorienting dilemmas

Disorienting dilemmas often question and challenge the soundness and rationality of people's "values and the assumptions that underpin them" (Christie et al., 2015: p. 1). These dilemmas play an integral part in transformative learning as they act as the trigger or spark that effects transformative learning and leads to a change in one's beliefs, values and attitudes, ultimately leading to a change in one's frames of reference (Cranton, 2006; Hicks, 2012; Howie & Bagnall, 2013; Christie et al., 2015). According to Christie et al. (2015; p. 1), these dilemmas can also be triggered by "carefully designed exercises" or activities. These dilemmas are situations in which individuals realise that what they believed in the past is not correct. They are uncomfortable and challenging experiences for those who face them, but they serve as the main trigger that leads to transformative learning. Consequently, these dilemmas are necessary to trigger and 'shake' these 'ingrained' worldviews of individuals (Christie et al., 2015, p. 11). Howie & Bagnall (2013, p. 7) see a disorienting dilemma as "a dilemma that causes a disruption or disturbance in a person". In this study, the questionnaire, the TKT and the focus group discussions represented those

disorienting dilemmas as they acted as the spark that challenged student teachers' existing perceptions, beliefs and assumptions of their preparedness to teach English after graduation.

3.2.7 Critical reflection

Individuals transform their habits of mind and points of view (frames of reference) via critical "reflection on the assumptions upon which their interpretations, beliefs, and habits of mind or points of view are based" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 7). They become more critically reflective of their assumptions or others' assumptions when they try to solve problems or when they engage in rational discourse. They can also be critically reflective on their assumptions when they read a book, hear a different point of view, or engage in solving problems. They may also reflect on their own ideas and beliefs. Their self-reflection may also "lead to significant personal transformations" (p. 7). This is how Mezirow (1997: p. 9) puts it:

> To facilitate transformative learning, educators must help learners become aware and critical of their own and others' assumptions. Learners need practice in recognizing frames of reference and in using their imaginations to redefine problems from a different perspective.

This is what is planned through this study, meaning that student participants of this study would be helped by the researcher to be more aware and critical of their perceptions and other people's assumptions so that they can recognise their existing frames of reference so as to assess their perceptions of preparation to teach English from a different perspective.

3.2.8 Rational discourse

Mezirow (1997; p. 9) contends that "learners need to be assisted to participate effectively in discourse" because this discourse is essential to "validate what and how one understands, or to arrive at a best judgment regarding a belief". In this sense, Taylor (2009) considers rational discourse or dialogue as one of the vital means for transformation to occur. Taylor (2009, p. 9) highlighted the relation between rational discourse and transformation of perceptions by stating that "dialogue becomes the medium for critical reflection to be put into action, where experience

is reflected on and assumptions and beliefs are questioned and habits of mind are ultimately transformed". Mezirow (1997: p. 10) sets out measures for rational discourse to be effective when he says:

> "Effective discourse depends on how well the educator can create a situation in which those participating have full information; are free from coercion; have equal opportunity to assume the various roles of discourse (to advance beliefs, challenge, defend, explain, assess evidence, and judge arguments); become critically reflective of assumptions; are empathic and open to other perspectives; are willing to listen and to search for common ground or a synthesis of different points of view; and can make a tentative best judgment to guide action."

Consequently, student teachers of this study will be assisted to participate effectively in the focus group discussions (that represent rational discourse) so that they can assess their current perceptions and assumptions of being prepared to teach English in the presence of new perspectives. So, the researcher would create a situation (focus group discussions) where student teachers have a full set of questions that question how effective their preparation and their English language programmes are. Also, the researcher will make sure that these student participants are free from coercion, have equal opportunities to voice their views freely, and to become more reflective of their assumptions as well as others' assumptions. Thus, these student participants are expected to accept other perspectives, listen to different points of view and be exposed to other experiences to be able to make better judgements that would guide their future choices and actions.

3.2.9   Individuation

Jung (as cited in Cranton, 2013: p. 270) defines individuation as "a process by which people become aware of the psychic structures of anima, animus, ego, shadow, and the collective unconscious". Thus, they distinguish themselves from all human beings, "while, at the same time, seeing how they are a part of the collective of humanity". Dirkx (2012 as cited in Cranton, 2013: p. 270) sees individuation as a base for transformative learning, and he emphasizes "the importance of understanding our 'inner' worlds, of which we may be unaware". To develop their personalities,

individuals need to engage in an interpersonal process that involves a dialogue with themselves or with the psyche (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 2009; Khabanyane et al., 2014). Through this dialogue, they would be aware of characteristics of their personalities or inner worlds that they were unaware of before or they could be aware of the hidden world of their inner selves, which gives a full account of their identity, how they understand the world and how they behave (Dirkx, 1998; Mezirow, 2009; Santalucia & Johnson, 2010). This inner dialogue is part of the so-called individuation, and it is a natural and constant process that happens to all people (Dirkx, 1998; Khabanyane et al., 2014). As for this study, the questionnaire, as well as the TKT, would evoke this interpersonal dialogue in the student teachers who are expected to have such dialogue during answering the questionnaire and the TKT questions. This would evoke queries and questions about their preparedness and the perceptions they have as well as the reasons that underlie their perceptions of being prepared to start teaching English after they graduate. Also, this inner dialogue would help them form the right perceptions about how well they are prepared.

3.2.10 Conscientisation

Freire (1970: p 35) defined conscientisation as "learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality". During this process, a critical awareness is developed, which enables individuals to take action against those oppressive elements of reality. Freire also claims that the objective of transformative learning is to emancipate and liberate students through education which "aims at fostering critical consciousness" (Khabanyane et al., 2014, p. 454). Conscientisation is a process where individuals develop skills to assess and question their social, cultural, political and economic domains that shape their perceptions and take action to change fixed and built-in frames of reference (Khabanyane et al., 2014). As mainly rooted in the work of Freire, conscientisation refers to individuals who are viewed as participants who can unceasingly reflect on their perspectives, assumptions, and act on

their transformation (Taylor, 2008). Cranton (2006) argues that raising these individuals' critical consciousness is aroused by new perspectives, insights, information and knowledge that are contradictory to their existing frames of reference and that this only happens when these individuals perceive their world and perceptions from different perspectives, which in turn raises their consciousness. Hatherley (2011) affirms that these individuals can be aroused through getting involved in conscientisation through a disorienting dilemma which may force them to reflect critically on their current perspectives and frames of reference, which may help them take future actions consciously. Khabanyane et al. (2014, p. 454) clearly strengthen this concept by linking it to the varied components of Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory when they stated that

> "the students must be conscientised about the way the world has shaped their frames of reference, and that they have the power to change those frames of reference by constructing their own meaning of the world".

Thus, the concept of conscientisation fits well into this study as the participants of this study went through the questionnaire, the TKT and the focus group discussions that served as the catalysts, the triggers and the disorienting dilemmas that evoked their critical reflection and helped them form the correct perceptions by the end of the study, of their preparedness to teach English.

3.2.11 Mezirow's ten phases of transformative learning

Individuals or students who go through the transformation process may follow or go through the ten phases. However, they may also go through only some of these phases. This means that these ten phases are not inclusive or conditional for transformation to happen, meaning that transformation may follow some variation while it is happening. In this study, student teachers may also go through all of Mezirow's phases of transformation until transformative learning occurs, or they may go through some of these phases so that their transformative process begins. Then they may start to learn how to perceive their preparedness to teach English differently, which is a natural dimension of adult learning (Mezirow, 2015). The previous paragraph is a summary of

part of a video published on Youtube in 2015, a year after his death. Mezirow's (1978a, 1978b) Ten Phases of Transformative Learning are as follows:

Phase 1: A disorienting dilemma;

Phase 2: A self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame;

Phase 3: A critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions;

Phase 4: Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change;

Phase 5: Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions;

Phase 6: Planning of a course of action;

Phase 7: Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans;

Phase 8: Provisional trying of new roles;

Phase 9: Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships; and

Phase 10: A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's perspective

The following section discusses how the ten typical phases may apply to the student participants of this study. These phases, or at least some of them, may help the student participants of this study to transform their existing perspectives and to accept new ones that would help them change and take decisions concerning their future jobs. Firstly, a disorienting dilemma (phase one) is an uncomfortable and challenging situation where student teachers may find out that what they used to believe in in the past was not totally accurate. This disorienting dilemma is a kind of life experience or event that cannot be solved by using traditional problem-solving techniques. Moreover, this dilemma requires self-examination of one's assumptions and experiences in the presence of new perspectives. However, this dilemma is often emotionally disturbing, and this disturbance is the key that triggers and ignites successful transformative learning experiences. In this case, individuals may feel that they can't use their old ways of thinking anymore, they will

allow for new frames of reference and perspectives to take over, direct their future action, and shape their perceptions. However, these individuals may find it difficult to change their past and existing beliefs because their perspectives of the world have – as per Mezirow's emphasis - "become unconscious frames of references constructed of habits of mind" and they have become so fixed to the extent that they make the process of transformation difficult (Christie et al., 2015, p. 11). Consequently, a disorienting dilemma is necessary to spark and 'shake' their 'ingrained' perspectives and world views (Christie et al., 2015, p. 11). Moreover, it has been acknowledged by many researchers that this type of disorienting dilemma can lead to a change in attitudes, perspectives, worldviews, experiences, values and beliefs that would result in an adjustment or modification of those students' frames of reference (Cranton, 2006; Hicks, 2012; Howie & Bagnall, 2013; Christie et al., 2015). Howie & Bagnall (2013, p. 7) also define a disorienting dilemma as something that "causes a disruption or disturbance in a person". Moreover, this kind of dilemma could be triggered by intentional or unintentional single events or a series of events. These events could be dramatic (unintentional), or deliberate and educational or even through ways of development and training that occurs naturally (Cranton as cited in Khabanyane et al., 2014). Thus, transformative learning can be started and triggered or sparked through rational discourse and critical reflection during one of these events (Howie & Bagnall, 2013). In this regard, the questionnaire, the TKT, and the focus group discussions may represent the catalysts that could initiate a disorienting dilemma for this study's main participants (student teachers). It can be said that these data generation techniques were carefully planned and chosen to act as the sparks or dilemmas that would lead to and trigger transformation in the student teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach English after graduation. Thus, these prospective or would-be teachers were asked to participate and engage with their accumulated experiences using their critical reflection through the questionnaire, the TKT, and rational discourse during the focus group discussions so

that they could evaluate their perceptions of preparedness in the light of new perspectives and information.

The self-examination (phase two) with the feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame -as stipulated by Mezirow- would happen directly after that disorienting dilemma. After student teachers realise that they are in a critical situation, they begin to examine their existing perceptions, assumptions, experiences and beliefs, meaning that they have started a self-examination. This also means that these student teachers have already started to think critically about their previous experiences, perceptions, assumptions as they pertain to their preparedness to teach; and how- their past experiences - have led to or are connected to their existing and disorienting dilemma, meaning that they have started the process of transformative learning. Thus, perspectives transformation can be created, and these student teachers may realise and understand that their current perspectives are not the only existing perspectives. This notion of self-examination is in line with this study's objectives because the participants (student teachers) are also expected to have this self-examination after they engage with the questionnaire, undertake the TKT and participate in the focus group discussions that act as the triggers of their transformation.

A critical assessment of assumptions (phase three) would also happen when these student teachers can critically reflect on their past experiences and assumptions while accepting that not all their experiences and beliefs are correct. In this case, these student teachers become open to new perspectives, thoughts, experiences and information. This critical reflection of one's own experiences and assumptions could transform one's views and attitudes while looking with more neutral eyes at his/her own past experiences and beliefs. After these student teachers recognise their discontent (phase four) with their existing experiences, perspectives and beliefs, they may start the process of exploring new options (phase five), new roles, relationships and actions. At this moment, their transformation has already begun. After these student teachers realise that their

past experiences, assumptions, beliefs and perceptions of preparedness to teach are entirely correct, they may start to plan a course of action (phase six). For example, they may consider furthering their studies and apply for practical degrees, diplomas or certificates. This means that they may start to consider other new perspectives, talk to professionals in the field, and have a strategy for planning their course of action professionally. It also means they can identify their areas of weakness as they pertain to their perceptions of preparedness to teach. Once these student teachers plan for their future actions and they decide what to learn, what to study and what to do about their preparation to be competent teachers, they have already started their process of transformation. This also means that they have already acquired the knowledge and skills to implement their plan (phase seven). Provisional trying of new roles is the stage (phase eight) in which these student teachers are expected to try out new positions, understand and experience new perspectives and experiences to build up their competency, self-efficacy and self-confidence (phase nine) as it pertains to teaching. This phase can be accomplished by putting the acquired new perspectives or experiences into practice, meaning that these student teachers have become more competent and practical in their transformation. For example, they may try to look for the best ways and certification to be trained on how to teach, meaning that they may try to gain the right teaching skills, new practical information and knowledge to be competent teachers. New perspectives and experiences always lead to a kind of reintegration (phase ten) in one's life based on new conditions. This stage is always realised when the student teachers start to apply the acquired perspectives and experiences practically, professionally and unconsciously. In this case and after choosing the right course of action and getting trained, student teachers can start teaching.

3.2.12 Further discussion on the role of critical reflection and rational discourse in this study

Quillinan et al. (2019: p.140) maintain that reflection and rational discourse are two fundamental factors in transformative learning as they help learners to consider

> "(and change where appropriate) (i) the way they interpret their experience, and in turn transform the view of themselves, and (ii) interactions, and in turn how they interact with others and their environment."

They (Quillinan et al.) used those two transformative learning elements – critical reflection and rational discourse - to set up the results of their study, which proved that lecturers taught differently, and students learnt differently due to using the transformative learning approaches to inform their research. It is also expected that those two elements would play a significant role in this study. For example, the critical reflection element would be triggered and evoked once the student teachers participate in the questionnaire, which questions their perceptions of preparedness to teach English and the TKT which challenges their real teaching skills and concepts. However, Talyor & Cranton (2013: p. 33) add "role of experience, empathy, the desire to change" as other elements or factors (in addition to critical reflection and rational discourse) that would lead to a transformation in frames of reference.

It is expected that the rational discourse (represented in the focus group discussions) between the researcher and the student participants would act as the medium or the spark that would ignite the desired transformation that is hoped to be promoted and developed (Taylor, 2017). We usually use this kind of discourse

> "when we have reason to question the comprehensibility, truth, appropriateness (in relation to norms), or authenticity (in relation to feelings) of what is being asserted" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 77).

Through the multiple data collection tools – the questionnaire, the TKT and the focus group discussions - these student teachers are expected to question their deeply held assumptions about their perceptions of preparedness to teach English. For example, the questionnaire would work as

an initiator. The TKT exam would work as the crisis (disorienting dilemma), and the focus group discussions would work as the springboard from which these student teachers would start the process of transformation. Through the rational discourse (the focus group discussions) between student participants and the researcher, these student teachers are expected to:

1. gain access to EFL information – like accredited EFL certificates and diplomas (CELTA and DELTA or their equivalent)- so they can position themselves in the EFL world;

2. voice their suggestions and ideas freely, with the assurance that they will be heard;

3. take and make decisions and act autonomously; and

4. build a bridge to their future profession – teaching EFL - by learning how to reflect critically on their perceptions of preparedness.

The researcher's role during the focus group discussions is to help these student teachers become aware and critical of their assumptions as well as others' assumptions. In other words, the rational discourse about their perceptions of preparedness to teach English would work as the trigger or spark that helps them form new perceptions that they have never had. These student teachers also need to reconsider their frames of reference and use their imaginations to redefine their perceptions of preparedness in the light of other points of view during these discussions so that they can accommodate and accept different views and shape their perceptions based on broad and open perspectives that would help them form the right perceptions about their preparedness to teach English as a foreign language after their graduation. The ultimate objective is that these student teachers reach the stage of transformation in their frame of references, experiences and points of view. Once they reach this stage, they will be able to redefine their perceptions and assumptions about being prepared to teach English after their graduation. Thus, they will also be able to validate and assess - through rational discourse, critical reflection and assistance provided by the researcher – what they understand about their perceptions of preparedness to teach. Ultimately, they may

reach the best judgements that would guide their future action and form their perceptions positively

of preparedness to teach English after graduation. This transformation is expected to happen

through the focus discussion groups which were preceded by the two other triggers (the

questionnaire and the TKT. Besides, during the rational discourse, the researcher will ask questions

through which student teachers will, as Mezirow (1997: p. 10) puts it:

> "have full information; are free from coercion; have equal opportunity to assume the various roles of discourse (to advance beliefs, challenge, defend, explain, assess evidence, and judge arguments); become critically reflective of assumptions; are empathic and open."

3.2.13 When and where transformation takes place and the meaning of emancipation

Transformative learning takes place in a variety of different ways. For example, it can occur in a

family, in a workplace, in a public sphere or anywhere. It can also happen in a school or a college.

It can even happen at any time once the factors that trigger it are present. Once transformation

happens, people become emancipated or freed from their old ways of thinking, their old frames of

reference and their cultural meaning perspectives. Thus, these people (who experience

transformative learning) are enabled to effect change through rational discourse and to be open to

others' experiences and perspectives. When freed and emancipated from their old frames of

reference, people will be able to make the right decisions and to take the right actions for their

future (Jack Mezirow, 2018) as it is stipulated by Boshier (1990: p. 22), who maintains that:

> "radical humanists want to release people from constraints - which largely reside in their own cognitions. It thus seeks transformation, emancipation, and a critical analysis of modes of domination. It wants people to reconstrue their "view" of "reality" and take appropriate action. Thus praxis becomes reflection (or reconstruing) followed by action."

These student teachers need to become fully "capable of critically examining" their "taken-for-

granted belief systems" that are represented in their perceptions of preparedness to teach English

after graduation (Mezirow, 1993: p. 141). As such, transformative learning makes it easy for these

student teachers to move from their current status of perceptions to another, and to change and challenge their old ways of thinking. Eventually, these student teachers are freed from their

> "constraining habits of expectation and move to a perspective that permits interpretations which are more inclusive, differentiating, permeable and integrative of experience" (Mezirow, 1993: p. 141).

This notion of emancipation is in line with this study's objectives. It applies to its main participants (student teachers) as the main aim is that these student teachers are freed and emancipated from their existing perceptions of preparedness to teach English. Consequently, these student teachers have to be assisted in a way that makes them critically reflect on their current experiences and perceptions of readiness to teach English. This kind of assistance – through the questionnaire, the TKT and the focus group discussions - should enable them to consider other experiences and perspectives that could help them shape the correct perceptions of being prepared to teach English after graduation. Thus, the ultimate objective of challenging these student teachers' current perceptions of preparedness to teach is to identify the crucial times and 'critical incidents' that would trigger and tempt them to be busy-minded with their perceptions, to engage in questioning and to explore new perspectives as they pertain to their professional requirements, and "to consequently experience processes of development that lead to their professionalism" (Laros & Košinár, 2019: p. 148).

After obtaining the student teachers' responses to the questionnaire in writing, the researcher noticed that they had made a lot of grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation mistakes. Also, after recording the student teachers during the focus groups, the researcher noticed that the student teachers made a lot of pronunciation, and grammar mistakes in addition to their weak use of vocabulary. Consequently, a need arose for the qualitative content analysis approach which is considered one of the qualitative methods used for analyzing participants' data and interpreting their meanings (Schreier, 2012). This method employs logical and objective ways of illustrating

and quantifying the participants' data (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992; Schreier, 2012). A precondition for effective content analysis is that participants' data can be condensed to concepts that assess the research phenomenon succinctly (Cavanagh, 1997; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) through producing categories, subcategories, steady concepts, and maybe models, conceptual frameworks, or even maps (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Morgan, 1993; Weber, 1990).

3.3 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the philosophical underpinnings of the theoretical framework were explained in detail. It discussed this study's conceptual framework that is guided by Mezirow's transformative learning theory that draws on and informs this study. It discussed Mezirow's ten phases of transformative learning, the definition of transformative learning, the critical reflection and rational discourse in addition to when and where transformation takes place and the meaning of emancipation.

The following chapter (Methodology) will discuss the ground plan of this study, the type of data collected and the procedures for collecting these data. It will also give details about the interpretive paradigm, the mixed-method approach, the setting and the participants of this study.

Chapter Four - Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The methodology of a dissertation describes the plan of the study, the type of data collected and the procedures for collecting them. The selection of a methodological framework adds to the strength of research design. The chapter provides a foundation for selecting a particular method and allows connections to be made between the aim of the research, the choice of methods, and the approach to data analysis (Padgett, 2017). Moreover, this chapter discusses the meaning of a research paradigm and why a researcher needs to base his/her research on a specific research paradigm. In addition, this chapter provides a full account of the interpretive paradigm - concerning its ontological, epistemological, axiological and methodological perspectives and rulings - and how it is used to inform and underpin this study. It (this chapter) also gives details about the research approach and design, research setting, participants of the study and the duration of the study. Data-collection techniques (represented in the questionnaire, the TKT, focus group discussions and the interviews) are discussed in detail within this chapter. Data-analysis methods, which include the quality of the quantitative data and the quality of the qualitative data, is discussed in this chapter. Issues of trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, triangulation, research ethics, request for permission to study, informed consent, voluntarism, competence, comprehension, anonymity, and confidentiality are also part of this chapter. Finally, the methodical limitations of this study are declared at the end of this chapter.

Hofstee (2006) believes that the researcher's method, together with her/his thesis statement, is indispensable for the success of her/his dissertation "because a result can only be accepted, rejected, checked, replicated, or even understood in the context of how" they (the researchers) "got there" (p. 107). The method chapter also informs the readers how the researcher reached her/his findings and conclusions. It (The method chapter) is also considered the atlas that guides the

readers through the other sections of the dissertation. Research design or methodology is the pathway a researcher follows in designing her/his study. In the method chapter, the researcher selects her/his techniques for data collection, whether qualitative or quantitative, like interviews, questionnaires or focus discussion groups etc. It also deals with how the researcher goes about applying one or more research designs to her/his problem (Hofstee, 2006). This research methodology also helps the researcher develop a plan to sample participants to be researched and to schedule how well the data will be processed. Such methodological choices are informed and directed by the chosen type of research design. This chapter presents the research methods applied throughout this study, and it gives a thorough justification for using such methods. This study employs a case study approach at the English Language Programme at one of the official Saudi universities. The researcher adopted a mixed-method approach that used both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection to attain a complete and detailed representation of the student teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach English as a foreign language after their graduation. The qualitative part of this study employed interviews with two professors at the English Language and Translation Department and interviews with two EFL expert teachers at the ELC of the same university. It also included focus group discussions with the main participants of this study (year-four students or student teachers) as well as a qualitatively dominant questionnaire. The quantitative part of this study was represented through the Closed Questions sections in the questionnaire and the TKT (Teaching Knowledge Test), which is a professional exam that focuses on examining or testing the teaching concepts of the teachers of English as a foreign language. The Cambridge TKT is a test that focuses on the skills a teacher needs to succeed in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). Through using these multiple approaches with their triangulation and various tools from different angles and prospects (interviews, focus discussion groups, a questionnaire, and by administering a TKT), the validity and reliability of this study was

increased. However, in each case study, the researcher faces some theoretical orientation and practice of evaluation challenges that may affect the dimensions of evaluation which Kiely & Rea-Dickens (2005, p. 7-8) put as follows:

1. The purpose of evaluation in its social and political context;
2. The informants who people programmes and evaluations;
3. The criteria which generate evaluation frameworks, instruments and ultimately judgements;
4. The data which validate these approaches and instruments and complete the construction of judgements; and
5. The use of evaluation findings in managing social programmes.

The interpretive paradigm was used to explore final-year student teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach English after they graduate. This paradigm is also used to investigate the factors or reasons that shape these student teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach. A mixed-method approach was adopted to collect data about these student teachers' perceived preparedness and what shapes their perceptions. A case study design was also incorporated to underpin and to delve into this specific phenomenon of perceived preparedness to teach English as a foreign language. The data generation techniques used – the questionnaire, the TKT, the focus group discussions, and the interviews – gave detailed answers to the research questions that tried to identify this phenomenon of perceived preparedness in this study's questions. As such, this chapter provides a detailed account of the methods used and the research process followed in this study. In addition, Mezirow's (1975-2009) Transformative Learning Theory (as discussed in Chapter 3) was used to inform and underpin this study. In sum, this chapter provides a complete account of the main aim of the study as well as the objectives, research questions and the theories and the paradigm that underpin it. This chapter also provides details about the research approach and its design, the research setting and the participants, the duration of the study and the data generation techniques, as well as the limitations of the study.

4.2 Objectives and Research Questions

This study seeks to interrogate the perceptions of preparedness of final-year student teachers to teach English as a foreign language after their graduation. It also aims to explore the reasons for their perceptions. It was hoped that this would give insights into the challenges that face new graduates when they start teaching. In addition, it was expected that this study would provide insights into the design of teacher education programmes and ways to improve them, if any. The main objectives of this study are summarised as follows:

1. *To examine whether or not final-year student teachers (English Major) are adequately prepared to teach EFL after graduation.*

2. *To explore how final-year student teachers feel about their preparedness to teach EFL and why they have these perceptions*

Research Questions:

- **Main Question:**

  Are final-year Saudi Arabian student teachers (English Major) adequately prepared to teach EFL after graduation? Why or why not?

- **Sub-questions:**

1. *Does the teacher programme at University in Saudi Arabia produce competent teachers of English as a foreign language? Why, or why not?*

2. *How do final-year student teachers feel about their preparedness to teach EFL? Why do they have these perceptions?*

3. *What are the perceptions of EFL teachers regarding the preparedness of graduate students to teach English? Why do they have these perceptions?*

4.3 Theoretical Underpinnings

To establish a robust case study design and to ensure its internal validity, the theories and methods underlying this case study have to be explained in detail. This case study falls into the category of "interpretive paradigms" that "strive to understand and interpret the world in terms of its actors." (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007: p. 26). Also, Patton (2014) contends that the interpretive approach does not only emphasise experiences and their meanings but it also

> "suggests that programmes must always be judged by and from the point of view of the persons most directly affected" (p. 1366).

The interpretive approach is known as the "ethogenic method" which "concentrates upon the ways in which persons construe their social world", which is quite the opposite of the positivistic approach which "ignores or presumes its subjects' interpretations of situations." (Cohen et al., 2007: p. 20). Robert Stake (2010; as cited in Patton, 2014: p. 52) explains what interpretation means and what the role of the interpreter looks like:

> "Interpretation is an act of composition. The interpreter takes descriptions and makes them more complex, drawing upon a few conceptual relationships……The best interpretations will be logical extensions of the simple description but also will include contemplative, speculative, even aesthetic extension…..All people make interpretations. All research requires interpretations. Qualitative research relies heavily on interpretive perceptions throughout the planning, data gathering, analysis, and write-up of the study."

The following section will discuss the notion of a research paradigm, and how the interpretive paradigm is used to inform this study.

4.3.1   The notion of a research paradigm

A research paradigm is a group of basic assumptions, beliefs, and values that guide and control the nature of research and the researcher's behaviour (Kuhn, 1977; Wahyuni, 2012; Onwuegbuzie, 2004). These beliefs include "ontological beliefs, epistemological beliefs, axiological beliefs, aesthetic beliefs, and methodological beliefs" (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007: p. 130). For Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, a research paradigm refers to the research culture in which

studies are carried out. Paradigms are flexible as they have the ability to shift or change (Kuhn, 1970). These shifts result in new paradigms. Guba & Lincoln (1994: p. 3) view a research paradigm as:

> "a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimates or first principles. It represents the worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the "world," the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts, as, for example, cosmologies and theologies do."

Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) identify four major types of paradigms: normative, interpretive, complex and critical. However, Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner (2007) recognise three main research paradigms: qualitative research, quantitative research, and mixed methods research. This study falls within the mixed-method approach that adopts the interpretive research paradigm.

4.3.2   The interpretive paradigm

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, the interpretive paradigm is adopted and used to underpin this study. Interpretivism or constructivism is a relatively new research paradigm that arose as a result of a paradigm shift from the positivist paradigm. This research paradigm is often referred to as post-positivism as proposed by Karl Popper (as cited in Pennycook, 2001; Mack, 2010; Wahyuni, 2012). The interpretive paradigm is mainly "concerned with understanding the world as it is from the subjective experiences of individuals" (Gary, 2011: p. 6). Its main objective is to "understand the subjective world of human experience" (Cohen et al., 2007: p. 21). Therefore, the scientist's role in the interpretive paradigm is to "understand, explain, and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 19). Mixed-method research may also fall into the interpretive paradigm as Guba & Lincoln (1994: p. 105) stated that "both qualitative and quantitative methods may be used appropriately with any research paradigm." The interpretive paradigm is also called the "anti-positivist" paradigm as it was

developed as a response to the positivist paradigm. It is also sometimes referred to as 'constructivism' because it stresses the ability of the individual to construct meaning. The interpretive paradigm was deeply affected by the notions of 'hermeneutics' which is "the study of meaning and interpretation", and phenomenology which considers "human beings' subjective interpretations" and their "perceptions of the world" (Mack, 2010: p. 7). Even if researchers try to be as objective as they can, they cannot reach a mere scientific outcome that is 100 per cent objective. In this regard, Mack (2010: p. 3) contends that:

> It is impossible for any theory in social science to be simple and precise because the world we live in and peoples' multiple perspectives and interpretations of events make theories complex and chaotic. So many variables affect different events and people's actions that it is impossible to determine an absolute truth.

In terms of ontology, the interpretive paradigm assumes that social reality is seen and interpreted differently by multiple people who provide manifold perspectives of a phenomenon (Mack, 2010). This means that reality is "dependent on social actors and assumes that individuals contribute to social phenomena" (Wahyuni, 2012: p. 69). Epistemologically, regarding what constitutes acceptable knowledge, the interpretive paradigm assumes that social phenomena and meanings are interpreted subjectively, and the main focus is on "the details of situation, the reality behind these details, subjective meanings and motivating actions" (Wahyuni, 2012: p. 70). Similarly, Mack (2010: p. 8) contends that - as per the interpretive paradigm's epistemological aspects:

- Knowledge is gained inductively to create a theory;
- Knowledge arises from particular situations and is not reducible to simplistic interpretation; and
- Knowledge is gained through personal experience.

This also means - as per the epistemological aspects of this paradigm - that "knowledge is socially constructed" (Pennycook, 1989: p. 612). In terms of axiology, where the role of values and the researcher's stance emerge, interpretivism is emic, and the research is value-bound. Also, the

researcher is considered as part of the research and cannot be detached from it (Wahyuni, 2012), meaning that the researcher is seen as an insider. Although the interpretive paradigm supports the qualitative research approach, according to some researchers, it also adopts the mixed method approach as per some researchers like McChesney & Aldridge (2019). Consequently, both qualitative and quantitative approaches and mixed-method approaches can be used in the interpretive paradigm according to McChesney & Aldridge (2019) as they position themselves "in favour of flexible (but intentional) integration of any research method with any research paradigm" (p. 1). This means that the researcher can be an outsider and an insider at the same time if he/she adopts a mixed-method approach under the interpretive paradigm's umbrella. Consequently, this study is etic and emic. The TKT test scores - the quantitative part of this study – represents the etic side where the researcher is an outsider observing the phenomenon under scrutiny from afar. However, the qualitatively dominant questionnaire, the focus group discussions and the interviews (the qualitative part of this study) represent the emic side where the researcher is an insider interpreting the phenomenon with the help of the participants' subjective interpretations and perceptions (Ernest, 1994 as cited in Mack, 2010). A limitation of the interpretive paradigm is "that it abandons the scientific procedures of verification and therefore results cannot be generalised to other situations" (Mack, 2010: p. 4). However, Mack refutes this accusation by saying that this paradigm's "goal is the creation of local theories for practice rather than generalizable findings" (p. 4). Another limitation of this paradigm is that its ontological aspect is subjective rather than objective.

Nevertheless, researchers like McChesney & Aldridge (2019) integrated the mixed-method approach under the interpretive paradigm's umbrella. This case study was mainly set up to investigate student teachers' (final-year English Major students) perceptions of preparedness to teach English and to understand why they have such perceptions. Consequently, the study adopted

the interpretive paradigm as it is in line with using research tools like the questionnaire, the TKT, the focus group discussions and the interviews which were used as catalysts that evoked rational discourse and critical reflections. In this way, these student teachers' perceptions of preparedness can be understood through their subjective views and experiences, which is compliant with the interpretive paradigm.

The researchers who use the interpretive paradigm do not view the phenomena under scrutiny as merely existing, but as they are interpreted and seen by concerned individuals (Phothongsunan, 2010). So, these researchers try to understand meanings and experiences as interpreted and explained by those concerned individuals and according to their perspectives (Hennink et al., 2020). This view is also following Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory that focuses on how, through rational discourse and critical reflections, those individuals are able to reflect on their existing assumptions, experiences and perspectives using their contexts, to create new meanings and views (during the transformative learning process) that guide their future action (Hicks, 2012). In sum, to answer the main research question and the three sub-questions of this study, the researcher adopted Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory as its theoretical framework. This study was also guided by the interpretive paradigm, a mixed-method research approach, and a case study format. The following section will discuss how this case study is based on the mixed-method approach.

4.3.3   Mixed-method approach

This study also adopts a qualitatively-dominant approach as it employs interviews, focus-group discussions, and a qualitatively-dominant questionnaire. The only quantitative data generation procedure used in this study is the TKT. Consequently, this study falls into the mixed-method approach that strengthens the triangulation aspect of study. Mixed methods designs include both qualitative and quantitative features, data collection, analysis, and integration of the different types

of data. In the first issue of the *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, Tashakkori & Creswell (2007) define mixed methods as

> "research in which the investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or program of inquiry" (p. 4).

Hence, mixed methods can refer to the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods to answer research questions in a single study as well as those studies that are part of a larger research programme and are designed as complementary to provide information related to several research questions, each answered with a different methodological approach. While mixed methods have an intuitive appeal, they also demand that the researcher be an expert in both approaches to research or to work with a team that has such expertise. Issues related to the design of studies as well as to ensuring the quality of a mixed-methods approach are explored in this chapter. Teddlie & Tashakkori (2010) described a truly mixed approach methodology as methodologically eclectic, meaning that the researcher selects and synergistically integrates

> "the most appropriate techniques from a myriad of QUAL, QUAN, and mixed methods to more thoroughly investigate a phenomenon of interest" (p. 8).

The intent may be to seek a common understanding through triangulating data from multiple methods or to use multiple lenses simultaneously to achieve alternative perspectives that are not reduced to a single understanding. Educational and psychological researchers mix methods to varying degrees at various points in their research, although they may not use mixed methods at every stage of their studies. Researchers can insert multiple mixed options into their work at various points in the research process, including the definition of purpose, overall design, methods, sampling, data recording, analysis, and interpretation. Yin (2006: 42), who sees mixed methods as entering the stages of research: research questions; units of analysis; samples; instrumentation and data collection; and analytic strategies, argues that the stronger the mix of methods and their

integration at all stages, the stronger is the benefit of mixed methods approaches (p. 46). Reams & Twale (2008: 133) argue that mixed methods are 'necessary to uncover information and perspective, increase corroboration of the data, and render less biased and more accurate conclusions. Denscombe (2008: 272) suggests that mixed methods research can: (a) increase the accuracy of data; (b) provide a more complete picture of the phenomenon under study than would be yielded by a single approach, thereby overcoming the weaknesses and biases of single approaches; (c)n the original data; and (d) aid sampling (he gives the example of where a questionnaire might be used to screen potential participants who might be approached for interview purposes).

As for the design of this case study, Denzin & Lincoln (2018: p. 600) maintain that a case study is

> "an instance, incident, or unit of something and can be anything—a person, an organization, an event, a decision, an action, a location like a neighbourhood, or a nation-state."

Swanborn (2010: as cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 2018: p. 600)) elucidated that case studies can be situated at

> "the micro (persons and interpersonal relations), meso (organization, institution), or macro levels (communities, democracies, societies) and involve one actor or multiple actors."

However, a case study must have some broad characteristics and features that make it an exemplary one. These features are proposed by Yin (2018, p. 301-308) as follows:

1. The case study must be significant;
2. The case study must be complete;
3. The case study must consider alternative perspectives;
4. The case study must display sufficient evidence; and
5. The case study must be composed in an engaging manner.

Moreover, this study draws and builds on Mezirow's (2009) Transformative Learning Theory regarding its theoretical framework. This learning theory explains that one's personal experiences

and one's experiences with others make one reflect on and challenge one's current perceptions and assumptions, thus changing the way one thinks or feels about something. As per Mezirow (1991, 2000), transformative learning is always triggered by a disorienting dilemma or a crisis. People or students who experience such feelings become infuriated by their current meaning perspectives. This feeling is usually accompanied by depressing emotions, such as feeling guilty or ashamed. Subsequently, those who experience such negative emotions most likely start to search for other perspectives (alternatives) where they have rational discourse with others and explore and try out new perspectives which are accompanied by new frames, new competencies, and self-confidence. Finally, those individuals or students incorporate their new perspective into their current worldview and come up with unique views or frames that guide their future actions, meaning that their transformative learning process has already occurred (Laros & Košinár, 2019). This theoretical framework is suitable for this study because participants were engaged in a series of activities (data collection strategies) that it was hoped would challenge their existing perceptions of preparedness to teach English after their graduation and make a kind of transformation or shift in those perceptions. In other words, it was expected that after their participation in the questionnaire, the TKT and the focus group discussions, the participants of this study would reflect on their existing perceptions and assumptions. Then, through their participation in this study, these student teachers were expected to obtain and form new experiences and perspectives that would shift and transform their perceptions of preparedness to teach English. These new perceptions, experiences and perspectives were hopefully expected to guide their future action as it pertains to joining the teaching profession. For example, if they find out that they are really well-prepared to teach, then they do not need any further training or courses. However, if these student teachers find that they are not well-prepared to teach, they need to act accordingly before starting real

teaching. This means they can start teaching or they need further studies and training or they just quit before they start.

4.4 Research Approach and Design

In correlational research, the researcher seeks to find a correlation among variables. If a strong relationship or connection among these variables has been found and confirmed, then predictions can be made based on the findings or results of this correlation. This notion is supported by Mackey & Gass (2005, p. 145) as they maintain that "if variables are strongly related, we can often predict the likelihood of the presence of one from the presence of the other(s)." This study was based on finding correlations among some different variables. For example, is there a correlation between year-four students' perceptions of preparedness to teach English after their graduation and the effectiveness of their English Language Programme? Besides, is there an association between these students' preparedness to teach English and their belief in their teachers? In other words, are these students' perceptions of readiness to teach English influenced by their teachers' ways of teaching, their proficiency level and their attitudes? Also, did what they study during their teaching programme shape their perceptions of preparedness to teach English. Also, do their TKT scores show any correlation between their level of English and their ability to teach English after they graduate?

As a way of ensuring that the design of the research is in line with the standards of proper research structure, the researcher has to examine some measures or guidelines before she/he starts. These measures are stated by Hofstee (2006) through the following ten points summarised as follows:

- How completely the researcher's method covers her/his statement (completeness),
- How well the researcher's method examines her/his research statement (applicability and reliability);
- How familiar she/he is with the research design;

- How reliable her/his data will be;

- How difficult it will be for her/him to analyse that data;

- How difficult it will be for her/him to obtain her/his data if she/he goes about it using the method she's/he's considering;

- How much effort it will take for her/him to abide by ethical guidelines;

- If she/he can do it this way (expense);

- If the method will allow her/him to keep to her/his time frame; and

- How easily she/he will be able to design the body of her/his dissertation,

Contrary to the guidelines mentioned above, some researchers like Rounds (1996, as cited in Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 30) see that in second language research,

> "sometimes ... a research design requires that the researcher conceal her real interests, and perhaps use small deceptions to deal with the classic 'observer's paradox'".

Rounds' approach in this regard does not suit the researcher's attitude in this study as he (the researcher) cannot hide any of his intentions and interests as this is considered a kind of deception of the participants of the study.

4.5 Research Setting

This study is carried out in the English Language and Translation Department at a university in Saudi Arabia. This programme is called 'the English Language Programme', which is a four-year programme. Each year consists of two semesters. There is also a summer semester for those who fail some courses during the two semesters. Therefore, students can repeat the courses they failed during the summer semester. This four-year programme consists of four levels, a level per academic year. Students enrolled in this programme have to complete 134 credit hours so that they can graduate. After successful graduation, students are awarded a BA degree in the English Language. Graduates of this programme are expected to work as EFL teachers or translators. This

study is only conducted on the male campus of the English Language and Translation Department due to the gender segregation law. Access to the female students or participants at the female campus is impossible because it would be considered a breach of the Kingdom's laws. Nevertheless, the focus group discussions, the questionnaire, and the TKT could have been conducted by a female colleague at the female campus, but this would have weakened the reliability and validity of the findings and conclusions of this study as the administrators of the research would be totally different. In this regard, it would be great and interesting to replicate this study on the female campus participants and see how similar or different the results and conclusions would be. Students pursuing this English Programme study a variety of courses. The following table shows in detail the desired National Qualification Framework (NQF) learning domains with their learning outcomes, the teaching strategies used, and the assessment methods employed at the English Language and Translation Department.

	NQF Learning Domains and Learning Outcomes	Teaching Strategies	Assessment Methods
1.0	**Knowledge**		
1.1	• Identify effective communication skills in terms of reception and production.	• Lectures • Classroom Discussion • Classroom questions	• Paper-pencil tests • Oral tests
1.2	• Locate grammatical problems	• Lectures • Oral presentations	• Paper-pencil tests • Individual asks
1.3	• Recognise different theoretical linguistic, phonological and translation notions useful for discourse and textual analysis	• Lectures • Classroom discussion	• Paper-pencil tests • Oral tests • Individual questions
1.4	• Distinguish literary works of various eras, their themes, styles and historical/cultural influence.	• Lectures • Classroom discussion • Classroom questions	• Paper/pencil tests • Oral tests • Individual tasks
2.0	**Cognitive Skills**		

2.1	• Practice English in the different fields of study, including basic skills, linguistics, translation and literature	• Classroom discussion • Oral • presentations • Text analysis • Presentations and demonstrations • Drills and practices	• Paper-pencil • tests • Oral tests • Individual tasks • Projects • Rubrics • Personal interviews
2.2	• Write on topics, essays, and projects using sound and meaningful grammatical structures	• Classroom discussion • Cooperative learning • Brainstorming • Texts analysis • Project-based teaching • Presentations and demonstrations	• Projects • Essay writing • Individual tasks • Paper-pencil tests
3.0	**Interpersonal Skills & Responsibility**		
3.1	• Cooperate in classroom discussions and projects	• Problem-solving strategies • Individual • and group projects Debates • Role-playing	• Rubrics • Projects • Essay writing • Oral tests
3.2	• Behave ethically in essay undertaking writing, individual tasks and projects	• Individual and group projects	• Rubrics • Checklists • Projects • Essay writing • Individual tasks
4.0	**Communication, Information Technology, Numerical**		
4.1	• Communicate their views in oral and written forms	• Classroom discussion • Presentations and demonstrations • Oral presentations	• Rubrics • Oral tests • Paper-pencil tests • Essay writing • Individual tasks • Individual and group projects

4.2	• Interact with peers during classroom discussions, and projects	• Classroom discussion • Presentations and demonstrations • Oral presentations	• Rubrics • Oral tests • Checklists • Essay writing • Individual and group projects

Table 2: National Qualification Framework (NQF) (English Programme September 25, 2017: p. 14-15)

4.6 Participants

The success or failure of a study does not only depend on the right choice of research methods and their instruments, but it also depends on the suitable sampling strategy that the researcher adopts (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Mackey, Gass & Margolis (2006) maintain that the group of participants have to be drawn randomly from the population, which is hoped to be generalised. They also wonder if the selected sample is representative of the whole population. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) state that the researcher should be neutral and objective so that she/he can get rid of the halo effect through which she/he sees all participants as being good and having "haloes around their heads" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007: p. 189) although they have aspects of negative behaviour. In contrast, the researcher also has to avoid the horns effect that makes her/him see that all participants are bad and have devil's horns on their heads while they have aspects of positive behaviour. Consequently, the selection of the participants in this study was made through 'random sampling' which means that the entire population or all participants have an equal chance of being chosen or selected. The main participants, as well as the two professors interviewed, were also chosen from the English Language and Translation Department in the university wherein the study was conducted. However, the two EFL expert teachers were selected from the English Language Centre (ELC) of the same university. Also, the researcher ensured that an adequate sample size was selected, and that there was as much diversity within the sample as possible (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). The primary source of the qualitative data in this study came from

year-four student teachers (student participants), and the main source of the quantitative part also came from these participants in the form of the TKT. The student participants were final year students (student teachers) who were about to complete level four (year four), and they were about to graduate. The two professors (from the English Language and Translation Department) had many years of experience teaching at Saudi universities as well as teaching year four students. The teacher participants (two EFL experts) are native speakers of English (British nationals) with many years of experience in the English language teaching field. They are also recruiters, heads of units and teachers' observers. This means they are members of the recruitment committee, and they interview candidates for the EFL positions at the ELC, and they observe teachers and write feedback reports. They also teach English. Thus, both student participants and professors or teacher participants were selected from the original context of the study. However, and for the primary data authentication, the professor and teacher participants were used as a secondary source of data as the major source of data came from the student participants. The number of student participants in this case study included 26 final-year student teachers who undertook the TKT.

Twenty-five of those student participants completed the questionnaire. However, only seven of them took part in the focus group discussions. The two professors from the English Language and Translation Department and the two EFL experts from the ELC (English Language Centre) were separately interviewed. The two professors' interviews, the TKT and the focus group discussions were conducted in the English Language and Translation Department. However, the researcher interviewed the two EFL experts from the ELC in the ELC building where they work. All student participants were Saudis, and their ages ranged from twenty to twenty-three. Furthermore, these student participants were all males because the research was carried out on an all-male campus with a male researcher, which conforms with the Saudi Arabian laws. This means that male

researchers can only do their studies with male participants at their own campuses as per the laws of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

To sum up, this study employed 30 research participants altogether. Twenty-six of these research participants were final-year student teachers at the English Language and Translation Department, two professor participants from the same department and two EFL expert teacher participants from the ELC of the same university. The student participants, the professor participants, as well as the EFL teacher participants were representative of both the student and teacher populations where the study was carried out.

4.7 Duration of the Study

Social sciences research can be done in a cross-sectional, longitudinal, trend or prediction studies form. Cross-sectional studies classically note the participants' thoughts, behaviour, or their emotional positions taken against an issue at a specific point of time, for example, in a never-to-be-repeated survey (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Longitudinal studies observe the participants over an extended period of time in order to spot the changes and forms of "development over time" (Keeves, 1994 as cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 204) that are caused by "biological influences (e.g., age), environmental influences, planned learning experiences." Yet, longitudinal studies can repeat cross-sectional studies, using larger samples or totally new samples, to convert them to longitudinal studies. In contrast, trend studies focus on factors that are studied over time rather than the participants themselves. In trend studies, new samples are used each time the data is collected, but the focus is always on the factors, not on the participants (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

This study used the cross-sectional approach which investigated the phenomena under examination at a given point in time. To avoid the shortcomings and criticism attributed to this kind of method

that does not observe the participants for an extended period in time, the researcher used the same participants on multiple occasions through the different methods of data collection. This means that the same participants took part in the TKT, the qualitatively dominant questionnaire and the focus-discussion groups over some time during the whole second semester of the academic year. The researcher ensured that the participants who took part in the TKT were taken from those who had participated in the focus-discussion groups because part of the focus group discussions were based on discussing the results of the TKT.

4.8 Data-collection Techniques

Ethnographic research is done through qualitative methods where the researcher observes and interacts with the participants of a study in their real-life context. However, Yin (2018, p. 53) considers case study research as "a form of inquiry that does not depend solely on ethnographic or participant observer data." The design of this case study tries to portray an authentic and contemporary phenomenon thoroughly in its real-life environment through employing quantitative (objective) and qualitative (subjective) data collecting techniques (Yin, 2018; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Yin (2018, p. 44) maintains that the exceptional strength of a case study

> "is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence—documents, artifacts, interviews, and direct observations, as well as participant-observation".

Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) also underscore the value of participants being allowed to voice their opinions and ideas in situations like interviews or focus group discussions in case studies rather than being purely interpreted or reported by the researcher. In sum, in this study, the data were collected employing a qualitatively dominant questionnaire, the TKT, and from focus group discussions with year-four student teachers from the English Language and Translation Department. The researcher also interviewed two professors in the same Department. He interviewed two EFL experts at the English Language Centre of the same university. Because it is

based on a case study design, this study mainly depended on focus group discussions with student participants and one-on-one interviews with professors and EFL experts. The following table shows the data generation methods, the description of the respondents and their numbers as well as the timing of each data collection technique.

Data Collection Technique	Description of participants	Number of participants	Timing
Questionnaire	Year-four students (would-be EFL teachers)	25	The end of the second semester, 2019
TKT (Cambridge Knowledge Test)	Year-four students (would-be EFL teachers)	26	The end of the second semester, 2019
Focus Group Discussions	Year-four students (would-be EFL teachers)	Six + a participant who just attended without participation	The end of the second semester, 2019
Interview	Two professors in the English Language and Translation Department	2	The end of the second semester, 2019
Interview	Two EFL expert teachers (supervisors and recruiters) at the English Language Centre of the same university	2	The end of the second semester, 2019

Table 3: Data Generation Methods

Every data generation method will be discussed on its own in the following section:

4.8.1 The Questionnaire

Richards & Schmidt (2002, p. 438) define the questionnaire as "a set of questions on a topic or group of topics designed to be answered by a respondent." They also maintain that the researcher has to design a questionnaire that is valid, reliable and clear. The first data generation method in

this study was a 'qualitatively dominant' questionnaire which was adapted from Sheokarah's study (2018) that is titled *'Final-Year Student Teachers' Perceived Preparedness to Teach English'*. This questionnaire contained both quantitative and qualitative aspects, but the qualitative part was the most dominant. Some researchers call this kind of questionnaire a mixed methodology. Sandelowski (2003: as cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 240) states that there are two main and somewhat incompatible reasons for blending or mixing methods:

> "(a) to achieve a fuller understanding of a target phenomenon and (b) to verify one set of findings against the other."

However, some questions in a questionnaire could be ambiguous, so it had to be piloted before it is given to the participants. Consequently, the questionnaire was given to some of the staff members as well as to some students so as to identify any ambiguous questions. As a result, some items were found to be unclear, so some of them were removed, and other items were rephrased with the help of the staff members and the students in order to suit the participants' context and culture. After comments were considered and changes were made, the modified and updated version was then given to the sample of the study in the English Language and Translation Department. Also, the researcher ensured that all participants were allowed to ask for any clarifications during the answering of the questionnaire so as to obtain the best results. The questionnaire included four sections A, B, C, and D. Sections A, B, and C contained the closed-ended questions (the quantitative part of the questionnaire). However, Section D included the open-ended questions (the qualitative and most dominant part of the questionnaire). In detail, Section A gives an account of the participants' biographical details. Section B requires participants to give their views about how they feel about teaching specific aspects of English. Section C asks the participants how they feel about the general aspects of teaching English as a foreign language. Section D has open-ended questions that the participants have to answer in writing. Twenty-five

student participants completed the questionnaire.

4.8.2 The TKT (Teaching Knowledge Test)

The TKT represents the quantitative side of this study. It is a test that was developed by Cambridge University, Cambridge English Language Assessment Department. This department is a nonprofit entity of the University of Cambridge. It is one part of the three major boards of examinations that form the Cambridge Assessment Body. The exam consists of three modules. Each module contains 80 MCQ and matching questions. The duration of each module is 1 hour and 20 minutes (80 minutes in total). Every module assesses an aspect of English language learning and teaching. For example, Module 1 tests a candidate's knowledge of the language itself and their background to language learning and teaching. In detail, it tests the candidates' ability to identify terms, concepts and factors underpinning the learning and teaching of English. Module 2 examines candidates' knowledge of lesson planning and use of resources for language teaching. In detail, it tests the knowledge and the skills the candidates need for lesson planning. It also examines the range of types of assessment and resources which can guide their preparation of lessons. Module 3 examines the candidates' ability to manage the teaching and learning process. In detail, it tests their ability to use the teacher's and learner's language in the classroom as well as their ability to manage the class. The researcher used only Module 1 as a data generation method because Module 1 only assesses candidates' knowledge of the language itself and their background in language learning and teaching. Module 1 test takers are assessed according to the table below (adapted from the *Cambridge ESOL Band Descriptors*). There are four band descriptors according to which the test taker is assessed. For example, if a test taker obtains a score out of 80, this score is compared to one of the four band descriptors.

TKT Module 1	Module 1: Language systems and background to language learning and teaching

Band 4	The candidate demonstrates comprehensive and accurate knowledge of all areas on the TKT Module 1 syllabus, i.e., language systems and background to language learning and teaching. He/she shows familiarity with the full range of concepts, terminology, practices and processes tested in TKT Module 1, which relate to describing language and language skills, factors in the language learning process and the range of methods, tasks and activities available to the language teacher. The candidate is able to relate existing knowledge to both familiar and unfamiliar classroom situations.
Band 3	The candidate generally demonstrates comprehensive and accurate knowledge of areas on the TKT Module 1 syllabus, i.e., language systems and background to language learning and teaching. He/she shows familiarity with most of the concepts, terminology, practices and processes tested in TKT Module 1, which relate to describing language and language skills, factors in the language learning process and the range of methods, tasks and activities available to the language teacher. The candidate is generally able to relate existing knowledge to both familiar and unfamiliar classroom situations.
Band 2	The candidate demonstrates basic knowledge of areas on the TKT Module 1 syllabus, i.e., language systems and background to language learning and teaching. He/she shows familiarity with some of the concepts, terminology, practices and processes tested in TKT Module 1, which relate to describing language and language skills, factors in the language learning process and the range of methods, tasks and activities available to the language teacher. The candidate is able to relate existing knowledge to familiar classroom situations, and occasionally to unfamiliar ones.
Band 1	The candidate demonstrates restricted knowledge of areas on the TKT Module 1 syllabus, i.e., language systems and background to language learning and teaching. He/she shows familiarity with a limited range of the concepts, terminology, practices and processes tested in TKT Module 1, which relate to describing language and language skills, factors in the language learning process and the range of methods, tasks and activities available to the language teacher. The candidate is able to relate existing knowledge to familiar classroom situations only

Table 4: TKT Band Descriptors for Module One (2021)

In the TKT, there is no Pass or Fail results. Candidates receive their marks in the form of bands from 1 to 4. While Band 4, which represents wide-ranging knowledge of areas on the TKT, is the highest, Band 1, which represents limited knowledge of the TKT content, is the lowest. Band 3 demonstrates a broad and in-depth knowledge of areas of the TKT. Band 2 shows basic knowledge like language systems and the background of language learning and teaching. The table below shows the equivalent range of marks compared to the four bands. For example, if a candidate obtains ten out of 80 in Module 1, this means he will be awarded a Band 1 certificate. Also, if another candidate obtains 63 out of 80, he will be awarded a Band 3 certificate.

TKT Module 1	Range of marks out of 80
Band 1	0 -15
Band 2	16 -39
Band 3	40 - 67
Band 4	68 - 80

Table 5: TKT Bands and Range of marks (adapted from Lauran & Zakaria, 2013: p. 65)

The TKT was an extension of the questionnaire because it addressed more real and hands-on aspects of mastering the English language and the ways it is taught. The TKT proved to work very well as most of the student teachers were very excited to sit for it as it was their first experience with a standardised exam from Cambridge and they may have felt the exam was easy and entertaining to sit for. Student teachers were also excited about the scores that would question their preparedness to teach English, and that would stand as the turning point for the transformation of their existing perspectives and frames of reference. Moreover, the TKT may have been the dilemma or the crisis that faced those student teachers, meaning that it exposed their real preparedness to teach English. Most of the student teachers were really excited during and after the test as it was an authentic experience that dealt with their perceptions of preparedness to teach English after their graduation. Upon giving them the results of the test, a few students were happy and satisfied with their results, however the rest of the students were shocked with their results as they were low. Consequently, when asked to participate in the focus group discussions, only seven students agreed to take part. This may be indicative of their actual state of preparedness, meaning that they are not well-prepared linguistically and pedagogically to teach English after their graduation.

4.8.3 Focus Group Discussions

Bell (2010: p. 165) maintains that the objective of focus groups is to "focus discussion on a particular issue." Focus group discussions are considered to be another form of typical interviews. Still, they are better than traditional one-on-one interviews as they are "time-efficient", and they

depend on "the group interactions" (Salkind: 2010, p. 500). Mcleod (2014) maintains that focus groups happen when participants are interviewed together. They also believe that the interviewer's role is to "make sure the group interact with each other and do not drift off topic." (p. 3) Focus group discussions have a lot of advantages, as stated by many researchers (viz., Krueger 1988; Morgan 1988: Bailey 1994: 192–3; Robson 2002: 284–5 as cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison: 2007, p. 378-377). They maintain that focus group discussions are useful for:

- orienting to a particular field of focus;
- developing themes, topics and schedules flexibly for subsequent interviews and/or questionnaires;
- generating hypotheses that derive from the insights and data from the group;
- generating and evaluating data from different subgroups of a population;
- gathering qualitative data;
- generating data quickly and at low cost;
- gathering data on attitudes, values and opinions;
- empowering participants to speak out, and in their own words;
- encouraging groups, rather than individuals, to voice opinions;
- encouraging non-literate participants;
- providing greater coverage of issues than would be possible in a survey; and
- gathering feedback from previous studies.

The focus groups were conducted with two student participant groups (student teachers or would-be teachers) from the English Language and Translation Department in the University where the study was carried out. The first focus group included three student participants (final-year students)- from those who took the TKT and completed the questionnaire. Also, the second focus group discussion included four student participants (one of them only attended without participating) from those who took the TKT and completed the questionnaire. Those focus group discussions provided a foundation for the student participants to exchange their views concerning the perceived conceptions of their preparedness to teach English as well as a providing base for the researcher to analyse in-depth these student teachers' perceptions of preparedness along with their differences and similarities. Also, these focus groups served as an authentic platform where

participants voiced their reflections and views spontaneously and without restrictions, especially when they made sure that their opinions would not be shared with any other parties and their identities were kept anonymous.

Focus group discussions are used to collect qualitative data by using a small number of participants – who are usually between seven and ten – to have a rational discourse with one another on a specific topic with the help of the researcher (Leung & Savithri, 2009; Silverman, 2014). The purpose of focus group discussions is to collect data from participants with the same qualities and who are expected to share their views, perspectives, experiences, and frames of references, which in turn will help the researcher to understand better what these participants feel and think about that topic or issue (Krueger & Casey, 2015). Focus group discussions are built on a set of questions and prompts that are usually supported by "stimulus material" that helps facilitate the rational discourse, and that help expand and to elucidate data in the other methods used (Silverman, 2014, p. 206; Flick, 2014, p. 199). For this study, the stimulus material was represented in the TKT that was taken by participants ahead of the focus group discussions. The TKT was also a central part of the focus group discussions.

Those focus group discussions were conducted through open-ended questions and stimuli that helped create an atmosphere of informality which assisted participants to engage in verbal communication (rational discourse) and to share their interpretations and experiences. The researcher's role – during the focus group discussions – was as a facilitator who only asked the questions and gave the prompts (Guillemin, 2004; Leung & Savithri, 2009; Flick, 2014). During the focus group discussions, participants were asked to comment on the TKT and on their TKT scores and whether they were satisfied with their results or not, whether their scores reflected their real teaching skills and whether they needed further studies like doing an MA or a diploma or at least a certificate in teaching before they started teaching. The questions about the TKT and its

results were intended to help participants reflect on their language ability and their perceptions of preparedness to teach English after they had graduated. Participants were also asked direct questions about their perceptions of preparedness to teach English, such as: "What is your opinion about the Bachelor of Arts programme? Probe: Has it prepared you enough for teaching English next year? What makes you say that?"; "In your opinion, which course or subject was the most influential regarding preparing you to teach English? Why?" and "Do you think that you are prepared to teach these language aspects; Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening at least the same way you learnt them? Why? Why not?" These questions were directly related to their perceptions of preparedness and to whether or not they felt they would be able to teach English as a foreign language after their graduation.

4.8.4   Interviews

This study used an array of techniques to collect data, including interviews, focus discussion groups, a questionnaire and the TKT. An interview is defined as a discussion between a researcher and a person or a group of people in order to collect data (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). There are many kinds of interviews. For example, Patton (2015) mentions four types of interviews: 'the informal conversation, the interview guide approach, the standardised open-ended, the closed ended and fixed-response interviews. Similarly, Richards & Schmidt (2002) mention five other types of interviews: the focused, the guided, the in-depth, the structured and unstructured. The researcher opted for the guided interview by Richards and Schmidt, which is the same as the interview guide approach by Patton. Richards & Schmidt (2002), as well as Patton (2015), define the guided interview as an interview that has been prepared by the researcher in advance (i.e., the questions have been carefully chosen and prepared by the researcher beforehand). The list of questions in the guided interview is called the "interview schedule or protocol" (Richards and Schmidt, 2002: p. 235). Researchers usually tape-record or video-record the interviewees' answers

to the questions. The interviews in this study were recorded by using the researcher's mobile phone, which is better than the old and traditional ways used before. One strength of this guided interview (as stated by Patton, 2015: p. 866) is that the outline form of this interview "increases the comprehensiveness of the data and makes data collection somewhat systematic for each respondent." The researcher interviewed two professors from the English Language and Translation Department in addition to two EFL expert teachers from the ELC at the same Saudi Arabian University. These four interviewees raised issues connected to the final-year student teachers' preparedness to teach English as a foreign language after they graduate as well as the effectiveness of their English Language Programme.

4.9 Data-collection procedures

Cohen et al. (2007, p. 461) state that "There is no one single or correct way to analyze and present qualitative data; how one does it should abide by the issue of fitness for purpose." By abiding by the principle of fitness for purpose, the researcher used different measuring tools to stipulate the student teachers' perceived preparedness to teach English as a foreign language after they graduate. These tools included SPSS and NVivo. For instance, the researcher used SPSS to compute the mean scores of student teachers' results of the TKT. These mean scores were compared to the themes that emerged from their answers to the qualitative-dominant questionnaire and the focus group discussions. This was an attempt to try to find any kind of correlation between their perceptions of preparedness to teach English as a foreign language, their real level of English and their actual teaching skills. Also, these mean scores were compared to the themes that emerged from the two professors' interviews as well as the two EFL expert teachers' opinions through the interviews. Nvivo is a kind of software that is used to analyse qualitative data. It is a package that was produced by QSR International. The researcher used both Nvivo and Happyscribe to analyse student teachers' responses during the focus group discussions. At first, student teachers were

recorded during their focus groups. Then, their audio tracks were uploaded to those sites where they were transformed into scripts. However, participants' scripts were not accurate 100%, so the researcher had to listen carefully to them again and correct the mistakes done by Nvivo and Happy scribe. The final product of both Nvivo and Happyscribe was used to report student teachers' responses.

The researcher used NVivo and Happyscribe applications to transcribe the focus group discussions for both focus groups. They (NVivo and happy scribe) were also used to transcribe the four interviews with the two professors and the two EFL expert teachers. Even the focus group discussions scripts and the interviewees' (two professors and two EFL expert teachers) scripts were encoded and stored in NVivo and happy scribe.

4.10   Data-analysis Methods

Data in qualitative research can be observed but not measured. The type of data tends to be interpretive and nonstatistical. In other words, it cannot be expressed in numbers. Also, in qualitative research, data are always collected through interviews, focus-group discussions, qualitative questionnaires, words, pictures, symbols and observations. Richards & Schmidt (2002) maintain that collected qualitative data can often be transformed and analysed in the form of quantitative data. Moreover, the researcher is closely and personally involved in the data collection process, and the results and findings tend to be subjective.

On the other hand, in quantitative research, data can be described, quantified and statistically or mathematically analysed. In quantitative research, data can be collected in the form of numbers and statistics like questionnaires or surveys, tests, weight, height, price, time, temperature, etc. In qualitative research, the data analysis is mostly interpretive (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Quantitative research is considered to be more accurate due to its representation in numbers. By attending to this dichotomy, this study employed both qualitative and quantitative data which

address the concerns and weaknesses of each approach, respectively (Nunan, 1992). Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011, p. 220) maintain that

> "The main attraction of mixed methods research has been the fact that by using both qualitative and quantitative approaches a researcher can bring out the best of both paradigms while also compensating for their weaknesses."

4.11   Ensuring Data Quality

Researchers can choose to present qualitative data on their own, or they can combine them with quantitative data. They (researchers) may also use multiple methods that incorporate both qualitative and quantitative data which is widespread in the field of academic research. This notion is presented by Patton (2015: p. 71) as follows:

> "Qualitative findings may be presented alone or in combination with quantitative data. Research and evaluation studies employing multiple methods, including combinations of qualitative and quantitative data, are common. At the simplest level, a questionnaire or interview that asks both fixed-choice (closed) questions and open-ended questions is an example of how quantitative measurement and qualitative inquiry are often combined."

Consequently, qualitative data need to be assessed for their quality by using methods that would disclose their paradigmatic style and epistemological and ontological nature. While quantitative data is concerned with natural sciences and they are exemplified in numerical or statistical forms, Qualitative data are represented in nonstatistical forms. As a result, validity and reliability are confirmed via the use of statistical measures and correlation checks. Qualitative data need to be addressed throughout bearing in mind the issues of trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, applicability and confirmability. Consequently, researchers who only use a quantitative data generation approach are like doctors who only look at their patients' test results. But because, they don't also listen to them giving accounts of their feelings; these researchers are "making judgments with inadequate knowledge." (Patton, 2015: p. 87). This section discusses in detail the steps taken to ensure data quality. Due to the usage of both qualitative and quantitative data generation procedures in this study, the researcher employed a detailed approach. For

instance, he used valid and reliable data generation techniques to ensure the quality of the data collected. He used a reliable and valid test (i.e., the Cambridge TKT) to collect his quantitative data. Also, he piloted the qualitative-dominant questionnaire before it was used with the sample to ensure its validity and reliability.

4.11.1 Quality of the Quantitative Data

Freeman & Long (2014, p. 106) maintain that quantitative methods are referred to as "hypothesis-testing", but qualitative methods as "hypothesis-generating". They also assert that quantitative research is

> "best typified by an experiment designed to test a hypothesis through the use of objective instruments and appropriate statistical analyses." (p. 52).

Grix (2004: p. 117) stresses the importance of quantitative data as being "very important" as seen by the

> "supporters of quantitative analyses because the work is thus subject to verifiability, which provides an air of legitimacy, reproducibility, reliability and objectivity."

He also maintains that statistical reliability can be achieved by employing "a random sample (the more, the better) from which" researchers can obtain "generalizable results." (p. 117) Also, Richards & Schmidt (2002) opine that collected qualitative data can be analysed and transferred into the form of quantitative data.

4.11.2 Quality of the Qualitative Data

Richards & Schmidt (2002) define qualitative research as any research that employs nonstatistical data like interviews, case studies or observation of participants. They aver that qualitative research is a kind of:

> "a holistic approach to social research in which experimental intervention in a research site, attempts to isolate phenomena of interest in experiments, and attempts to identify causal relationships among isolated variables are eschewed in favour of the naturalistic observation of complex settings." (p. 435)

Likewise, Mackey & Gass (2005) define qualitative research as research that relies on descriptive data which do not use any statistical measures. They also posit (p. 163-164) that qualitative research includes

> "rich description", "natural and holistic representation", "few participants", "emic perspectives", "cyclical and open-ended processes", "possible and ideological orientations".

For them (Mackey & Gass), qualitative research also has general and open-ended questions in addition to hypotheses that are generated as an outcome of this qualitative research. In detail, the 'rich description' refers to providing detailed and careful descriptions of the phenomenon under scrutiny. The 'natural and holistic representation' means that the researcher studies respondents or participants in their natural backgrounds. Besides, qualitative research uses 'few participants' that are randomly selected in order to generalise the results to the whole population. The 'emic perspectives' relate to the extent to which the qualitative researcher interprets a phenomenon in its cultural and meaningful context. That means that the researcher uses "categories that are meaningful to members of the speech community under study". (Mackey & Gass, 2005: p. 163). The 'cyclical and open-ended processes' refer to that "inductive path" that commences with a small number of perceived conceptions which are in turn followed by "a gradual fine-tuning and narrowing of focus". (Mackey & Gass, 2005: p. 163). 'Possible and ideological orientations' mean that the researcher could intentionally advocate ideological positions (i.e., social or political goals) that make her/his research critical. For Richards & Schmidt (2002), qualitative researchers have to take care of ethical issues like gatekeeping, research design flexibility, and triangulation. However, Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) prefer to replace the term 'reliability' with ideas like trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, neutrality, confirmability, consistency, and applicability. Most of these terms will be discussed in the following sections, as well as the notion of triangulation.

4.11.2.1   Trustworthiness

Validity and reliability are essential factors in sociolinguistic research. Every study has to be valid and reliable. Not only does validity refer to the extent to which a measurement tool or an instrument (like a questionnaire or an interview) is accurately founded and designed, but it also refers to the trustworthiness and believability of the research itself. Accordingly, if we want a study to be valid, it means we want its results

> "to reflect what we believe they reflect and that they are meaningful in the sense that they have significance not only to the population that was tested but, at least for most experimental research, to a broader, relevant population." (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p.106, 107)

Validity is a kind of fidelity that "requires the researcher to be as honest as possible to the self-reporting of the researched" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 134).

 Validity consists of two broad aspects:

- Internal validity refers to the extent to which the research tools or instruments can really measure what they are supposed to measure, and "the findings must describe accurately the phenomena being researched" (Cohen et al., 2007: p. 135).
- External validity refers to the extent to which the findings of a study can be "generalized to the wider population, cases or situations" Cohen et al., 2007: p. 136).

This study attends to validity through triangulation, which uses more than one method of data generation. Data for this study were collected through the use of four data collecting devices: a questionnaire, the TKT, focus groups and an interview with two professors and two interviewers. Interpretive techniques were used to collect data through focus groups with student teachers and interviews with professors and interviewers.

On the other hand, reliability refers to the consistency and replication or repeatability of the findings of a study in another context or setting (Mackey & Gass, 2005; Cohen et al., 2007). For example, if a piece of research were to be carried out in another similar context or setting and on

a similar group of participants, it should yield similar findings and results (Nunan, 1992; Cohen et al., 2007). Iacono et al., (2011: p. 59) contend that

> "reliability demonstrates that the procedure can be replicated with the same results and is dealt with by making as many steps as explicit as possible, and clearly displaying the evidence so that the process can be audited".

The researcher used standardised questions during the interviews so as to address the reliability issue. Data from those interviews was transferred into numerical representations, and they were tested for their degree of consistency.

4.11.2.2   Credibility

Credibility is the first component when it comes to the evaluation of trustworthiness in qualitative research. On the other hand, credibility relates to the notion of internal validity in quantitative research. (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Merriam and Tisdell (2015: p. 242), on the other hand, posit that the notion of "internal validity deals with the question of how research findings match reality", how consistent "the findings with reality are", and if "the findings capture what is really there." They also wish to establish if researchers observe or measure "what they think they are measuring." Thus, internal validity relates to the notion of reality. In this respect, to realise the credibility side of this study, the researcher gave the participants (prospective teachers) time to familiarise themselves with questionnaire items. He also gave them time to ask for any clarifications before and during answering of the questionnaire. The same was also done during the interviews with the two professors and the two EFL expert teachers. As for the TKT, the researcher explained what the TKT is and what it is for, and how they can answer it using the bubble sheets, and why the participants are given such a test. Thus, credibility was attended to in this study through various techniques and ways which also included collecting the data through multiple methods (qualitative and quantitative).

4.11.2.3   Transferability

The second component towards the evaluation of qualitative research trustworthiness is transferability or external validity (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). They also define transferability as the extent to which the findings of a study can be applied to or "generalized to the wider population, cases or situations" (p. 136). In other words, to what extent the results or the findings of a particular study are generalisable (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In this respect, this study offers a thorough description of the English Language Programme, where the study was carried out. It also gives a detailed description of the programme with its four levels, its content, its context and background, along with the findings of this study. Data collection methods and techniques (the TKT, the qualitative questionnaire, as well as the interview questions) are also thoroughly described and detailed. The whole set of transcripts of the prime qualitative data sources are also included in the appendices section at the end of this study.

4.11.2.4   Dependability

Dependability is related to the concept of consistency or reliability in qualitative research (Golafshani, 2003). Likewise, Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) and Salkind (2010) consider dependability as synonymous with reliability, consistency, and replicability. Salkind also (2010: p. 1595) maintains that "investigators also establish dependability and credibility in how the gathered evidence is aligned with the interpretations they make."

4.11.2.5   Confirmability

In qualitative paradigms, confirmability is similar to replicability in quantitative research. It

> "contains making available full details of the data on which claims or interpretations are based so that other researchers can examine the data and confirm, modify or reject the first researcher's interpretations." (Mackey, Gass and Margolis, 2006: p. 352)

Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) define confirmability as the data authentication in any study. It is also considered the product of the study itself (Golafshani, 2003). Bell (2010: p. 54) states the conditions and guarantees for a successful research project, as follows:

1. All participants will be offered the opportunity to remain anonymous;
2. All information will be treated with the strictest confidentiality;
3. Interviewees will have the opportunity to verify statements when the research is in draft form;
4. Participants will receive a copy of the final report;
5. The research is to be assessed by the university for examination purposes only, but should the question of publication arise at a later date, permission will be sought from the participants; and
6. The research will attempt to explore educational management in practice. It is hoped the final report may be of benefit to the school and to those who take part.

4.11.2.6 Triangulation

Triangulation is a way to 'validate one's conclusion by presenting converging results obtained through different methods' (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011: p. 241). Using two or more methods of collecting data is called triangulation (Cohen et al. 2007). They contend that using a variety of methods supports the validity of the study. The researcher used more than three methods of data collection to reach the proposed results of this study. Mackey & Gass (2005), on the other hand, identify three kinds of triangulation: theoretical triangulation, investigator triangulation, and methodological triangulation. While the theoretical triangulation employs various tools or measures to scrutinise or analyse the same data, the investigator triangulation uses several observers or interviewers to investigate the same phenomenon. However, the methodological triangulation (the one adopted in this study) uses different kinds of research methods to explore a specific phenomenon. For achieving the notion of triangulation in this case study, the researcher used multiple methods (qualitative as well as quantitative) for collecting the set of data. For example, he used the TKT, a questionnaire, focus group discussions as well as interviews with two professors and two EFL experts. The researcher opted for this kind of triangulation because "a

major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence", as noted by Yin (2018: p. 170-171).

4.11.2.7 Research ethics

Cohen et al. (2007) believe that the major problem that would face researchers is that they have to be able to strike a balance between what they are required to achieve, as researchers, in quest of the truth, and what would threaten their respondents' rights and values. This means that the researcher is caught between a rock and a hard place. She/he has to do his/her research and achieve the proposed results, and yet, she/he has to respect the privacy, and confidentiality of her/his respondents at the same time. The Nuremberg Code (1949), which was considered the basis of ethics in research, asserts that with human respondents' voluntary consent is unquestionably essential. This means that the research participants should have legal eligibility to give such consent. Also, these participants should be able to have the power of choice without being forced, coerced, deceived, or threatened. They should not be exposed to any hidden form of constraint or intimidation, and they "should have sufficient knowledge and comprehension of the elements of the subject matter involved" to enable them to "make an understanding and enlightened decision" (Nuremberg Code: p. 2).

4.11.2.8 Request for Permission to Study

The first phase of the ethical part of this study was to obtain authorisation from the Head of the English Language and Translation Department at the Saudi university where the study was carried out. Consequently, a request for permission (Indemnity Form under Appendix 9.15) for this study to be conducted was submitted to the head of that department, who approved it right away without any kind of hesitation.

4.11.2.9   Informed Consent

This study was conducted under overt observation where the participants of the study know that they are being observed by the researcher, which in turn does not violate the principles of informed consent, and their privacy and private space are not invaded. On the other hand, the covert observation deals with the participants as being instruments or research objects, which puts the researcher in a position that distorts her/his role (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). These authors also state that if the private aspects of the participants of the study are to be scrutinised as well, then ahead of the study, the purpose of the research needs to be clarified and informed consent should be attained from the chosen participants. In addition, according to the Belmont Report (*National Commission*, 1979, as cited in Mackey, Gass, & Margolis, 2006, p. 27), informed consent is subject to three conditions that have to be fulfilled as follows:

1. Provision of sufficient information (i.e., full disclosure about the experiment by the researcher);
2. Comprehension on the part of the subject; and
3. Voluntary participation, in which the subject is free from undue pressure or coercion.

Consequently, prior consent was obtained from the Head of the English Language and Translation Department of the university where the study was conducted. Also, the researcher obtained written consent from all participants (year-four students, two professors, and two EFL expert teachers) of the study.

4.11.2.10   Voluntarism

Voluntarism involves applying the notion of informed consent, which ensures that all participants freely and voluntarily decide to participate or not to participate in the study, and it also ensures that risk exposure is carried out knowingly and willingly. This also means that the participants have the right to choose whether to take part or not; whether to answer the questions or not; whether to be interviewed or not; or to answer telephone calls or emails in a way that would make them

feel that this is not compulsory. Overall, participants should not feel afraid of being observed in any way (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). As a result, participants of this study were told in advance that their participation was voluntary, and they should feel free to stop and withdraw from the study (from the TKT, the questionnaire, and the focus discussion groups) at any point. That is why the number of participants is different in the TKT, for instance, from the number of participants in the qualitative questionnaire or the focus-discussion groups.

4.11.2.11 Competence

Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2007) aver that competence is an integral part through which the participants of any study will make precise decisions if they are given the pertinent data. Consequently, participants in this study were chosen carefully. For example, the student teachers were all year-four students who were mature, responsible, and who did not have any form of mental or psychological impairment. As for the two professors, they were professors in the same English Language and Translation Department, and they used to teach these student teachers through their four levels or four years of study. Concerning the two EFL expert teachers, they were chosen for interviews because they used to work as coordinators, heads of units, teacher observers as well as recruiters (in addition to being EFL teachers) at the ELC of the same University.

On the other hand, the researcher himself has been an EFL teacher, test administrator, Head of testing, and Head of recruitment for a long time (since he graduated in 1991). He also used to work at the same University, but in the English Language Centre (ELC), not in the English Language and Translation Department. This gave the researcher an advantage and privilege to conduct such a study as he is well aware of the Saudi context and the study context in particular, as he has been working for this University for more than eleven years. Thus, the participants, as well as the researcher, were knowledgeable, experienced, and competent to participate in the study.

4.11.2.12 Comprehension

The term comprehension entails the extent to which participants entirely comprehend the nature of the study and the subtle objectives that lie behind it. The researcher had to ensure that the participants of the study fully understood the complicated procedures and the hidden risks, if any, and even the questions asked during the interviews, focus-discussions and questionnaire (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Participants of this study were given clear instructions and explanations at the beginning of each stage of the research. The researcher made sure that participants fully understood the posed questions before they started answering them. Also, the researcher gave the participants the right to ask for clarification and explanations in case they could not understand any part of the questionnaire, the focus-discussion groups, or the TKT. This way, the participants of the study should have fully comprehended what they were doing before they did it.

4.11.2.13 Anonymity

Participants' identities, and any sort of violation of their anonymity, ought to be made with the consent of the participants themselves. Also, their personalities should not be revealed through the information they provide (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). This means that their identities should not be exposed under any circumstances, and that these must be kept confidential throughout the course of their participation. Participants of this study (professors, EFL teachers, and year-four students) were not asked to state their names, place of employment, or study in the interviews, focus group discussions, the TKT, or in the questionnaire. Also, all participants were not mentioned by their surnames or first names in any part of this study. Besides, participants in this study wil not be identified in the final version of the thesis as pseudonyms were used to refer to them.

4.11.2.14   Confidentiality

Confidentiality is second to none in the ethics of research. It relates to privacy in a sense. While participants' responses attained during the process of research are considered confidential, their personal information, which can be identified by others, must not be revealed by the researcher (Kimmel, 1988). All participants in this study were given pseudonyms so as not to be identified by other researchers. They were also given a verbal as well as a written statement confirming that their identifiable information and their responses would not be disclosed to any third party or institution. Besides, all soft documents used in the study have been stored in the researcher's external hard drive, which makes it difficult to be hacked or stolen. Also, all the data from the audio recordings and all digital media obtained during the interviews and focus-group discussions have been stored on the researcher's external hard drive that is kept in a secure place. All soft and hard copies of the study findings, consent forms, and any other related data have also been kept in a safe place with the researcher. All the soft and hard copies will be made available upon request within five years of the completion of this study. All the soft and hard copies of all stored data will be burnt after five years. This way, participants' confidentiality would not be breached, and it wouldn't be easy for anyone to trace them and expose their identities.

4.12   Methodical Limitations

Mackey, Gass, & Margolis (2006) are of the view that an acknowledgement of the limitations of the research is important both for the readers so as not to overgeneralise the findings of the study; and for the future researchers as a suggestion on how further studies could be conducted and improved. This study was only done in one University out of many universities in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the results of this study may be applicable to a wide population of Saudi students who study similar syllabi, and who are in similar English Language and Translation Departments. However, it cannot be generalised to students who study different syllabi in other English

Language and Translation Departments in other Saudi universities. Besides, this study was conducted with male student teachers because of the segregation of sexes as there is still a separation between males and females. This means that male students have their own campuses and male teachers, and females have their own campuses and female teachers as well. It would also be beneficial to replicate this study with the same data collection tools among female student teachers in the female campus to investigate their perceptions of preparedness to teach English as a foreign language and the reasons for their perceptions. This way, similarities and differences among male and female student teachers would be tracked and highlighted regarding their perceptions of preparedness, which in turn would enrich the field of teaching English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia. Also, further studies should be carried out to evaluate the teacher education programmes and their effectiveness in Saudi Arabian universities as this study was only undertaken in order to assess student teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach English as a foreign language after graduation and the reasons for their perceptions.

4.13   Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the main aim and objectives of this study, along with the research questions. An outline was also provided concerning the research paradigm, the learning theory, the mixed-method approach that underpinned, informed and guided this study to achieve its primary aim and objectives. The research approach, its design and setting were also discussed in this chapter. Moreover, details of the participants, the duration of the study, and the data collection techniques were provided. This chapter also discussed the data collection procedures, the data analysis methods and the ensuring of data quality. In addition, this chapter declared the methical limitations of this study.

 The next chapter will report on this study's main findings, based on both qualitative and quantitative data. It will also provide an outline of the organisation of data collecting tools

according to their chronological order. It will start with an introduction, followed by the results of the questionnaire, the TKT, the focus group discussions and the interviews with the teacher participants.

Chapter Five - Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on the findings of this study whilst employing the methods that were explained in detail in the methodology chapter. Since this is a case study investigating the perceptions of preparedness of EFL would-be teachers to teach English as a foreign language after their graduation, and since it covers events over a specific period, the sections in this chapter were arranged chronologically. The chronological approach of reporting the findings of such a case study "can serve an important purpose in doing explanatory case studies because presumed causal sequences must occur linearly over time" (Yin, 2018: 287). The first section that presents part of this study's findings relates to the results of the qualitatively-dominant questionnaire held right before the TKT. The second section of the data collection tools (the TKT) presents the findings' quantitative side. This TKT was conducted by the end of the second semester of the academic year 2019. It was carried out at the DLT (English Language Department) of the University in which this study was conducted. The third qualitative component was the focus group discussions which were conducted to discuss the student teachers' results of the TKT test as well as their perceptions of preparedness to teach English and their English ability in the four language skills (reading, writing; listening and speaking). The last part of the findings relates to the one-on-one interviews held with two professors at the English Language and Translation Department and two EFL expert teachers in the English Language Centre (ELC) of the same University that was the site of this study. Consequently, this chapter will discuss the results of the following data collecting tools in the following order:

1. The questionnaire– taken by year-four students (would-be teachers) at the DLT.

2. The TKT - taken by year-four students (would-be teachers) at the DLT.

3. Focus Group discussions - done with year-four students (would-be teachers) at the DLT.

4. Interviews with two EFL experts at the English Language Centre (ELC)

5. Interviews with two professors at the English Language and Translation Department where the study was carried out.

In sum, this chapter presents this study's findings as derived from the questionnaire, the TKT, the focus group discussions and the interviews.

5.2 The Questionnaire Results

The questionnaire aimed to investigate final-year student teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach English as a foreign language and to determine what shapes their perceptions of preparedness. This questionnaire was designed to last for approximately 30 minutes. It consisted of five pages, and it was entirely voluntary. All the information that the participants provided was kept confidential and was used only for this study. The questionnaire comprised of four sections: A, B, C, and D. Section A was about respondents' biographical details. Section B requires respondents to give their views about how they felt about teaching specific aspects of English. Section C asked the respondents how they felt about teaching general aspects of English as a foreign language. Section D comprised of open-ended questions that respondents had to answer in writing. The following section gives details of the results of all the four sections. Results of each section will be presented separately:

5.2.1 Section A: Biographical Details

This section asked respondents to provide biographical and educational details about themselves. It (section A) contained six questions as follows:

1. *What is your gender?*
2. *What is your nationality?*

3. *How old are you?*
4. *What is your home language?*
5. *Which language do you prefer to communicate in?*
6. *What type of secondary school did you attend?*

The following table presents the biographical details of the student participants who completed the questionnaire. It shows that all candidates are males. Regarding nationality, 25 candidates are Saudis except for one candidate, an Egyptian. Two participants were under 20 years old, while 23 were between 22 and 23 years old. All participants speak Arabic as their native language. Sixteen participants speak Arabic as their preferred language. Six candidates prefer to speak in English, and only one candidate speaks both languages. Twenty-two candidates attended government schools, two candidates attended private schools, but only one candidate had attended both kinds of school.

#	Category	Details		
1	Gender	All candidates are males.	No Females	
2	Nationality	Twenty-five candidates are Saudis.	An Egyptian	
3	Age	Two candidates are under 20.	Twenty-three candidates are between 22-25.	
4	Home Language	All candidates speak Arabic.		
5	Preferred language of communication	Sixteen candidates prefer to speak Arabic.	Six candidates prefer to communicate in English.	Three candidates speak both Arabic and English.
6	Secondary school attended	Twenty-two candidates attended State Schools.	Two candidates attended private schools.	One candidate attended both kinds of school.

Table 6: Biographical details of the student-teacher participants

5.2.2 Section B: Teaching Specific Aspects of English

This section required the student participants to indicate their perceived preparedness (how well they think they are prepared) to teach specific aspects of the English language curriculum in Saudi schools. This section involved seven questions. These respondents were asked to answer these questions on a Likert-type scale, which is a psychometric scale that is commonly used in research.

The question to be answered was: ***How do you feel about teaching:***

- ***Grammar?***
- ***Reading Comprehension?***
- ***Listening?***
- ***Writing paragraphs and short essays?***
- ***Short stories and abridged classics?***
- ***Speaking?***
- ***Vocabulary?***

The following table shows the percentage of responses for each category. First, in response to the first question, '***How do you feel about teaching Grammar?',*** only 4 per cent of the respondents said they were not prepared to teach Grammar at all. While 44 per cent said that they were somewhat prepared to teach Grammar, 40 per cent said that they were well prepared to teach Grammar. Only 12 per cent of the respondents said that they were very well prepared to teach Grammar. Regarding reading comprehension, 16 per cent said they were not prepared at all, and only 8 per cent said they are very well prepared. 32 per cent said they were very prepared, the rest (44%) said they were somewhat prepared to teach reading comprehension. 4 per cent said that they were not prepared at all to teach listening, whilst 16 per cent said they were very well prepared to teach it. A significant 44 per cent said they were well prepared to teach listening in addition to the 16% who said they are very well prepared to teach it, meaning that about 60 per cent were prepared to teach listening in total. While a significant 72 per cent said that they were well prepared (40%) and very well prepared (32%) to teach writing paragraphs and short essays, 12 per cent said they were not well prepared, and the other 12 per cent said they were somewhat prepared. Remarkably, 32% said that they were not well prepared to teach short stories and abridged classics, and 36 per cent confirmed they were somewhat prepared to teach them. Only 16 per cent affirmed that they were well prepared to teach short stories and abridged classics, and 12 per cent said they were very well prepared. About 52 per cent said they were well prepared (32%) and very well prepared (20%) to teach speaking. 44 per cent said they were prepared (24%) and very well prepared (20%) to

teach vocabulary. Only 4 per cent said they were not prepared to teach vocabulary at all, but 48 per cent said they were somewhat prepared to teach it.

		Tick (□) the appropriate box in each line			
	How do you feel about teaching:	**Not at all prepared**	**Somewhat prepared**	**Well prepared**	**Very well prepared**
1	Grammar	4%	44%	40%	12%
2	Reading Comprehension	16%	44%	32%	8%
3	Listening	4%	36%	44%	16%
4	Writing paragraphs and short essays	12%	12%	40%	32%
5	Short stories and abridged classics	32%	36%	16%	12%
6	Speaking	16%	32%	32%	20%
7	Vocabulary	4%	48%	24%	20%

Table 7: Teaching Specific Aspects of English

5.2.3 Section C: General Aspects of Teaching

This section required respondents to indicate their perceived preparedness (how well they thought they were prepared) for various aspects related to the English classroom. It also employed a Likert-type scale. It involved 15 questions, as shown in Table 8 below.

Table 8 below shows respondents' responses as percentages. In response to the first question (*How do you feel about lesson planning and its design?*), only 4 per cent of the respondents said they were not at all well prepared for planning and designing lessons. However, 56 per cent of them (the respondents) said that they felt somewhat prepared for lesson planning and its design. While 32 per cent of these respondents felt well prepared for lesson planning and its design, only 8 per cent felt very well prepared for lesson planning and its design. 12 per cent of the respondents showed that they are not prepared at all to deal with students of varying abilities and learning

styles, but 16 per cent said they were very well prepared to deal with these students. While 40 per cent said that they are somewhat prepared to deal with students of varying abilities and learning styles, the other 32 per cent said they were well prepared to deal with them. 20 per cent of the respondents showed that they are very well prepared to motivate students and to maximize their learning, but only 8 per cent said they were not prepared at all to do the same. 28 per cent said they were well prepared to motivate students and maximize their learning; however, 44 per cent said they were somewhat prepared to do so. Only 8 per cent said that they had a repertoire of teaching methods and teaching styles, but 16 per cent confirmed that they did not have this kind of repertoire. On the other hand, 56 per cent said they somewhat had somewhat of a repertoire of teaching methods and teaching styles, but 20 somewhat of said that they were well equipped with a repertoire of teaching methods and teaching styles. A significant 44 per cent said they were well prepared to manage students' discipline in a practical way, and only 4 per cent said they were very well prepared to do so. A surprising 24 per cent said they were not prepared at all to manage students' discipline in a practical way, but 20 per cent said they were somewhat prepared to handle students' discipline in a practical way. A significant 64 per cent of the participants said they understood students' cultural backgrounds and values well (36%) and very well (28%). Only 8 per cent said that they do not understand students' cultural backgrounds and values; however, 20 per cent said they understood students' cultural backgrounds and values to some extent. As for being enthusiastic, confident and passionate about teaching, 20% said that they are not, and 32 per cent said they were somewhat enthusiastic, confident and passionate about teaching. In contrast, 28 per cent and 16 per cent said they were very enthusiastic, confident and passionate about teaching. Regarding using educational technology to support their classroom instruction, 12 per cent said they are not prepared to use such technology in their classrooms, but 24 per cent said they are somewhat prepared to use it. On the other hand, 36% said they are well prepared to use

it, and 20 per cent said they were very well prepared to use it as well. While 16 per cent of the participants said they were not at all prepared to teach in under-resourced schools, 60 per cent said they were somewhat prepared to teach in such schools. On the other hand, 16 per cent said they were well prepared to teach in under-sourced schools, and 8 per cent reported they were very well prepared to teach in those schools. Only 12 per cent said they were very well prepared to develop their students' critical thinking skill, and 40 per cent said they were well prepared to do so. 12 per cent and 32 per cent said they were not at all prepared and somewhat prepared (respectively) to develop their student's critical thinking skill. 52 per cent of the participants said they could encourage their students to participate in the English classroom, but 12 per cent and 36 per cent said they said they were not prepared and somewhat prepared (respectively) to encourage their students to participate in the English classroom. 8 per cent of the participants could not choose appropriate texts for teaching various aspects of English, but 56 per cent of the participants said they are somewhat prepared to do this task. 36 per cent (20% and 16%) are well prepared and very well prepared (respectively) to choose appropriate texts for teaching various aspects of English. 12 per cent of the participants cannot write or set tests and examinations for their future students; however, 40 per cent said they were prepared to do so. 48 per cent (28% and 20%) of the participants stated that they were well prepared and very well prepared (respectively) to write or set tests and examinations for their future students. While 12 per cent and 32 per cent of the participants said they were not prepared and somewhat prepared (respectively) to mark their students' work, 32 per cent and 20 per cent said they were well prepared and very well prepared to mark their students' work respectively. 12 per cent and 28 per cent said they were not prepared and somewhat prepared (respectively) to provide their students with effective feedback, but 28 per cent and 16 per cent said they were well prepared and very well prepared to do so respectively.

#	How do you feel about:	Tick (□) the appropriate box in each line			
		Not at all prepared	Somewhat prepared	Well prepared	Very well prepared
1	Lesson planning and its design	4%	56%	32%	8%
2	Dealing with students of varying abilities and learning styles	12%	40%	32%	16%
3	Motivating students and maximizing learning	8%	44%	28%	20%
4	Having a repertoire of teaching methods and teaching styles	16%	56%	20%	8%
5	Managing students' discipline in a practical way	24%	20%	44%	4%
6	Understanding students' cultural backgrounds and values	8%	20%	36%	28%
7	Being enthusiastic, confident and passionate about teaching	20%	32%	28%	16%
8	Using educational technology to support classroom instruction	12%	24%	36%	20%
9	Teaching in under-resourced schools	16%	60%	16%	8%
10	Developing learners' critical thinking	12%	32%	44%	12%
11	Encouraging all learners, despite diversity, to participate in the English classroom	12%	36%	32%	20%
12	Choosing appropriate texts for teaching various aspects of English	8%	56%	20%	16%
13	Setting tests and examinations	12%	40%	28%	20%
14	Marking learners' work	12%	32%	32%	20%
15	Providing effective feedback	12%	44%	28%	16%

Table 8: Teaching General Aspects of English

5.2.4 Section D: Open-ended Questions

1. At this moment, do you think you are adequately prepared to teach English next year?

Why or why not?

In their answers to: ***At this moment, do you think you are adequately prepared to teach English next year? Why or why not?*** 44 per cent of the respondents (11 students) said they were adequately prepared to teach English the following year, and 44 per cent of them said they were not adequately prepared to teach English the following year, stating their reasons beyond their answers. Only 12 per cent of these respondents (3 students) said, "Yes, they are prepared, but....". Participants' responses are shown in the following chart:
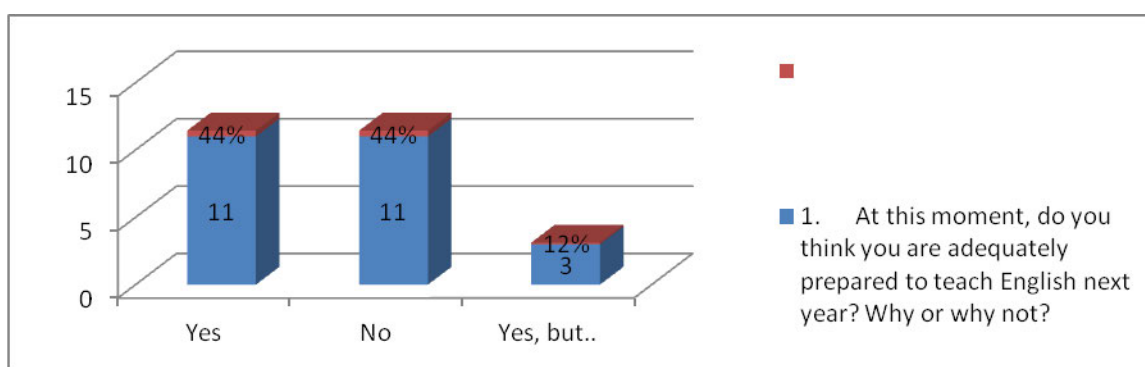
Figure 18: Chart showing student participants' preparedness to teach English the following year

The following statements are what they gave in response to the abovementioned question. I quote what they exactly said with their spelling and grammar mistakes to retain authenticity and accuracy. The following student teachers affirmed that they could teach English in the coming year:

- *Yes, because I am passionate about teaching English.*
- *Yes, I think I am because I believe I have what it takes to be a good teacher.*
- *I believe so. In 4 years with this university I think I have learned a lot from my teachers.*
- *Yes, because I toke some sub subject out said The KSA.*
- *I think, if I teach English I'll do well.*
- *I think for English skills.*
- *I think that I can only teach the skills of language.*
- *Yes I do , because I think the English department prepared me so well to become a great teacher, I feel lucky to what I'm learned so far.*

- *I hope that to do , but I prefer to be a police man. I aspier it.*
- *Yes, I think I am good enough to teach some skills of English but not all.*
- *I think that I'm very prepared to teach English, because I studied English language and I have been using it for five years at leist.*

The following student teachers affirmed that they cannot teach English, and they stated their reasons that range from being linguistically unprepared, not pedagogically prepared, to lacking skills and strategies, or to lacking experience as reflected in the responses below:

- *I am not prepared to teach English next year .Because I need to fix the problem I had in English before teaching.*
- *No, I'm not quit sure. because I have to learn more things about teaching.*
- *No, i am not. There is a skill, and strategies I need to learn.*
- *I don't prepare verey well to teach english the reason it must to take the expearince to how teach.*
- *No, I think that I need to take some courses to improve myself even more and to be able to set an effective way of teaching.*
- *Not yet, I have plans to study matter.*
- *no because I need to improve and learn who to teach students and understand the different ages and how to deal with them.*
- *I dont think i'm prepared because i dont have any experiences in this field, but i think one year of practical experience will prepared me.*
- *No. because of lack of teaching skills.*
- *No, I think I have to go back through all of what I have learned.*
- *I am not well prepared yet, because I should improve speaking skills.*

The following responses are from three student teachers said they could start teaching on some conditions. For example, the first student said that he had to improve his language skills so that he could teach the language correctly. The second student confirmed he can teach, but he needs time to talk to experienced people to benefit from their experience. The last student said that he had to work hard before he starts teaching.

- *yes but I used to work on my language more to teach it wright.*
- *I think I am prepared. But I need some time to talk with people who older than me on teaching to get benfit from thier knoledge. Also, I think it needs preparing a class before you start.*
- *Yes, but I worked hard before I started.*

[150]

2. What aspect of English teaching (as listed in Section B) do you feel you are:

2.1 Most prepared for?

The aspect that these respondents were most prepared to teach was: 'Writing paragraphs and essays,' as this accounted for 20 per cent (5 students). Grammar, Listening, and Speaking scored 16 per cent each. Preparedness to teach short stories and abridged classics and vocabulary attracted only 12 per cent. Only 8 per cent are prepared to teach reading comprehension. Respondents' responses are presented in the following chart:
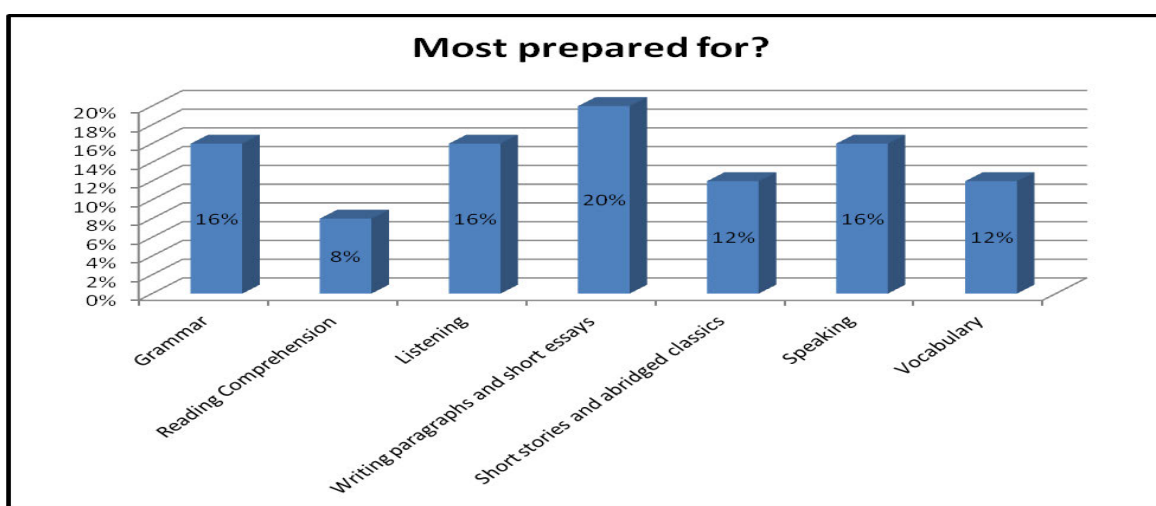

Figure 19: Aspects of English that student participants are most prepared to teach

2.2 What or who influenced this feeling of preparedness to teach in this aspect? Briefly explain. (E.g., A course? A teacher/lecturer/tutor?)

About 50 per cent of the candidates (12 out of 25) indicated that they had a positive feeling of preparedness to teach English because of their excellent teachers who influenced them a lot. Some of these participants confirmed that they had a sense of readiness due to the movies they watch and the video games they play. Five candidates said that they were influenced by the courses they studied like Reading, Short Stories, and Grammar. Some of these students also said these courses prepared them to teach because they liked the teachers who taught them such courses. Only one

candidate did not attribute his preparedness to any of the criteria stated in the question. Still, he attributed it to his talent and that he can teach because he has the ability and calibre to teach:

> *'I think I have a talent in teaching. I somtimes summarize a lesson through an app called "Simple Mind Lite" on my mackbok then I use my work to ense the lesson to my friends.'*

One student gave a vague answer:

- *'Because it's fun, and thier is not much stress like others classes, also, you can talk about studen' 'favorit subject which will let him feel comfortable when he talk'*

The following are their verbatim answers:

- *It because movies and videos.*
- *Both a course and a teacher.*
- *lecturer influenced me. He had a very unique style in teaching writing and very good way of assessting the students writing.*
- *One of the teachers in the speaking class.*
- *The teach is the most influenced in the class because he will fond the idea to our mind more clear than the others.*
- *Reading because it is simple to teach.*
- *There is a course which is modern literature. The resone why, because it gives us ideas about who people think and make us to think like phlaisfr people.*
- *A teacher.*
- *I think my writing teacher, Dr. Y. F influenced a lot with his teaching methods.*
- *I have this feeling because I study this course grammer with good teachers and they are the best.*
- *teaching stories is the dream and I'll made the student learn fast and feel fun about it.*
- *My Teacher Mr. Y. F.*
- *In writing Pro. Y. F was great Teacher I benefited a lot from. Pro. F. M is a great teacher at Grammar.*
- *Many of my teachers use it in university.*
- *A teacher and a tutor from movies and listening to music.*
- *providing effective feedback*
- *My perfect Teacher F. M teached me i a good how to use sencies*
- *Best Teacher ever Mr. Y. F*

3. **What aspect of English teaching (as listed in Section B) do you feel you are:**

   3.1 Least prepared for? _____

The following chart shows that 24 per cent (6 students) of the participants were least prepared for teaching speaking. Only 4 per cent (1 student) was least prepared for teaching reading

comprehension, listening, lesson planning, developing learners' critical thinking, and motivating students. 20 per cent of the participants were least prepared for teaching writing paragraphs and short essays. While 12 per cent of the participants were least prepared to teach short stories and abridged classics, 8 per cent of the participants were least prepared for teaching vocabulary.
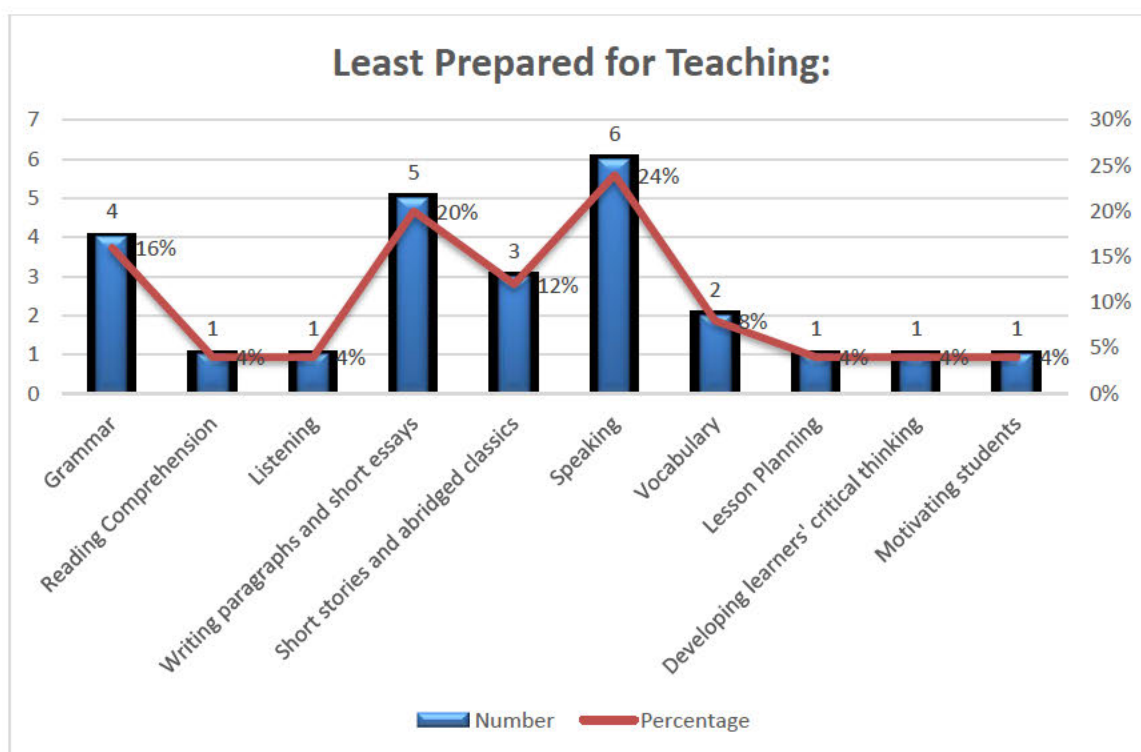

Figure 20: Aspects of English that student participants were least prepared to teach

3.2 What or who influenced this feeling of preparedness in this aspect?

Briefly explain. (E.g., A course? A teacher/lecturer/tutor?)

Such participants attribute their lack of readiness to teach speaking and writing to many reasons. For example, one student didn't read; another said it was because grammar was his least favourite subject; a third said short stories and abridged stories were useless. A fourth said he was not good at vocabulary. One of the participants attributed his lack of preparedness to teach speaking, short stories and abridged stories to the low marks he had received for these subjects. Others stated:

- *Because I don't read a lot.*
- *Grammer is my least favorite subject*
- *I just think it is not that beneftional (short stories and abridged stories)*
- *Because, vocabulary are very close to forgiot it and I don't use it at all. Also, it is sometimes good but I do not like to read somthing and take from me a long time to translital.*
- *because i got a low mark in this aspect (Speaking, short stories and abridged classics)*
- *I didn't work in my writing so much.*
- *A good teacher because, he will motivate me.*

Two participants thought that what they were studying was complicated. They stated:

- *I think the course is very complex.*
- *A course is more complex.*

Others believe that, because of their teachers who did not teach or prepare them well, they were

not prepared to teach. They stated:

- *I believe this is because I myself didn't have a good grammer teacher or lecturer. I think I don't have the proper style to teach grammer knowledge wise. I think I'm well prepared, but style wise? I don't think so.*
- *A tutor*

Others needed to master the skills first before they could teach them. They stated:

- *Basically, because I myself dont feel that I will be able to teach it unless I master 80% of it.*
- *I did not study how to plan for lessons.*

Others were not sure of how they were going to teach and how they were going to convey the

message to their students. They felt that they would not be able to help their students to improve

or to express themselves. participants were not sure of their teaching skills. They stated:

- *I have the passion of getting that skill (Developing learners' critical thinking) perfectly so; I won't be able to improve others.*
- *It's not that I'm not prepared at all but more of how would I teach in this course.*
- *Because you need both grammer and vecabulary Also, you need to teach the students how to express thier own ideas, not something memorized.*

[154]

4. **In approximately ten sentences, explain how you feel about your Bachelor of English Language and Translation degree in terms of preparing you to teach EFL?**

    You may use these questions to guide you:

    - *What were the most effective courses or subjects during your B.A.? Why? How did you find them useful?*
    - *How did they affect your feelings of preparedness to teach English?*
    - *What were the least effective courses or subjects during your B.A.? Why?*
    - *How did they affect your feelings of preparedness to teach English?*
    - *Do you think you need any further studies to enhance your level of English and your teaching skills?*

S1 thinks that the most effective course was translation because it helped him in both English and Arabic. He asserts that he was not prepared to teach unless he fixes his way of teaching. He says he needed more courses to enable him improve. S1 wrote:
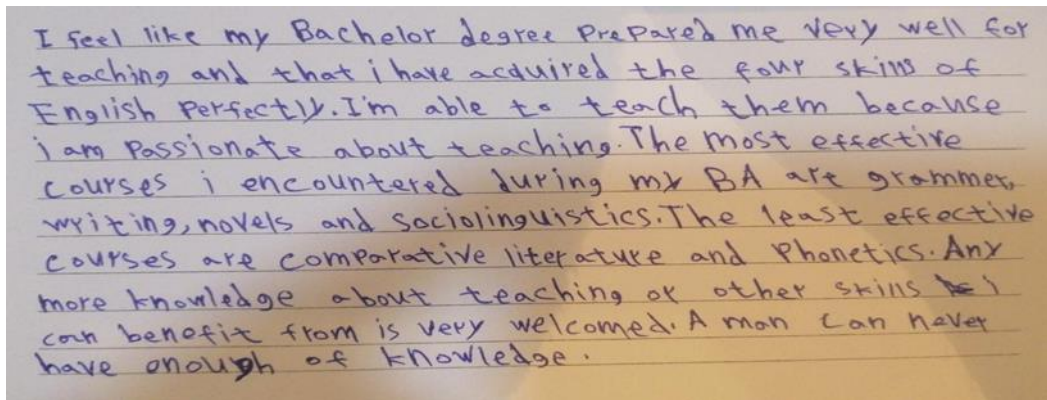
S1's opinion of the efficacy of the BA programme
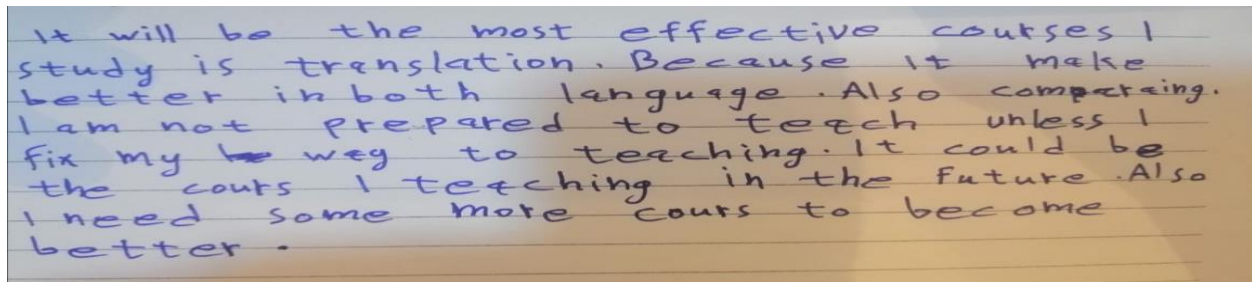
[It will be the most effective courses I study is translation. Because it make better in both language. Also comparaing. I am not prepared to teach unless I fix my way to teaching. It could be the cours I teaching in the future. Also I need some more cours to become better.]

S2, on the contrary, believed that his B.A. degree had prepared him well for teaching. He maintains that he acquired the four skills well to the extent that he could teach them as he was enthusiastic about teaching. While he also thought that grammar, writing, novels and sociolinguistics were the most effective courses in the programme, he saw comparative literature and phonetics as being the

least effective courses. He asserted that he was open to any kind of knowledge that would improve

his status. S2 wrote:
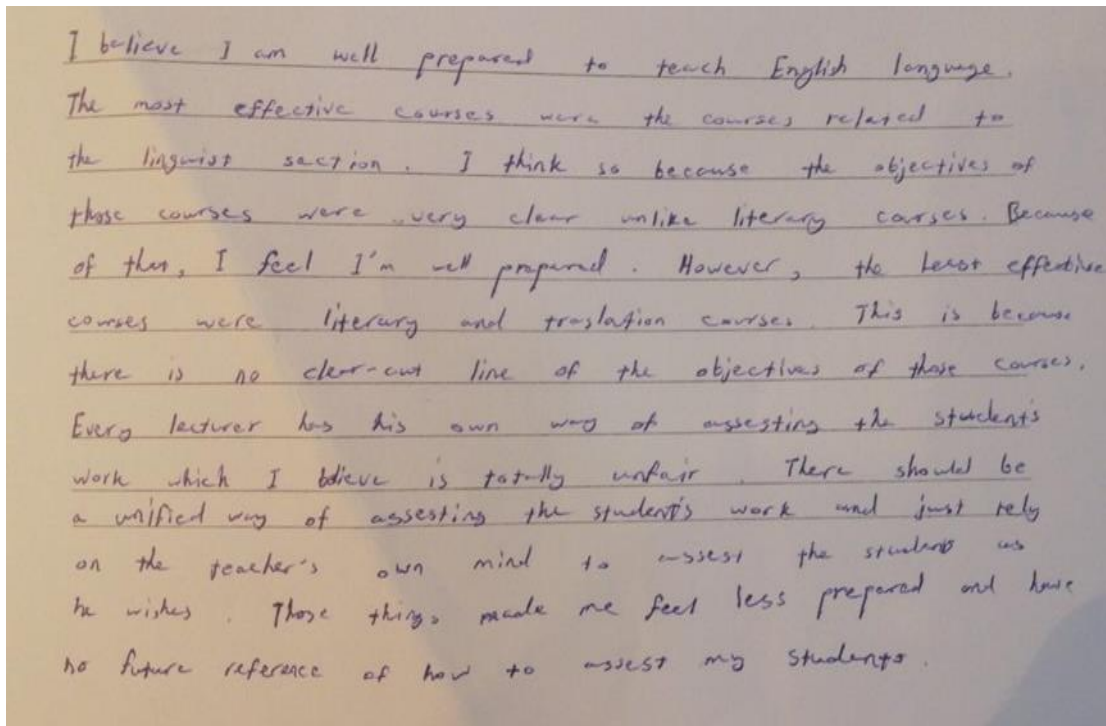
S2's opinion of the efficacy of the BA programme

[I feel like my Bachelor degree prepared me very well for teaching and that i have acquired the four skills of English perfectly. I am able to teach them because i am passionate about teaching. The most effective courses i encountered during my BA are Grammar, writing, novels and sociolinguistics. The least effective courses are comparative literature and phonetics. Any more knowledge about teaching or other skills i can benefit from is very welcomed. A man can never have enough of knowledge.]

S3 also believed that he was prepared to teach English. He indicated that Linguistics courses which

were the most effective courses for him because their objectives were clear, in contrast the literary

courses were not clear for him. The teachers' ways of assessment made him unprepared to teach,

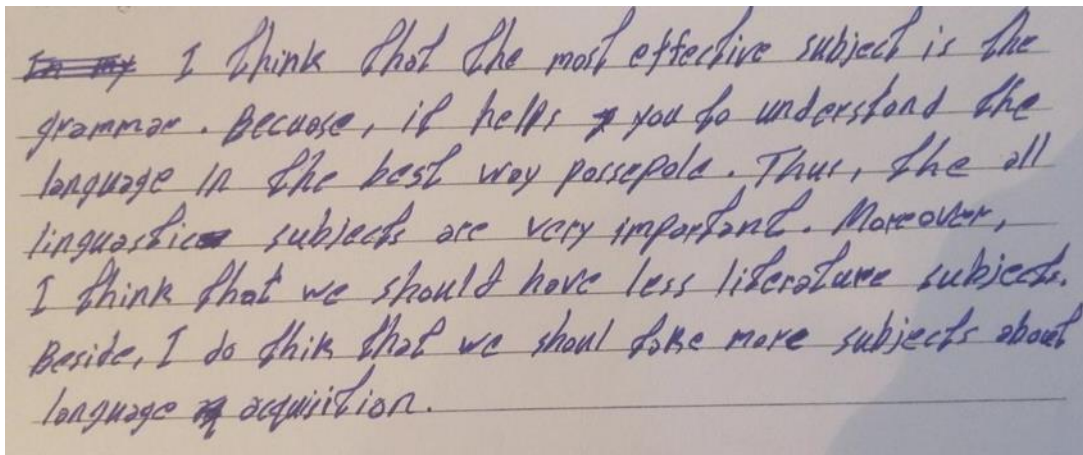and he did not know how he would assess his students. S3 wrote:

S3's opinion of the efficacy of the BA programme

[I believe I am well prepared to teach English language. The most effective courses were the courses related to the linguist section. I think so because the objectives of those courses were very clear unlike literary courses. Because of them, I feel I'm well prepared. However, the least effective courses were literary and translation courses. This is because there is no clear-cut line of the objectives of those courses. Every lecturer has his own way of assesting the student's work which I believe is totally unfair. There should be a unified way of assesting the student's work and just rely on the teacher's own mind to assest the student as he wishes. Those things made me feel less prepared and have no future reference of how to assest my students.]

S4 considered grammar the most effective subject as it helped him to comprehend the English Language well. He also thought that the linguistics courses were very crucial. He suggested that they needed fewer literary courses, but more language acquisition courses. S4 wrote:

S4's opinion of the efficacy of the BA programme
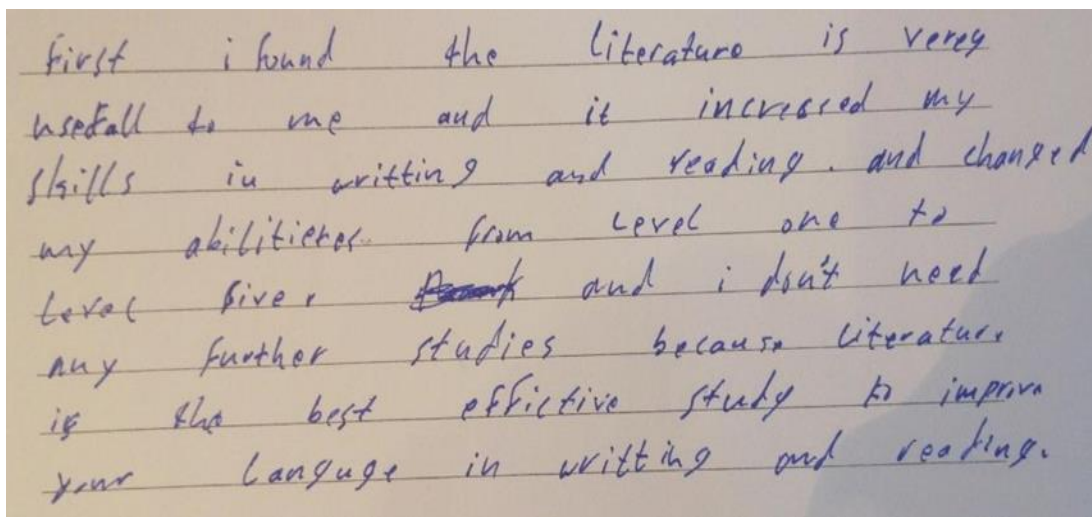
[I think that the most effective subject is the Grammar. Because, if helps you to understand the language in the best way possepole. Thus , the all linguastic subject are very very important. Moreover, I think that we should have less literature subjects. Beside. I do think that we shoul take more subjects about language acquisition.]

S5 found that literature was the most useful course as it improved his writing and reading skills, and it raised his level from level 1 to level 5. Because of literature, he did not need any further studies. He wrote:

S5's opinion of the efficacy of the BA programme
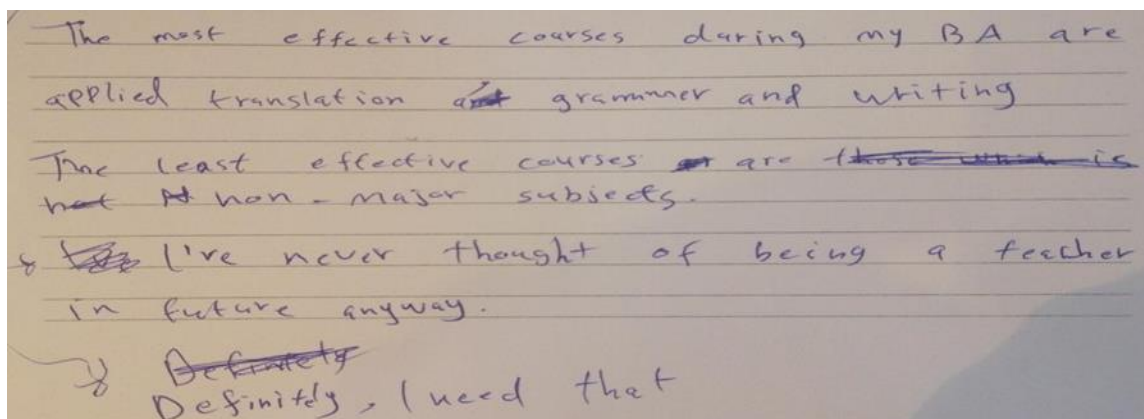
[first i found the literature is verey useful to me an it increased my skills in writing and reading. and changed my abilitietes from level one to level five and i don't need any further studies because literature if the best effictive study to improve your languge in writing and reading.]

[158]

While S6 perceived applied translation, grammar and writing as being the most useful courses, he considered no-major (elective) courses to be the least effective. He did not intend to be a teacher in the future. He said that he needed further studies to enhance his level of English and his teaching skills. He wrote:

S6's opinion of the efficacy of the BA programme
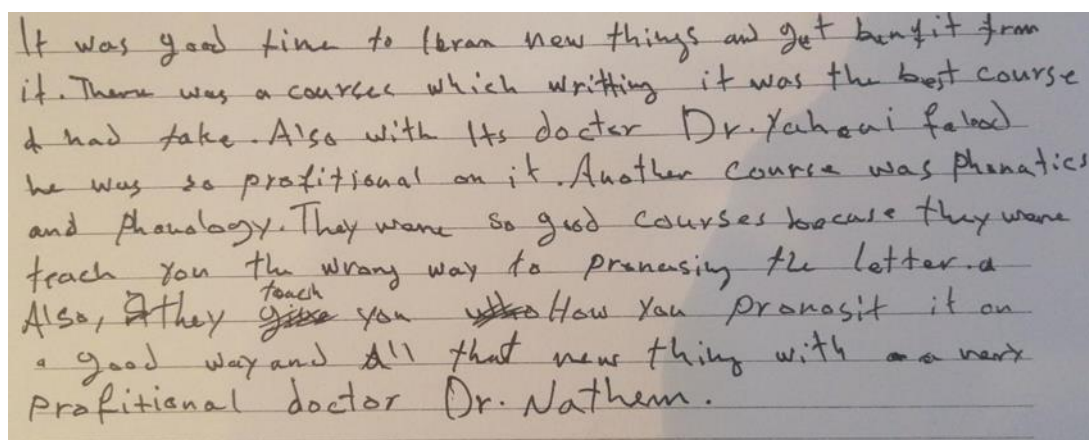
[The most effective curses during my BA are applied translation and grammer and writing The least effective courses are non-major subjects. I've never thought of being a teacher in future anyway. Definitely, I need that (further studies to enhance my level of English and my teaching skills)]

For S7, writing was the most effective course because of their teacher, Dr Y. F., who was proficient. He also believed that phonetics and phonology were beneficial courses because of their teacher, Dr N., who taught them how to pronounce the new words correctly. He wrote:

S7's opinion of the efficacy of the BA programme
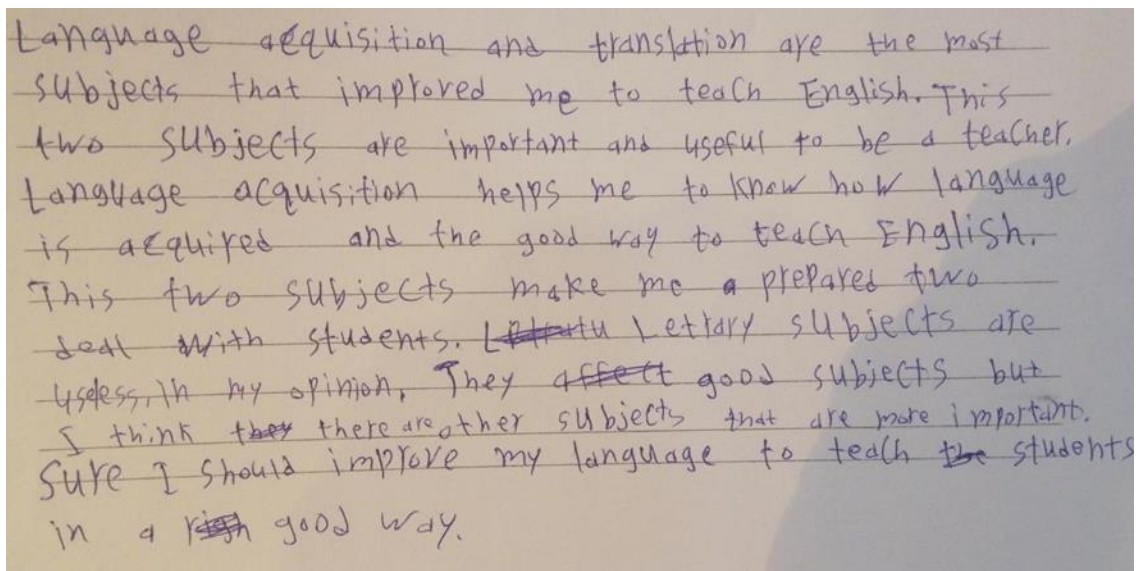
[It was good time to leran new things and get benfit from it. There was a courses which writing it was the best course I had take. Also with its doctor Dr. Yaheui falood he was so profitional on it. Another courses was phonatics and phonology. They were so good courses because they were teach you the wrng way to pronusing the letter.a Also, they teach you how you pronosit it on a good way and All that neww thing with a very profitional doctor Dr. N.]

S8 maintains that language acquisition and translation courses were the most useful and essential subjects because they helped him improve his English, his teaching, and how to be a teacher. They also taught him how to deal with students. On the other hand, he thought that literature courses were useless, although they were essential, other courses were more important than them. He wrote:

S8's opinion of the efficacy of the BA programme
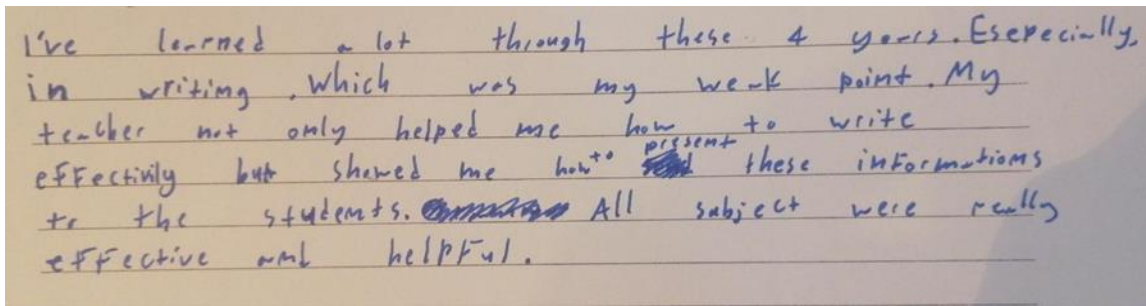
[Language acquisition and translation are the most effective subjects that improve me to teach English. This two subjects are important and useful to be a teacher. Language acquisition helps me to know how language is acquired and the good way to teach English. This two subjects make me prepared two deal with students. Letrary subjects are useless, in my opinion. They good subjects but I think there are other subjects that are more important. Sure I should improve my language to teach students in a good way.]

S9 maintained that he learned a lot through the programme. He considered writing the most effective subject because of his teacher who not only helped him to write efficiently, but also showed him how to present what he wrote to the other students. He also perceived all courses as being effective and helpful. He wrote:

S9's opinion of the efficacy of the BA programme
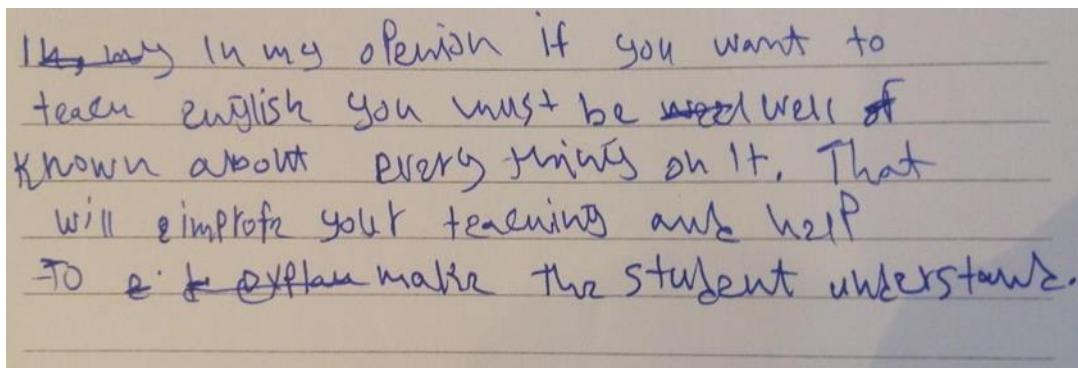
[I've learned a lot through these 4 years. esepecially, in writing . which was my weak point. My teacher not only helped me how to write effectively but showed me how to present these informations to the students. All subject were really effective and helpful.]

S10 contended that he had to know everything about teaching so as to be able to start teaching. He thought that knowing everything beforehand would help him understand teaching. He wrote:

S10's opinion of the efficacy of the BA programme
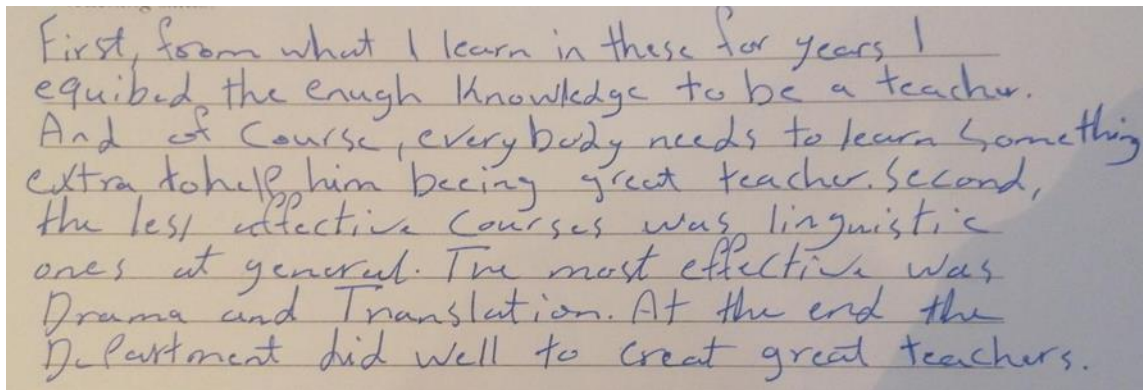
[In my openion if you want to teach english you must be well known about every thing on it. That will improfe your teaching and help your teaching and help to make the student understand.]

S11 maintained that he had learnt enough throughout the four years to the extent that he could be a teacher. However, he maintained that he needed extra information to be a great teacher. While he saw linguistics as the least effective course, he considered drama and translation to be the most effective courses. He also thought that the English Language and Translation Department has done a great job helping them become excellent teachers. He wrote:

S11's opinion of the efficacy of the BA programme
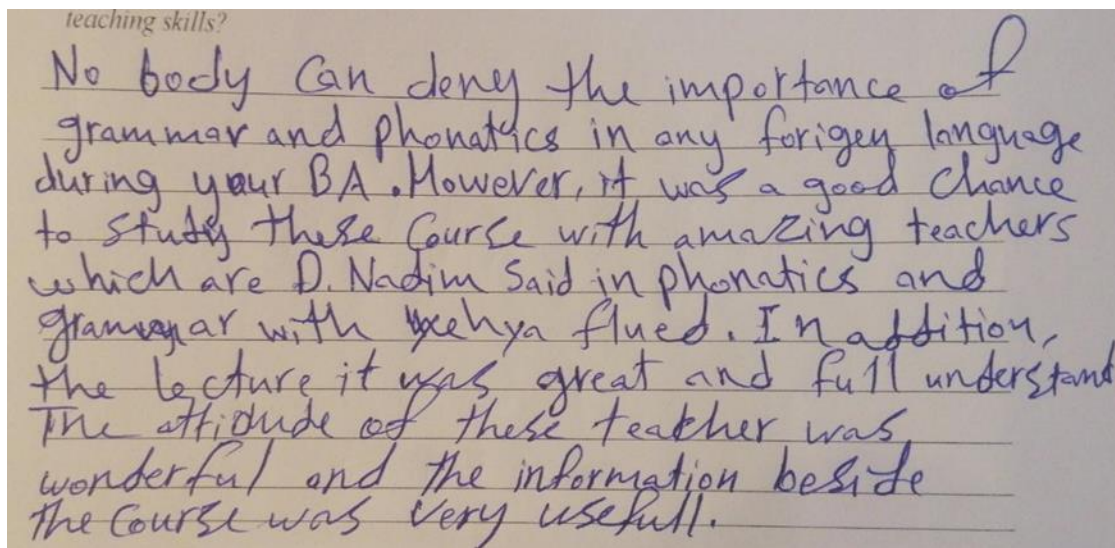
[First from what I learn in these for years I equibed the enugh knowledge to be a teacher. And of course, everybody needs to learn something extra to help him beeing great teacher. Second, the less effective courses was linguistic ones at general. The most effective was Drama and Translation. At the end the Department did well to creat great teachers.]

S12 was confident that grammar and phonetics were the most effective courses all over his B.A. He was sure that his amazing teachers Dr N. S. and Dr Y. F., promoted his fondness for these courses. He also asserts he could understand these courses because of the wonderful attitude of the teachers and the useful information these courses contained. He wrote:

S12's opinion of the efficacy of the BA programme

[No body can deny the importance of Grammar and phonatics in any forigen language during your BA. Mowever, it was a good chance to study these course with amazing teachers which are D. Nadim Said in phonatics and Grammar with Yehya Flued. In addition the lecture it was great and full understand. The attitude of these teacher was wonderful and the information beside the course was very useful.]

While S13 saw writing as being the most effective course, he considered drama the least effective one because he had a bad teacher. He wrote:

S13's opinion of the efficacy of the BA programme

[The most effective course during my BA was writing courses. It improved my academic writing. The least effective courses during my BA was Drama courses. The reason was the bad teacher.]

S14 nominated literature as being the most beneficial subject as it helped him improve his critical thinking skills. He maintained that listening is the least useful subject because its teachers are inefficient. He wrote:

S14's opinion of the efficacy of the BA programme

[The most effective course during my BA was literature courses. It helpt me to improve my critical thinking. The least effective course during my BA was lesiting due the infuraty of teachers.]

S15 wrote incomplete and illegible sentences as follows:

S15's opinion of the efficacy of the BA programme
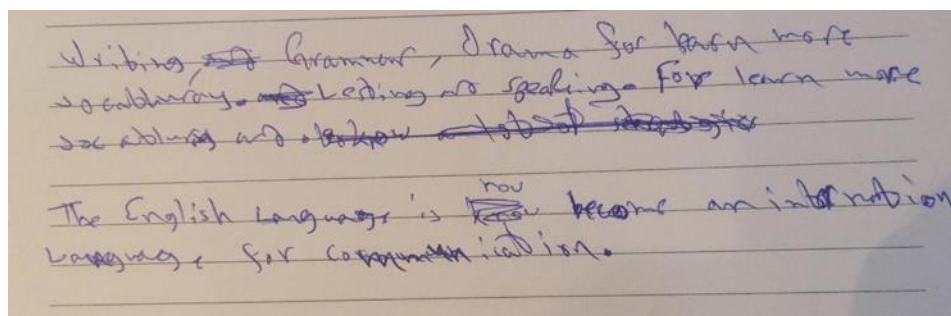
[Writing, Grammar, drama for learn more vocabulary. Lesting and speaking for learn more vocabulary and. The English language is now become an interbation language for communication.]

For S16, translation, listening and speaking were the most practical courses, but the least one was grammar. He suggested that the school should replace the methods of teaching English with the language acquisition course. He wrote:

S16's opinion of the efficacy of the BA programme
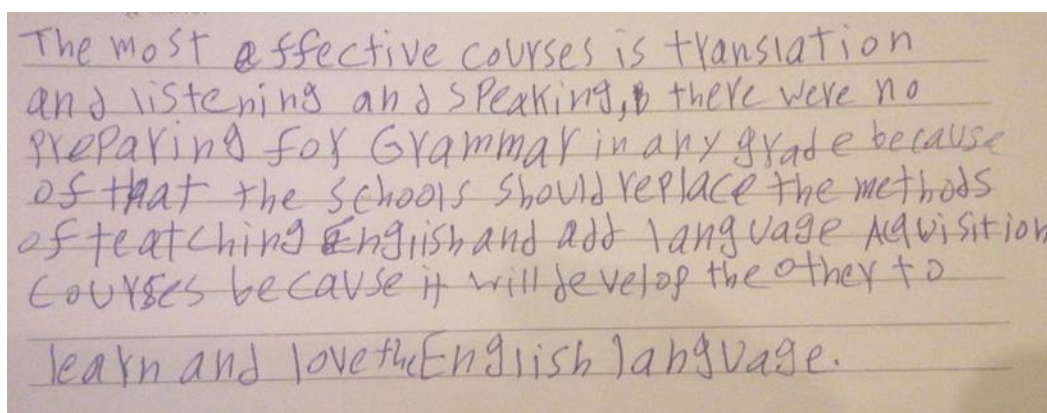
[The most effective curse is translation and listening and speaking, there were no preparing for Grammar in any grade because of that the schools should replace the methods of teaching English and add language acquisition courses because it will develop the other to learn and love the English language.]

S17 stated that he needed further studies so that he could become qualified. He says that he did not enjoy the translation courses as he was not interested in them. He said that he had a passion for teaching because his father was a professor, and his brother was a lecturer. He confirmed that he would go for an M.A. and a PhD to further his studies. He wrote:

S17's opinion of the efficacy of the BA programme

[I feel that I need further studying (in order to be more qualified) while my reputation among the teachers is an excellent student I almost like all courses except the translation because I don't have any interests on them. I personally a son of an associate professor and a brother of lecturers. So, I have a feelings or passion to be a teacher naturally. Yes, I want to study master and PhD and (if I can) study further.]

S18 stated that listening and speaking were the most practical courses as his skills had been improved through studying them, and he could talk to and listens to native speakers. He wrote:
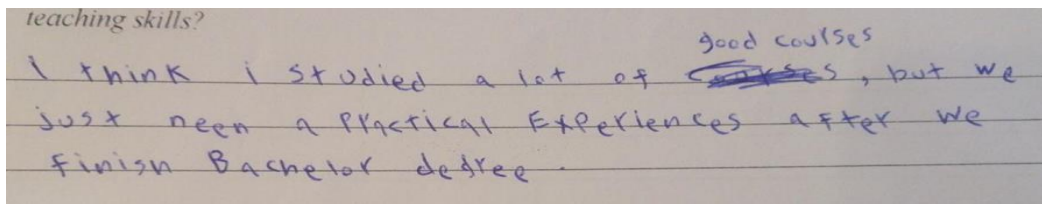
S18's opinion of the efficacy of the BA programme

[Speaking and listing because they improved my skills of speaking and listing I can notice that when I talk or listen to forigin person.]

S19 was sure that he had studied many good courses, but they (he and his colleagues) still needed to be trained on how to be competent teachers after graduation. He wrote:

S19's opinion of the efficacy of the BA programme
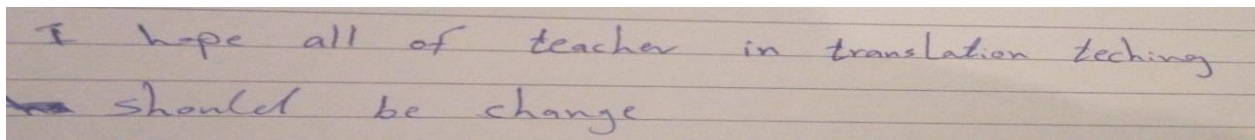
[I think I studied a lot of good courses, but we just need a practical Experiences after we finish Bachelor degree.]

S22 did not like his translation teachers, and he wanted them to be replaced. He wrote: "I hope all of Teacher in translation teching should be change."

S22's opinion of the efficacy of the BA programme
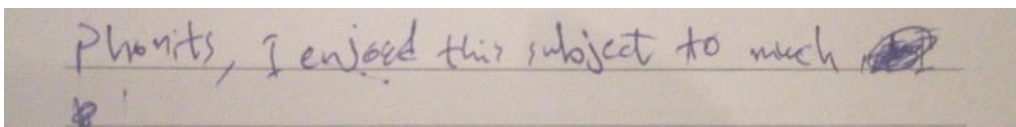
[I hope all of teacher in translation teching should be change.]

S24 enjoyed the phonetics course a lot as he wrote: "Phonits, I enjoed this subject to much."

S24's opinion of the efficacy of the BA programme

[Phonits, I enjoed this subject to much.]

Some participants did not write their responses to this question. So, S20, S21, S23 and S25 are missing.

5. **How relevant are the subjects in the Bachelor of Education programme? Do you think you will be able to apply the skills learned in the subjects in your classroom?**

One student said that he would learn from what the other students do and how the Teacher reacts. Another respondent maintained that he was able to apply the skills he learned during

the programme because 15 of the courses he studied were relevant to his B.A. A third student thought that the subjects or courses he studied during his B.A. programme were relevant to some extent as he will be able to apply them in the classroom. A fourth student thought that the literature courses were not relevant, although he could apply them very well. Some candidates were not sure if the courses they studied during the four-year programme were relevant or not; if they could apply them practically. Below are some of their answers:

- *I think I will learn from what the student do and how the Teacher act.*
- *Almost 15 of the subjects i encountered during my Bachelor are relevant. I'm very able to apply the skills i learned in any given subject.*
- *They were relevant, sort of. I think I will be able to apply them in any classroom.*
- *I think the subjects of literature are not relevant, even though I can apply them very well.*
- *Yea it is*
- *Yes, maybe*
- *Mayby I'll,*
- *Yes, I will apply them.*
- *In some ways. yes.*
- *yes I think I will apply what I learned in the classroom.*

6. If you were in charge of the Teacher Education programme, what would you add/change to increase the level of preparedness of teachers of English?

participants had different views in this regard. One respondent said that he would make the course of study easy for the students from the very beginning. Another participant suggested an extra course that would deal with the difficulties that students would face during the programme and ways to overcome such challenges. A third student asked for fewer literature courses in the English and translation programme. He also wanted to study more linguistic and translation courses. A fourth student proposed adding more skills and less literature. A fifth student recommended adding something from outside the syllabus, like from the internet. A sixth student recommended adding pragmatics because it helps students find the hidden meanings of the language. A seventh student thought that class hangouts would be a perfect solution, and he also proposed ways to encourage students to learn more. Below are

some of their responses:

- *I will make it easy at the beging.*
- *I would add a subject that would talk about the difficulties that students encounter during the learning and how to overcome them.*
- *If it was an English translatin programme , I would say less literary courses and more linguistic and translation courses.*
- *I would add more skills and less literature.*
- *a lot of training and examing to recive the subject very well.*
- *Nothing new t come up with.*
- *I'll try to add soething from outside the course frm the enternet.*
- *I will add pragmatics, due to it helps students to know the hidden meaning.*
- *I think class hangouts would make differences and more ways to encourage the students to learn more.*
- *more test and programmes to help them not forgett what they stady.*

7. **Do you have any other comments regarding your thoughts on your preparedness to teach English?**

Most students said that they did not have any comments. One student said that they need a course, without assigning a mark for it, to teach them how to become good teachers. Another student said that they had to depend on themselves and not depend on the school to prepare them to teach English. A third student suggested identifying the problems relating to the skills and finding solutions on how to solve these problems. The following are some of their tips:

- *I hope when we study English give us cours without mark about to become a good teacher or just simple way.*
- *I think one must prepare himself/herself and not to depend on school only.*
- *I think you needs to know the studen'ts problemof their sklls and try to deal with it and give them soulation for their problem skills.*

5.3 TKT results

The second section of the data collection tools (the TKT) represents the study's quantitative aspect.

This TKT was conducted by the end of the second semester of the academic year 2019. It was

carried out in the English Language and Translation Department of the university in which this study was conducted.

5.3.1   TKT Statistics

Only module 1 of the TKT (Teaching Knowledge Test) was given to the student participants of this study. This module involves language and background to language learning and teaching. It is made up of 80 MCQ items that have to be answered in 80 minutes, a minute per each question. These 80 questions are spread over 18 pages, and each question carries one mark. Participants are to mark their answers on the answer sheet provided using a pencil or a pen as the test is marked manually. Before giving them the test, the participants were given a thorough introduction to it and an explanation was given for why they were given such a test. They were also given clear instructions on how to answer the test using the answer sheet. The following table represents the participants' scores after they sat for the test. The table shows and presents the participants' pseudonyms, numbers, scores out of 80 and the percentage representing their scores. The table also presents the highest mark (maximum), the lowest mark (minimum) and the average mark or score.

Student no.	Mark out of 80	Percentage %
S1	46	57.5
S2	34	42.5
S3	9	11.25
S4	30	37.5
S5	32	40
S6	33	41.25
S7	42	52.5
S8	43	53.75
S9	35	43.75
S10	62	77.5
S11	27	33.75
S12	38	47.5
S13	50	62.5
S14	63	78.75

S15	58	72.5
S16	27	33.75
S17	54	67.5
S18	36	45
S19	25	31.25
S20	41	51.25
S21	54	67.5
S22	30	37.5
S23	27	33.75
S24	40	50
S25	59	73.75
S26	35	43.75
Minimum	9	11.25
Maximum	63	78.75
Average	39.6	49.2

Table 9: Student teachers' TKT scores and their percentages

Descriptive Statistics:

Participants' results were computed using the descriptive statistics, and hereunder is the figure showing the frequency table, the Histogram and the Frequency Diagram of the Histogram. The following charts show that 26 participants (Total number of scores) wrote the TKT. While the Mean is 39.61538, the Standard Deviation is 13.18811. Also, the lowest score is 9 out of 80; however, the highest score is 63 out of 80. The number of classes in this Histogram is 5, and the most prominent class is 33-44 as 10 participants fall into this category. Class 2 involves seven respondents whose scores range between 21 and 32.

Frequency Table	
Class	Count
9-20	1
21-32	7
33-44	10
45-56	4
57-68	4

Your Histogram	
Mean	39.61538
Standard Deviation (s)	13.18811
Skewness	0.07773
Kurtosis	-0.1525
Lowest Score	9
Highest Score	63
Distribution Range	54
Total Number of Scores	26
Number of Distinct Scores	21
Lowest Class Value	9
Highest Class Value	68
Number of Classes	5
Class Range	12
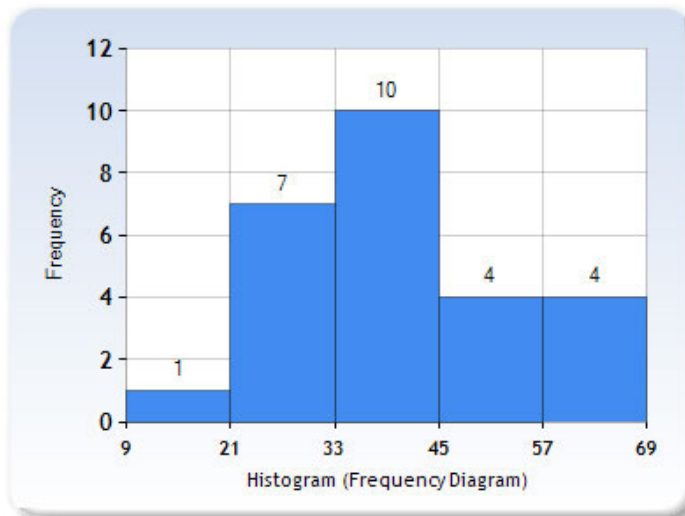
Figure 21: Student teachers' TKT (Teaching Knowledge Test) scores computed using SPSS

(Statistical Package for the Social Sciences)

These results were generated on Monday, April 1, 2019, via https://www.socscistatistics.com/descriptive/histograms/default.aspx website, which has free statistics calculators.

Finally, and during June 2020, the researcher – after many trials with professors at the DLT - obtained the final GPA scores of most of the students who sat for the TKT test. He (the researcher) transferred their GPAs to percentages. For example, S1's final GPA score is 3.58 out of 5, so his percentage is 71.6 per cent. Then these percentage scores were computed using the SPSS application. The SPSS gave the following results as shown in the Histogram:

Frequency Table	
Class	Count
50-59.9	1
60-69.9	2
70-79.9	8
80-89.9	4
90-99.9	5

Your Histogram	
Mean	79.07
Standard Deviation (s)	11.48514
Skewness	-0.36068
Kurtosis	-0.09576
Lowest Score	52.8
Highest Score	97.4
Distribution Range	44.6
Total Number of Scores	20
Number of Distinct Scores	18
Lowest Class Value	50
Highest Class Value	99.9
Number of Classes	5
Class Range	10
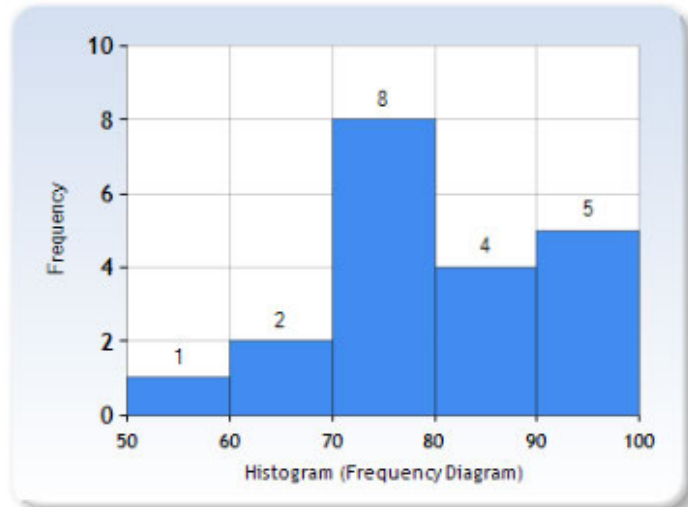
Figure 22: Student teachers' final GPA (Grade Point Average scores computed using SPSS

The mean of the percentage of their GPA scores is 79. 07 per cent. The standard deviation is 11.48514. The lowest score (poorest student) is 52.8 per cent. The highest score (the best student) is 97.4 per cent. The total number of scores -students' GPA scores - is twenty. The number of distinctive scores is 18. Then students were given pseudonyms, and their TKT scores and their final GPA scores were compared in the following table using their percentages as a preparation for the SPSS computations. Also, the following table shows the number of students who wrote the TKT and the number of students whose GPA scores were obtained by the researcher, meaning that some students' GPA scores were not obtained – only 20 GPA scores out of 26 (who took the TKT) were obtained.

Pseudonyms	TKT (Mark out of 80)	TKT Percentage %	Final GPA	GPA Percentage %
S1	46	57.5	3.58	71.6
S2	34	42.5	4.38	87.6
S3	9	11.25	3.23	64.6
S4	30	37.5	3.23	64.6
S5	32	40	2.64	52.8

S6	33	41.25		
S7	42	52.5		
S8	43	53.75	4.08	81.6
S9	35	43.75	3.58	71.6
S10	62	77.5		
S11	27	33.75	3.93	78.6
S12	38	47.5		
S13	50	62.5	3.5	70
S14	63	78.75	4.87	97.4
S15	58	72.5	4.51	90.2
S16	27	33.75		
S17	54	67.5	4.56	91.2
S18	36	45	3.71	74.2
S19	25	31.25		
S20	41	51.25	3.8	76
S21	54	67.5	4.59	91.8
S22	30	37.5	4.31	86.2
S23	27	33.75	4.05	81
S24	40	50	3.94	78.8
S25	59	73.75	4.76	95.2
S26	35	43.75	3.82	76.4
Minimum	9	11.25		
Maximum	63	78.75		
Average	39.6	49.2		

Table 10: Student teachers' TKT and GPA percentages compared

5.3.2 Results of the correlation test

SPSS was used to compute the correlation between the percentages of the GPA scores and the TKT scores. The following table was created using the Excel sheets; then it was computed by the SPSS application.

Pseudonyms	GPA %	TKT %
S1	71.6	57.5
S2	87.6	42.5
S3	64.6	11.25
S4	64.6	37.5
S5	52.8	40
S8	81.6	53.75
S9	71.6	43.75

S11	78.6	33.75
S13	70	62.5
S14	97.4	78.75
S15	90.2	72.5
S17	91.2	67.5
S18	74.2	45
S21	91.8	67.5
S22	86.2	37.5
S23	81	33.75
S24	78.8	50
S25	95.2	73.75
S26	76.4	43.75

Table 11: Student teachers' TKT and GPA percentages correlated

The value of R is **0.476**, meaning that this is a moderate positive correlation, which means if the students' GPAs go high, their TKT scores go high (and vice versa). So, students' GPA and TKT scores were found to be moderately positively correlated. Some scores are close to the line, but other scores are far from it, which indicates only a moderate linear relationship between the two variables (GPA and TKT scores).
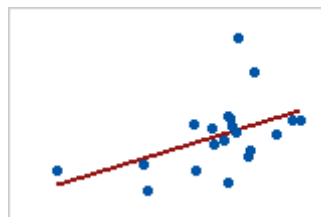
Moderate positive relationship: Pearson r = 0.476
Figure 23: Scatter plot showing Student teachers' TKT and GPA correlation

5.4 Focus Group Discussions Data

Two focus groups were conducted for the sake of the qualitative side of this study. The researcher had a meeting with two focus group discussions on two separate days. The first focus group included three participants (students who wrote the TKT and who responded to the questionnaire). In comparison, the second focus group included three other participants plus a fourth participant who just attended the discussion but did not take part in it. The student participants will be referred

to by the pseudonyms Student 1 FG1, Student 2 FG1, Student 3 FG1; and Student 1 FG2, Student 2 FG2, and Student 3 FG2. The second group also wrote the TKT and responded to the questionnaire. FG1 means Focus Group one, and FG2 means Focus Group 2. Consequently, Student 1 FG1 = Student 1 Focus Group One; Student 3 FG2 = Student Three Focus Group Two and so on. The transcripts of these focus groups are found in the appendices section at the end of this study. The focus group discussions consisted of two parts: Part A and Part B. Part A posed five questions that asked final year students (student teachers) about: what they thought of the TKT and whether it was beneficial or not; how they felt about their test results and if they were happy with such results or scores; if they thought their results correlate to or were in line with what they studied during the English Language Programme and how the two related; and if they needed any further study to improve the level of English and why or why they did not need further studies. The five questions in Part A can be found in Appendix 9.4.

On the other hand, Part B has 13 questions. Questions 1, 2,3,4,5 and 9 were about: how they felt about being English-Major students and if they enjoyed it or not; if the English Language Programme had prepared them to speak English fluently, write coherent and cohesive pieces of writing, to read a variety of texts using the necessary reading skills like skimming and scanning; to be able to listen to a variety of accents and dialects as well as standard English; and if the B.A. programme had prepared them well enough to teach English the coming year after their graduation. Questions 7, 8, 9 and 10 were about: which course or subject had the most or least influence on their preparedness to teach English; whether they were prepared to teach reading, writing, listening and speaking well; whether they could use one word to describe how they felt about themselves as teachers of English at that point and why they chose this word and what this word suggested about their opinion of their preparedness to teach English the following year. Questions 11 focused on how they felt about the way they had been assessed during the Bachelor of Arts programme. It

also examines whether or not this assessment was in line with the theory they had learned and with their practical experience and if the assessment types had prepared them to assess their future students. Questions 12 and 13 discussed how they are prepared for implementing the theory around teaching English, and if there was anything specific that they learnt during the Bachelor of Arts programme that they could apply in real-life situations; and if they had any comments or suggestions. The 13 questions in Part B can be found in Appendix 9.4.

5.4.1 Part A: Focus Group Discussions

1. *What do you think of the TKT? Do you think it is beneficial? Why? Why not?*

All participants thought that the TKT was beneficial. Most of them believed it was useful and helpful as one of them said: "at least you know your score and you know your level". Two students thought that the TKT test was useful as it helped them to learn teaching methodology. The first student (Student 1 FG2) confirmed that

> *it's be useful because it helps me think I might know about the teaching methods, know about what I don't know so that I can search for it later and know more about it.*

The second student (Student 2 FG2) also repeated the same notion of learning teaching methods, and how they teach, through the TKT. He said:

> *If I think it's useful and beneficial because it reminds us of the things that we took in like practical way and it gave us like a glance about the teaching methods and how do we teach. As the guy said, we need to search and look for it to solve the problem. Because it's not just like a guessing game. You need to know what to do.*

Student 1 FG1 confirmed that they had taken similar tests before they joined the University to assess how much they were qualified to join specific majors. He also maintained that it was a useful test, and it is the same as the Alqudrat exam (a placement test for teachers including all majors), however this would be beneficial. He said:

> *I think it will be useful. We have similar tests before we join university to see if we are qualified enough or not to study further majors such as Alqudrat exams. It is the same, but before being a teacher, I think it is very useful.*

2. *How do you feel about your results? Are you happy with them?*

When the participants were asked about how they felt about their TKT results, and if they were happy with these results, they gave different responses. Four of them said that they were pleased and satisfied with their scores for the TKT. For example, Student 2 FG1 said that he was happy as it gave him an indication of his level of performance "Of course I am happy with it. Even it's not a high number but at least I know where I am now and where I can improve." Student 2 FG2 was happy with his score at the TKT as it showed him how his level improved through the four years in his major "Actually I'm happy with my marks I'm kind of satisfied because it somehow shows me how my level is improved during the past four years in this major." Also, Student 1 FG2 said he was happy with his score, and he didn't expect to get such a score. Student 3 FG1, on the other hand, was satisfied with his TKT score as it showed him that he was not competent enough to be a teacher, and that he should improve himself to fit into the teaching position. He said: "I'm satisfied with my degree because that showed me that I'm not good enough now to be a teacher and that I should improve myself to be a teacher in the future." Other participants in the focus group discussion gave views against his opinion. Student 1 FG1 stated that he was not satisfied with his scores and his level of English. He thought that he had to improve his language and to study further to be a qualified teacher. He said:

> *Well, for me, I guess I have to work on myself. Yeah, I have a good level but to be a great teacher I need to practice more my language to I need to improve and study further studies to be very qualified teacher.*

Among the arguments supporting the kind of dissatisfaction about their test results, Student 3 FG2, in particular, passionately articulated his stance and said that although he didn't know any teaching methods, he had achieved a good score at the TKT. He said: "I am happy with my results. I because out of the things that I don't know which are the teaching methods, I got a good mark."

3. ***Do you think these results correlate or are in line with what you studied during the English Language Programme? How?***

Students gave different views when they were asked if they thought their TKT results correlated to or were in line with what they studied during the English Language Programme. Student 1 FG1 was confused because of the new methodology terms he saw for the first time "of course it correlates but the thing is I've faced new terms for me that confused me with answering the questions and then later I could understand what the question really wants to ask me about." It was also confusing, at the beginning of the TKT, for him as he thought the TKT was not in any way correlated to what he studied, and then he realised that there was a connection. He said:

> *I don't know how to explain that, but when I just first start reading the questions I think I thought it's not related. And then I get further reading. Then I understood that it's related Yes. Yeah. When I read the question the first thing the first time. It was confusing.*

Student 2 FG1 found a link between what he studied in the four-year programme, especially Grammar and Phonology), and what he saw in the TKT as he said: "But thinking about it. You remember at least something about. Yes, especially phonetics. (Grammar and phonology)."

However, Student 3 FG1 finds the TKT was not related to what they had studied during their four years of study except for the language acquisition course they did as part of the whole programme. He said:

> *Ah I got confused when I read some these questions but some it's related of what we studied what you studied in the courses in the university Language a language acquisition it's related for meaning and new words, but it's not related to our course.*

Student 1 FG2 thought that most of the TKT related to what they had studied except for the teaching methods section as the terms in it were not understandable for him. He concluded that a significant portion of the TKT related to what they had studied except for a small part. He said:

> *I think most of it relates to what we studied. But the part about teaching methods the part about recall some words that explain that is uh some terms are not understandable, or I don't know how to relate it to other words like there. And this and that does sports colour*

correlate with other terms that I don't know how to correlate them with that sort of the so most of the most of it is from what we talk about. So part of it is not.

4. ***Do you think you need any further study to improve your level of English? Why? Why not?***

Most participants thought that they had to improve their level of English. They gave similar reasons as to why they had to improve their level of English. Student 1 FG1, for example, agreed that he had to improve his level of English because if he didn't do so, he would not be able to be a competent teacher. He also said that although he needed to study the methods of teaching, he wanted to be a native-like speaker of English. Once he became native-like, then he could start teaching. He said:

> *Well, it's a basic thing to be agreed, yeah. I have to improve my English level. If I haven't improved my English level, I will not be a qualified teacher. Even though I need to study some theories for teaching language I need also to improve my language to be native-like If I could. So when I feel native-like, I know how to pitch.*

Student 2 FG1 gave valid reasons for his improvement. He assumed that because they study English as a Second Language, they had to improve continuously or else they would lose what they learned language-wise over time. He says,

> *Of course, in our situation as English for us as second language. You need to improve it all the time. Any time we need to keep it in our mind, otherwise we lose the language because it is not native and we can not practice at home. Some of us yeah. But, not all of them.*

Student 3 FG1 asserted that they did not use English in their society except when they went to hospitals as they had to speak to nurses and doctors in English because these nurses and doctors were not Saudi, and they only use English as a medium of communication. He also said that some of them (of the students) were obliged to study English although they do not love it. He concluded that one should have a passion for English if he wanted to improve. He said:

> *in our society. We don't use English as much as we can. We just use it in the hospitals and maybe if you .....nurses doctors and maybe when you going to university some of some of us forced to get English they don't love it. You should have a passion in English to be*

improved by watching movies by listening to music and also reading and write. but that should be a passion thing not forced.

Student 3 FG2 thought that they were missing the practical part (practicum) as well as the theories of teaching. Although they had studied one language acquisition course during the four years, he said that they had not done any classes in the methods of teaching except what they learned from the teachers during the English programme. He said:

> *study you mean a level sir, or I think we are missing the practical part of the practical part about teaching and we haven't taken any course in the past four years about the teaching methods. I mean some teachers have given us like presentations, and they have told us you need to do this and you need to do that when it comes to teaching like bits and pieces. But there is no particular subject about it. And I think this is the thing that we are missing.*

5. ***What about your teaching skills? Do you think the test results reflect your skills of teaching or do you need further studies like doing an M.A., or a diploma or at least a certificate in teaching English as a foreign language?***

Student 1 FG1 stated that he would need further studies if he was going to teach exhaustive subjects because a B.A. in English Language and Translation was not enough of a qualification to start teaching. He said that he would need further studies if he was going to teach linguistics and language acquisition courses, but he would not need any further studies if he was only going to teach grammar. He said:

> *Well, of course, I have to give to study further studies, especially if I if I want to teach very detailed subjects. If I had bachelor in English language translation, It's not enough to teach, for example, such a linguistics language acquisition I need to give further studies. But if I want to teach grammar, it might be work. I think it has different level that than the grammar. I think it has to study to have further studies.*

Student 2 FG1 considered that his teachers were the best examples to learn how to teach from. Then he could create his own methodology and practice it with his family members. He said:

> *You have to so see his teacher. First of all before any course. His teacher is a big course and first one. If it's good, he have to follow them and how to teach. Yeah and you can create a new think and Practice it with your brother or sister ……I think your teacher is a good example to do with.*

Student 3 FG1 also thought a B.A. degree was not enough because it was all about teaching. For him, a degree whether it be a B.A., or a diploma did not matter unless one knows how to teach. He was only concerned about the methods of teaching and how to teach in the first place. He couldn't teach because he did not know anything about the methods of teaching. He said:

> *I think bachelor's degree is not enough because you should to know how to teach. It doesn't matter if you have bachelor or diploma or anything. It's how we will teach. Now I have I can speak, and I can listen. I know what people know what people say, but it doesn't matter. I can't teach because I don't know the rules and how I will teach this student if they are adults or they are children. I should know the ways of teaching them.*

5.4.2 Part B: Focus group Discussions

1. *How do you feel about being an English Major student teacher? Probe: Do you enjoy it? Why/why not?*

Almost all participants enjoyed being English Major student teachers with varying reasons. For instance, Student 1 FG1 enjoyed being an English Major student teacher because he was learning grammar, writing, and learning about cultures as well as English. He also changed his major from physics (as it didn't work for him) to English. He said:

> *I am. Because I don't only learn grammar and learn reading writing. I learning cultures I learn history. That's gives me a joy while I study English language as a major. Aye aye. In 2015 or 2014 I was going to be specialised in physics. It didn't work with me. I went to English, and I really enjoyed it.*

Student 2 FG1 agreed with Student 1 FG1 that learning English meant learning other people's new cultures. He also assumed that he was fortunate to be an English Major student as it would be beneficial for his future. He thought the English Language was helpful as it enabled him to be in touch with other cultures. He said:

> *Yeah of course it it's very important to being as many gifted students. and it's very helpful and your future if you are interested in English language to be in touch with the culture on another student. Yeah it's very good and very helpful.*

Student 3 FG1 felt that he would be more than satisfied if his English were better than it is now, and he would share his knowledge with his classmates so as to know how much knowledge he had. This way, he and his mates could improve themselves. He said: "I will be more than satisfied if my English is was good and sharing my knowledge that I have with others to know what I have and improve themselves." Student 1 FG2, on the other hand, has a different point of view about being an English Major student teacher. He likes being a student in the English Language and Translation Department. Still, he did not think that he was going to be a teacher as it did not fit his character as he said: "I enjoy being a student here in the English Department, but I don't think I will enjoy being a teacher. I don't think I am a character that should be teaching." At this point, the researcher posed another notion and said to him: "But sometimes you have to teach if you don't find a job in another field. So you may have to teach." The student agreed with the researcher and said: "Yeah, as a job."

2. ***Do you think that the English Language programme, through its four years, prepared you well enough to speak English fluently like a native speaker?***

All participants, except Student 3 FG2, seemed to agree that the English Language Programme prepared them to speak English well. However, it did not prepare them to speak English as native speakers of English do. Student 1 FG1, for example, confirmed that the English Language Programme was helpful in this regard; however, he reasoned that one should have a good background in the English language if one wanted to be successful in this major. He considered the English Language Programme as a means to help them to be native-like speakers of English. He said:

> *It helps. Yes, it helps, but I don't think you will be good at this major if you don't have good English background. So it's a medium to help you to speak like a native-like. Yeah, it's all about you how good you are and your background how you receive knowledge.*

Student 2 FG1 agreed with Student 1 FG1 and saw the programme as helpful and enough to speak English but not like a native speaker "…… it's very helpful, and it's enough to speak English but not like native." Student 2 FG1 also stressed the importance of literature as a vital learning tool that taught him about their culture (native speakers' culture) "…. it's very helpful to learn to speak another language and with the grammar and with their culture because we study literature which is very important in any language and in any culture." Student 3 FG1, on the other hand, was quite sure that whatever they did, they would not be like native speakers of English because they (participants) did not speak in English all the time because they used Arabic most of the time. He suggested going to stay in an English-speaking country like England or the United States if one wanted to attain native-like fluency, and if he wanted to speak English fluently. He said:

> *First of all, you will not be like a native because you do not talk all the time at English. We're using Arabic here. But more than English. You can't say your either your colleague and you can you can't share with them in English. You should talk to them in Arabic…. if you want to be as an English native. Maybe you should be hyphenated with the other you will be in maybe in England you in united states.*

Contrary to what the other students said, Student 3 FG2 came up with new ideas. He maintained that the student had to practice his English language outside the University. He said that he learned English from video games and from free applications. He advised others not to depend on the university programme as it was not enough for them to speak English fluently. For him, the English Language Programme would help them to reach a certain level, but it was not the desired one. He said:

> *To be honest, Sir, I'm talking about my personal perspective. You cannot rely on speaking to a particular university or a subject. The person the student or whomever he was. He needs to practice English outside of this field. Let's say for example for me it helped me like in the web in online video games and let's say let's talk about apps. There are free apps to do that, but the thing is you do not rely on university because as much as you can take from one hour of listening speaking it is not enough for you in the future. It will only take you to certain let's say like. We will talk about business, and this is like business terminologies in the book but you will. You might never use the terminologies you need like basic terminologies about that. So, I don't think it's enough, Sir.*

3. ***What about writing? Can you write coherent and cohesive pieces of writing?***

Almost all participants said that they can write a coherent and cohesive piece of writing, whether it was a paragraph or an essay. For instance, student 1 FG1 said that he practices writing many times so that he can write a cohesive and coherent paragraph. However, he made some mistakes (with tenses, articles and punctuation) that he saw as spelling and capitalization mistakes. He said: "Yes, I do. I know practice the writing So many times I know how to write cohesive or coherent coherent paragraph here. My major mistakes is the tenses quiet articles And some punctuations. So it's a mechanical problems with the writing." Student 2 FG1's writing seemed to be illegible. The researcher cannot decode what he said from the audio track or the transcription, as he said:

> *Yes, because we talk a C mixture and writing. You have to write one paragraph as it can. Second one you have to write an essay or an article. It's a three paragraph.*

He also went on to say: "and third one it's essay to five paragraph. And it was very good lecturer and a very good teacher. Here in the university and we know how to write well." Student 3 FG1 was confident that he could write an essay or a paragraph. Still, he was not sure about coherence and cohesion as he said:

> *I think I can write I can write an essay a paragraph but maybe if I first a new word maybe I will have issues with write a good paragraph in cohesive and coherence.*

Student 1 FG2 maintained that he could write a cohesive and coherent piece of writing, but it depended on the topic he was writing on as he said:

> *Yes I think I can write a cohesive coherent piece of writing. It depends on the subject of the of the piece that is supposed to be written. But yeah I can write a cohesive and coherent piece of writing.*

Also, Student 2 FG2 maintained that it depended on the level of the student, but for him, he was sure that he could write a wholly cohesive and perfect piece of writing. He said:

I think this question is bent on the student level for me. I am certain by 80 per cent that I could write or 70 per cent or 60 per cent that I could write a full cohesive and perfect essay. So I think it depends on the levels.

4.   And reading? Can you read a variety of complex texts using the reading skills like previewing a text, skimming, and scanning?

All participants stated that they could read various texts; however, some of them were still trying to improve; and others were still struggling with the reading skills like previewing a text, skimming and scanning. It was also apparent that all of the student participants only talked about scanning, but none of them mentioned the other two skills (previewing a text and skimming). For instance, Student 1 FG1 felt happy when he read and when he applied the reading skills and techniques. He confessed that he was weak at reading, but he was trying to improve. He said:

Yes, I do. It's actually comforts me to do with the steps before I read anything to skim to etc. Yeah, I normally follow these steps to conform myself about the text I read. I am practicing reading. I have weakness in reading, but I'm working on it.

Student 2 FG1 seemed to have a problem with being illegible or understandable. He was of the view that reading was boring, and that he was weak at it. It also appeared that he had a problem with scanning. He said:

Yeah, I think this is this boring to have to work on it the writing especially right reading I mean reading Yeah it's very important to work in, and I think it's have a problem with it reading to scanning to sign the similar word like this I think I have weakness in it.

Student 3 FG1 contended that he knew how to read in English. However, for him, English was not like Arabic and that he should be attentive and prepared when it comes to analysing it (English) and that he should make it as easy as possible as he said:

I know how to read but English not like Arabic. I should be more focused more prepared to be able to analyse it and make it a piece of a piece of cake for me.

Student 3 FG2 said that he knew how to scan a text in detail. He said that when he read a complicated text, he used the scanning technique to break the text down, which made it easy. He

looked for the piece of information and the main idea that made him understand the gist rather than the details. He said:

> *Yes, Sir. When you read a complex text I like for us it's going to be hard, so we use the scanning like we try to make it easier to us as much as we can. So, we try to search and scan and like four for the single piece of information and the main idea we take it, and we leave out the details.*

5.   *Listening? Can you listen to a variety of accents and dialects as well as standard English?*

Participants' views were similar regarding their ability to listen to a variety of accents and dialects. Some of them had already been abroad to study English. They had hands-on experience studying with and talking to international students (who were also studying English) from all over the world. For example, Student 1 FG1 loved to listen to different accents and dialects. He had a real experience of these accents when he went to the University of Adelaide (as a student) in Australia. He said that the accents he had listened to were different. For example, Japanese people had a different accent which is not like the Koreans' accent, which is different from the Chinese's that differs from the Jordanians'. The researcher asked if he understood these accents: "So you understand them?", Student 1 FG1 said he also enjoys listening to them: "Yeah yeah, I enjoy also to listen to them." He claimed that he could also tell the difference between the Scottish accent and the English one. Besides, he said it is a unique advantage to go abroad to study English. He said:

> *well, I enjoy listening to these things. So, I actually had experience with it in an English language centre of University of Adelaide. Australia. Yeah, the English the accent of Japanese people is different from the Korean different from the Chinese different from Jordanian people. .....Yeah, Scottish English Welsh English it has some difference from the English English. Yeah. It's actually enjoyable.*

Like Student 1 FG1, Student 2 FG1 had also been to England for studying English. He asserted that when abroad, one could hear different accents spoken by students from around the world. He also confirmed that these accents were different from the native one. He said:

I've been in England for a month. And It's very good, yeah. And you hear different accent of English people with a different student from different countries. Yeah. And they can sound different accent from people whose the language its first language there not English. Like us. And like Asian countries. Yeah, you can hear it's big different.

Student 3 FG1 enjoyed listening to all accents, American accent, Irish accent, British accent, and even the Indian accent that made him laughs. He thought that the more you listened to these accents, the more you understood them. He also watched movies with these accents to the extent that he could tell the difference between them. He said:

I think you will enjoy more. The more you listen to more accents and the more you understand. I love when I hear some U.S. people talk. And some British people talk, and some Irish people talk. I watch them a lot in the movies, and I like the accent. I can't. I can know the differences between them. Some of them, not all of it and the Indian accent …….Yes, it's very different and makes me laugh about them all the day.

At this point, Student 1 FG1 interjected and mentions the Australian accent which was quite weird for him. He mentioned his Australian neighbour who said to him, "Have a good die (as they voice it)" instead of, Have a good day." On the other hand, Student 1 FG2 confirmed that he could understand some accents, yet he couldn't catch or understand some parts as they were still hard for him to decode. He also maintained that the four years did not adequately prepare him to understand all the current accents. He finally said if he concentrated while listening to any subtle accent, he could understand it. He said:

I can listen to a variety of accents but. Not I don't. Some accents I can't understand or catch understand part of its of them. So. The four years did not really prepare fully your for the whole. For all of the accents that are out there, some accents are a little bit hard, but if you focus enough, you can understand them. If you repeat them you can understand them.

6. ***What is your opinion about the Bachelor of Arts programme? Probe: Has it prepared you enough for teaching English next year? What makes you say that?***

Most participants maintained that the B.A. programme partially prepared them to teach English after they had graduated. None of them said that the B.A. programme thoroughly equipped them to teach English except for Student 1 FG1, who at the beginning, was confident that the B.A.

programme helped and prepared him enough to be a teacher after he graduates. He stated some reasons, like the courses he studied during that period. Also, he was confident he was a passionate teacher by nature, but he maintained that what he studied during his BA programme was not adequate for him.

> *Yes, it help. It helped me a lot. Three courses for grammar. Three courses of writing three courses Listening and speaking it does help yeah with the basic teaching basics basic topics conjunctions vocabs grammar present past. Yeah, but for me, I am passionate teacher, so this one does not satisfy me.*

However, he changed his view later in the discussion. Student 2 FG1 agreed with Student 1 FG1 that the B.A. programme prepared him to be a good teacher when he graduated. He affirmed that they had studied many skills that would enable them to teach at the High School, but not at the university because he couldn't teach phonetics or literature yet, "Yeah we took a lot of skills lecture and it. I think we are prepared to teaching but not like phonetics and literature. to teach in a high school or secondary school. It's it will be okay but not in the University." At that point, Student 1 FG1 interrupted and supported his view, that he stated at the beginning, that he was ready for teaching; however, he had to improve his teaching techniques because the new generation of students who want to learn English are thirsty for learning it. He also stated that - at in house -there were people who wanted to learn English as they were used to watching movies, but they did not understand what was going on because they lacked the language that would enable them to understand. That is why these families wanted to learn English as well.

> *I think I am ready for teaching, but I should improve myself in the techniques of teaching because there is a new generation who is thirsty for being about knowing the English know the knowledge. Now all people in every house you steps in. You watch the family watch an English movie. But the people don't understand. What is that? Just maybe from the moves and the actions that they do it. Maybe they understand what they do. But. They want to know English and know other people.*

Likewise, Student 3 FG2 was in agreement with the other participants' views. He similarly declares that the B.A. programme had prepared them to teach to some extent. However, it had not prepared

them sufficiently to teach English after graduation as they still missed out on the practical part (practicum) that could have enabled them to teach well. He also said that they couldn't teach children some subjects (like comparative literature) that they studied during the four years. He contended that these subjects were neither beneficial for their students nor for their teaching. He said:

> *It has prepared us in some aspects, but we lacked some. But we lacked some certain aspects like the practical one and to be honest with you Sir we have taken some subjects that it is impossible for us to teach to children. We have taken some certain subjects without naming anything that we see no benefit in them in our field or like in teaching, and I think like comparative lit is not like literature for example.*

7. ***In your opinion, which course or subject was the most influential regarding preparing you to teach English? Why?***

In answer to this question, participants gave different opinions on as to what constituted the most central subject or course that helped prepare them to teach. Some of them went for grammar as the most dominant subject that helped them prepare to teach. Others went for literary courses and writing. They also gave different reasons for their choices. For example, some participants said their teachers influenced them the most as they were good examples to follow to the extent that the participants loved the subjects or course taught by those teachers. They also said that they could teach those subjects because their teachers made them like the courses. For instance, Student 1 FG1 believed that the literary courses they studied were the most influential courses that helped prepare them to teach English as he said: "When you teach you will quote some ways of teaching some books. Some. Yeah, I think literary courses are the most beneficial."

Student 2 FG1 said that grammar helped him to be able to teach as he was interested in it, and that his teacher Dr Y. F assisted him to be good at grammar. He said that Dr Y.F was an excellent teacher. That is why he was into grammar, and why he could teach it because his teacher made him love grammar as he said:

> *for me, I think it's grammar. Yeah because I'm interest with the grammar. I mean study with Y.F. ….. Yeah, and he is. …..He was a very good teacher, yeah and he talked to me …..Yeah, help me to teach grammar.*

Similarly, Student 3 FG1 confirmed the notion that grammar was the most significant subject that prepared him for teaching because, as he assumed, he was going to teach students who did not know grammar. He wanted to prepare his students so that they would be even better than him, "I think it's grammar because you will teach maybe you will teach people they don't know grammar. you want to prepare them to be good as you or more than you." Student 1 FG1 interjected and supported his notion of literary courses as being the essential courses that helped prepare him to teach as they represented the culture of the language the teacher taught. So, through teaching that culture, the teacher could correct any cultural misconceptions among countries. He said:

> *I like to add. If my answer. If my answer was not that clear. Relying on literature is representation of the language's culture. So, when you have that knowledge of it you can teach you can use idioms and you can correct some misunderstandings.*

Student 3 FG2 had a different stance. He considered phonetics and phonology as being the most influential courses that helped prepare him for teaching because they were taught by competent teachers. He said:

> *I think it's phonetics and morphology. First of all, because of this the ideas and the concepts and like theories inside of the inside of the subjects and because of the man who teaches them the tutors they were they were literally (Uttering Arabic words) amazing Dr N. and Dr A. A.*

Once more, Student 1 FG2 interrupted and proposed writing as being the best subject that helped prepare him for teaching. He learned how to teach writing because the teacher was an excellent example of how a teacher should be,

> *Yeah, I think writing. Yeah. And it's part of how it showed me how to teach writing because the teacher was great……So yeah. Writing is a big part of how I should be teaching writing.*

8. ***In your opinion, which course or subject had the least influence on you? Follow-up question: How did it impact your preparedness to teach English?***

Student 1 FG1 considered that translation was the least important subject that influenced his preparedness to teach English because he was not interested in it. He was obliged to study translation, and he did not have the passion for it as he said: "I might enforce myself for it. I might acquire, but these days I don't have the passion to learn translation. yeah, but I'm forced with this programme." Student 2 FG1 saw literature as the least essential subject that did not prepare him to teach English because he did not understand literature in the first place as he said: "for me, it's literature. Yeah. Unfortunately, I didn't understand in it." When he was asked (as a confirmation) by the researcher if he were really not interested in literature: "You were not interested in literature?", he added that he was not interested in Arabic literature as well as he said: "because of that I like to, and they have less influence."

Student 3 FG1 agreed with Student 2 FG1 and asserted that comparative literature was not relevant when he became a teacher. For him, literature was an essential subject as it gave him a lot of information as a student of English, but it was useless when it came to teaching. He said they were struggling when they were studying this kind of course because it had many complicated terms, and the sources for this subject were insufficient. He said:

> *I think it's a literary theory. Literary Theory. Because it tells a lot of them a lot of information, it's I think it will not be important related and important for you in the future when you will be a teacher. Yes. It's just for adding information for your background. I think Sir it's the subject that I'm taking this course. I have never had any problem with any course except for the comparative literature. This subject is has the weird terminologies sources in the old line; it's not enough. And we're actually battling to understand what it contains.*

9. ***Do you think that you are prepared to teach these language aspects (Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening) at least the same way you learnt them? Why? Why not?***

Student 1 FG1 thought that teaching any of the skills mentioned above depended on the course's level. However, he did not believe his B.A. was adequate to prepare him to teach these skills. He thought that he had to have a PhD to be able to teach such skills.

First of all, it depends on the level of the course. And second of all, as a Bachelor, I don't think it's enough. Because I don't think you can teach the students further understandings through reading by Bachelor of English language. I think it has to do with PhD at least with this very basic skills.

In opposition to what Student 1 FG1 believed, Student 2 FG1 thought that the B.A. was enough of a qualification for him to teach the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking): "four skills and after you finish the University I think it's enough." He was also sure that it was easy to teach these skills, "Yeah at least for foreign people. Like herein, Saudi Arabia they speak out of it. You will not find it hard to teach them." Student 3 FG1 was optimistic as he was confident that the B.A. was enough of a qualification for him to start teaching if he were prepared enough and knew the correct teaching techniques. He said:

I think it would be enough cause if you was prepared and know all of this things perfectly and you able to get the techniques of how you study how you'll teach it. You will be able to teach the other the next generation.

Student 2 FG2 presented a different viewpoint as he thought students had different abilities. For him, he thought he would be good at teaching listening and speaking because he was influenced by his teacher Dr. Y. who had a high impact on him and who taught him how to use his tongue to communicate faster. He said:

I think in every night, and every student have some weak skills and some powerful one. I think I will be good at listening and speaking cause of the teacher because of the doctor Y.. he influenced me so much, and he has a great effect on me, and he make him somehow my tongue can go faster.

10. ***Use ONE word to express how you feel about yourself as a teacher of English at this point. Follow-up questions: Why did you choose this word? What does this word suggest about your opinion about your preparedness to teach English next year?***

While Student 1 FG1 described himself as a qualified teacher, Student 2 FG1 considered himself as a very good teacher. However, Student 3 FG1 saw himself as less than average. The researcher asked him, "So you are not qualified enough?", and he replies, "not qualified. Not qualify enough.

But if you want to be a teacher, you should get the techniques first." He insisted on getting the teaching techniques or methods before he started teaching. Student 1 FG1 explained the word 'qualified' as follows:

> *You know how to teach, but you are not as the idiom say nobody's perfect. So, you know how to teach you have background, but still you need to learn more. So, you might learn new teaching techniques. You might be able to understand what the students want to say, but he could not say. And this is important for. For the teacher for the qualified teacher.*

When the researcher wanted to make sure that Student 1 FG1 meant what he had said, he asked, "Yeah. So, you mean that you are not prepared 100 per cent, Student 1 FG1 replied, "Exactly." This meant that he still insisted that he was not qualified enough to start teaching after his graduation. Student 2 FG1 still insisted that he would be a perfect teacher for adults as he said: "Yeah I'm very good for adults," because he was not suitable for young children yet as he said: "No I'm not for a very young child." He thought adults can understand him more than young children, and he was confident that he had the right skills for teaching adults. He continued:

> *And I think because they are begin to understand you and begin to be a man you can speak with then this point can and understand them and I have a good knowledge about as I said skills and I think I'm very good with it.*

When Student 3 FG1 was asked again why he thought that he was not prepared yet to start teaching, he clarified his stance and said, "You should get the methods first. The techniques. And know how to teach children and how they improve their English." He also insisted that all year-four students are not 100 per cent prepared to start teaching when they graduated as he says: "Yes, of course. Yeah. Nobody is prepared 100 per cent." Student 1 FG1 supported his stance and said, "There is a saying from Einstein if I'm not mistaken. If you could not explain it to a 6-year-old child, you haven't understand anything."

The participants summarised their abilities (in one word) to teach as follows:

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- Student 1 FG2, "I think the one word would be bad." He thought he would be a bad teacher and "not worthy or not prepared."

- Student 2 FG2 thought that he would be nervous, "I think I'm gonna be nervous in at least in the first two months or three months of teaching. I think I'll be nervous."

- Student 3 FG2 thought that he would be "confused" "because of the lack of practicality and in our major and we haven't like taught any students at all."

11. *How do you feel about the way you have been assessed during the Bachelor of Arts programme? Probe: Was it in line with the theory you have learnt and your practical experiences? Did the types of assessment prepare you to assess your students next year?*

Student 1 FG1 thought that all the exams they had sat for were practical rather than theoretical. He said they were tested for what they studied. He said the courses they studied were practical except for literary theories and language acquisition courses which were only theoretical. He confirmed that the exams were in line with what they studied. He said:

> *well, our it mostly or almost all the exams were applied more than theory. I know. I mean we study things we ask about Yeah. Yeah. We just began with theories on the level of seven 7 I guess or eight by the subject of literary theory and language acquisition. This is the very first courses we study language as philosophical theories about the language. Otherwise, it just what you study you'll be asked about. Yeah, I used applied instead of* practical.

Student 2 FG1 confirmed that what they had studied was what they were examined on, however, the solution rested with him, which meant that if he studied hard, he would get high marks, and if he didn't, he wouldn't. He said:

> *Think it's when you study enough you'll get a full mark. And You get less mark. That's mean we don't, we didn't study enough, but when you study enough, you will get a full mark. it's clear the questions here, and you faced what you studied before.*

In his response to this part of the main question: **"*Do you think these types of exam or assessment prepare you to assess your students next year if you become a teacher?"*,** Student 3 FG1

contended that if he himself were prepared enough, he would be able to help his students answer the exam questions that he would give them easily. Thus, they would become good students as he said: "I think it's when I prepared myself. I will be able to give them this exam and know how to answer it and be a good student." The researcher sought confirmation from the student by saying: "So you learnt from these exams here, and you will apply the same methods when you teach?" Student 3 FG1 replied positively and said: "After I improve myself." He (Student 3 FG2) elaborated on what he had said and added:

> *Yes, Sir. I think writing exams wouldn't be like much of a problem. It's not a skill that it's like it's out of the space skill; it's like it's a skill by everyone. As long as you have a book, I think you can do that. But it depends on your type of questions, and that's it.*

Student 3 FG2 maintained that the exams were fair and said: "Yeah, it was fair enough. It was fair enough." Student 1 FG2 supported Student 3 FG2's notion of the fairness of the exams and said:

> *Well, I think I would be able to make exams not as good as the ones that were made, but I think I can make fairly good ones. I think the exams we took are fair. Some of them are like a little bit not fair, but mostly they're fair.*

12. ***How well are you prepared for implementing the theory around teaching English? Probe: Is there anything specific you learned during the Bachelor of Arts programme that you can apply in real-life situations?***

Almost all participants agreed that they can partially apply what they learnt during their four-year programme. Only Student 3 FG1 thought he would have difficulties applying what he learnt in real-life situations because he did not have any kind of real practice; however, he would adapt and acquire practical skills very fast. He said: "well, I will have difficulties because I didn't begin to practice it in real environment. But I will acquire it very fast." Student 3 FG1 did not have an answer for the question, but he was confident that if he learned the theories, he would recall them easily while teaching as they would still be there in his mind. This meant he would be able to improve these theories over time through practice. He said:

I don't. I don't think I have a specific answer for it. But as you've learned theories it will stuck in your mind, and then you live your life but you can't you'll just recall while you teach or while you read who we spoke about the literary theory. ....Well maybe you will improve it may be in your daily life.

Student 3 FG2 thought that they could gradually apply what they learnt during their programme. He said that they would have to revise so that they could retain the full details of what they were practising. He said:

Yes, Sir, I think we can apply them, but we can apply like bits and pieces of every single subject that we have taken a student or the teacher for to us we need to review a little bit in order for us to give the complete information or the full information and the idea about it.

Student 1 FG2 believed that he could apply some of what he learned during the programme. He was also wondering about the use of studying the language acquisition course during the last semester (semester eight). He wondered why they didn't study this course in an earlier semester. For him, it was an essential course, and it contained a lot of language theories that they should have studied earlier and in more detail. He said:

I think I can apply some of the theories that I take but uh that I took. Sorry but uh what is the benefit from making language acquisition eight in the eighth semester. Yes, of course. Because it's has a lot of theories. A lot of important theories. So it's uh it's not beneficial……It's too late.

Student 1 FG2 said he could partially apply some of the theories. He agreed with Student 3 FG2 to the extent that he almost used the same words, "bits and pieces of every single subject that we have taken." He agreed with him that he had to review what they had learned before they applied it. He said:

I think I can apply. Uh, not all of the theories I talk about part of them. like my friend said bits and pieces of every subject we took. I think I can apply but if I need to apply a lot of uh good amount of theories I need to review them.

13.   Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

Student 1 FG1 stated that if he were lucky enough to be hired as a teacher, he had to read a lot to improve himself and not to depend on what they studied during their B.A. programme as this would not be enough. He said:

> *If you were lucky and employed after the Bachelor's degree you have to have further readings for yourself. Do not stop with the bachelor's degree and rely on teaching Same subjects for many years. you have to improve yourself.*

The researcher asked him again to make sure that what he meant was that their B.A. was not enough of a qualification for them to start teaching. The researcher asked: "So a B.A. that is a bachelor's degree is not enough." Student 1 FG1 replied: "It's not." He went on to say: "Our bachelor was an introduction to three ways in the language intro. We have few courses in linguistics field courses in literature field courses and translation." Again, the researcher asked if he wanted to further his studies, and he replied: "yes, because teaching is a great job very great job. and I use great to mean big no." Student 2 FG1 then came up with the idea of a diploma or a practicum to further their studies and to put what they had learned into practice as this would be helpful for them. He said: "To put a lecture or something to practice…..As a diploma on system do you get to go to schools or to teach students it should be very helpful to us." Student 3 FG1 was sure that a B.A. degree was enough of a qualification if he was going to teach students at the primary, intermediate and secondary school levels. However, he would need a diploma, and he will need to improve a lot if he was going to teach University students. He said:

> *the bachelor degree Is enough when you want to teach until the high school, but If you want to teach in universities, you should get a diploma and improve yourself more and more even if you want to teach English if you want to teach high school. Until the high school you know you should improve yourself to teach the younger men.*

Student 1 FG2 agreed with what his colleague said that they needed to study the language acquisition course earlier in the programme, and they also needed to study more literature courses. He said: "Yeah, I think like my friend said we need to take the language acquisition early on. We

needed to take more literature." He also supported the notion of fewer theories in linguistics and more practice for teaching. He said: "I think also less theory more practical like less in linguistics less theory more practical." Likewise, Student 2 FG2 supported the notion of some practical subjects or parts to be added to the programme because, as he assumed, about 60 per cent of the students in his major could not speak English fluently like native speakers. He gave himself as an example as one who struggled to talk fluently as native speakers do. He says:

> Yes, I think we need as some practical subjects because I think almost 60 per cent of this students major can't speak in full fluency and unlike almost a native speaker it's hard. Even you can notice it you cannot notice in my way of speaking. Yes, It's strict almost strict.

Student 3 FG2 argued that the language acquisition course should be taught early in the programme as it would educate them and provide them with hands-on experience of how to teach. He also reasoned that throughout the four years of the programme, they studied many courses without practical application. Furthermore, he questioned the use of only one language acquisition course and one exam to test this course, and then he was expected to be a teacher. He said:

> I think Sir we should like we need the language acquisition to be in the first like levels because it enlighten us to new ways of teaching and like how to be practical and how to use the things that you have got. I mean we have taken four years of literature phonetics phonology morphology, and it goes on. But what's the point of taking it if you didn't know how to apply it. It just doesn't make any sense. And like you take one one course, which is language acquisition, and then you take a test in order for you to be a teacher.

Once more Student 2 FG2 added that if they had studied the language acquisition course at an early stage, they would have been able to match the theories they studied in this course with the methods their teachers had used. This way, the approaches they studied as part of the course and their teachers' ways of teaching would help them to know how to teach. He said: "And I think even if you take this subject earlier, you will be able to match the theories that you take with the methods the doctors use. So, it will stick in your head."

5.5 Interviews

5.5.1 Interview with two EFL expert teachers

5.5.1.1 Introduction

The researcher had two separate interviews with two experts in the EFL field. These two expert teachers had been in the EFL field for a long time. One of them (Teacher M) was Head of Instruction at the ELC of the university where the study was carried out. He was also a teacher, a recruiter, and a coordinator who observed teachers' classes. Besides, he is a native English Language speaker, and he has an M.A. in English Language Teaching. The other (Teacher S) was also a native British speaker with a Ph.D. in teaching English as a foreign language (TESOL). He was Head of Training, a recruiter, an EFL teacher and a teacher observer. Both experts used to be IELTS examiners for the British Council. Besides, these two EFL experts were members of the recruitment unit at the ELC of the same University under research. The researcher and these two EFL experts interviewed candidates for the EFL positions at the ELC. They interviewed candidates for direct-hire positions at the same university and for positions provided by outsourcing companies. To clarify, the ELC has two kinds of vacancies: direct-hire vacancies and non-direct-hire vacancies. If a candidate was recruited as a direct hire, she/he would get her/his salary directly from the University.

On the other hand, if a candidate was recruited through an outsourcing company, she/he would work as an EFL teacher at the ELC, but she/he would get her/his salary from that outsourcing company. The researcher and the two EFL expert teachers formed the recruitment unit. They interviewed candidates from around the world for the EFL positions at the ELC. These candidates represented all nationalities (native and nonnative speakers of English). Among these candidates are the Saudi candidates. These Saudi candidates include both experienced and inexperienced candidates (new graduates). These two interviews, with the two EFL experts, were about the new

graduates who apply for the position of EFL teachers. These new graduates were similar to the participants of this study. First, they had just graduated with a bachelor's degree in the English language. They did not have any kind of teaching experience and their language ability was almost the same as this study's participants (final year students in the English language programme). Also, they were graduates of the same English language programme. That is why the two EFL experts were asked questions about the new graduates' language ability and their preparedness to teach English as a foreign language. Usually, once a recent graduate passed the interview, he was given a period of shadowing in other experienced teachers' classes before he was given a teaching schedule and started teaching. After he had been given a full teaching schedule and during the first few weeks of his teaching, his class was observed by one of the two EFL experts. A report was always written about his performance (his language ability and his teaching ability) inside his classroom. This is another reason why the researcher had interviews with these two EFL experts because they ran the interviews, and they observed the new graduates' classes. This meant they had practical experience of the new graduates' real status as it pertained to teaching and the skills they were good at and the skills that needed improvement.

Consequently, these two EFL experts knew precisely the new graduates' language ability and their teaching ability. The following questions were asked about these recent graduates because they were similar to or almost at the same level as the participants (year-four students) of this study. Each interview consisted of eleven questions (see Appendix 9.7).

5.5.1.2 Discussing the results of the interviews

1. *You have interviewed hundreds of Saudi candidates so far. Have you ever interviewed any new graduates?*

Both candidates confirmed that they have already interviewed hundreds of Saudi candidates for the EFL position at the ELC of this university so far. They also confirmed that they had interviewed new graduates as well.

> **Teacher M:** Yes, I have interviewed new graduates.
> **Teacher S:** Yes, I have yeah. Yeah

2. ***What do you think of their language ability in general?***

Both teachers believed that new graduates could speak English well. For instance, Teacher M believed that these recent graduates were very fluent and good at listening. Although Teacher A thought that some of these graduates were almost native speakers, he believed that some were still below that native-like level. He said:

> *In general, I would say they are very well-spoken, and obviously, from the interview stage, I can really only gather information about their spoken proficiency and listening proficiency in terms of understanding the questions. And in both of those areas, I would say their proficiency depends on the graduate. Some, you could say are almost native-like some are near-native, and some possibly are just a bit below that level.*

Similarly, Teacher S maintained that these new graduates were good at speaking as well, and they would score between band 5 and band 7 in the international IELTS exam. However, he said that their level had not been very excellent in the past if it was compared to the present time. He also reasoned that they could communicate. He said:

> *It's not bad. In the past it wasn't particularly good. But now you know I think that they're able to communicate in terms of speaking ability. I think that they're okay. They're not you know. I mean from an oil perspective I think that many of them have an IELTS of 5 to 6 probably. So, in terms of speaking ability. Five to IELTS five to seven if anything. Yeah I mean they're certainly able to communicate.*

3. ***Do you think they (new graduates) are prepared to teach English as a foreign language? Why? Why not?***

Both teachers agree that these new graduates cannot start teaching as they are not prepared enough for teaching, and they do not have the practical experience to teach English. For example, Teacher M assumed that these new graduates would lack experience in the classroom setting as they have

just graduated with zero teaching experience. Besides, he maintained that they were not ready to teach EFL in a classroom environment, but some had experience of working as private tutors, which did not make them ready to start teaching in the EFL setting. He said:

> *If they are just newly qualified graduates, they probably lack the experience needed in a classroom setting. Some of them may have experience doing private tuition but not really in an institutional environment so I wouldn't say they are ready immediately having graduated to teach in EFL in a classroom environment.*

Teacher S said that these new graduates cannot teach English because no course taught them how to teach. He said that they only studied theoretical courses rather than practical ones. That is the reason why they cannot teach or start teaching without practising. He said:

> *No, because basically in their courses they don't actually. There is no course that teaches them teaching methodology. It might be theoretical, but you know they don't actually have any course which focuses on teaching in the classroom. That's the problem. That's why they are unable to.*

4. *Do you think their programme prepared them well to teach English?*

Both teachers' arguments were based on the assumption that the English language programme did not prepare these graduates well enough to teach English as a foreign language after their graduation. Teacher M said that translation was their programme's focus, so that neither the programme nor translation prepare them to teach English as a foreign language because the whole programme did not have the essential modules that would teach them how to teach English. He also contends that these new graduates believe in the grammar-translation method (the way they were taught in college), which is not the best way of teaching English as a foreign language. He also contended that the programme or the major is only based on theory and translation rather than practice. The English language programme does not in his view produce teachers of English in the first place. Besides, he maintains that the other choice for these new graduates to work as EFL teachers is to use the grammar-translation method (the favourite method for Saudi learners) in their future teaching to escape getting a qualification. He said:

If we're talking about the programme being a Bachelor's in English language in translation then the focal point of the programme doesn't really prepare them to teach English as a foreign language from that angle I would say. The programme in itself doesn't really have the core modules that would prepare them to teach English as a foreign language. Mainly I would say it's theory-based and the focus is going to be on translation which doesn't necessarily translate into someone being a good teacher unless that person believes in the grammar-translation method which maybe is not the best the way forward for students in Saudi Arabia.

Teacher S gave his answer to this question in question 3, stating that they (the new graduates) do not have any course that focuses on teaching in the classroom.

5. ***Do you think they need any further training or study like doing a CELTA or DELTA to be able to teach English well? Why? Why not?***

Typical comments and suggestions were quoted by the two teachers supporting the notion that these new graduates needed further training or a CELTA or DELTA or their equivalent to start teaching. They thought that a B.A. is not enough of a qualification for these new graduates to teach English as a foreign language. Teacher M, for instance, maintained that these candidates unquestionably needed further training. They needed a practical part to compliment the theory they learnt because the needs of the classroom setting are different from what they study at University. He believed that a certificate like CELTA would be a good starter as a teaching qualification. This way, when they obtained a teaching certificate, they would have the feeling of a classroom environment where they could be given the opportunity to teach. They would also observe their peers teaching, and they would be observed as well, which will provide them with the chance to learn from their peers and their supervisors. He suggested a diploma (equivalent to DELTA) to be added to their programme. This diploma could be introduced at the state Universities as well as the private ones. This kind of certification should focus on a practical part that would focus on teaching English as a foreign language rather than on a theoretical one. Accordingly, these graduates could then transfer from being theoretical to practical. He said:

Definitely. Like I mentioned earlier they need some kind of practical aspect having a theory is one thing but actually. You know, Executing in the classroom is something totally different and doing something. CELTA would definitely be the entry level certificate. At least they'll get a good feel for the classroom environment and teaching, and they teach, and they observe, and they can learn from their peers and their supervisor on the programme. ……….. Perhaps to some degree it is. So, giving an insight into it or they could do some other our programme maybe a longer kind diploma programme like a Delta or something equivalent to that which has more of a practical element to it that would definitely help them to transition

Teacher S stated that these candidates needed a kind of module that would teach them how to teach and how to act as teachers inside their classrooms. Or else they needed a type of certificate like a CELTA which would make a big difference to their teaching styles. He said:

I think they certainly need a module of some kind that teaches them. What to do in the classroom how to act as teachers. So yeah, I mean something like. If you think about. Yeah something like a CELTA would make a significant difference. On a significant positive difference. If they were to do that. Yeah.

6. **As a recruiter, if you hire one of these new graduates, what do you think they need to have to be efficient teachers?**

Both teachers agreed that these new graduates could not start teaching effectively without first shadowing experienced teachers in their classes. Secondly, they should work as volunteers in the beginning until they acquire the appropriate experience that would enable them to start teaching on a solid foundation. For example, teacher M confirmed what he had said before and insisted that these new graduates lacked experience and that they needed exposure to the classroom context. He suggested that they could start as volunteers or as interns to gain some experience in the beginning if they wanted to be hired. This way, they (the new graduates) could be mentored, or they should shadow some experienced and senior teachers- which would help them to become effective teachers, and they would have the feeling of the teaching process in its context and as it happens on the spot. He said:

Like I said they'll definitely lack experience, so they need to have that exposure. So, I think there are different ways possible that they could probably get that. I mean if they were to be hired possibly they could come in as a voluntary position or like an intern position where they can just get some experience. I mean before they do, they have to be mentored

or shadow some more experienced and senior teachers in institutions to get a feel for what the teaching kind of process is like in a class.

Teacher S agreed with Teacher M and maintained that these candidates needed some sort of mentoring and guidance. Because these new graduates do not have a background or knowledge of teaching in the classroom, he suggested that they needed to shadow experienced teachers. Then they could be talked to about their experience of attending such classes. Besides this, he thought that they needed to reflect on what they have seen in the lessons they had visited, and they needed then to be allowed to implement what they had learnt, and they had to be observed as well. He said:

> *Well I mean if they many of them need mentoring they need guidance. And so because of that many of them don't really have any background or knowledge of teaching in the classroom. We would need them to shadow other teachers go to other classes have a look at what other people are doing and then perhaps we would need to follow up and ask them. To reflect on what they've seen and perhaps. We would need to Observe them. Ask them to perhaps implement or try to implement what they've seen.*

7. *Have you ever observed any of these new graduates' classes? What did you notice in general?*

Both teachers confirmed that they had already observed some of these new graduates' classes. They affirmed that these recent graduates still lack teaching methods, classroom management skills, and a language skills class compared to a lecturing-skills class. For example, Teacher M stated that he had already observed many of these new graduates' classes. He contended that recent graduates want to convey a message that they are very keen; they have a passion, and they are enthusiastic about teaching. However, there are areas where they needed to improve on regarding delivering an EFL class efficiently. They needed to improve their classroom management skills as well as their teaching methods techniques. He said:

> *Yes, I have observed many of their classes. In general, I would say these newly qualified graduates they want to make a positive impression they're very keen. They've a lot of passion, and they're very enthusiastic about teaching English which's a very positive thing in terms of their character in terms of teaching English. But obviously, there are areas*

where they need to improve on. And typically, I would say areas, where they fall short on, is in the structural management side because they don't maybe that's where you have the strategies.

Teacher S also confirmed that he had observed these new graduates' classes. He observed that, because these recent graduates have experienced a lecturing style during their years of college attendance, they would follow the same form in their teaching, which was unsuccessful teaching-wise. He also maintained that they would not follow a language skills class that requires a lot of interaction, as recommended by the standard modern methodologies currently prevailing. They only stick to what they had learned during their programme, and they imitate their teachers' traditional way of teaching. He also contended that this classic lecturing style does not help them teach English nor do their students learn it. He says:

Yes, I have. I mean. Well, I mean the thing is because they have experienced a lecturing style of study themselves they've graduated with a B.A. in all English in English language in English literature. They're only exposed to that kind of teaching and because they haven't really been taught how to teach they effectively repeat the lecturing style. Which really is totally counter-productive. In a language skills. Or in ESL course because perhaps that requires interaction at least in terms of modern methodologies. lecturing is certainly not seen as something that will help someone learn a language.

8. ***Are they able to teach the four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking)?***

The two teachers had different views about whether these new graduates could teach the four languages skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). For instance, teacher M confirmed that these new graduates could teach the four language skills (reading and writing; listening and speaking) with varying degrees of success, and that they were more comfortable in teaching some skills rather than others. He said: "Yes, they're able to teach the four skills but to varying degrees of success. I would say they're probably more comfortable in some skills compared to others." However, Teacher S thought that these new graduates' greatest strength was their speaking ability. However, this strength did not mean they could teach the four language skills. He believed that

one of these new graduates' advantages was that they were bilingual. They could use Arabic to give instructions, convey the messages, and explain the lessons if they could not communicate with their students in English. However, for him, these new graduates still lacked teaching methodologies. He said:

> *It's difficult to say just because they can speak English well and naturally normally their speaking ability is the strongest ability they have. I'm unsure. However, I think one of the advantages they have is that they're bilingual. So, when it comes to, for example reading and writing I mean all the skills they have the advantage that they can use their Arabic language to convey the concept, the idea, give instruction. So, to that extent I think that they can but other than that. They still lack teaching methodologies. So. Yeah, I think that's. So can they teach to a limited extent?*

9.   *Which skill are they good at?*

Teacher M thought that these new graduates were good at receptive skills (reading and listening). He also felt they feel more comfortable when it comes to delivering reading and listening lessons as he said in response to the question: "I would say probably more in the receptive skills probably reading and listening. I feel they feel more comfortable in delivering those lessons."

On the other hand, Teacher S believed that these new graduates were good at teaching grammar because they had the same experience of being taught in the same way (grammar-translation method) when they were learners. This meant they learnt how to teach Grammar from their teachers who tended to use the grammar-translation approach in their teaching. He said:

> *I suppose in teaching …. Grammar. I if I wanted. If I if I had like someone who's a Saudi. We find that generally they're very good at teaching grammar perhaps because they've had the same kind of experience as the learners. So, if anything I would say they're extremely good at teaching grammar which doesn't necessarily I mean they can even use the old grammar-translation method, but Grammar is something that I find they're quite strong at.*

10.   *Which skill are they weak or poor at?*

The two interviewees had different views about the skill that the new graduates were weak at. While Teacher M thought that these recent graduates were poor at writing and speaking, Teacher S believed that they were ineffective at listening. For instance, according to his experience of

observing these new graduates' classes, Teacher M said that they (the recent graduates) needed to develop their productive skills (writing and speaking). He maintained that if they were not proficient at t using the receptive skills listening and reading, they would not be able to teach them appropriately. As for their speaking competency, he pointed out that they needed to improve some areas like 'intonation and stress' as they were not native speakers. This also applies to their writing ability that had to be developed as well. He said:

> *the area where they're probably need to develop. I would say is in the productive skills in writing and speaking from my experience of having observed the teachers. Again, I think the Speaking possibly is an area where maybe if they don't have the near kind of native fluency they're not familiar with intonation and stress and so on so a lot that comes across in the class. And so that's important in terms of the writing. Also. That typically is an issue with a lot of students, and even after they actually graduated from the programme, there may still not be the same level. They're quite level to effectively teach the writing process.*

Teacher S said that listening is one of the most challenging skills for them to teach as they have to know things like pair work and group work to make their students interact. For him, if these new graduates fail to make students interact, they will have a problem teaching all the skills, not just listening. He said:

> *What I mean listening is probably one of the hardest skills to teach anyway. I think that it's not necessarily just about a skill I think you know just understanding. You know how to use things like pair work and group work to get strict teacher students interacting. So if they don't have students interacting then I think that they're going to have a problem with all of the skills.*

11.   *Do you have any other comments?*

Teacher M remarked that, because of the Saudi vision 2030, the government needed to hire more Saudis to give them a chance to teach. For him, the problem was that all jobs and employers require experience, but these new graduates do not have this kind of experience. But, they (fresh graduates) can come as volunteers at the beginning of a semester, and if they showed their skills and impressed the employers, they could be hired full time. He said:

> *No, I think definitely the way the country is going in terms of the Vision 2030 I would just like to add that maybe I think it's important they need to definitely hire more Saudis I*

think and bring them on board and different issues. I think the thing is they need to have an opportunity into like get their foot in the door somehow, and it is the dilemma that if they don't have experience and how do they get the first position and the most employers require some kind of experience. So these were some kind of middle ground where students newly qualified graduates can come in and maybe they just volunteer for a semester or something just to you know unpaid even just to showcase their skills, and if they impress then, they should be given an opportunity to actually be hired full time.

Teacher S insisted that these new graduates needed some sort of teaching methodology to be able to teach. He also thought that these candidates may need to do a course like a CELTA that would help advance their teaching skills. He said:

Yeah I think that like you know to be able to teach a skill you need to you need to have knowledge of teaching methodology. Something that is gonna help students interact with each other and if they don't interact then. It's gonna be very hard on their own. So. It's gonna be very difficult for them. To get youngsters to learn a language, I think like you said earlier Perhaps doing a course, for example, a CELTA which is quite advanced you know that would help improve their teaching.

5.5.2   Interview with two professors teaching final year students

5.5.2.1 Introduction

Two separate interviews were conducted with two experienced professors working for the English Language and Translation Department (DLT). These two professors have been working for Saudi Universities for a long time. Now, they teach year-four students (the participants of this study) different courses. For instance, Professor M. F. A.'s major was translation studies and text linguistics. So, his field has to do with linguistics and translation. He received his PhD 10 years ago. He has been working in the field of linguistics, literature, and translation in different Saudi universities for more than ten years at the time of the study. He had also worked as an EFL instructor in one of the Saudi Universities before he got his PhD. At the time of this study (during semester two), he was teaching the only 'Second Language Acquisition' course to year-four students. Professor M. F. A. will be referred to as Professor A.

On the other hand, Professor N. A. A. taught phonetics and phonology in the English Language and Translation Department (DLT) where this study was conducted. He had been working for the DLT for more than six years. He worked for K. A. university in Saudi Arabia before he worked for this university. He taught both male and female students - females through video conferencing, not face-to-face. He taught other courses like contrastive analysis, comparative linguistics and discourse analysis. Professor N. A. A. will be referred to as Professor N. Each interview consisted of ten questions (see Appendix 9.7)

5.5.2.2 Interviews results

1. *You have taught hundreds of year-four Saudi students so far. Have you ever thought of their language ability?*

Both professors said that they had already taught hundreds of year-four students. They had vast experience teaching at different Saudi Universities as well as teaching different levels and courses. For instance, Professor A said that he taught different levels and both undergraduate and postgraduate students at two famous Universities in Saudi Arabia, including this University (T. University). He has been working as an assistant professor since 2009.

> *Yes Exactly. Including by the way different different levels whether undergrad undergraduates like here at T. University or even postgraduate students at K. A. University because I worked there as an assistant professor starting from 2009. So 2009 now we're 2019.*

Professor N said that, in his view, year-four students' language ability was moderate, and that there is a difference between males and females. He says that females are more willing to study, more prepared, more committed and devoted than male students. He confirmed that he taught different courses, including listening, speaking, reading and writing. Moreover, he taught more focused courses like second language acquisition, linguistics, phonetics and phonology. Furthermore, he

says that he had experience in teaching linguistic courses at Saudi Universities and experience in dealing with Saudi students with their different levels. He said:

> *Yes, their language ability is you can say it is moderate, and there is a difference between the males and females; usually, females are more, or you know willing to study more prepared committed devoted. Yes, of course. I taught different skill courses, including, for instance, listening speaking reading and writing. Then later I turned it to rather specialised courses including second language acquisition linguistics even phonetics and phonology. And of course, it was some kind of you know. Different linguistic strong linguistic background about the linguistic courses taught at the Saudi Universities and the levels of the students themselves. I mean I had some kind of experience whether in the courses or even in understanding the students the Saudi students themselves.*

2. ***I mean when they speak, do they speak English fluently and accurately?***

Professor A thought that these students tended to imitate native speakers when they speak or read. They didn't know how to employ the kind of information that would lead to perfect imitation because they sometimes lacked sufficient knowledge or the practice of what he called a 'problem of information processing'. He maintained that these students already knew the grammatical rules, for example, but they did not know how to apply them, which meant they have the theoretical part, but they don't yet know how to put it into practice. He said:

> *Ah, this is a very good question. I usually recognize or observe a problem with the students here. Which is the idea of imitation or imitating they usually have wide and great aspiration to read like native speakers or to speak fluently like native speakers but they don't know how to do it…..they don't know how to employ that the grammatical rules or the rules they already have in their minds they don't know how to do to function.*

He also asserted that these student teachers (year-four students) tended to memorise words without knowing how to use them and without connecting them to their context. He believed that these students needed more training, inside the University and outside of it and how to practice what they learn. He believed that they needed to listen to or to watch movies to see these words or grammar rules used in real contexts. Furthermore, he reasoned that the professors at the English Language and Translation Department should focus on the actual teaching that employs real-life situations rather than on theoretical ones that depend on theories. He likewise suggested teaching

these students the slang conversations spoken in everyday life situations in America and England.
He said:

> *. ..... Sometimes students just memorize or keep words without understanding how to use them. And the I think they need more training here in the whether in the university or even in general. Why. Because they like to memorize words without relating them to their contexts of situations I think they need they need you know more training here to do how by listening or watching different videos which reflect a different situations not just words or theoretical information. ....teachers here should focus on the features used in real life rather than a rather than theoretical information and instead of. ...... we can cope with you know what's going on in the world let me say this in Arabic.*

He (Professor A) spoke in Arabic. He said that this meant that we, as teachers, had to cope with what's going on around us so as to make students feel that they could speak English if we taught them some everyday conversations. This didn't mean that everything should be merely academic, and this is a factor that should be referred to in the study. In sum, he suggested teaching these students everyday language and situations through which they could acquire native-like proficiency. He suggested adding this component to the recommendations section of this study. On the other hand, Professor N did not think that these students could speak English fluently and accurately like native speakers. He clarified his stance by saying that they were trying their best to speak fluently and accurately, and they were improving towards the end of the programme (year four). In general, their level during the final year is better than their levels before. He said:

> *No, usually it's not. It's not fluent, and it's not accurate a hundred per cent, but they're trying they're trying you know to the best of their ability. And beyond the call of duty they are improving particularly in the final you know grade. Usually, they are much better than the lower levels.*

1. When they write, do they write cohesive and coherent pieces of writing?

Both professors agreed that these year-four students could not write fully cohesive and coherent pieces of writing. They attributed this inability to write a good piece of writing to some valid reasons. For example, Professor A reflected that year-four students could write cohesive and coherent pieces of writing to some extent, but that they still needed more writing and grammar

courses. He thought that these students' level of writing was better than their level in speaking. He believed that what these students study - in writing and grammar - is acceptable, but it is not enough. Finally, he recommended that these would-be teachers should be given more writing and grammar courses because there is a shortage of such courses as he understands. He said:

> *To some extent, yes. I usually think that what is written is better than what is being said here in Universities. So once you give the students a space of time to write yes, they can. I think they can write cohesive and coherent stretches of words and passages but of course, Dr. Ahmed, we cannot ignore the idea that the courses of Grammar here are not a lot. I think we need more courses. What is going on now is okay is good but I think they need more courses like you know write more writing courses more grammar courses. So I think there is some kind of shortage. Frankly speaking.*

Professor N noted that these students' writing had a lot of coherence and cohesion mistakes. For example, their pieces of writing contained a lot of grammar mistakes and a lot of inappropriateness. However, a few students could write good pieces of writing free of such grammar mistakes. He said:

> *You find a lot of errors in their writing particularly when it comes to the idea of cohesion and coherence. You can find a lot of mistakes lot of Grammar a lot of inappropriateness. So usually there are a lot of errors and mistakes but this is just only the general kind of information. However, you find some students who really write well with good you know Grammar and with error-free kind of writing.*

2. ***When they read, do you think they have the right reading skills that enable them to deal with a variety of texts?***

Professor A bluntly rejected the notion that year-four students can read a variety of texts. He said that, when it comes to reading different texts like religious, social and literary ones, these students wouldn't be able to deal with such texts as they are only used to reading some specific texts like novels and stories. He proposed that these students should be allowed to join reading clubs, and to visit reading festivals or events. Similarly, these student teachers could be invited to reading or viewing sessions where they can watch a movie or a documentary on different topics like religion,

tourism, and history. This way, as he anticipates, these students would be exposed to various texts and contexts that would help boost their reading skills. He said:

> *No. A variety of texts means that we will talk about so many types of texts including for instance religious texts social texts supporting texts literary texts and so on. And sometimes we know we don't find much time to read these different texts we usually focus on you know reading novels stories such academic texts but my advice for you know researchers and for students etc……… So, we can have extra you know reading sessions or supervised events so that we can expose students to two or more readings or more or even talking to speaking. So, I think still courses are not enough in such and such. Yes, in such an aspect so I'm not fully satisfied with the reading.*

Likewise, Professor N declared that these students were slow and inarticulate in reading. He maintained that it took them a long time to read, understand and to analyse a text. They also miss the basics of reading skills. He suggested that more focus should be put on teaching these students the necessary reading skills like skimming, scanning and the other relevant reading skills. He said:

> I think reading is very instrumental in in here as a second language learning. However, students are really slow in reading. They are not you know flow in reading, so they take a lot of time to read and to comprehend and to understand exactly the basic tenets of reading abilities. So usually we should have more kind of focus on reading more kind of focus on reading skills particularly skimming scanning and other kind of skills.

3. *What about their listening skill? Can they comprehend different accents and dialects?*

Professor A thought that year-four students were lucky because they were exposed to many accents from around the world. He saw 'listening' as an advantage for these students, at the English and Translation Department, because they had teachers from all over the world. They had teachers from England, America, Egypt and Saudi Arabia etc. Thus, each of these staff members had his own accent, dialect and even idiolect, which was a bonus for the students who were exposed to and practice these accents, dialects and idiolects. He said:

> *I think this is you know that the best thing here. Since we have different staff members, we usually have you know staff members from England from America from Egypt or from Saudi Arabia. And of course, we have all learned that each person has his own idiolect. We have dialect we have idiolect we have varieties so really we have varieties here, and I think that students can benefit well from being exposed to different staff members here.*

So, I think they have no problem with listening. I think the problem is more with Speaking and even writing.

In contrast, Professor N believed that if these students were weak at speaking, then they would be ineffective at listening as listening and speaking are related. He claimed that they needed more exposure to listening materials so that they could improve their speaking skill. He said:

As you know they're you know listening and speaking usually they go hand-in-hand together, so they are when they are weak in speaking it means that their listening also is weak. So maybe they need more exposure to listening in order to improve their Speaking.

3. ***What about their teaching ability? Do you think they are prepared to teach English as a foreign language after they graduate? Why? Why not?***

Professor A mentioned a teaching project at Albaha University, where he used to work as a language instructor. In that project, students had to go to schools to train for teaching for a whole semester. That practical training was supervised and observed by particular staff members. He liked the idea of that training project to the extent that he suggested applying it in this Department and this University. He also suggested that year-four students should train at the ELC of this university where English is taught as a foreign language. He suggested that year-four students could be given part of the lectures at the ELC. They could be supervised, observed and guided by the ELC staff members. By the end of the discussion, he confirmed that he believed that these students could teach English after their graduation. He said:

I remember when I was working as a language instructor at Albaha University. …. there was what is called a teaching project. It was like you know half a year where the student was obliged to go to a school to train or to have practical training and supervised by certain staff members. I'm not sure whether this is applied here or not but I think this was a very good idea and of course you have here the ELC centres. I think also why not why don't bring students to have a practical training to give part of the lectures to the students themselves. Especially senior students those who are about to graduate from the college to practice this and to be supervised by you by the staff members there,……but I say if they have more training of course they'll be better but generally speaking, Yes, I think yes they are able to work.

Professor N came up with a new suggestion that these students (year-four students) should only teach lower levels rather than higher levels. He pointed out that they needed in-service as well as post-service training so that they could improve their teaching ability as he said: "I think yes they will be able to teach particularly lower levels. However, maybe they need some kind of in-service and post-service training to improve their teaching skills."

4. ***Do you think they will be able to teach the four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking)?***

Professor A insisted that these students needed experience and training before they started teaching. He also contended that they needed official and supervised educational training for a year or half a year because they could not begin teaching once they had graduated as they are still not ready for teaching. He maintained that even though most of these students are good at the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), this does not mean they can teach them (the four skills). He said:

> *Of course they will still you know need some kind of experience ……. I think they will be in need of training and somehow I don't support you know the idea that just as a student get out of or graduate from a University to start working directly there should be some kind of training supervised training. Even if you know it is official in somehow it's like you know a year a half year of supervised training we can even call it this way supervised training or supervised educational training before starting the real work but B because there is a difference between you know a student having the four abilities and the student teaching the four abilities. So yes they know how to speak English how to write to listen and even they can try to teach students but to be more safe to be more organized I think the idea of training is very important.*

Likewise, Professor N maintained that these students could start teaching on condition that they got further any kind of training that would enable them to get to know how to handle these skills and how to teach them appropriately. He said: "I think they will be able to do that. But as I told you that they need some kind of training in order to know how to deal with these kinds of skills and how to teach them properly."

5. ***Which skill are they good at?***

Professor A believed that these students were better at listening than speaking, and at reading rather than writing, which means that they are good at the receptive skills rather than the productive skills. He also contended that these student teachers were good at receptive skills, but they were weak when it came to productive skills. He said:

> *I think usually they are good at listening more than Speaking and reading more than writing. I can divide it this way they are good they are. They are better in listening than speaking and reading than writing and I think you know this has this has to do with. Yes, receptive skills and productive skills and I think you know most people are this way. They usually receive well but if they find problems with giving out what they have.*

On the other hand, Professor N reasoned that these students were good at speaking, but they were weak at reading and writing. He confirmed that they were good at productive skills, but they were weak at the receptive ones. He said:

> *I would say. maybe speaking to some extent that they are weak in reading and writing or if I put it in other words I can't say that they are good in the receptive kind of skills, but in the productive kind of skills maybe they need some kind of some more exposure.*

6.   Which skill are they weak or poor at?

Professor A answered this question in his response to question 5. Similarly, Professor N responded to this question in his reply to question 5.

7.   Have you ever observed any of these students teaching? What did you notice in general?

Professor A asserted that he was teaching these students the only 'Second Language Acquisition' course. This course had allowed him to train these students to speak and how to imitate their teachers. Many a time, he gave them a chance to explain some parts of the lesson. He also taught them that language was not restricted to using dictionaries, but instead, it is acquired through different sources, contexts and abilities. He believed that the 'Second Language Acquisition' course is crucial, yet it is not enough as these students need more practical courses. He said:

> *I rarely found this opportunity except for language second language acquisition, so I'm very happy. Frankly speaking with your interview and with this and with teaching this this course second language acquisition has really given me a chance to train my students*

to give them a chance to speak to imitate you know even teachers. I many times I have given them the opportunity to explain certain points. For example, I ask them to prove to me and to their colleagues that language is not only confined to dictionaries. Prove that in order to understand language we need extra things extra abilities. That's why they talked about the contexts of situations the pragmatic aspect of language and so on. So, some courses are very important like Second language acquisition, and what we have been mentioning now is we need more courses I think practical courses.

Professor N confirmed that he only saw them giving their assigned presentations during classes. During these presentations, these students sometimes taught using PowerPoint. He maintained that some of these students (about 10%) are exceptional at teaching. This 10 per cent of the students are instinctively good teachers as they are devoted and committed. He said:

Well just only in their presentation when they do a presentation in class. and they use PowerPoints etcetera. So, some of them are really remarkable, but they are very few. I notice that some of them you could say 10 per cent they have the ability of teaching. I mean they are you know good at teaching by nature and they are you know very much committed and devoted to teach. But that's only the percentage of to 10 10 per cent.

8. *Do you think their programme prepared them well to teach English?*

Professor A didn't think that their programme has prepared them well to teach English. However, he believed that the programme has prepared them to be speakers of English. Again, he insisted that they need more practical courses which should be added to their plan. He maintained that these students have not been exposed to enough practical courses - they were only taught and exposed to theoretical material. He said:

I can't say that the programme is OK. The programme is really very efficient is very good, but it's. It's good for four of the students to have to have information to have you know to have the required skills to be to be a speaker or English-speaking person. But. I have you know some pedagogical or didactic you know reservations. I think that they need more more courses should be added to the plan. I think that that's my personal viewpoint. We need some courses more courses. Sometimes I feel that the students haven't been exposed enough to practical courses rather than theoretical ones.

Professor N agreed with Professor A that this programme had not prepared these students to teach as it was only dedicated to literature, linguistics and translation courses. He suggested that if they

needed to learn how to teach, they had to join the Faculty of Education so that they could learn

how to teach via in-service and post-service training courses provided by these colleges. He said:

> *No. Because this programme is just only for either literature or linguistics or translation. It's meant for teaching particularly. Maybe they need to go and join the Faculty of Education in order to prepare themselves for in-service and post-service training.*

9. ***Do you think they need any further training or study like doing a CELTA or DELTA to be able to teach English well? Why? Why not?***

Professor A still insisted on the practical elements being added to the English Language

Programme. He wondered why the people in charge did not provide students with CELTA or

DELTA programmes or their equivalent. He believed that these programmes (CELTA or DELTA)

would compensate for what the students missed throughout their four-year programme. He also

posed that orientation or explanatory sessions should be held to teach and enlighten these students

about such certifications. Besides, he maintained that year-four students could be guided and

referred to the ELC where real EFL professionals could guide and help them with professional

information relating to the EFL field or context. Finally, he asserted that such certification

programmes would compensate for the dire shortage of the missing practical element in the

English Language Programme. He said:

> *I've been just talking about you know the need for something practical. So why not. The responsible here provide students with CELTA or DELTA programmes they can indulge the students in somehow so that they can you know compensated for what they have missed during that the plan and the academic plan we cannot you know turn a blind eye to the need for more practicum courses so we can see that Delta or CELTA you know certificates it could be a good way. ..... you'll provide you know like orientation courses or even explanatory courses to know what they are some students now really ask about such advanced programmes and I hope you know we can direct them easily to the ELC in case they talk about more such programmes. ..... and I think that those are the programmes that can compensate for the shortage in that training here.*

Professor N agreed that year-four students needed further studies in the field of EFL teaching

because they had not studied any relevant courses that teach them on how to teach. He again

repeated what he had said before that all that they study in this programme was theoretical stuff

that has nothing to do with the practical field of English teaching pedagogy or methodology. He said:

> *Exactly Because they don't study any kind any courses about curriculum planning or course design or methodology of teaching, we didn't have any kind of courses of that sort. All the courses are theoretical like for example phonetics phonology grammar morphology syntax semantics, or they are literature kind of nature or translation. We have these three domains right. So, nothing about English pedagogy or English methodology.*

10. ***If you were a recruiter, would you hire these students after they graduate? Why? Why not?***

Professor A was sure that he would hire these students as EFL teachers after they graduated. He says he is proud of some of his students and their performance to the extent that he would hire them as teachers because they are fluent in English. He already mentioned some names who were really competent language users because of the excellent courses introduced in the English Language Programme and their motivation that plays a part in their capability. He believed that motivation should be given attention when designing such programmes as all attention is given to the programme's components and details rather than to the motivational side. Also, he suggested that they (as educators) should connect students to their work environments so that they could be inspired to try hard to improve and adapt. He confirmed that he would unquestionably hire these students after they graduated. He said:

> *I can mention some students in names and some students like my student (O) for instance or even (M). I really know some students in names who are very fluent and I'm very proud of their performances and inside of the classroom and I think this could be the result of both the good courses introduced to them and their motivation. I think motivation should has a source should have a very important place in somehow. …….. They should know about the importance of understanding English language and how to employ it in their future lives and future careers. So yes, I can say that I you know I feel thoroughly satisfied to employ some of my students to work.*

Contrarywise, Professor N would hire year-four students after they graduated on the condition that they are trained as he says: "Well if they have further training, yes."

11. ***Do you have any other comments?***

Professor A contended that language is a human phenomenon that needs more research done and more researchers to do that research and teach people how to teach. He proposed that more focus should be put on the teachers who teach the students as well because they (as educators) focus only on the students and they neglect their teachers who are supposed to be more educated, and better trained so that they could teach their students adequately.

> *Yes. I can now say at the end of the day that language is a phenomena is a human phenomena which really needs more researchers and more study and the ones we know how to teach language. In modern ways how to use that the language of our age. That is the technological aspects and the language tools we can have better production, or we can have a better outcome whether on the part of the students or even on the part of teachers themselves…. You know much more advanced results whether from teachers themselves and from the students. So my final advice Dr Ahmed or my final comment is we should not only focus on the students. We should focus on the teachers who teach the students how to acquire language.*

Professor N only wished the researcher success as he said: "Well, I wish you all the best and every success." He did not add any further comments.

5.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the findings of this study. For instance, in the first section of this chapter the questionnaire the student participants' perceptions of preparedness to teach English as a foreign language after graduation were reported on. The questionnaire comprised of four sections: A, B, C, and D. Section A gave an account of student teachers' biographical details. Section B asked those would-be teachers to state their views about how they felt about teaching specific aspects of English. Section C required those prospective teachers to express how they felt about teaching general aspects of English as a foreign language. Section D had open-ended questions that student teachers had to answer in writing.

In the second section of this chapter, the TKT - taken by year-four students - was used to assess the student participants' (would-be teachers) language ability and their teaching ability, meaning to evaluate their actual preparedness to teach English after graduation. The findings of the TKT

data were analysed using the SPSS application. Participants' results were computed using descriptive statistics. For example, the mean scores, the standard deviation, the main classes were calculated. A correlation test was also used to compare student teachers' GBA percentages and TKT scores. By using the scatter plot technique, a moderate positive correlation was found to exist between these two variables. This correlation was graphically illustrated where the R's value was **0.476,** meaning that there was a moderate positive correlation. This correlation also indicated that if the students' GPAs go high, their TKT scores go high (and vice versa).

The third section of this chapter – the focus group discussions – reported on those focus groups discussions' findings. It gave details about how student teachers (main participants of the study) saw their TKT test scores and how they perceived their preparedness to teach English after their graduation.

The fourth section of this chapter – the interviews with two EFL teachers (from the ELC) and two professors (from the DLT) – reported on those interviews' findings. Those interviews were conducted separately, meaning that the researcher interviewed the teacher participants one by one. The interviews' main objective was to seek the interviewees' views about the preparedness of year-four students and novice teachers to teach English.

In the next chapter - the Discussion Chapter - this study's most relevant findings derived from the questionnaire, the TKT, the focus group discussions and the interviews will be analysed critically, interpreted, and made ready for application. It (the forthcoming chapter) will provide the answers to the research questions as stipulated in the Introduction Chapter. In some sections, the coding analysis will be used as a technique to interpret and analyse the findings critically. This coding technique will be used to find the common themes pertaining to the commonalities, differences

and relationships among the student participants' and teacher participants' views as they pertain to year-four students' preparedness to teach English as a foreign language after graduation.

Chapter Six Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the data derived from the questionnaire, the TKT, the focus group discussions and the interviews. It critically analyses the most relevant findings disclosed in the findings chapter. In order to reach an accurate and better understanding of the final-year student teachers' perceptions of preparedness and their actual preparedness to teach English after their graduation, triangulation was used to synthesize data from multiple sources and perspectives. For example, in order to understand these student teachers' actual preparedness to teach English, the TKT and the interviews (with the two professors and the two experienced EFL teachers) were employed in this study. These two data collection techniques – the TKT and the interviews – gave a precise picture of these student teachers' actual preparedness to teach English after their graduation. Besides, these two data collection techniques effectively answered the main research question of this study: *Are final-year Saudi Arabian student teachers (English Major) prepared to teach EFL after graduation? Why or why not? The* two research sub-questions were as follows: *Does the teacher programme at this University produce competent teachers of English as a foreign language? Why, or why not?* and *What are the perceptions of EFL teachers regarding the preparedness of graduate students to teach English? Why do they have these perceptions?*

On the other hand, the questionnaire and the focus group discussions gave an exact picture of the student teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach English after graduation. Additionally, these two techniques answered the third research sub-question: *How do final-year student teachers feel about their preparedness to teach EFL? Why do they have these perceptions?* Data obtained from questionnaire, the focus discussion groups, and the interviews are analysed under the relevant themes that emanated from these data collection techniques. Besides, these findings and conclusions need to be assembled precisely so that all stakeholders can evaluate and understand

them through their relevant experience (of the English Language programme). Consequently, these pertinent findings are critically analysed hereafter, and conclusions are drawn through synthesised procedures to give credibility to this study's findings, as well as to reinforce the scientific approach of enquiry employed in this study, which assesses student teachers' actual preparedness and their perceptions of preparedness to teach English at an English Language and Translation Department of a Saudi Arabian University. Thus, by addressing this study's research questions, previous and relevant research is also integrated into the argument in order to acknowledge and build on the contributions of earlier scholars in the field and in the context of English language teaching in Saudi Arabia.

In this study, coding was used as an essential procedure for carrying out a thorough thematic analysis of the focus group discussions and interviews. Coding helps to attain all the three aims of thematic analysis: examining commonality, examining differences and examining relationships. Via the use of coding, the recurring themes that emerged from the findings were highlighted by using different colours on a word document. The created codes were also backed by the notes made alongside the margin of the focus groups' and interviews' transcripts on the same word documents. Then, initial groupings were created based on reading the transcripts, writing codes alongside the transcripts, and looking for commonalities, differences and relationships. Then, multiple data collection techniques were used to organize the data coherently. Throughout the analysis of the data, the following recurring themes emerged. These recurring themes or commonalities are discussed hereunder the two main categories titled:

- **'Year-four English Major student teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach English and the reasons behind such perceptions'**; and

- **'Year-four English Major student teachers' actual preparedness to teach English.'**

These two main categories include sub-categories as explained below.

6.2 Year-four English Major student teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach English and the reasons behind such perceptions

Despite the overall teaching deficiencies in the EFL context in Saudi Arabia, the overall poor learner performance, and the research that shows that many current teachers have weak subject knowledge and pedagogical skills (Deacon, 2016), most student teachers in this study tend to have "positive perceptions of their subject and pedagogical competences, feeling highly confident of their classroom abilities" (Deacon, 2016: p. 18). The following sections will present student teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach English after graduation, the reasons for their perceptions and the effectiveness of their English language programme, as drawn from the questionnaire and from the focus group discussions. Their (final-year student teachers') perceptions are also discussed in the light of their TKT results and the four interviewees' perceptions concerning these would-be teachers' preparedness to teach English.

6.2.1 Year-four student teachers' perceptions of teaching Specific Aspects of English

These specific aspects of teaching include grammar, reading comprehension, listening, writing paragraphs and short essays, speaking and vocabulary.

6.2.1.1 Perceptions of preparedness to teach grammar

In this study, perceptions of preparedness to teach grammar proved to be a recurring theme. Although student teachers showed general perceptions of preparedness to teach grammar in the closed questions in Section B of the questionnaire, this may not be an accurate reflection because their written replies in Section D (Open-ended Questions) showed their true mastery or lack of mastery of the grammar rules and its mechanics. Also, although 52 per cent of the student teachers

said they are well prepared (40%) and very well prepared (12%) to teach Grammar in Section B (Closed questions) of the questionnaire, 16 per cent of these student teachers chose grammar as one of the subjects they are most prepared to teach in Section D, Open-ended Questions. This perceived inconsistency could be ascribed to student teachers' inclination – in the beginning - to choose the most appropriate answer in order to form (as would-be teachers) a positive impression because the closed question section basically asked them to tick the appropriate option regarding their preparedness to teach grammar. However, the open questions may have prompted their critical reflection, and they unconsciously wrote what they really thought about their real perceptions of preparedness to teach grammar. Thus, their actual grammatical ability was revealed in what they wrote (in the open-ended section) and what they said (during the focus group discussions) as they were encouraged to write and voice their real perceptions of preparedness and to provide reasons for their perceptions. The question is: if most of these student teachers showed positive perceptions of readiness to teach grammar, can they really teach it while most of them still make trivial grammar errors (examples of their writing were shown in the questionnaire) and if they cannot write a grammatically correct sentence? Also, can they teach grammar or speaking while most of them cannot speak correctly (examples of their spoken English were shown in the focus group discussions)?

It can be noticed - from the above - that although student teachers have some perceptions of preparedness (that were shaped by various factors) to teach grammar, most of them still lack the appropriate linguistic competence that enables them to teach grammar. The reasons behind their perceptions of preparedness may stem from the perception that they find it easy to teach because they could learn it easily from their teachers or their teachers were role models when it came to teaching grammar. Having such perceptions of preparedness to teach grammar does not mean that they can actually teach it. The following are some of the student teachers' perceptions of

preparedness to teach grammar and what the four interviewees (two of their professors and two EFL expert teachers) thought about their actual preparedness:

In answer to the question: *What or who influenced this feeling of preparedness in this aspect? Briefly explain. (E.g., A course? A teacher/lecturer/tutor?),* one student said (in the questionnaire) that grammar is one of the courses that influenced his feeling of preparedness to teach English as he said: "*I have this feeling because I study this course grammer with good teachers and they are the best.*" Another student attributed his preparedness to teach grammar to the teacher who taught him grammar as he said: "*In writing Pro. Y. F was great teacher I benefited a lot from. Pro. F. M is a great teacher at grammar.*" Also, Student 2 (in the questionnaire) wrote*: "The most effective i encountered during my B.A. are grammar, writing, novels and sociolingustics"* He considered grammar as one of the most effective courses that shaped his perceptions of preparedness to teach English. Also, Student 4 (in the questionnaire) considers grammar the most effective subject as it helps him comprehend the English Language well as he says: "*I think that the most effective subject is the grammar. Because, if helps you to understand the language in the best way possepole.*" Student 6 also considers grammar as one of the most effective courses that influenced his perceptions of preparedness. Student 12 affirms that grammar and phonetics are the most effective courses that affected his preparedness to teach English. He attributes his perceptions of preparedness to teach these courses to his amazing teachers Dr N. S. and Dr Y. F. He also claims he could understand these courses because of the teachers' enabling attitudes and the useful information these courses contained. However, Student 16 sees grammar as the least effective course. Student 2 FG1 (in the focus group discussion) found a link between what he studied in the four-year programme, especially Grammar and Phonology, and what he saw in the TKT as he says: "*But thinking about it. You remember at least something about. Yes, especially phonetics. (Grammar and phonology).*" In his answer to: *What about your teaching skills? Do you think the*

test results reflect your skills of teaching or do you need further studies like doing an M.A., or a diploma or at least a certificate in teaching English as a Foreign Language? Student 1 FG1 (*in the focus group discussions*) maintains that he would need further studies if he was going to teach exhaustive subjects because a B.A. in English Language and Translation is not a sufficient qualification to start teaching. He says that he would need further studies if he were going to teach linguistics and language acquisition courses, but he will not need any further studies if he is going to teach grammar. Student 2 FG1 conversely says grammar helped him to be able to teach as he is interested in it, and his teacher Dr Y. F helped him to be good at grammar. He says that Dr Y.F is an excellent teacher. That is why he is into grammar, and he can teach it because his teacher made him love grammar. On the other hand, Teacher S (through the interview) claimed that these new graduates are good at teaching grammar because they had the same experience of being taught in the same way (grammar-translation method) when they were learners. This means they learnt how to teach grammar from their teachers, who tended to use the grammar-translation approach in their teaching.

In conclusion, although most student teachers have positive perceptions of preparedness to teach grammar, and they have studied three grammar courses (ENGL 111 Introduction to Grammar, ENGL 112 Grammar in Use and ENGL 213 Advanced Grammar R), they still need more grammar courses to enhance their linguistic competence. Not only haven't these student teachers studied any course on how to teach grammar, but they have not observed any experienced EFL teachers teaching grammar except for their teachers. Besides, they have not taught any grammar components as well, meaning that most of them are not fully prepared linguistically and pedagogically to start teaching. This is consistent with this study's hypothesis, suggesting that final-year student teachers are not linguistically and pedagogically prepared to teach English after graduation. This also means that their English language programme and the whole education

system in Saudi Arabia are not preparing EFL graduates with English and teaching competence at an acceptable standard for global communication.

6.2.1.2 Perceptions of preparedness to teach reading comprehension

In Section B of the questionnaire, although 16 per cent of the student teachers said they are not prepared at all to teach reading comprehension, 8 per cent said they are very well prepared. While 32 per cent said they are very prepared, the rest (44%) said they are somewhat prepared to teach reading comprehension. However, when these student teachers were asked *What aspect of English teaching (in Section D of the questionnaire) they felt they were most prepared for,* only 8 per cent said they are most prepared to teach reading comprehension. Also, when they were asked *What aspect of English teaching (in Section D of the questionnaire) they felt they were least prepared for,* only one student (4%) said that he is least prepared for teaching comprehension. This kind of perceived discrepancy may be accounted for as they are still experiencing the phase of critical reflection (Phase one of Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory). Besides, they may be undergoing a phase of assessing their own beliefs, experiences and perceptions (Phase 2) in the presence of other points of view and perspectives that try to question their real preparedness to start teaching English after graduation. Moreover, changing their answers may be perceived as an inconsistency because the student teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach reading comprehension appeared to have been challenged and questioned (Self-examination phase) by repeating the same questions in other formats. This challenge may have led to a kind of transformation in their beliefs and perceptions due to reflecting on (Critical assessment phase) their existing preparedness when they were given another chance to write about their real preparedness.

When the student teachers were asked what or who influenced their feeling of being most prepared to teach some specific aspects of English (questionnaire, Section D item 2.2), five of

them (25%) said that they were influenced by the courses they studied, like reading, short stories, and grammar. Also, some of these students attributed their preparedness to teach such aspects to their love for their teachers who taught them such courses.

However, Student 3 F.G. 1 considers reading as one of the means that would improve their English as he addresses the researcher and his colleagues. When they were asked if they could read various complex texts using the reading skills like previewing a text, skimming, and scanning, student teachers confirmed they could read various texts. However, some of them said they were still weak at reading, and they were trying to improve; and others were still struggling with the reading skills like previewing a text, skimming and scanning. It was also noticeable that all of the student teachers only talked about scanning, but no one mentioned the other two skills (previewing a text and skimming). Although Student 1 FG1 felt happy when he read and applied the reading skills and techniques, he confessed that he was still weak at reading, but he was trying to improve. It seemed that Student FG1 had started to reflect on (Phase 2) his perceptions of preparedness, and he had recognised that he was discontent (Phase 11) with his level of reading, and he was trying to explore other options and to take action (phase 12) to improve his reading ability, meaning that he had started the process of transformation. Likewise, Student 2 FG1 seemed to have a problem with reading as he thought that reading was boring, and he is weak at it. It also appeared that he had a problem with scanning. Student 2 FG1's weakness may be a reflection of his low score (36/80) in the TKT. He may have also critically reflected on his actual level of English and his preparation to teach it. So, he started to change his existing perceptions of preparedness to teach English, meaning that he was going through some of Mezirow's transformative learning phases.

When they were asked, "*Do you think that you are prepared to teach these language aspects (Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening) at least the same way you learnt them? Why? Why*

not?", student teachers gave varying answers. Student 1 FG1, for example, stated that teaching any of those skills depended on the course's level. However, he did not believe his B.A. was a sufficient qualification for him to teach these skills. He thought that he had to have a PhD to be able to teach such skills. It is clear that there is a kind of transformation in Student 1 FG1's way of thinking, and he has already started to think of his preparation as lacking the real skills to begin teaching. Although his English seems to be satisfactory and he has a good mastery of speaking and listening, he still thinks that a B.A. in English is not a sufficient qualification for him to start teaching. Consequently, he is thinking of doing a PhD. It also seems that this student-teacher (Student 1 FG1) has gone through most of Mezirow's phases of transformative learning. For example, he may have experienced a disorienting dilemma (first phase) when he was faced with other perspectives that opposed his views or beliefs. So, he started a sort of self-examination (of his preparedness to teach English) with mixed feelings of fear, anger, guilt or shame through a kind of critical assessment of his assumptions. As a result, he may have recognised that he still needs further studies and training. So, he is exploring options of actions towards his preparedness, and he is planning a course of a specific action, which is doing a PhD to be able to teach English. For him, obtaining a PhD will enable him to acquire the correct knowledge and skills (last phase) to teach English professionally. It is also noticed that Student 1 FG1 falls into Band 3 (with a score of 54/80 as shown in the table below) of the TKT exam as per his TKT results and a final GPA of 4.56 out of 5. This means that his theoretical teaching knowledge and skills, in addition to his final distinctive GPA (4.56/5), can enable him to start teaching after graduation. Nevertheless, he still thinks that his current preparation is not enough to begin teaching English.

Student No.	TKT Score out of 80	TKT Band	Final GPA out of 5	Notes
Student 1 FG1	54	Band 3	4.56	
Student 2 FG1	36	Band 2	3.72	

Student 3 FG1	27	Band 2	Was not found	
Student 1 FG2	63	Band 3	4.87	
Student 2 FG2	46	Band 3	3.58	
Student 3 FG2	58	Band 3	4.51	
Student 4 FG2	30	Band 2	3.23	He attended the focus group discussion, but he did not participate

Table 12: Student Teachers' TKT scores and their Bands compared to their final GPA scores

Nevertheless, Student 2 FG1 thought that the B.A. was sufficient qualification for him to teach the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) as he says, *"four skills and after you finish the University I think it's enough."* He is also sure that it is easy to teach these skills as he says, *"Yeah at least for foreign people. Like herein, Saudi Arabia they speak out of it. You will not find it hard to teach them."* This may be a false perception of preparedness to teach the four skills because this student teacher's TKT score does not reflect his preparedness to start teaching after graduation because his TKT score was 36/80, and his final GPA is 3.72 out of 5. It may also mean he is not an outstanding student teacher to have such misplaced confidence and perceptions of preparedness to begin teaching English right after graduation. Besides, from what he said during the focus group discussions, it can be noticed that his level of English would not be higher than A2. For instance, he made many mistakes in range, accuracy, fluency, interaction and coherence as per the qualitative aspects of spoken language use of the CEFR, 2020.

Similarly, Student 3 FG1 thinks that the B.A. is enough of a qualification for him to start teaching if he were prepared enough and knew the correct teaching techniques. This student-teacher may have been struggling with his own assumptions, and it may have been difficult for him to accept other points of view that question his existing beliefs and experiences. Also, looking at this student's TKT exam score (27/80) would tell part of the whole story about his actual preparedness

to teach English. Besides, looking at his language proficiency level when he speaks would complete the entire picture about his preparedness because he made many mistakes in range, accuracy, fluency, interaction and coherence as per the qualitative aspects of spoken language use of the CEFR, 2020.

Student 2 FG2 introduces an opposing point of view as he thinks they as students have different abilities. For him, he believes he will be good at teaching listening and speaking because he was influenced by his teacher Dr Y. who had a huge impact on him and taught him how to use his tongue to communicate faster. It is inferred that he is not prepared to teach reading and writing because he only mentioned that he could teach listening and speaking due to his teachers' influence. Also, he may be confident to teach some skills because of his good score (46/80) in the TKT that helped boost his perceptions of preparedness to start teaching after he graduates. However, his high perceptions of being prepared do not mean that he is really prepared to start teaching as he still has problems with his language proficiency.

In conclusion, although most student teachers have positive perceptions regarding the teaching of reading comprehension and they did study three reading courses: ENGL 113 Reading Strategies, ENGL 211 Extended Reading Strategies and ENGL 212 Advanced Reading, they still need more reading courses to enhance their reading skills. They also need a course to teach them how to teach reading. Besides, they need to observe experienced teachers teaching reading through shadowing their classes. Moreover, they need to practice teaching reading under expert tutors' supervision in real classrooms, where they can be given feedback about their teaching styles and how to improve.

6.2.1.3 Perceptions of preparedness to teach listening

44 per cent and 16 per cent of the student teachers said they are prepared and are very well prepared to teach listening, respectively. This implies that listening is the most specific English aspect that

student teachers perceive they can teach (as per their answers in Section B in the questionnaire). However, when asked what aspect of English teaching (in Section C) they felt they were most prepared to teach, four student teachers (16%) said they are most prepared to teach writing paragraphs and essays. Although 16 student teachers (40%) said (in section B) that they are very prepared to teach grammar and listening in Section B of the questionnaire, only four students (16%) (in section C) said that these two aspects are the easiest to teach.

It seems that student teachers' perceptions of teaching listening are changing from one question to another, which shows a kind of discrepancy and inconsistency. This changing of views may mean that student teachers may be going through some phases of Mezirow's transformative learning. For example, they may have started critically to assess their assumptions of preparedness to teach this skill. They may also have recognised that they are not satisfied with their preparedness, and they are in the process of considering and exploring options of actions to perfect teaching this skill. Consequently, they may have realised that they are not yet prepared to teach this skill, and they are going through the phase of considering their preparation and experiences of teaching this skill. This inconsistency in their views may divulge the unseen part – as represented in their English language programme – which reveals their English language programme's efficiency, what they study, and their real preparedness to start teaching after graduation. Ultimately, this may lead to the notion that there is a discrepancy between what they learn at their English language programme and what is expected from them when they graduate and become teachers (Deacon, 2012; Sayed, Badroodien, Salmon & McDonald, 2016).

S14 (in Section D Question 4 of the questionnaire) maintains that listening is the least useful subject for him because its teachers are ineffective, but S16 considers listening as one of the most practical courses. S18 sees listening as one of the most beneficial courses as his skills have been

improved through studying this course, and he can listen to native speakers. Student 3 FG1 (in the focus group discussions) sees listening as a tool for improvement. He suggests improving their English through watching movies and listening to music. Student 3 FG2 suggests using free apps - like games - to improve listening and speaking because a lecture for an hour is not enough to improve their English. Almost all the student teachers in the focus group discussion confirmed that they could listen to various accents and dialects because some of them had already been abroad to study English. In addition, they have been exposed to multiple accents as they have teachers from different countries. According to Professor N, these student teachers are lucky because they have teachers from other countries with different accents. Other student teachers are influenced by their teachers to the extent that they like the courses taught by these teachers, and they are ready to teach these courses. For example, Student 2 FG2 thinks he will be good at teaching listening and speaking because he was influenced by his teacher Dr Y.

Although some of these student teachers' listening competence can enable them to teach listening to EFL classes, they have not studied any courses on how to teach listening, they have not seen any experienced teachers teaching listening (except for their teachers), and they have not been given a chance to teach listening. This implies that these student teachers need more listening courses to enhance their linguistic competence, and they need a how-to-teach-listening course to improve their teaching competence. Besides, student teachers need to shadow EFL experienced teachers' classes to learn practically from their teaching methods.

6.2.1.4 Perceptions of preparedness to teach writing paragraphs and short essays

When student teachers were asked how they felt about teaching writing paragraphs and short essays (in Section B of the questionnaire), about 40 per cent said that they were well prepared and 32 per cent said they were very well prepared to teach writing paragraphs and short essays,

meaning that 72 per cent of the student teachers think they are prepared to teach writing paragraphs and short essays. On the other hand, 12 per cent said they are not well prepared, and another 12 per cent said they are somewhat prepared. Also, when these student teachers were asked what aspect of English teaching (Section D, Question 2) they felt they were most prepared for, five of them (20%) confirmed that they are most prepared to teach writing paragraphs and essays. Three of these five students attributed their preparedness to teach writing to their teachers, who influenced them to form such perceptions of preparedness to teach writing. Besides, when they were asked what aspect of English teaching they felt they were least prepared for (Section D, Question 3 in the questionnaire), 20 per cent said they were least prepared for teaching writing paragraphs and short stories. One student said write a lot. But S6 and S13 (Section D, Question 4) perceive writing as one of the most useful courses. Similarly, S7 perceived writing as the most effective course because of his teacher, Dr Y. F., who was a proficient professor. Also, S9 considered writing the most effective subject because of his teacher who not only helped him on how to write efficiently, but also showed him how to present what he wrote to the other students. In the focus group discussions, when the six student teachers were asked if they could write a coherent and cohesive piece of writing (Question 3), almost all the six participants confirmed that they could write a coherent and cohesive piece of writing, whether this was a paragraph or an essay. However, this perception of being able to write a cohesive and coherent paragraph or essay is not accurate as most of these student teachers made a lot of mistakes while writing and speaking, which means that their writing competence has not been developed professionally. Consequently, student teachers need more writing courses in addition to the three writing courses (ENGL 215 Short Essay Writing, ENGL 216, and Extended Essay Writing) they have already undertaken during the four-year programme. It is also noteworthy that not only do these student teachers need more writing courses to enhance their writing competency, but they also need courses on how to

teach the writing skill as well as a kind of practical training to observe experienced teachers teach writing and to teach writing under the supervision of expert teachers. The following are only three examples of what they wrote during the questionnaire. These examples represent the actual writing competency of most student teachers. For example, most of them cannot write a coherent and cohesive paragraph, contrary to what they claimed. Their writing challenges emerge as an obstacle for them to start teaching because they still make grammar, punctuation, capitalisation, spelling, cohesion, coherence mistakes and particularly vocabulary. So, it is a dubious claim that they can teach these skills without demonstrating mastery of these skills

Most of what student teachers wrote in answer to some of the questionnaire items (examples above) may fall in Level A2, which means that students at this level "can produce a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like 'and', 'but' and 'because' as shown in the figure below. Only a few student teachers can "produce straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within their field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence" (level B1). Two or three student teachers can "produce clear, detailed text on a variety of subjects related to their field of interest, synthesizing and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources" (Level B2). None of the student teachers falls into Levels C1 and C2; in fact, a few of them are still in Levels A1 and A2.

Overall written production

	Overall written production
C2	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, complex texts in an appropriate and effective style and a logical structure which helps the reader identify significant points.
C1	Can produce clear, well-structured texts of complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples, and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion. Can employ the structure and conventions of a variety of genres, varying the tone, style and register according to addressee, text type and theme.
B2	Can produce clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to their field of interest, synthesising and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources.
B1	Can produce straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within their field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence.
A2	Can produce a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like "and", "but" and "because".
A1	Can give information about matters of personal relevance (e.g. likes and dislikes, family, pets) using simple words/signs and basic expressions. Can produce simple isolated phrases and sentences.
Pre-A1	Can give basic personal information (e.g. name, address, nationality), perhaps with the use of a dictionary.

Figure 24: Overall written production, European Council CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020)

From the above findings, it can be noted that the lack of extensive writing courses, as well as a how-to-teach writing course at the English language programme, affects student teachers' writing competency as well their teaching competency. In conclusion, most student teachers are not prepared to teach writing because they still need to develop this skill by taking more writing courses. Although some student teachers show a degree of competency in writing, they have not studied any courses on how to teach it, nor have they practised teaching it or shadowed classes of expert teachers.

6.2.1.5 Perceptions of preparedness to teach short stories and abridged classics

Although year-four student teachers' ability to teach short stories and abridged classics cannot be measured accurately through the questions in the questionnaire because they have to be seen teaching these components in class, some of them have perceptions of preparedness to teach them. For example, 16 per cent (4 participants) affirmed that they are well prepared to teach short stories and abridged classics, and 12 per cent (three participants) said they are very well prepared. However, 32 per cent said that they are not well prepared to teach short stories and abridged classics, and 36 per cent confirmed they are somewhat prepared to teach them. Astonishingly,

these student teachers studied 11 compulsory literature courses plus two electives, yet most of them still feel they are not prepared to teach short stories and abridged classics. This kind of perception of unpreparedness can be attributed to the fact that they study these courses to fulfil the requirements of their graduation, but they have not been given any courses on how to teach such courses. The only teaching experience these student teachers have is that they have seen their teachers teaching these courses. Furthermore, they have not been given a chance to teach any of these courses. The English literature courses student teachers studied during the English language programme are as follows:

1. ENGL 236 Introduction to Literature
2. ENGL 334 Victorian Novel
3. ENGL 336 Elizabethan Drama
4. ENGL 431 Literary Theory
5. ENGL 302 Short Story (Elective)
6. ENGL 331 Introduction to Poetry
7. ENGL 333 The Rise of the Novel
8. ENGL 432 Comparative Literature
9. ENGL 433 Modern Drama
10. ENGL 434 Contemporary Literature
11. ENGL Literary Criticism in Practice
12. ENGL 332 Romantic Poetry
13. ENGL 406 Victorian and Modern Poetry (Elective)

From the above, it seems that most student teachers have negative perceptions of preparedness to teach short stories and abridged classics, although they studied a lot of literature courses. This may also mean they have just started to reflect on their own perceptions, perspectives and experiences in the presence of other views that question their current perceptions and suggest that they are not prepared yet, meaning that they are being geared towards a real transformation of their exiting beliefs of being prepared. An essential part of transformative learning theory is for these student teachers to adjust their existing frames of reference through reflecting critically on their current assumptions and beliefs and taking a course of action. At this stage, they would try intentionally to execute plans that generate new ways that redefine their worlds (Mezirow, 1979; Grabove,

1997). This is what may have happened to the student teachers through most of the stages of this study, which means that they have started to realise that their English language programme has not fully prepared them linguistically and pedagogically to start teaching after their graduation.

6.2.1.6 Perceptions of preparedness to teach speaking

Perceptions of preparedness to teach speaking emerged as one of the recurring themes in this study. Although more than 50 per cent of the student teachers (Section C: General Aspects of Teaching) confirmed that they are prepared to teach speaking, this perception may not be as accurate as they assume because there are some discrepancies in their answers to the following speaking related questions. For example, when student teachers were asked if they were adequately prepared to teach English (Section D Question 1 in the questionnaire) next year, stating their reasons, 11 student teachers (44%) out of 25 said they are adequately prepared to teach English next year, 12 per cent (3 student teachers) said, "Yes, they are prepared, but....", but only one of them said he is not prepared to teach English in general because he should improve his speaking skills as he said: *I am not well prepared yet, because I should improve speaking skills.* In contrast, when student teachers were asked what aspect of English teaching ((Section D Question 2.1 in the questionnaire)) they felt they were most prepared to teach, only four of them (16%) said they were most prepared to teach speaking. Similarly, when the student teachers were asked what aspect of English they felt they were least prepared (Section D Question 3.1 in the questionnaire) to teach, 24 per cent (6 students) said they were least prepared for teaching speaking. It is clear that there are some inconsistencies in their replies from one question to another, meaning that these student teachers may have started a phase of re-evaluation and critical assessment (Mezirow, 1998; Imel, 1998) of their own experiences and assumptions of their preparedness to teach English in general and speaking in particular. This kind of re-evaluation of assumptions and experiences is also supported by Kitchenham (2008: p. 10), as he calls it "a comprehensive and critical re-evaluation

of oneself". Nevertheless, some individual students (Students 16 and 18 in Section D Question 4 of the questionnaire) consider speaking one of the most practical courses that prepared them to teach English. On the other hand, Student 3 FG2 (in the focus group discussions) maintains that one hour lesson on listening and speaking is not enough to prepare them to be good teachers in the future.

From what he said, this student-teacher seems to have a good command of the language. However, he assesses and evaluates their language proficiency and their teaching ability practically. It is crucial to mention that this student-teacher got 58/80 on the TKT. Yet, he is not satisfied with his own preparation in the English Language Programme as he thinks that this programme has not provided them with enough courses to enable them to be good at English and to start teaching. Besides, he suggests other ways to improve their proficiency English level and to be prepared to teach it in the future. For example, he suggests using some free apps and online video games to enhance their English language and not depend on the University as the only means of development. It appears that this student-teacher has already started practically and critically to think about his own preparedness, meaning that he is trying to think outside the box and consider other perspectives and points of view. Although his linguistic ability (as proven from his spoken production) and his teaching ability (as confirmed from his TKT results) can enable him to start teaching, he still sees himself as being not fully prepared to begin teaching after his graduation.

Student teachers' actual speaking competency can only be assessed through what they said during the focus group discussions.

Although these student teachers studied ENGL 115 Listening and Speaking Skills, ENGL 116, Communication Skills and Strategies R ENGL 115, ENGL 214 Advanced Communication Skills R ENGL 116, ENGL 323 Phonetics R ENGL 224, ENGL 324 Phonology R ENGL 325, most of

them still make mistakes (as shown in the examples above) that would place them in Level A2 (as shown in the figure below) as per the European Council CEFR (2020) overall oral production.

Overall oral production

	Overall oral production
C2	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured discourse with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
C1	Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on complex subjects, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.
B2	Can give clear, systematically developed descriptions and presentations, with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail.
B2	Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on a wide range of subjects related to their field of interest, expanding and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples.
B1	Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within their field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.
A2	Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines. likes/dislikes, etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list.
A1	Can produce simple, mainly isolated phrases about people and places.
Pre-A1	Can produce short phrases about themselves, giving basic personal information (e.g. name, address, family, nationality).

Figure 25: Overall oral production, European Council CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020)

Although some of these student teachers' speaking competence can enable them to become teachers, they have not studied any courses on how to teach speaking, they have not seen any experienced teachers teaching speaking (except for their teachers), and they have not been given the opportunity to teach speaking. This implies that these student teachers need more speaking courses to enhance their speaking competence, and they need a how-to-teach-speaking course to improve their teaching competence. Consequently, most of these student teachers seem not to be linguistically (at speaking) or professionally (teaching wise) prepared to start teaching speaking after their graduation.

6.2.1.7 Perceptions of preparedness to teach vocabulary

Although most student teachers showed perceptions of preparedness (48% somewhat prepared, 24% well prepared and 20% very well prepared) to teach vocabulary, the range and breadth of

their vocabulary still suffers and needs improvement. This means that these student teachers' range and breadth of vocabulary (whether during speaking or writing) needs development. Looking at what these student teachers wrote (during the questionnaire) and said (during the focus group discussions), it can be found that they still make a lot of vocabulary errors during speaking and writing.

As vocabulary is a productive skill, it has to be supported and acquired through wide reading and listening to be developed naturally. This also needs to be considered by course designers and authors in the Saudi EFL context when designing and writing new materials for would-be teachers. This also means that more reading and listening courses have to be given to student teachers to develop their vocabulary. When student teachers were asked what aspect of English teaching they were least prepared for (Section D, Question: 2.2), two student teachers (8%) confirmed that they were least prepared to teach vocabulary. This could also be a kind of discrepancy between their answers because only two students (4%) said that they were not prepared to teach vocabulary when they were asked what aspect of English teaching they felt they were least prepared for (Section D, Question: 3.1). Besides, 12 per cent said that they were most prepared for teaching vocabulary in Section D, Question: 2.1 of the questionnaire. This kind of variation in their answers could be because these student teachers are in the process of evaluating their current experience and perceptions, and they are trying to consider and accept other perspectives and experiences of others as it pertains to their real preparedness to start teaching after they graduate. Student teachers' vocabulary range can only be assessed and evaluated using the vocabulary range standard set by the European Council CEFR, 2020 (as shown in the figure below). Most of the student teachers' range of vocabulary falls into Level A2, some fall into Level B1, and a few of them fall into Level B2. This implies that most student teachers are not linguistically prepared to teach vocabulary as

they still need some extra vocabulary courses to enhance their linguistic competency. They also need a how-to-teach-vocabulary course to improve their teaching skill.

	Vocabulary range
C2	Has a good command of a very broad lexical repertoire including idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; shows awareness of connotative levels of meaning.
C1	Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions; little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies. Can select from several vocabulary options in almost all situations by exploiting synonyms of even words/ signs less commonly encountered. Has a good command of common idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; can play with words/signs fairly well. Can understand and use appropriately the range of technical vocabulary and idiomatic expressions common to their area of specialisation.
B2	Can understand and use the main technical terminology of their field, when discussing their area of specialisation with other specialists. Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics. Can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution. Can produce appropriate collocations of many words/signs in most contexts fairly systematically. Can understand and use much of the specialist vocabulary of their field but has problems with specialist terminology outside it.
B1	Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations. Has sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to their everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events.
A2	Has sufficient vocabulary to conduct routine everyday transactions involving familiar situations and topics. Has sufficient vocabulary for the expression of basic communicative needs. Has sufficient vocabulary for coping with simple survival needs.
A1	Has a basic vocabulary repertoire of words/signs and phrases related to particular concrete situations.
Pre-A1	*No descriptors available*

Figure 26: Vocabulary Range, European Council CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020)

6.2.1.8 Perceptions of preparedness to teach general aspects of English

The following chart shows the degree to which student teachers can deal with teaching and incorporate general aspects of English in their classrooms. For example, will student teachers be able to give feedback to their students? Will they be able to mark their students' work and provide meaningful feedback? Will they be able to set exams and tests? etc.

How do you feel about:

Providing effective feedback — 16%, 28%, 44%, 12%
Marking learners' work — 20%, 32%, 32%, 12%
Setting tests and examinations — 20%, 28%, 40%, 12%
Choosing appropriate texts for teaching various… — 16%, 20%, 56%, 8%
Encouraging all learners, despite diversity, to… — 20%, 32%, 36%, 12%
Developing learners' critical thinking — 12%, 44%, 32%, 12%
Teaching in under-resourced schools — 8%, 16%, 60%, 16%
Using educational technology to support classroom… — 20%, 36%, 24%, 12%
Being enthusiastic, confident and passionate about… — 16%, 28%, 32%, 20%
Understanding students' cultural backgrounds and… — 28%, 36%, 20%, 8%
Managing students' discipline in a practical way — 4%, 44%, 20%, 24%
Having a repertoire of teaching methods and teaching… — 8%, 20%, 56%, 16%
Motivating students and maximizing learning — 20%, 28%, 44%, 8%
Dealing with students of varying abilities and learning… — 16%, 32%, 40%, 12%
Lesson planning and its design — 8%, 32%, 56%, 4%

Legend: ■ Very well prepared ■ Well prepared ■ Somewhat prepared ■ Not at all prepared

Figure 27: Self-evaluation of teaching skills

Although most student teachers showed positive perceptions of preparedness to incorporate and execute the above aspects in their classes, these general aspects need to be taught to them before they start teaching. They also need to attend classes to shadow experienced teachers to learn from them how to execute such aspects during their classes. Consequently, these general aspects of teaching (as shown in the chart above) need to be measured or assessed in a practical way. For example, student teachers need to be observed during teaching so that these aspects can be evaluated in the light of their actual teaching because the questionnaire only measured the student teachers' perceptions of preparedness to incorporate these skills effectively in their classes. Student

teachers gave different degrees of preparedness to incorporate these aspects into their lessons. For instance, the aspect that student teachers said they are weak at is *"Having a repertoire of teaching methods and teaching styles",* as only 8 per cent said they are very prepared for this aspect, and 20 per cent said they are well prepared. This means that most student teachers feel they do not have to have a repertoire of teaching methods and styles because they have only studied one theoretical course towards teaching methods. This also implies that not only have they not been prepared theoretically, but they have also not been prepared practically to begin teaching as well. This is in line with the research hypothesis that year-four student teachers are not prepared professionally to start teaching after graduation.

In sum, although student teachers showed some positive perceptions of preparedness to execute the abovementioned aspects of teaching in their classes when they start teaching, they still need to observe how expert teachers carry out these aspects in their classes. They also need to be given a chance to try to execute these tasks under the guidance and supervision of expert teachers who give them feedback and show them how to incorporate and carry out such aspects in their future classes.

6.3 Year-four English Major student teachers' actual preparedness to teach English.

Final-year student teachers' actual preparedness to teach English is discussed through the four interviewees' perceptions, their results in the TKT, and their counterparts' (new graduates') linguistic and teaching preparedness. The two EFL experts' views and perceptions regarding recent graduates' preparedness were taken into consideration because the linguistic and teaching levels of these recent graduates are similar as final-year student teachers, meaning that discussing their linguistic and teaching status should yield similar results and findings.

6.3.1   New graduates' and year-four student teachers' language ability as seen by the four interviewees

Novice teachers' language ability and year-four student teachers' language ability were discussed thoroughly through the four interviews with the two EFL teachers (from the ELC) and the two English professors (from the DLT). For example, both Teacher M and Teacher S believe that the new graduates – being the same level as year-four students - can speak English well. For instance, Teacher M believes that these recent graduates are fluent and good at listening. Although Teacher A thinks that some of these recent graduates are almost operating at native speaker levels and near native speakers', he believes that some of them are still below that native-like level. Similarly, Teacher S maintains that these new graduates are good at speaking as well, and they would score between Band 5 and Band 7 in the international IELTS exam. However, he says that their level was not good in the past when compared to the present time. He also reasons that they can communicate, meaning and that they have the ability to talk to other people in English.

On the other hand, Professor N said that year-four students' language ability is moderate, and there is a difference between males and females. He says that females are more willing to study, more prepared, more committed and much more devoted than males. Also, Professor A thinks that these students tend to imitate native speaker levels when they speak or read. They don't know how to apply the kind of information that would lead to perfect imitation because they sometimes lack sufficient knowledge or the correct practice that he calls a problem of information processing. He maintains that these students already know the grammatical rules, for example, but they don't know how to apply them, which means they have the theoretical part, but they don't know how to put it into practice. In sum, he suggests teaching these students everyday language and situations to acquire native-like proficiency.

Contrary to the two EFL teachers' views, Professor N does not think that these students speak English fluently and accurately as native speaker levels. He clarifies his stance by saying that they

are trying their best to speak fluently and accurately, and they are improving towards the end of the programme (year four). In general, he maintains that their level during the final year is better than their levels before. Both professors agree that these year-four student teachers cannot write fully cohesive and coherent pieces of writing. They ascribe this inability to write a good piece of writing to some valid reasons. For example, Professor A assumes that year-four students can write cohesive and coherent pieces of writing to some extent but that they still need more writing and grammar courses. He thinks that these student teachers' level in writing is better than their level in speaking. He believes that what these students study - in writing and grammar - is acceptable, but it is not enough. Finally, he believes that these would-be-teachers should be given more writing and grammar courses because there is a shortage of such courses. Similarly, Professor N claims that the students' writing exhibits coherence and cohesion mistakes. For example, their pieces of writing contain many grammatical mistakes and a lot of inappropriateness. However, a few students can write good pieces of writing free from such grammatical mistakes.

As for their reading ability, Professor A bluntly rejects the notion that year-four students can read a variety of texts. He says, when it comes to reading different texts like religious, social and literary ones, these students wouldn't be able to deal with such texts as they are only used to reading some specific texts like novels and stories. He recommends that these students should be allowed to join reading clubs, and to attend reading festivals or events. Similarly, these student teachers could be invited to reading sessions or viewing sessions where they can watch a movie or a documentary on different topics like religion, tourism, and history. In this way, he anticipates, these students will be exposed to various texts and contexts that would help boost their reading skills. Likewise, Professor N candidly declares that these students are slow and inarticulate in reading. He maintains that it takes them a long time to read, to understand and to analyze a text. They have also missed out on the basic training in reading skills. He suggests that more focus should be put on teaching

these students the necessary reading skills like skimming, scanning and other relevant reading skills.

On the other hand, Professor A thinks that year-four student teachers are lucky because they are exposed to many accents from around the world. He sees 'listening' as an advantage (for these students) in the English and Translation Department because they have teachers from all over the world. They have teachers from England, America, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, etc. Thus, each of these professors has his own accent, dialect and even idiolect, which favours the student teachers who are exposed to and practice these accents, dialects and idiolects. On the other hand, Professor N reminds us that if these students are weak at speaking, then they are ineffective at listening as listening and speaking are related. He maintains that they need more exposure to listening materials so that they can improve their speaking skill.

The above argument is in line with this study's hypothesis, which claims that final year student teachers are not linguistically competent enough to start teaching after graduation. As per the two professors' perceptions about final-year student teachers' preparedness to teach English, these student teachers still need many courses that enhance their linguistic competence. For example, they need extra courses to help them with their speaking, listening, writing and reading skills. Besides, although year-four students would be studying three grammar courses (ENGL 111 Introduction to Grammar, ENGL 112 Grammar in Use, ENGL 213 Advanced Grammar and ENGL 114 Paragraph Writing), and three writing courses (ENGL 215 Short Essay Writing, ENGL 216, and Extended Essay Writing), most of them cannot write a cohesive and coherent paragraph. Also, they are not competent at reading as per the two professors' views. This linguistic incompetence is clear from their responses to the questionnaire items and the focus group discussions. For example, the responses (in the form of sentences and paragraphs) they wrote in the questionnaire contained

many grammatical mistakes, spelling mistakes, vocabulary usage mistakes (malapropisms), coherence and cohesion errors, and capitalisation and punctuation mistakes.

As per the CEFR Overall written production descriptors, 2020 (shown in the table below), most year-four student teachers "can give information about matters of personal relevance (e.g., likes and dislikes, family, pets) using simple words/signs and basic expressions." This group of year-four student teachers (largely) fall in Level A1 as per these general writing descriptors. The second group (some year-four student teachers) "can produce a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like 'and', 'but' and 'because.' This group falls into Level A2. Only a few of these year-four student teachers falls into Level B1 and Level B1 as they "can produce straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within their field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence." They can also "produce clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to their field of interest, synthesizing and evaluating information and arguments from a number of resources."

Scale	Level	Descriptor
Overall written production	C2	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, complex texts in an appropriate and effective style and a logical structure which helps the reader identify significant points.
Overall written production	C1	Can produce clear, well-structured texts of complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples, and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.
Overall written production	C1	Can employ the structure and conventions of a variety of genres, varying the tone, style and register according to addressee, text type and theme.
Overall written production	B2	Can produce clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to their field of interest, synthesising and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources.
Overall written production	B1	Can produce straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within their field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence.
Overall written production	A2	Can produce a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like "and", "but" and "because".
Overall written production	A1	Can give information about matters of personal relevance (e.g. likes and dislikes, family, pets) using simple words/signs and basic expressions.
Overall written production	A1	Can produce simple isolated phrases and sentences.
Overall written production	Pre-A1	Can give basic personal information (e.g. name, address, nationality), perhaps with the use of a dictionary.

Figure 28: CEFR Overall written production descriptors. (Council of Europe, 2020)

Consequently, and as per the global scale of Common Reference Levels (as shown in the figure below) of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching,*

assessment (CEFR), most of the year-four student teachers fall into the Basic User classification, which includes Levels A1 and A2. Only a few year-four students fall into the Independent User classification, which includes Levels B1 and B2. None of these year-four students reached the Proficient User stage, which incorporates Levels C1 and C2.

The CEFR classifies foreign language proficiency into six levels: A1 and A2, B1 and B2, C1 and C2. It also provides three 'plus' levels: A2+, B1+ and B2+. In addition to their evaluative role, referring to the CEFR standards in this study makes it possible for the course designers, teachers, professors and authors in the Saudi EFL context to set proper learning and teaching objectives consistent with the proposed outcomes. These stakeholders can also review the DLT current curricula, design relevant teaching materials, and provide a foundation for identifying the students' suitable language qualifications at the DLT. This step would facilitate the educational and occupational upward mobility for the DLT graduates, and it would enhance their linguistic and pedagogical preparedness to start teaching after graduation.

Proficient user	C2	Can understand virtually all types of texts. Can summarise information from different oral and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express themselves spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express themselves fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent user	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in their field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with users of the target language quite possible without imposing strain on either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise while travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic user	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of their background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce themselves and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where someone lives, people they know and things they have. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Figure 29: Common Reference Levels (Council of Europe, 2020: p. 175)

Their speaking ability suffers because most of the year-four students cannot speak clearly, fluently and accurately. As per the qualitative aspects of spoken language use in terms of the CEFR, most of the year-four students fit into Levels A1 and A2, which is consistent with their writing ability, which is also in line with the Basic User as per the global CEFR scale above. Only a few can fit into the Independent User Level, which includes B1 and B2. None of the year-four students falls into the Proficient User, which contains C1 and C2 Levels.

1.3 Qualitative aspects of spoken language use

	RANGE	ACCURACY	FLUENCY	INTERACTION	COHERENCE
C2	Shows great flexibility reformulating ideas in differing linguistic forms to convey finer shades of meaning precisely, to give emphasis, to differentiate and to eliminate ambiguity. Also has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms.	Maintains consistent grammatical control of complex language, even while attention is otherwise engaged (e.g. in forward planning, in monitoring others' reactions).	Can express him/herself spontaneously at length with a natural colloquial flow, avoiding or backtracking around any difficulty so smoothly that the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.	Can interact with ease and skill, picking up and using non-verbal and intonational cues apparently effortlessly. Can interweave his/her contribution into the joint discourse with fully natural turntaking, referencing, allusion making etc.	Can create coherent and cohesive discourse making full and appropriate use of a variety of organisational patterns and a wide range of connectors and other cohesive devices.
C1	Has a good command of a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/ herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics without having to restrict what he/she wants to say.	Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare, difficult to spot and generally corrected when they do occur.	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.	Can select a suitable phrase from a readily available range of discourse functions to preface his remarks in order to get or to keep the floor and to relate his/her own contributions skilfully to those of other speakers.	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured speech, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
B2	Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints on most general topics, without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so.	Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make errors which cause misunderstanding, and can correct most of his/her mistakes.	Can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although he/she can be hesitant as he or she searches for patterns and expressions, there are few noticeably long pauses.	Can initiate discourse, take his/her turn when appropriate and end conversation when he / she needs to, though he /she may not always do this elegantly. Can help the discussion along on familiar ground confirming comprehension, inviting others in, etc.	Can use a limited number of cohesive devices to link his/her utterances into clear, coherent discourse, though there may be some "jumpiness" in a long contribution.
B1	Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some hesitation and circum-locutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events.	Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used "routines" and patterns associated with more predictable situations.	Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.	Can initiate, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversation on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. Can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding.	Can link a series of shorter, discrete simple elements into a connected, linear sequence of points.
A2	Uses basic sentence patterns with memorised phrases, groups of a few words and formulae in order to communicate limited information in simple everyday situations.	Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes.	Can make him/herself understood in very short utterances, even though pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident.	Can answer questions and respond to simple statements. Can indicate when he/she is following but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord.	Can link groups of words with simple connectors like "and, "but" and "because".
A1	Has a very basic repertoire of words and simple phrases related to personal details and particular concrete situations.	Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a memorised repertoire.	Can manage very short, isolated, mainly pre-packaged utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words, and to repair communication.	Can ask and answer questions about personal details. Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition, rephrasing and repair.	Can link words or groups of words with very basic linear connectors like "and" or "then".

Figure 30: CEFR Qualitative aspects of spoken language use (Council of Europe, 2011: p. 7)

It seems that year-four students' productive skills (writing and speaking) are affected by the strength of their receptive skills (reading and listening), meaning that the more competent they are at the receptive skills, the more skilled they are at the productive skills. Being a Basic User or

Independent User (as per the CEFR standards) of the language is not enough of a qualification for year-four student teachers to start teaching after graduation because they still need further language courses to strengthen their linguistic ability. Only those who fall into the Independent User level can begin teaching if they go through a practical teaching period through which they can shadow professional teachers' classes, teach classes under the observation of skilled and experienced teachers, and get feedback from their students as well as their tutors. This also means that even if some of year-four students are linguistically able to teach English after graduation, they still lack the teaching methods (theoretical part) that would enable them to teach professionally.

6.3.2 Year-four student teachers' teaching ability as assessed by the TKT

Year-four student teachers' teaching knowledge and ability were measured through their TKT scores. It is stipulated by Cambridge Assessment that their research shows that for a candidate to achieve TKT Band 3, she/he must get a score of at least 45-50 out of 80. As per the results of the year-four student teachers at the TKT, most of them fall into Band 2, which is less than 45 out of 80, as shown in the table below:

Student no.	Mark out of 80	Band
S3	9	Band 1
S19	25	Band 2
S11	27	Band 2
S16	27	Band 2
S23	27	Band 2
S4	30	Band 2
S22	30	Band 2
S5	32	Band 2
S6	33	Band 2
S2	34	Band 2
S9	35	Band 2
S26	35	Band 2
S18	36	Band 2

S12	38	Band 2
S24	40	Band 2
S20	41	Band 2
S7	42	Band 2
S8	43	Band 2
S1	46	Band 3
S13	50	Band 3
S17	54	Band 3
S21	54	Band 3
S15	58	Band 3
S25	59	Band 3
S10	62	Band 3
S14	63	Band 3

Table 13: Student Teachers' TKT scores compared to the four Bands

The table above also shows that only one student (3.85) scored 9 out of 80, which falls into Band 1. While 17 students (65.38%) fall in Band 2, only eight students (30.77%) fall in Band 3. None of these year-four students could reach Band 4.

TKT Band Descriptors		
Module 1: **Language systems and background to language learning and teaching**	**Module 2:** **Lesson planning and use of resources**	**Module 3:** **Managing the teaching and learning process**
Band 4 The candidate demonstrates comprehensive and accurate knowledge of all areas on the TKT Module 1 syllabus, i.e., language systems and background to language learning and teaching. He/she shows familiarity with the full range of concepts, terminology, practices and processes tested in TKT Module 1, which relate to describing language and language skills, factors in the language learning process and the range of methods, tasks and activities available to the language teacher. The candidate is able to relate existing knowledge to both familiar and unfamiliar classroom situations.	The candidate demonstrates comprehensive and extensive knowledge of all areas on the TKT Module 2 syllabus, i.e., lesson planning and use of resources for language teaching. He/she shows familiarity with the full range of concepts, terminology, practices and processes tested in TKT Module 2, which relate to general practice in lesson planning and materials use, reasons for carrying out particular activities in the classroom, and for using particular resources and materials. The candidate is able to relate existing knowledge to both familiar and unfamiliar classroom situations.	The candidate demonstrates comprehensive and extensive knowledge of all areas on the TKT Module 3 syllabus, i.e., managing the teaching and learning process. He/she shows familiarity with the full range of concepts, terminology, practices and processes tested in TKT Module 3, which relate to teachers' and learners' language in the classroom and options available for classroom management in order to promote learning. The candidate is able to relate existing knowledge to both familiar and unfamiliar classroom situations.
Band 3 The candidate generally demonstrates comprehensive and accurate knowledge of areas on the TKT Module 1 syllabus, i.e., language systems and background to language learning and teaching. He/she shows familiarity with most of the concepts, terminology, practices and processes tested in TKT Module 1, which relate to describing language and language skills, factors in the language learning process and the range of methods, tasks and activities available to the language teacher. The candidate is generally able to relate existing knowledge to both familiar and unfamiliar classroom situations.	The candidate generally demonstrates comprehensive and extensive knowledge of areas on the TKT Module 2 syllabus, i.e., lesson planning and use of resources for language teaching. He/she shows familiarity with most of the concepts, terminology, practices and processes tested in TKT Module 2, which relate to general practice in lesson planning and materials use, reasons for carrying out particular activities in the classroom, and for using particular resources and materials. The candidate is generally able to relate existing knowledge to both familiar and unfamiliar classroom situations.	The candidate generally demonstrates comprehensive and extensive knowledge of areas on the TKT Module 3 syllabus, i.e., managing the teaching and learning process. He/she shows familiarity with most of the concepts, terminology, practices and processes tested in TKT Module 3, which relate to teachers' and learners' language in the classroom and options available for classroom management in order to promote learning. The candidate is generally able to relate existing knowledge to both familiar and unfamiliar classroom situations.
Band 2 The candidate demonstrates basic knowledge of areas on the TKT Module 1 syllabus, i.e., language systems and background to language learning and teaching. He/she shows familiarity with some of the concepts, terminology, practices and processes tested in TKT Module 1, which relate to describing language and language skills, factors in the language learning process and the range of methods, tasks and activities available to the language teacher. The candidate is able to relate existing knowledge to familiar classroom situations, and occasionally to unfamiliar ones.	The candidate demonstrates basic knowledge of areas on the TKT Module 2 syllabus, i.e., lesson planning and use of resources for language teaching. He/she shows familiarity with some of the concepts, terminology, practices and processes tested in TKT Module 2, which relate to general practice in lesson planning and materials use, reasons for carrying out particular activities in the classroom, and for using particular resources and materials. The candidate is able to relate existing knowledge to familiar classroom situations, and occasionally to unfamiliar ones.	The candidate demonstrates basic knowledge of areas on the TKT Module 3 syllabus, i.e., managing the teaching and learning process. He/she shows familiarity with some of the concepts, terminology, practices and processes tested in TKT Module 3, which relate to teachers' and learners' language in the classroom and options available for classroom management in order to promote learning. The candidate is able to relate existing knowledge to familiar classroom situations, and occasionally to unfamiliar ones.
Band 1 The candidate demonstrates restricted knowledge of areas on the TKT Module 1 syllabus, i.e., language systems and background to language learning and teaching. He/she shows familiarity with a limited range of the concepts, terminology, practices and processes tested in TKT Module 1, which relate to describing language and language skills, factors in the language learning process and the range of methods, tasks and activities available to the language teacher. The candidate is able to relate existing knowledge to familiar classroom situations only.	The candidate demonstrates restricted knowledge of areas on the TKT Module 2 syllabus, i.e., lesson planning and use of resources for language teaching. He/she shows familiarity with a limited range of the concepts, terminology, practices and processes tested in TKT Module 2, which relate to general practice in lesson planning and materials use, reasons for carrying out particular activities in the classroom, and for using particular resources and materials. The candidate is able to relate existing knowledge to familiar classroom situations only.	The candidate demonstrates restricted knowledge of areas on the TKT Module 3 syllabus, i.e., managing the teaching and learning process. He/she shows familiarity with a limited range of the concepts, terminology, practices and processes tested in TKT Module 3, which relate to teachers' and learners' language in the classroom and options available for classroom management in order to promote learning. The candidate is able to relate existing knowledge to familiar classroom situations only.

CER/63B7/V1/AUG19

Figure 31: TKT Band Descriptors (Cambridge Assessment English, 2021)

Year-four student teachers only sat for Module 1, which assessed their knowledge of the language systems and their language learning and teaching background. As per the *Cambridge Assessment TKT Band Descriptors for Module 1*, as shown in the figure below, about 70 per cent of year-four students fall into Band 2, which shows that candidates show basic knowledge of language systems and background to language learning and teaching. This means that this basic knowledge is not enough for these year-four student teachers to start teaching after their graduation. They need further training courses as well as practical experience, which is not available as part of the English Language Programme. As per Band 2 descriptors (shown above in Figure: 30) for Module one, the candidate should:

demonstrates basic knowledge of areas on the TKT Module 1 syllabus, i.e., language systems and background to language learning and teaching. He/she shows familiarity with some of the concepts, terminology, practices and processes tested in TKT Module 1, which relate to describing language and language skills, factors in the language learning process and the range of methods, tasks and activities available to the language teacher. The candidate is able to relate existing knowledge to familiar classroom situations and occasionally to unfamiliar ones. (Cambridge Assessment English, 2019: p. 1)

About 30% of year-four students fall into Band 3, which describes how a candidate generally demonstrates comprehensive and accurate knowledge of language systems and background to language learning and teaching as follows:

The candidate generally demonstrates comprehensive and accurate knowledge of areas on the TKT Module 1 syllabus, i.e., language systems and background to language learning and teaching. He/she shows familiarity with most of the concepts, terminology, practices and processes tested in TKT Module 1, which relate to describing language and language skills, factors in the language learning process and the range of methods, tasks and activities available to the language teacher. The candidate is generally able to relate existing knowledge to both familiar and unfamiliar classroom situations. (Cambridge Assessment English, 2019: p. 1)

As per the Cambridge Teaching Framework (as compared to the TKT Bands) 2018, about 70 per cent of year-four student teachers are 'Foundation and Developing' teachers, as per the figure below. A Foundation and Developing teacher can "provide accurate examples of language points taught at A1 and A2 levels" (p. 1). He / She can also "use basic classroom language which is mostly accurate" (p. 1). Furthermore, a Foundation and Developing teacher can "provide accurate examples of language points taught at A1, A2 and B1 levels" (p. 1). She/he can "use classroom language which is mostly accurate" (p. 1). However, if these year-four student teachers' levels range between A1 and B1, does this mean they can teach these levels? In other words, if a year-four student teacher is an A2 Level as per the CEFR, will he/she be able to teach this level to their students? Only a few of the year-four student teachers would fall into the proficient teacher criteria. None of these year-four student teachers would be seen as an expert in teaching as per the criteria below.

Cambridge English Teaching Framework – at the heart of professional development

We developed the Cambridge English Teaching Framework: to help teachers identify where they are in their professional career to help teachers and their employers think about where they want to go next and identify development activities to get there.

Stages	Foundation	Developing	Proficient	Expert
Learning and the learner	Has a basic understanding of some language–learning concepts. Demonstrates a little of this understanding when planning and teaching.	Has a reasonable understanding of many language–learning concepts. Demonstrates some of this understanding when planning and teaching.	Has a good understanding of many language–learning concepts. Frequently demonstrates this understanding when planning and teaching.	Has a sophisticated understanding of language–learning concepts. Consistently demonstrates this understanding when planning and teaching.
Teaching, learning and assessment	Has a basic understanding of some key principles of teaching, learning and assessment. Can plan and deliver simple lessons with a basic awareness of learners' needs, using core teaching techniques. Can use available tests and basic assessment procedures to support and promote learning.	Has a reasonable understanding of many key principles of teaching, learning and assessment. Can plan and deliver lessons with some awareness of learners' needs, using a number of different teaching techniques. Can design simple tests and use some assessment procedures to support and promote learning.	Has a good understanding of key principles of teaching, learning and assessment. Can plan and deliver detailed lessons with good awareness of learners' needs, using a wide range of teaching techniques. Can design effective tests and use a range of assessment procedures to support and promote learning.	Has a sophisticated understanding of key principles of teaching, learning and assessment. Can plan and deliver detailed and sophisticated lessons with a thorough understanding of learners' needs, using a comprehensive range of teaching techniques. Can design a range of effective tests and use individualised assessment procedures consistently to support and promote learning.
Language ability	Provides accurate examples of language points taught at A1 and A2 levels. Uses basic classroom language which is mostly accurate.	Provides accurate examples of language points taught at A1, A2 and B1 levels. Uses classroom language which is mostly accurate.	Provides accurate examples of language points taught at A1, A2, B1 and B2 levels. Uses classroom language which is consistently accurate throughout the lesson.	Provides accurate examples of language points taught at A1–C2 levels. Uses a wide range of classroom language which is consistently accurate throughout the lesson.
Language knowledge and awareness	Is aware of some key terms for describing language. Can answer simple learner questions with the help of reference materials.	Has reasonable knowledge of many key terms for describing language. Can answer most learner questions with the help of reference materials.	Has good knowledge of key terms for describing language. Can answer most learner questions with minimal use of reference materials.	Has sophisticated knowledge of key terms for describing language. Can answer most learner questions in detail with minimal use of reference materials.
Professional development and values	Can reflect on a lesson with guidance and learn from feedback. Requires guidance in self-assessing own needs.	Can reflect on a lesson without guidance and respond positively to feedback. Can self-assess own needs and identify some areas for improvement.	Can reflect critically and actively seeks feedback. Can identify own strengths and weaknesses as a teacher, and can support other teachers.	Consistently reflects critically, observes other colleagues and is highly committed to professional development. Is highly aware of own strengths and weaknesses, and actively supports the development of other teachers.

Figure 32: *Cambridge English Teaching Framework – at the heart of professional development*

(2018: p. 1)

To sum up, year-four student teachers' actual teaching competence has been judged and assessed through more practical and authentic tools (the TKT, the CEFR and the Cambridge Teaching Framework) other than their perceptions through the questionnaire and the focus group discussions and their professors' perceptions. This kind of assessment gives a more authentic picture of the real preparedness of the student teachers to teach English after graduation. Although some student teachers' teaching knowledge seems to be satisfactory for them to start teaching (as per their TKT scores), they still need a practical component through which they can shadow EFL experts teaching, teach some classes and receive feedback for their teaching. However, the majority of student teachers still need extra courses to enhance their linguistic ability, and they also need methods of teaching English courses to teach them how to teach. This is in line with the research

hypothesis that claims that the Saudi education system (including the English language programme) does not prepare its EFL graduates with English and teaching competence to meet the national standards or the international standards of teaching English as a foreign language. This means that final-year student teachers are not fully qualified to start teaching English as a foreign language as soon as they graduate, which answers the main question of this study:

Are final-year Saudi Arabian student teachers (English Major) prepared to teach EFL on graduation? Why or why not?

6.3.3 New graduates' and year-four student teachers' teaching ability as seen by the four interviewees

In their answer to "*Do you think they (new graduates and year-four students) are prepared to teach English as a foreign language? Why? Why not?",* the four interviewees (Teacher M, Teacher S, Professor N and Professor A) agreed that new graduates, as well as year-four students, would not be able to start teaching as they are not prepared enough for teaching, and they do not have the practical experience to teach English. For example, Teacher M argued that new graduates lack experience in the classroom setting as they have just graduated with zero teaching experience. Besides, he maintains that they are not ready to teach EFL in a classroom environment, although some of them have experience working as private tutors, which does not make them ready to start teaching in the EFL setting. Teacher S says that these new graduates cannot teach English because no course taught them how to teach. He says that they only studied theoretical courses rather than practical ones. That is the reason why they cannot teach or start teaching without practising. Professor A suggests a practical component be added to the English language programme. This practical training has to be supervised and observed by experienced teachers. He also recommends that year-four student teachers can be trained at the ELC of this University, where English is taught as a foreign language. He suggests that year-four student teachers be given part of the lectures at

the ELC. Besides, he states that these student teachers can be supervised, observed and guided by the ELC staff members. Professor N comes up with a new suggestion that these students (year-four student teachers) could be assigned to teach lower levels rather than higher levels. He believes that they need in-service as well as post-service training so that they can improve their teaching ability.

The four interviewees' perceptions about student teachers' and recent graduates' teaching ability are consistent with this study's hypothesis. This means that final-year student teachers and recent graduates are not qualified enough to start teaching English after their graduation because they do not have experience in the classroom setting as they have zero teaching experience. Also, these prospective teachers did not study any courses that teach them how to teach.

6.3.4 The English Language Programme effectiveness as seen by the four interviewees

The four interviewees' arguments are based on the assumption that the English language programme did not prepare the new graduates and year-four student teachers well enough to teach English as a foreign language after their graduation. For instance, Teacher M says that translation is their programme's focus, so neither the programme nor translation prepare them to teach English as a foreign language because the whole programme does not have the essential modules that would teach them how to teach English. He also contends that new graduates believe in the grammar-translation method (the way they were taught in college), which is not the best way of teaching English as a foreign language. He also contends that the programme or the major is only based on theory and translation rather than on practice. For him, the English language programme does not produce English teachers in the first place. Besides, he maintains that the other choice for these new graduates to work as EFL teachers is to use the grammar-translation method (the

favoured method for Saudi learners) in their future teaching. Teacher S stated that they (new graduates) do not have any course that focuses on teaching in the classroom.

Professor A doesn't think that the year-four students' programme has prepared them well enough to teach English. However, he believes that the programme has prepared them to be speakers of English. So, he insists that these would-be teachers need more practical courses that should be added to their four-year plan. He maintains that these student teachers have not been exposed to sufficient practical courses - they were only taught and exposed to theoretical material. Professor N also asserts that this English language programme has not prepared these student teachers to teach as it is only dedicated to literature, linguistics and translation courses. He recommends that if they need to learn how to teach, they have to join the Faculty of Education (which is on hold) so that they can learn how to teach via in-service and post-service training courses provided by these colleges.

From the above argument, it is clear that there is an inconsistency between what is taught and what is learnt in the English language programme and what these prospective teachers are supposed to do at schools when they are recruited (Deacon, 2012; Sayed, Badroodien, Salmon & McDonald, 2016). For instance, there are no courses that teach these would-be-teachers how to teach different skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing. Also, there are no teaching practicums through which these would-be teachers can shadow experienced teachers' classes, under which they are given an opportunity to teach classes under the supervision of expert teachers. This implies that devisors of the English language programme have failed to design a programme that caters for producing efficient EFL teachers. Also, this English language programme fails to provide a balanced curriculum as stated by CHE (2010: 95 as cited in Deacon, 2015):

> "the greatest problems in programme design result from institutions' incapacity to meet minimum standards of internal coherence, alignment with purpose, and intellectual

credibility in terms of the relationship between theoretical, practical and experiential knowledge." (CHE 2010: 95)

From the above quotation, it can be concluded this English language programme fails to strike a balance between the theoretical, practical and experimental components that act as the foundation of teacher education programmes. In this regard, Le (2013 as cited in Sheokarah, J., 2017: p. 41) observes that what is learnt (from teacher education programme) about teaching "is nothing like how you experience school as a teacher". Such a discrepancy proves to be one of the factors that discredit the English language programme as a teacher education programme which is assumed to prepare its graduates to work as EFL teachers after they graduate. Additionally, due to this discrepancy, student teachers may have formed erroneous perceptions about their preparedness. For example, they may have perceived themselves as being prepared to start teaching. However, in reality, they are not fully prepared to begin teaching because there is a great divide between what is taught and learnt in the English language programme and how they are supposed to be prepared. Besides, there is another gap between the theoretical part (as represented in the courses they study) and the practical and experimental sides that should be created and added to such programmes.

Finally, this English language programme is not accredited at the national level. English and Translation was the only English language programme (at King Saud University, Saudi Arabia) that received accreditation by the Saudi Education & Training Evaluation Commission in 2020 (as shown in the figure below). Besides, programmes like Applied Linguistics, Translation, English Language, and English and Literature have not yet received the Saudi national accreditation. This study's English language programme has not yet received this national accreditation. Programs can be looked for through the commission's website.

The following figure shows the only accredited English and Translation programme in Saudi Arabia.

Figure 33: Accreditation of the English and Translation Programme at King Saud University

(Education & Training Evaluation Commission: 2020)

This also gives validation to this study's objectives, meaning that the English language programme does not prepare its graduates professionally and pedagogically. Moreover, it is also in line with this study's hypothesis which claims that the education system in Saudi Arabia is not preparing its graduates with English and teaching competence at an acceptable level for global communication.

6.3.5 New graduates' and year-four students' ability to teach the four language skills as assessed by the four interviewees

The two teachers have different views about whether or not these new graduates can teach the four languages skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). For instance, Teacher M believes that these recent graduates can teach the four language skills (reading and writing; listening and speaking) with varying degrees of success. They are more comfortable in teaching some skills than

others. However, Teacher S thinks that these new graduates' most robust strength is their speaking ability. However, this strength does not mean they can teach the four language skills. He similarly believes that one of these new graduates' advantages is that they are bilingual. They can use Arabic to give instructions, convey messages, and explain the lessons if they cannot communicate with their students in English. However, for him, these new graduates still lack teaching methodologies. Professor A insists that these students need experience and training before they start teaching. He also contends that they need official and supervised educational training for a year or half a year because they cannot begin teaching after they graduate as they are still not ready for teaching. He maintains that even though most of these students are good at the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), this does not mean they can teach them (the four skills). Likewise, Professor N maintains that these students can start teaching but only on condition that they get the kind of training that would enable them to get to know how to handle these skills and how to teach them appropriately.

6.3.6 New graduates' and year-four student teachers' training needs as perceived by the four interviewees

There is a consensus among the four interviewees that new graduates and final-year student teachers need further training to enhance their teaching competence before they start teaching. For instance, the two EFL experts (Teacher M and Teacher S) made similar comments and suggestions, recommending that new graduates need further training or a CELTA or DELTA or their equivalent to start teaching. They (Teacher M and Teacher S) think that the Bachelor in English Language and Translation qualification is not adequate to enable these recent graduates to teach English as a foreign language. Teacher M, for instance, maintains that these candidates unquestionably need further training. They need a practical component to put the theory they learnt into practice because the classroom setting is different from what they study at University. He suggests that a certificate

like CELTA would be a good start as a teaching qualification. This way, when they obtain a teaching certificate, they would have the feeling of a classroom environment where they can be given the opportunity to teach. They will also observe their peers teaching, and they would be observed as well, which will provide them with the chance to learn from their peers and their supervisors. He suggests a diploma (equivalent to DELTA) to be added to their programme. This diploma can be created and offered at state Universities as well as private ones. This kind of certification should focus on a practical part that would focus on teaching English as a foreign language rather than on theoretical aspects. Accordingly, these graduates could transfer their focus from being theoretical to practical.

Equally, Teacher S states that these candidates need some modules that would teach them how to teach and how to act as teachers inside their classrooms. Alternatively, they need a type of certificate like a CELTA, which would make a big difference to their teaching styles.

Professor A insists on practical components to be added to the English Language Programme. He wonders why the people in charge do not provide students with CELTA or DELTA programmes or their equivalent. He believes that these programmes (CELTA or DELTA) would compensate for what the students missed throughout their four-year programme. He also proposes that orientation or explanatory sessions should be held to teach and enlighten these students about such certification. Additionally, he maintains that year-four students should be guided by and referred to the ELC, where real EFL professionals can guide and help them with professional information relating to the EFL field or context. Finally, he asserts that such certification programmes would compensate for the dire shortage of the missing practical element in the English Language Programme. Professor N also agrees that year-four students need further studies in the field of EFL teaching because they do not have or study any relevant courses that teach them how to teach. He

repeated what he had said before that all that they study at this programme is theoretical in nature that has nothing to do with the practical field of English teaching pedagogy or methodology.

6.3.7 Skills recent graduates and year-four students are good at as perceived by the four interviewees

Teacher M thinks that these new graduates are good at receptive skills (reading and listening). He also feels they feel more comfortable when it comes to delivering reading and listening lessons. Teacher S claims that these new graduates are good at teaching grammar because they had the same experience of being taught in the same way (grammar-translation method) when they were learners. This means they learnt how to teach grammar from their teachers, who tended to use the grammar-translation approach in their teaching.

Professor A maintains that these students are better at listening than at speaking, reading or writing, which means that they are good at receptive skills rather than productive skills. He also contends that these student teachers are good at receptive skills, but they are weak when it comes to productive skills. Professor N maintains that these students are good at speaking, but they are weak at reading and writing.

6.3.8 Skills that recent graduates and year-four student teachers are poor at as perceived by the four interviewees

The two interviewees had different views about the skill that the new graduates are weakest at. While Teacher M thinks that these recent graduates are poor in writing and speaking, Teacher S believes that they are ineffective in listening, and according to his experience of observing these new graduates' classes, Teacher M says that they (the recent graduates) need to develop their productive skills (writing and speaking). He maintains that if they are not proficient at these two receptive skills, they will not be able to teach them appropriately. As for their speaking competency, he believes that they need to improve in some areas like 'intonation and stress' as they

are not native speakers. This also applies to their writing ability that has to be developed as well. Teacher S says that listening is one of the most challenging skills for them to teach as they have to know things like pair work and group work to make their students interact. For him, if these new graduates are unable to make students interact, they will struggle to teach all the other skills, not just listening.

6.3.9 New graduates' and year-four student teachers' actual teaching ability and experience as observed by the four interviewees

From the practitioners' perspectives, both teachers (Teacher M and Teacher S) confirmed that they had already observed some of these new graduates' classes. They confirmed that recent graduates (in the classroom) still lack teaching methods, classroom management skills, and language-based classroom skills compared to lecturing-based skills. For instance, Teacher M asserts that he has already observed many of the new graduates' classes. He contends that these recent graduates want to communicate a message that they are very willing, passionate, and are excited about teaching. However, he thinks that there are areas where these new graduates need to improve on when delivering to an EFL class efficiently. He believes that these recent graduates need to improve their classroom management skills and teaching methods. Likewise, Teacher S confirms that he had already observed new graduates' classes. He maintains that because these recent graduates have been taught through lectures during their four years of study, they will follow the same teaching style, which is likely to be ineffective in the teaching set-up. He also maintains that they will not follow a language skills class that requires a lot of interaction, as recommended by the prevailing modern methodologies. They only stick to what they learned during their programme, and they imitate their teachers' traditional way of teaching. He also contends that this classic lecturing style will not help them teach English effectively.

Professor A asserts that he is teaching these student teachers 'Second Language Acquisition.' This course has allowed him to train these students to speak and how to imitate their teachers. Many a time, he gave them a chance to explain some parts of the lesson. He also taught them that language is not restricted to using dictionaries, but instead, it is acquired through different sources, contexts and abilities. He believes that the 'Second Language Acquisition' course is crucial, yet it is not enough as these students need more practical courses. Professor N confirms that he only saw student teachers giving their assigned presentations during classes. During these presentations, student teachers sometimes teach using PowerPoint. He maintains that some of these student teachers (about 10%) are exceptional at teaching. This 10 per cent of the student teachers are instinctively good teachers as they are devoted and committed. According to what Professor N said, about 90 per cent of the student teachers are not prepared adequately to start teaching after they graduate. Professor N's insight is in line with this study's hypothesis that final-year student teachers are not professionally, linguistically or pedagogically prepared to start teaching as soon as they graduate. This indicates that the English language programme, which is part of the education system in Saudi Arabia, is not preparing its graduates with English and teaching competence at an acceptable standard for global communication.

6.4 Chapter Summary

Although this study disclosed similar results regarding student teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach English, it indicated a difference in their perceptions of preparedness to start teaching. Moreover, this study showed that student teachers generally have positive perceptions of what they believe they can do in the classrooms, but they may have mixed the theoretical knowledge they obtained during their four-year programme and the practical part that they have to go through before they start teaching. This also refers to a gap that has to be filled through a real practicum through which these student teachers can observe experienced teachers teach, and they

can practice teaching themselves. So, it was very important for the researcher to make sure that student teachers do not confuse the two concepts, meaning that they have to know the difference between being prepared theoretically and being prepared practically. Also, although there have been general and positive perceptions of preparedness to teach English among student teachers that they will be able to start teaching English after their graduation, these perceptions have begun to weaken through the course of study. For example, in the questionnaire, they indicated positive perceptions of preparedness to start teaching, but these positive perceptions of preparedness have gradually begun to fade away after they sat for the TKT and after they attended the focus group discussions. This may also mean that these student teachers may have begun to think critically about their preparedness in the light of other perspectives and experiences that contradict their perceptions of preparedness. This kind of critical thinking may imply that these student teachers may have started their transformation process that involves several phases as per Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory.

Besides, it has to be noted that although these student teachers have already studied a lot of linguistic courses as well as translation courses that would prepare them theoretically and linguistically, they still need further courses to enhance their overall linguistic competence. This would imply, inter alia, more exposure to the target language in authentic scenarios. On the other hand, these student teachers have not studied any courses that teach them how to teach specific skills. Moreover, these student teachers have not been given a chance to observe expert teacher teaching, nor have they been given a chance to teach. These are critical disabling factors that impede the acquisition of professional teaching competence.

The four interviewees perceive the English language programme and the way student teachers are prepared differently and from a practitioners' perspectives. For instance, although the four interviewees have varying perceptions about the student teachers' linguistic competence, they

agree that the English language programme does not prepare student teachers pedagogically and practically to teach English after their graduation. About three out of the four interviewees agree that student teachers should study for a certificate or diploma to enable them to teach English before they start teaching.

Overall, this chapter discussed student teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach English after graduation and their real preparedness as the four interviewees perceive it based on their TKT results. The following chapter will discuss the conclusions drawn from this study, and it will answer the research questions. It will discuss the implications for stakeholders, the limitations, and the philosophical contributions. It will also offer suggestions and make recommendations.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to integrate the issues raised in the previous chapters and to provide answers to the research questions that were asked at the beginning of this study. This study was mainly set to evaluate year-four students' preparedness to teach English as a foreign language after graduation from an English Language and Translation Department at a Saudi Arabian University. This chapter also provides an account of the practical and theoretical implications for all the stakeholders in the field of teaching English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia. The study's findings should also be of importance to English language and translation programmes at other Saudi Arabian Universities. Additionally, this chapter makes recommendations and suggests areas for future research.

7.2 A Brief Overview of Previous Chapters

This study started with the introduction chapter, which presented the statement of the problem, the aims of the study, the rationale for conducting such an investigation, the theoretical approach, the objectives and the research questions. Chapter One also gave details about the study's context, education in Saudi Arabia, the teacher education programmes in Saudi universities and the English Language Programme background where this study was carried out. In addition, it provided a complete account of the recruitment requirements, criteria and standards of Saudi EFL teachers determined by the Saudi Ministry of Education and by Saudi Universities.

The literature review chapter (Chapter Two) provided a detailed background for this study. First, it outlined the relevant literature to see how other researchers and scholars – in the Saudi EFL context – thought about, commented on and researched this complicated phenomenon (perceptions

of preparedness and preparedness to teach English) under scrutiny. Secondly, it provided an overview of the teacher education programmes in Saudi Arabia, how they function, and how they are supposed to be operating. This was followed by the importance of old and current learning theories and approaches and the methods of teaching EFL for EFL Saudi teachers. The last section of this chapter discussed the status of English language competency in Saudi Arabia in general.

Chapter Three discussed philosophies and theories that informed this study. It showed how this study was conducted under the umbrella of Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory. It also discussed this study's conceptual framework guided by Mezirow's transformative learning theory.

Chapter Four discussed the methods employed in this study. It began with the primary aim, objectives and questions of this study. This was followed by the theoretical underpinnings that informed the research paradigm, Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory, and the mixed-method approach that underpin and are drawn on in this study. Moreover, this chapter provided details about the interpretive paradigm – with reference to its ontological, epistemological, axiological and methodological perspectives and rulings - and how it was used to inform and underpin this case study. It also reviewed the research approach, its design, and the research setting of this study. Moreover, this chapter gave details concerning the participants involved in this study and its duration. In addition, this chapter discussed the data-collection techniques, the data collection procedures and the ways of analysing these data. Likewise, a section on ensuring data quality in – quantitative and qualitative data collection - was discussed in detail. Lastly, this chapter discussed the limitations of this study.

Chapter Five presented the findings of this study. First, it introduced the qualitatively dominant questionnaire findings from its four sections. Then, this chapter discussed the quantitative part – the Cambridge TKT– which measured the teaching ability and some English language aspects of

the student participants. This was followed by the two focus group discussions conducted with the student participants from an English Language and Translation Department in a Saudi university. The fourth section presented the findings of the four interviews with two EFL expert teachers and two professors from the English Language and Translation Department.

Chapter Six critically examined the most pertinent findings of the four methods used for collecting data: the dominant qualitatively questionnaire, the TKT, the focus group discussions, as well as the four interviews with two EFL teachers and the two professors. A better understanding of EFL prospective teachers' preparation provided by their English education programmes and their perceptions of preparedness to teach English after graduation was one of the most prominent features in this chapter. This feature emerged and was shaped by synthesizing data -triangulation – from various sources and perspectives. Triangulation and coding techniques strengthened the credibility of the study's conclusions and the inquiry method. Moreover, the results of this study were analysed in accordance with Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory.

7.3 Restatement of and Answers to the Research Questions

This section provides answers to the research questions presented at the outset of this study. These research questions are restated and answered below:

- **Main Question:**

    Are final-year Saudi Arabian student teachers (English Major) prepared to teach EFL after graduation?

Most year-four student teachers were found to be unprepared linguistically and pedagogically to start teaching English as a foreign language after graduation. Although most of them showed positive perceptions of preparedness to teach English, they still lacked the practical side that helps them practise teaching under the supervision of experienced teachers. They also need methodology

courses to teach them how to teach. In addition, they need to shadow experienced teachers in classes to learn from them how to teach and how to manage their classes. Additionally, even though a few of these student teachers were found to be linguistically qualified to start teaching, they were found to be pedagogically and academically unprepared to begin teaching after they graduate.

Why or why not?

These student teachers are not linguistically prepared sufficiently to start teaching after their graduation because they still need courses to enhance their general linguistic ability as well as some specific language skills like reading, writing, listening and speaking. Also, most of these student teachers' linguistic competencies were found to range from level Pre-A1 to Level B1 as per the international standards of the CEFR criteria. These levels are inadequate linguistic preparation to start teaching as they still lack the language competence that enables them to teach and to be role models for their students.

These student teachers' teaching ability was assessed via the TKT that was given to them as a means of evaluating their teaching ability. Most of them were found to fall into Band 2 of the TKT. This Band means that their teaching knowledge -which represents the theoretical side - is satisfactory, but they still lack the practical component through which they could learn how to teach and how to manage their classes effectively. Moreover, these student teachers were not given any kind of practical teaching opportunities where they could observe and shadow experienced teachers while they are teaching, nor were they given an opportunity to teach under the supervision of experienced teachers. Besides, these student teachers are not pedagogically prepared because most of what they study in their English language programme relates to the English language, its literature and Arabic and English translation courses. It is also important to mention that these year-four student teachers studied one language methods course, which is inadequate for preparing them to be efficient teachers.

- **Sub-questions:**

1. *Does the teacher programme at a University in Saudi Arabia produce competent teachers of English as a foreign language? Why, or why not?*

The English language programme does not produce competent teachers of English as a foreign language for many reasons. First, they do not provide students with enough language courses to prepare them linguistically to fulfil EFL teachers' language requirements. Besides, these English language programmes do not prepare their students academically or pedagogically to become effective EFL teachers. These English language programmes provide their students with one course in teaching methods which is not enough for them to start teaching after graduation. Also, these language programmes do not give their students the chance to practice teaching (teaching practicum), even for a short period. Although these programmes are mainly designed to produce translators, interpreters and language teachers as per their set objectives, their primary concentration is on translation, not on language teaching and its methodology.

2. *How do final-year student teachers feel about their preparedness to teach EFL? Why do they have these perceptions?*

Most year-four student teachers perceive themselves as being prepared to begin teaching after graduation. However, some still perceive themselves as being unprepared to start teaching once they graduate. These student teachers ascribed their relative preparedness to teach to many reasons. For example, most of the student teachers who think they are prepared to start teaching ascribe their preparedness to their teachers, who were role models of teachers who helped them form positive perceptions of preparedness to teach. Other students attribute their perceptions of preparedness for teaching to the courses they studied during the four-year programme. They think these courses are enough to prepare them to commence teaching after graduation. Other students

believe that free apps and online video games are beyond their language ability and consequently they are unable to benefit from them in their preparation to teach.

3. ***What are the perceptions of EFL teachers regarding the preparedness of graduate students to teach English? Why do they have these perceptions?***

There was consensus among the four interviewees (the two EFL expert teachers from the ELC and the two professors from the DLT) that they perceived year-four students and novice teachers as not being fully prepared to teach English as a foreign language. Although two interviewees perceive some of the year-four students and novice teachers as being prepared linguistically (At native and near-native speaker level), they perceive most of them as being unprepared pedagogically to begin teaching. The four interviewees stated many reasons for having such perceptions about the year-four student teachers' and their counterparts' (novice teachers) unpreparedness to begin teaching. For example, one of the interviewees thought that the English language programme's focus is not on teaching, but its focus is instead on language and translation. However, most of the interviewees felt that the English language programme had not adequately prepared its students to start teaching as soon as they graduate. Almost all interviewees suggested a training programme or a further development programme in which these year-four students and novice teachers can be trained on how to teach and practice teaching as well. Consequently, their suggestions ranged from doing a certificate or a diploma like Cambridge CELTA and DELTA or their equivalents to volunteer for a semester or two to observe and shadow other experienced teachers' classes. Besides, they suggested that a certificate can be created (as part of the English language programmes) to teach these year-four students and novice graduates how to teach and how to manage their classes.

7.4 Recommendations

Firstly, criteria and standards of recruiting EFL teachers by the Saudi Ministry of Education should be revised as they are built on recruiting EFL teachers who only have a B.A. in English. Other criteria and standards should be added to the recruitment of EFL teachers. For example, the researcher has developed the following proposed model to recruit EFL teachers and to serve as the basis and criteria against which EFL teachers should be assessed, recruited or prepared for recruitment:

Prospective Teachers' Level of Competency	Language Competency			Pedagogical Competency	
	CEFR Standards	IELTS Band out of 9	TOEFL Score out of 120	TKT Bands	Practicum Observation feedback
Competent prospective teachers (Expert)	C2	8 - 9	110 - 120	Band 4	91% -100%
Near-Competent prospective teachers (proficient)	C1	6.5 – 7.5	97 - 101	Band 3	80% - 90%
Normal prospective teachers (Developing)	B1/B2	4 – 6	31 - 78	Band 2	50% - 79%
Less than average (Foundation) needs linguistic improvement	A1/A2	Less than 4 (1 – 3.5)	0 - 30	Band 1	

Table 14: Proposed model for recruiting and assessing EFL Saudi teachers

This model has been carefully designed. For instance, the correlation between the CEFR levels and the IELTS band descriptors was adopted from the Cambridge English website. The correlation between the IELTS band score and TOEFL scores has been adapted from the ETS website. The correlation between the CEFR levels and the TKT band descriptors has been reached through the comparison between Cambridge English Teaching Framework from the Cambridge English website (November 2, 2021); and the TKT band descriptors from the same site.

Secondly, English language programmes should provide courses for preparing teachers to teach if they really intend to produce competent EFL teachers who are prepared academically, pedagogically and practically. Prospective teachers can be prepared pedagogically if all learning theories, including Mezirow's transformative learning theory, Krashen's language acquisition theories etc., are incorporated in these programmes' syllabi. Also, these would-be teachers can be prepared academically if all the current, as well as the old teaching methods, were incorporated into the English language programmes syllabi. Although these learning theories and teaching methods have their pros and cons, would-be or prospective teachers would be prepared theoretically and pedagogically through knowing the implications of these theories and methods in the field of teaching.

Thirdly, due attention should also be given to the distribution of the language skills that should be mastered during the four years of study. For example, if these English language programmes have been designed primarily to produce EFL teachers in addition to language translators and interpreters, then a balance should be struck between the language courses, the translation courses and the language teaching courses. This means courses in linguistics and literature should not outweigh courses in translation and language teaching.

Fourthly, the English language programme at the Faculty of Arts with its four year duration is not sufficient for EFL teachers' training, so a diploma or a certification programme should be created by the Faculty of Education to compensate for the lack of teaching methods and the teaching practice component (practicum).

Fifthly, EFL teachers should be recruited on the basis that they have an accredited degree plus any practical certification like CELTA or DELTA or their equivalents and considerable experience in teaching.

Sixthly, recruiting EFL teachers should take into account the candidates' practical experience, not only their qualifications. From practitioner's perspective, we used to interview candidates who had an M.A. or a PhD in teaching, but they did not know how to teach because they did not practice teaching or they had very limited experience of teaching.

Seventhly, teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Programme Standards should be written and introduced into the TESL taking account of the Saudi context. These standards should copy and follow the internationally accepted TESL standards like the ones created by the American NCATE (2008), the Department of Education in South Africa (2000), and the criteria proposed by Deacon in 2012. Besides this, Cambridge English Teaching Framework (2018) can be adopted and adapted to suit the TEFL Saudi context. For example, the Cambridge framework competency statements, framework components and English Teaching Framework – at the heart of professional development can also be used as a guide for creating the Saudi TESL standards. This teaching framework can be obtained from the Cambridge English website.

In addition, students who want to join the English Language and Translation Departments have to prove their language ability by providing a valid IELTS Band score of 4.5 out of 9 or a TOEFL score of 60 out of 120 or at least level B1 as per the CEFR levels. This means their language proficiency would not be less than 50 per cent as per these assessment tools. Also, these students should not be allowed to graduate from these language programmes unless they provide further proof of their language competence which should not be less than the C1 level of the CEFR or Band 6.5 at the IELTS, or its TOEFL equivalent: 97 out 120.

Finally, as a lecturer at the research site, the lessons I have learnt from this study are manifold. For example, student teachers can be given a placement test that streams them into levels as per the CEFR standards. The results of such a test would inform decision-makers at the DLT about the English language competency of those who should join the DLT. For instance, students who score

a B2 band or above can be allowed to join the DLT. However, students who score less than B2 band can be given courses that would raise their level to B2. Such courses are taught at the ELC at the same University, so low-level students (below B2) can study these courses there before they are enrolled in the DLT. An alternative is that (as mentioned above) students should not be allowed to join the DLT unless they submit proof (such as TOEFL or IELTS) to show their language competency.

Moreover, student teachers should be allowed to observe and shadow classes at the ELC- where English is taught as a foreign language- starting from their first year. They may also be assinged to teach classes (during the third and fourth years) at the ELC under the supervision of qualified and experienced teachers there.

7.5 Implications for Policy Makers

The scholarship, the findings, and the conclusions presented in this study suggest that the English Language Departments' approach in Saudi Arabia with regard to preparing EFL teachers to commence teaching after their graduation is in urgent need of revision. For instance, new accreditation standards for the current English language programmes and any teacher education programmes in Saudi Arabia need to be developed so that such programmes can cope with the international standards of similar programmes around the world. Also, pre-university EFL syllabi and assessment methods need revision because many of the students who join the University after high school are weak in English due to the way they were taught and assessed. This notion was supported by Siddiek (as cited in Kadwa & Sheik (2021: p. 2). Kadwa & Sheik maintained that "even though English is taught at high schools in Saudi Arabia, the lack of standardized tests of English during the high school phase (Siddiek, 2011) means that students' English-language competencies cannot be accurately established." They also attributed students' inability to cope with the level of English in their first year of the University to the lack of those standardised tests

of English during the high school stage or as an exit tool of assessment. If this is the case with all students who join University departments after high school, it is crucial to note that students who join English language programmes should be at least of a better and acceptable English language level.

Due to the low standards of achievement at TOEFL, IELTS and PISA, English has to be taught in the early school stages, starting from pre-school, not just from grade four. Also, graded readers can be incorporated through the primary, intermediate and secondary phases. For example, a level per each year can be taught till they complete all the six levels (from Pre- A1 to C1) through the three school phases before they join the University. It is worth mentioning that these proposed levels can be taught concurrently with the Ministry of Education's syllabi. It is hoped that these graded readers can raise Saudi students' language competency before they join the university, whether at a Saudi University or a foreign university, which require an acceptable score at the TOEFL or IELTS. Besides, this graded readers' proposal is in line with Krashen's Conduit or Reading Hypothesis proposed in 2018. This Conduit or Reading Hypothesis is an extension and 'a special case' of the Comprehensible Input (CI) Hypothesis, which suggests that students acquire languages in only one way. This only way occurs when students understand messages and are exposed to comprehensible input. However, this input has to be extremely interesting and so compelling that the acquirers or students do not even notice that they are learning or studying a foreign or a second language. Krashen's Conduit Hypothesis (2018) is established on the claim that there are three stages for developing an academic competence in a language. These stages are:

A. Stage One: Stories

Krashen maintains that read-alouds and hearing stories build acquirers' language competence as they pave the way for a context in which linguistic competency can make reading more understandable. Also, read-alouds and hearing stories help students develop an interest in reading

books and stories. He also contends that this competence is grasped as long as acquirers hear stories.

B. Stage Two: Self-Selected recreational reading

This stage consists of massive and self-selected voluntary reading, which provides "the competence and knowledge that makes academic reading more comprehensible." This kind of reading is typically fiction which constructs "a bridge between conversational language and academic language" (Krashen, 2018: p. 2).

C. Stage Three: Narrow Academic Reading

Stage three is mainly based on stage 2 because stage 2 gives the linguistic and knowledge background for this stage involving, Narrow Academic Reading. It is called narrow academic reading because academic competence comes from reading many limited literary texts that appeal to the readers.

Finally, a training institution or body should be created to provide in-service training for the current EFL Saudi teachers at all stages, from pre-school to high school. Most of these teachers are graduates of the current English language programmes that did not fully prepare them to teach effectively.

Concerning the teaching competence of year-four students, this study questions the ethics behind restricting most of the courses taught at the English language programme to language and translation courses and neglecting teaching methodology courses, negatively affecting their language and teaching competence. These English language programmes are supposed to help their students graduate as language translators as well as EFL teachers, so due attention should be given to such programmes to work and function according to international standards.

Students join Universities with varying abilities, and they graduate with differing capabilities and competencies, so set standards should be provided concerning the criteria against which students can enter and graduate from these Universities.

7.6 Implications for Curriculum Designers

Given that the English language programmes have not been properly designed to produce efficient EFL teachers, it is mandatory to revise their curriculum in light of other international successful EFL programmes. For example, course designers should determine a balance between the language skills that have to be taught to students in these programmes so that every skill is given the same amount of time compared to the others. This means that these programmes need a one size fits all approach in designing suitable materials, meaning that these students have to study several specific language courses to be able to graduate. For instance, if these students are to study a writing course, this course must be graded in difficulty. Pedagogically and academically, course designers should incorporate all learning theories of learning and acquisition, plus all teaching English methods as a second or a foreign language in their course designs. These course designers may also use the available ESL and EFL methodology books written by famous writers in the TESL or TEFL field. For example, books by Jermy Hammer like *The Practice of English Language Teaching (2007), Essential Teacher Knowledge: Core Concepts in English Language Teaching (2012) and the How to Teach…. series* can be incorporated into the English language programmes. Also, books by Penny Ur, like *100 Teaching Tips (2016), A Course in Language Teaching (1996)*, can also be added to the English language programmes' curriculum. Books by Diane Larsen-Freeman like *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching 3rd Edition (2021), The Grammar Book (2015) and An Introduction to Second Language Acquisition Research (1990)* can also be used to build a good curriculum for such programmes. Besides, curriculum designers can also use books by Scott Thornbury like *About Language: Tasks for Teachers of English (1997),*
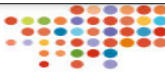
The CELTA Course: Trainee Book (2007), Scott Thornbury's 30 Language Teaching Methods (2017), Beyond the Sentence: Introducing Discourse Analysis (2005), The New A-Z of ELT: A dictionary of terms and concepts used in English Language Teaching (2017), "How to teach…..series" and Scott Thornbury's 101 Grammar Questions Pocket Editions: Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers (2019). Learning Teaching: The Essential Guide to English Language Teaching by Jim Scrivener (1994) and his "How to teach…." series can be used to establish an excellent EFL curriculum for English education programmes. Note that this is not an exhaustive sample. In addition, curriculum designers need to design curricula that can match the international standards of teaching English as a second or foreign language.

7.7 Implications for EFL Publishers

One of the positive aspects in selecting the TKT assessing and evaluating year-four students' teaching ability and some linguistic aspects at the English language programme wherein this study was conducted was the fact that the TKT test is used internationally to assess EFL teachers teaching and linguistic abilities.

Consequently, if all publishers consider providing institutions with level tests, pre- and post-placement tests along with their books and materials, there would not be a discrepancy between these level tests and placement tests, the course materials and the accredited tests like TOEFL, IELTS and TKT.

In so doing, these publishers need to scale or weigh their tests against other placement tests from other publishers or against internationally recognised tests such as the TOEFL, IELTS and CEFR standards. A good example of this scale or correlation can be seen in the following chart:

Figure 34: Q Skills for Success: Correlation to the international standards (Oxford University Press, 2012: p.1)

Although the English language programmes' courses should reflect the Saudi culture and its Islamic values and beliefs, these courses should also reflect the English language culture and its values. If the content incorporated the culture in the native countries of English like England, America, Australia and Canada, this would help students in these English language programmes reach the native-like competency or a native speaker level.

7.8 Implications for Student Teachers

Prospective teachers ought to know that the current English language programmes do not fully prepare them to be effective EFL teachers. These would-be teachers should understand that if these programmes have partially prepared them linguistically and pedagogically to start teaching after graduation, they are to be held accountable to develop themselves further, professionally before they start teaching. They can start with a kind of self-assessment that includes their language skills and teaching skills. For instance, they can assess their language by taking an IELTS or a TOEFL

exam to know how good they are at English. Also, they can undertake a TKT (with its three modules) as a means for evaluating their teaching skills. After they ensure that they are linguistically and pedagogically prepared, they can start practice teaching.

7.9 Implications for current EFL teachers

Current EFL teachers should know that the teacher education programmes they went through before they started teaching did not fully prepare them professionally for their current jobs. This suggestion is supported by Al-Osaimi's study (2014) that explored 60 EFL Saudi secondary school female teachers' level of teaching knowledge background by giving them a modified version of the TKT. She compared their TKT results with their class performance results. She found that these EFL secondary school teachers' teaching knowledge level is below average. She also found a very weak correlation between their teaching performance average (93.52%, with a mean score of 93.52) and their TKT results' average (47.8%, with a mean score of 11.95 out of 25). Surprisingly enough, these teachers' years of experience mean was 11.73 years of experience, and they are all B.A. graduates of the English Language and Translation Department of a Saudi university. This inadequacy indicates that the current teachers were not prepared well enough for their existing jobs, yet they have to be held accountable for their professional development.

7.10   Implications for MOI

Recruiting soon-to-be teachers (as per the MOE's set standards as discussed in the introductory chapter) would not benefit all the stakeholders. Although some would-be teachers are qualified linguistically, most of them are not qualified pedagogically. In other words, some of these student teachers' language ability is satisfactory, but when it comes to teaching, their teaching skills are not yet at the required standard. Consequently, recruitment policies and procedures should be reviewed carefully in light of the international standards for recruiting EFL teachers. For example,

most educational institutions worldwide require a degree in the English language plus a teaching certification like a CELTA or DELTA or their equivalent in addition to work experience.

7.11   Implications for Saudi Universities

English language programmes in the Faculties of Education at all Saudi Universities should be allowed to run again as they used to do in the past. This way, English major students would be given the opportunity to practice teaching for at least four months as they used to do in the past before they graduate. English language programmes in the Faculty of Arts should be modified to cater for graduating EFL teachers as well as language translators and interpreters. This could be done by adding more language courses as well as by teaching methodology courses. Also, a practical teaching component (teaching practicum) can be added to year-three and year-four students' curriculum to help them observe experienced teachers teaching and to practice teaching under the supervision of expert tutors. This practical component or teaching practicum should be designed professionally so that student teachers can practice teaching for four semesters, a day per week, during year three and year four of the English language programme. Also, this practicum should be conducted in real schools with real students. So, this practicum ought to be given a high priority if these English language programmes are intended to produce qualified teachers. This suggestion (of the four-semester practicum) may also apply to the teacher education programmes in the Faculties of Education in the event they are allowed to function again. Finally, this teaching practice would also help student teachers to "develop skills in student and classroom management, in meeting students' diverse learning needs, in recognizing multiple students' perspectives, and in grounding their understanding of what it meant to be a teacher 'for real'" (Busher et al., 2015: p. 1).

7.12   Philosophical Contributions

This study has some philosophical contributions. For example, the first contribution considers using the mixed method approach (triangulation) in TESL education research in the Saudi Arabian context and for the Middle East at large. The first theorist to triangulate methods was Denzin (1978), and he defined the term 'triangulation' "as the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" (p. 291). Denzin also thinks that "the sociologist should examine a problem from as many different methodological perspectives as possible" (p. 291). Besides, Jick (1979: p. 8 - 9) outlined the following benefits of triangulation as follows:

- It helps researchers to be more confident of their results;
- It promotes the development of creative ways of data collection;
- It can lead to thicker and richer data;
- It can lead to the synthesis or integration of theories; and
- It can uncover contradictions, and by virtue of its comprehensiveness, it may serve as the litmus test for competing theories.

Most studies focus on only one approach of analysis, whether it is quantitative or qualitative. The mixed-method approach, particularly in Saudi Arabia, is given a second priority to a single approach. For example, student teachers' perceptions (in this study) of preparedness to teach English as a foreign language should not have been considered accurate unless they were given the TKT. These two data collection tools incorporated both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This means one research approach would confirm or refute the findings of the other; one approach would show the flaws of the other. As per the TKT findings (the quantitative side) at this study, some of the student teachers' perceptions (through the qualitatively dominant questionnaire and the focus group discussions) of preparedness to start teaching have been proved to be inaccurate. Scores in the TKT revealed student teachers' actual preparedness to start teaching after graduation. Also, the qualitative data obtained from the four interviews (with the two EFL teachers and the two professors) were better able to explain student teachers' real preparedness

and the effectiveness of their English language programme. On the other hand, the qualitatively dominant questionnaire, the four interviews, and the focus group discussions explained and justified the pure numerical data drawn from the TKT results.

The second theoretical and practical contribution that this study introduced was to use the TKT to assess student teachers' teaching knowledge. Consequently, tests like TKT, or its American equivalent, the *Professional Teaching Knowledge* exam (PTK), can be used as assessment tools for measuring current teachers', prospective teachers' and novice teachers' teaching knowledge as a way of doing proper and objective research rather than depending only on subjective qualitative data.

The third philosophical contribution, which relates to the research field of teaching English as a foreign or second language in Saudi Arabia, the Middle East, and elsewhere is to base research on one of the learning theories or teaching methodologies. For example, research can be based on Mezirow's transformative learning theory or the European Bulding or Krashen's five hypotheses of language acquisition. This study drew on Mezirow's transformative learning, and its hypotheses have been tested positively by the end of this study.

The fourth and most important contribution is that this study started the spark in questioning the validity and effectiveness of the current English language programmes offered by the Faculties of Arts as well as the previous teacher preparation programmes offered by the Faculties of Education.

In addition, the fifth contribution is that this study is unique in questioning and investigating the perceptions of preparedness of year-four student teachers as well as their real preparedness to teach English after their graduation in a Saudi EFL context, so it (this study) can be used as a springboard for other studies to be conducted in the same way using the same or similar research methods.

7.13   Limitations

The first limitation of this study relates to the generalisation possibilities of its findings and results. Since the case-study design used in this study investigates a specific phenomenon or phenomena within its or their natural framework, any application of the findings or results in different or similar settings may not necessarily yield the desired or identical findings or results. In this regard, any future research on the same phenomenon or similar phenomena would have to acknowledge the similarities and differences between this study's setting, context and background compared to their research.

The issue of gender emerges as another limitation because this study used only male participants and a male researcher. The procedures, results, findings, and applications would likely be different using only a female researcher and female participants, a male researcher and female participants and vice versa. This also applies to research involving co-ed classes.

The third limitation is the issue of subjectivity. This study was carried out under the interpretive paradigm's umbrella, which is based on understanding the phenomenon as it is perceived from the individuals' subjective experiences or viewpoints. The findings, results and conclusions have also been interpreted according to the researcher's perspectives, assumptions, background, life experiences, and education. Consequently, this study could be biased except for the quantitative side presented through the TKT and the qualitatively dominant questionnaire.

Research or experimenter bias is the researchers' tendency to see what they expect to see or what they want to see. Sometimes researchers interpret findings and draw conclusions (about the group being investigated) using their prior knowledge or expectations or even their subjective emotions. Although the two issues of indexicality and reflexivity have been addressed by Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007), research bias cannot be avoided. Additionally, it is not easy to verify the researcher's interpretations because every researcher may interpret his/her findings and draw

conclusions in a different way from the same study. Thus, selectivity through this study has to be recognised as one of the limitations.

7.14   Suggestions for Future Studies

Firstly, it is suggested that researchers in the EFL Saudi context or any EFL or ESL context worldwide use the three modules of the TKT if they try to assess the teaching knowledge of would-be teachers, novice teachers or current teachers. Also, these researchers may use old TOEFL or IELTS exams to evaluate EFL or ESL teachers' language competence.

Secondly, this study has theoretically and practically proved that most of the current EFL prospective teachers, novice teachers and existing teachers have not been well-prepared linguistically and pedagogically. This lack of preparedness has been confirmed by exploring year-four student teachers' perceptions, two EFL experts' perceptions and two professors' perceptions. Consequently, other studies may focus on other factors beyond this prevailing lack of preparedness among these teachers. For example, they (researchers) may focus on factors such as the content these teachers study in the English language preparation programmes, the teachers at these programmes and any other cultural or social factors that may affect their preparedness.

Thirdly, researchers may focus on the pre-university stages and how students are linguistically prepared before they join University. Consequently, a longitudinal study may be conducted that investigate the primary, intermediate and secondary school phases. This study may explore the syllabi they study, the ways they are assessed, the teachers who teach these stages so as to assess the whole EFL process and to suggest ways to improve these phases in line with the international standards.

Fourthly, another longitudinal study may investigate the assessment methods in the four-year English language programme and whether these assessment methods correlate with students' linguistic and professional preparedness or not.

Fifthly, due to this study's limitation as being gender-biased, a replica study may be carried out on a female campus of any English language programme at an appropriate Saudi Arabian University. The results of such a replica study would greatly assist our understanding of the perceptions of preparedness and the actual preparedness of year-four students in the English language programme at the Saudi University where this study was conducted. Additionally, this replica study would serve as the basis for more generalised results and conclusions because most qualitatively-dominant studies (like this study) are after transferability rather than generalisation.

Most importantly, future researchers are advised to design a new placement test for students who would like to join the English language programmes, taking into account this study's findings. This placement test has to be piloted to test the effectiveness of the pre-university phases and stream students into levels as per their scores in this test. Thus, high school graduates would not be allowed to join these programmes unless they achieve a certain level of proficiency.

Finally, most researchers (in the Saudi EFL context) have not based their research on language learning and acquisition theories and hypotheses, and they have not established their studies according to any specific research paradigm. So, it is recommended that EFL future researchers in the Saudi context base their research on language learning and acquisition theories, adopting a specific research paradigm. Also, these researchers are advised to build research using the mixed-method approach, which is said to yield better results than a one-way or a single approach (Waysman and Savaya: 1997; Grafton et al.: 2011).

In addition to the research suggestions mentioned above, researchers should find the appendices section especially valuable as it includes the questionnaire's procedures and questions, the used TKT with its bubble sheet and answer key. This section also contains the focus group discussion transcripts, the interview procedure and questions. This section also includes the forms for

permission to carry out this study at a specific institution as well as the consent forms for both student participants and teacher participants.

7.15   Conclusion

Through exploring student teachers' perceptions of preparedness and their real preparedness at an English language programme at a Saudi Arabian University, this study should broaden our understanding of how these student teachers are prepared linguistically and professionally. It also should also broaden our understanding of how these English language programmes are able to bridge the gap in preparing student teachers to start teaching as a foreign language after their graduation. This study was established to seek a better and deeper understanding and insight into student teachers' perceptions of preparedness and their real preparedness to teach English after graduation. This deep understanding could have been achieved through employing research methods that included both qualitative and quantitative approaches using the interpretive paradigm and Mezirow's Transformative Learning theory to underpin and draw on this study.

Furthermore, this study was conducted in keeping with the prevailing research in teaching English as a foreign language, one which views EFL teachers as capable of teaching if they are well-prepared linguistically and professionally.

The philosophical assumptions and the research methods and approaches used allowed for the demonstration of the numerous complex layers of data to be contextualised systematically. One of the critical features of this study is the manner in which this thesis was designed. Pertinent literature was used to reach a consensus that most English major student teachers, EFL novice teachers and current EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia have not been prepared adequately either linguistically or professionally. Also, relevant literature was used as a guide for evaluating year-four students' (prospective teachers) teaching knowledge and teaching skills by using module one of the TKT which is used internationally to assess and evaluate EFL and ESL teachers' teaching

competencies before they start teaching. This Cambridge test (TKT) helped to determine year-four students' actual teaching competencies in addition to their perceptions of their teaching skills and their preparedness to start teaching.

In terms of the five features of an exemplary case study advocated by Yin (2014), this study is significant in that it deals with a subject of national importance in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It deals with teaching one of the most important subjects that serves as the foundation of studying other subjects in English like math and science in language schools. It also serves as the basis for studying subjects that are taught in English at the University level as the medium of instruction is English. Finally, it prepares students for social and work engagements internationally in places where English is the lingua franca.

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التعليم النظامي وغير النظامي في المملكة العربية السعودية بين الماضي والحاضر / تأليف ابراهيم محمد ابراهيم

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9. Appendices (Cranton, 2002) (Cranton, 2002)

9.1 Questionnaire

<div align="center">

Final-Year Student Teachers' Perceived Preparedness to teach EFL.
QUESTIONNAIRE

</div>

The aim of this study is to investigate final-year student teachers' preparedness to teach English as a foreign language and to find out what shapes their perceptions of preparedness. This questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. It consists of seven pages and is completely voluntary. All the information you provide will be kept confidential and used only for the purpose of this study.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

This section contains questions about you and your education. In responding to the questions, please tick (✓) the appropriate box.

1. What is your gender?

   Female ☐   Male ☐

2. What is your nationality?

   Saudi ☐   Other ☐

   If you check 'Other', please write your nationality here : _____

3. How old are you?

   Under 21 ☐   22-25 ☐   26-30 ☐   30+ ☐

4. What is your home language?

   Arabic ☐   Urdu ☐   English ☐   Hindi ☐

If you feel you do not fit into these categories, please indicate a category that you feel you

fit into: _____

5. Which language do you prefer communicating in?

   Arabic ☐   English ☐

   If you feel you do not fit into these categories, please indicate a category that you feel you

   fit into: _____

6. What type of secondary school did you attend?

   State (governmental) school ☐   Private school ☐

   If you feel you do not fit into these categories, please indicate a category that you feel you fit

   into: _____

SECTION B: TEACHING SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF ENGLISH

This section requires you to indicate your perceived preparedness (how well you THINK you are prepared) to teach specific aspects of the English curriculum.

How do you feel about teaching:	Tick (✓) the appropriate box in each line			
	Not at all prepared	Somewhat prepared	Well prepared	Very well prepared
1. Grammar	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Reading Comprehension	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Listening	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Writing paragraphs and short essays	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Short stories and abridged classics	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Speaking	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Vocabulary	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION C: GENERAL ASPECTS OF TEACHING

This section requires you to indicate your perceived preparedness (how well you THINK you are prepared) for various aspects <u>related to the English classroom</u>.

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#	How do you feel about:	Tick (✓) the appropriate box in each line			
		Not at all prepared	Somewhat prepared	Well prepared	Very well prepared
1	Lesson planning and its design	☐	☐	☐	☐
2	Dealing with students of varying abilities and learning styles	☐	☐	☐	☐
3	Motivating students and maximising learning	☐	☐	☐	☐
4	Having repertoire of teaching methods and teaching styles	☐	☐	☐	☐
5	Managing students' discipline in a practical way	☐	☐	☐	☐
6	Understanding students' cultural backgrounds and values	☐	☐	☐	☐
7	Being enthusiastic, confident and passionate about teaching	☐	☐	☐	☐
8	Using educational technology to support classroom instruction	☐	☐	☐	☐
9	Teaching in under-resourced schools	☐	☐	☐	☐
10	Developing learners' critical thinking	☐	☐	☐	☐
11	Encouraging all learners, despite diversity, to participate in the English classroom	☐	☐	☐	☐
12	Choosing appropriate texts for teaching various aspects of English	☐	☐	☐	☐
13	Setting tests and examinations	☐	☐	☐	☐
14	Marking learners' work	☐	☐	☐	☐
15	Providing effective feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION D: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

8. At this moment, do you think you are adequately prepared to teach English next year?

   Why or why not?

   _____

[318]

_____

_____

9. What aspect of English teaching (as listed in SECTION B) do you feel you are:

2.1. Most prepared for? _____

2.2. What or who influenced this feeling of preparedness in this aspect? Briefly

explain. (E.g., A course? A teacher/lecturer/tutor?)

_____

_____

_____

3. What aspect of English teaching (as listed in SECTION B) do you feel you are:

3.1. Least prepared for? _____

3.2. What or who influenced this feeling of preparedness in this aspect? Briefly

explain. (E.g., A course? A teacher/lecturer/tutor?)

_____

_____

_____

4. In approximately 10 sentences, explain how you feel about your Bachelor of English

Language and Translation degree in terms of preparing you to teach EFL?

You may use these questions to guide you:

What were the most effective courses or subjects during your BA? Why? How did you find

them useful?

How did they affect your feelings of preparedness to teach English?

What were the least effective courses or subjects during your BA? Why?

How did they affect your feelings of preparedness to teach English?

Do you think you need any further studies to enhance your level of English and your

teaching skills?

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5. How relevant are the subjects in the Bachelor of Education programme ? Do you think you will be able to apply skills learnt in the subjects in your classroom?

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6. If you were in charge of a Teacher Education programme, what would you add/change to increase the level of preparedness of teachers of English?

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7. Do you have any other comments regarding your thoughts on your preparedness to teach English?

_____

9.2 TKT (Teaching Knowledge Test)

Cambridge English

TKT

Teaching Knowledge Test

TEACHING KNOWLEDGE TEST
MODULE 1

Language and background to language learning and teaching

SAMPLE PAPER 4

Time   1 hour 20 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Do not open this question paper until you are told to do so.

Write your name, centre number and candidate number on your answer sheet if they are not already there.

Read the instructions for each part of the paper carefully.

Answer all the questions.

Read the instructions on the answer sheet.

Mark your answers on the answer sheet. Use a pencil.

You **must** complete the answer sheet within the time limit.

At the end of the test, hand in both this question paper and your answer sheet.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

There are 80 questions in this paper.

Each question carries one mark.

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For questions **1 – 7**, read the text. Match the underlined examples in the text with the grammatical terms listed **A – H**.

Mark the correct letter (**A – H**) on your answer sheet.

There is one extra option which you do not need to use.

Grammatical terms

A	conjunction
B	preposition
C	adverb
D	superlative adjective
E	object pronoun
F	demonstrative adjective
G	possessive adjective
H	demonstrative pronoun

Text

For me the **(1)** best thing about the weekend is that I don't have to go to work. I like **(2)** my job but I have to spend all day in an office and I'm someone who loves being outside. Another good thing about the weekend is **(3)** that I don't have to get up at half past six every day. It isn't **(4)** too bad in summer but I hate **(5)** it in winter when it's dark in the morning. **(6)** That's the time when I dream about moving away from **(7)** this country to somewhere light and bright.

For questions **8 – 13**, read the text. Match the underlined words or phrases in the text with the lexical terms listed **A – G**.

Mark the correct letter (**A – G**) on your answer sheet.

There is one extra option which you do not need to use.

Lexical terms

A	phrasal verb
B	compound noun
C	word with negative affix
D	compound adjective
E	word family
F	verb and noun collocation
G	noun with affix

Text

During his career, Sean Connery made over 70 films and became very rich. However, as a child **(8)** <u>growing up</u> in Scotland during the Great Depression in the 1930s, he was poor. He and his family were not **(9)** <u>unusual</u> in living in a two-roomed flat with no **(10)** <u>bathroom</u>. Sean left school at thirteen and did a variety of jobs to **(11)** <u>make money</u> including being a milkman and a **(12)** <u>builder</u>. Eventually he began acting and his role as the first James Bond made him **(13)** <u>well-known</u> all over the world.

Turn over ▶

4

For questions **14 – 19**, complete the sentences about the uses of adverbs with one of the three possible endings **A**, **B** or **C**.

Mark the correct letter (**A**, **B** or **C**) on your answer sheet.

---

14 'This is quite nice.' 'You're quite wrong.' These examples show that *quite* can be used

    A   to modify adverbs.
    B   to express a negative idea.
    C   to strengthen or weaken adjectives.

15 'This is the best book I've ever read.' In this sentence *ever* is used

    A   to give emphasis.
    B   to show there is only one of something.
    C   to show that the action has recently been completed.

16 'I have just been speaking to him.' In this sentence *just* is used

    A   to describe an unfinished action.
    B   to highlight when the action was done.
    C   to show a repeated action.

17 'I'd rather go somewhere else.' In this sentence *rather* is used because

    A   the speaker doesn't mind what he does.
    B   the speaker is saying that something is special.
    C   the speaker is making a polite suggestion.

18 'I can hardly see – it's so dark.' In this sentence *hardly* is used because

    A   the speaker is trying very hard to see.
    B   the speaker is unable to see.
    C   it is difficult for the speaker to see.

19 'Joe worked particularly well this month.' In this sentence *particularly* is used to

    A   show agreement with what Joe did.
    B   emphasise how well Joe worked.
    C   focus on when Joe worked well.

5

For questions **20 – 25**, match the underlined parts of the email with the functions listed **A – G**.

Mark the correct letter (**A – G**) on your answer sheet.

There is one extra option which you do not need to use.

Functions

A	expressing ability
B	making an offer
C	making a prediction
D	expressing intention
E	expressing possibility
F	making a request
G	expressing preference

Email

Dear Juan,

Thought I'd let you know **(20)** <u>I'm planning to come</u> to Chile next year and I'm hoping to visit you there! **(21)** <u>January is my first choice</u>, but I might stay with Mum then, so **(22)** <u>it could be</u> that I'll visit you in February instead.

Anyway, **(23)** <u>I'd be really grateful if you could share your knowledge</u>. What's the weather like in February? How much can I see in two weeks? **(24)** <u>I know how to check all this</u> on the internet, but it would be good to speak to someone who knows the country. By the way, **(25)** <u>would you like me to bring you anything special</u> from Britain?

Speak soon, I hope.

Frank

For questions **26 – 33**, look at the phonemic symbols and the three words listed **A**, **B** and **C**.

Choose the word which contains the sound matching the phonemic symbol.

Mark the correct letter (**A**, **B** or **C**) on your answer sheet.

---

26 /iː/

    A leave
    B wear
    C heard

27 /tʃ/

    A share
    B lots
    C question

28 /dʒ/

    A danger
    B cheap
    C nation

29 /uː/

    A but
    B new
    C book

30 /ʒ/

    A edge
    B pleasure
    C ocean

31 /θ/

    A this
    B father
    C teeth

32 /j/

    A   June
    B   university
    C   guest

33 /ŋ/

    A   night
    B   manager
    C   drink

For questions **34 – 40**, choose the best option (**A**, **B** or **C**) to complete each statement on speaking skills.

Mark the correct letter (**A**, **B** or **C**) on your answer sheet.

---

34 Adapting your speech to the listener can involve

- **A** giving attention to register.
- **B** making use of prompting.
- **C** politely correcting.

35 A common feature of speech which is not fluent is

- **A** hesitation.
- **B** encouragement.
- **C** turn taking.

36 Interactive speaking involves

- **A** developing a topic.
- **B** using a variety of language patterns.
- **C** exchanging ideas.

37 An example of self-correction is

- **A** No, what I actually said was…..
- **B** I mean coming *down* the stairs, sorry.
- **C** That's right. In other words, a lot of people think that…..

38 Trying to help the listener can involve

- **A** requesting clarification.
- **B** interrupting.
- **C** paraphrasing.

39 A speaker uses repetition to

- **A** explain things more simply when communication has broken down.
- **B** speed up the interaction process.
- **C** clarify things for a listener who has not heard properly.

40   Linking devices are important when

    A   giving a presentation to an audience.
    B   using corrected speech.
    C   communicating the meaning of individual words.

Turn over ►

For questions **41 – 45**, match the teacher's comments with the types of mistake listed **A**, **B** and **C**.

Mark the correct letter (**A**, **B** or **C**) on your answer sheet.

You will need to use some of the options more than once.

Types of mistake

A	developmental errors
B	L1 interference
C	slips

Teacher's comments

41   It's natural for all beginners to say things like *I goed home* instead of *I went home*.

42   Even though his level of English was good, the student was so excited yesterday that he made several mistakes which he wouldn't normally make.

43   This advanced student still has problems distinguishing between /ɒ/ and /□/. /ɒ/ doesn't exist in his language.

44   After we'd done the unit on comparatives using *more* several students started saying *more nicer*.

45   This intermediate level student did the written exercises on irregular verbs perfectly but she said *cutted* when she recorded the exercises. She was probably just a bit nervous.

For questions **46 – 50**, look at the learning strategies and the three learner activities **A**, **B** and **C**.

Two of the learner activities are examples of the learning strategy. One learner activity is **NOT**.

Mark the letter (**A**, **B** or **C**) which is **NOT** an example of the learning strategy on your answer sheet.

---

46 using a written reference resource to clarify meaning

    A   Learners check pronunciation of a new phrase in a dictionary.
    B   Learners check the register of a new phrase on the internet.
    C   Learners use examples on a worksheet to check understanding of a new phrase.

47 notetaking

    A   Learners record the main points from a lecture in writing.
    B   Learners make a mind map of what they have learned from a lesson.
    C   Learners complete gaps in a coursebook text.

48 organising work

    A   A learner categorises vocabulary into words she knows and doesn't know.
    B   A learner writes vocabulary quiz questions for his partner.
    C   A learner notes down important vocabulary under headings according to topic.

49 guessing meaning from context

    A   Learners use the intonation of a speaker in a recording to work out what he is feeling.
    B   Learners use a picture in a story to identify what a new word means.
    C   Learners use a picture dictionary to find out what a word in the title of a story means.

50 organising participation

    A   A group of learners agree a time limit for a speaking game.
    B   Learners discuss mistakes in a speaking game.
    C   Learners agree rules for taking turns to speak in a speaking game.

Turn over ►

For questions **51 – 55**, match the statements about first and second language learning with the categories listed **A**, **B** and **C**.

Mark the correct letter (**A**, **B** or **C**) on your answer sheet.

You will need to use some of the options more than once.

Categories

A	L1 learning
B	L2 learning in the classroom
C	Both

Statements about first and second language learning

51   There is always a strong social need for the learner to acquire the language.

52   It is necessary to process information you've heard.

53   Acquisition of the language always happens together with cognitive development.

54   The language isn't always an essential skill in the learner's life.

55   Many learners fail to become proficient users.

For questions **56 – 61**, match the teacher's actions with the techniques for presenting new language listed **A – G**.

Mark the correct letter (**A – G**) on your answer sheet.

There is one extra option which you do not need to use.

Techniques for presenting new language

A	encouraging prediction of target language
B	using a familiar text
C	drilling of language forms
D	concept checking
E	using a visual context
F	personalising a topic
G	giving a model for pronunciation

Teacher's actions

56 The teacher tells a favourite fairy story to introduce narrative tenses.

57 After the students have read a text about a person who used to live in New York, the teacher asks the students if the person still lives in New York.

58 The teacher repeats the words *walk* and *work*.

59 The teacher shows an interview with a singer and asks the students to identify five fillers the singer uses.

60 The teacher asks the students what sport they play.

61 The teacher asks the students to repeat some conditional sentences from a recording.

Turn over ►

For questions **62 – 68**, match the practice activities with the task types listed **A – H**.

Mark the correct letter (**A – H**) on your answer sheet.

There is one extra option which you do not need to use.

Task types

A	brainstorming
B	choral drill
C	jumbled sentence
D	rank ordering
E	role-play
F	survey
G	transformation drill
H	visualisation

Practice activities

62	You want to go out to visit the zoo. Your partner wants to stay at home. Try to persuade your partner to come with you.

63	Close your eyes and imagine you are walking in a forest. What animals do you see? What noises can you hear? What can you smell?

64	*Put these words in the right order to make questions* is colour a What zebra?

| 65 | *Listen to these animal names and say them together.* |

| 66 | Which of these animals is most useful to humans? Number them from most useful (1) to least useful (5).

rabbit   donkey   camel   sheep   elephant |

| 67 | Work with a partner. Write down the names of as many animals as you can. |

| 68 | Complete this table by asking your friends about animals they like and don't like |

Name	Animal he/she likes	Animal he/she doesn't like

Turn over ►

For questions **69 – 74**, match the features of lessons which students describe with the teaching approaches listed **A**, **B** and **C**.

Mark the correct letter (**A**, **B** or **C**) on your answer sheet.

You will need to use some of the options more than once.

Teaching approaches

A	Grammar-Translation
B	Total Physical Response
C	Lexical Approach

Features of lessons

69   We analyse the language, focusing especially on everyday expressions and learning their meanings.

70   We focus on understanding the rules of the structures in L2 reading passages.

71   We work a lot on collocation and this helps us to memorise common phrases.

72   In my class everyone speaks the same language, so our teacher often asks us to look at English texts and write them out in our own language.

73   Our teacher often tells us stories, and we listen or maybe mime parts of them.

74   We often do lots of exercises on different structures.

For questions **75 – 80**, match the assessment tasks with the descriptions of assessment listed **A – D**.

Mark the correct letter (**A – D**) on your answer sheet.

You will need to use some of the options more than once.

Descriptions of assessment

A	summative and objective
B	summative and subjective
C	formative and objective
D	formative and subjective

Assessment tasks

75 For their final test, students are given a picture and they talk about it. They are assessed on their ability to communicate.

76 Students write an article about leisure facilities in their area. The teacher gives comments later on layout and organisation, content and vocabulary and grammar.

77 Students read three texts on a topic they have studied on the course and do true/false and matching tasks.

78 Students do a vocabulary test at the end of every term on the words they have learnt. This term they have to match words with pictures.

79 Students do a multiple-choice diagnostic test which covers a range of grammar and vocabulary. The teacher then tells the students their main strengths and weaknesses.

80 As part of a monthly test, students write a composition. They then exchange compositions and choose comments from a list, to evaluate the writing. They then return it.

9.3 TKT answer key and answer Sheet...

Cambridge English

TKT

Teaching Knowledge Test

Answer Key: Module 1 Sample Paper 4			
Order	Key	Order	Key
1	D	41	A
2	G	42	C
3	A	43	B
4	C	44	A
5	E	45	C
6	H	46	A
7	F	47	C
8	A	48	B
9	C	49	C
10	B	50	B
11	F	51	A
12	G	52	C
13	D	53	A
14	C	54	B
15	A	55	B
16	B	56	B
17	C	57	D
18	C	58	G
19	B	59	E
20	D	60	F
21	G	61	C
22	E	62	E
23	F	63	H
24	A	64	C
25	B	65	B
26	A	66	D
27	C	67	A
28	A	68	F
29	B	69	C
30	B	70	A
31	C	71	C
32	B	72	A
33	C	73	B
34	A	74	A
35	A	75	B
36	C	76	D
37	B	77	A
38	C	78	A
39	C	79	C
40	A	80	D

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Sample OMR answer sheet

9.4 Questions for Focus Group Discussions with student teachers

Focus Group Discussions' Questions

Final-Year Student Teachers' Perceived Preparedness to Teach English

Introduction

Greetings colleagues and thank you for providing consent to participate in this study despite other responsibilities you may have. My name is Ahmed Elshamy, and I will be facilitating our conversation for the purpose of this research study. The discussion will include general questions regarding your TKT scores, and general questions about your perceived preparedness to teach English.

Please note that this focus group discussion will take approximately 45-60 minutes and will be

video-recorded to capture all aspects of the conversation, be it verbal or non-verbal. Kindly speak clearly when contributing to the conversation and respect one another. When one member is speaking, allow him or her to finish. Should you wish to add to what the speaker is saying, feel free to raise your hand. Each of you has a number so you remain anonymous but are still able to refer to one another the during conversation. It is important that we keep any schools or persons anonymous, so should you feel the need to refer to a place or a person, please do not use any names, but use phrases such as "my English lecturer" or "the school I studied English at last year" instead. If you have no questions, I will begin facilitating the conversation as I press the record button.

PART A:

1. What do you think of the TKT? Do you think it is beneficial? Why? Why not?
2. How do you feel about your results? Are you happy with them?
3. Do you think these results correlate with or are in line with what you studied during the English Language Programme? How?
4. Do you think you need any further study to improve your level of English? Why? Why not?
5. What about your teaching skills? Do you think the test results reflect your skills of teaching or do you need further studies like doing an MA, or a diploma or at least a certificate in teaching English as a foreign language?

PART B:

1. How do you feel about being an English Major student teacher? *Probe:* Do you enjoy it? Why/why not?
2. Do you think that the English Language programme, through its four years, prepared you well to speak English fluently like a native speaker?
3. What about writing? Can you write coherent and cohesive pieces of writing?
4. And reading? Can you read a variety of complex texts using the reading skills like previewing a text, skimming, and scanning?
5. Listening? Can you listen to a variety of accents and dialects as well as standard English?
6. What is your opinion about the Bachelor of Arts programme? *Probe:* Has it prepared you

enough for teaching English next year? What makes you say that?

7. In your opinion, which course or subject was the most influential regarding preparing you to teach English? Why?

8. In your opinion, which course or subject had the least influence on you? ***Follow-up question:*** How did it impact on your preparedness to teach English?

9. Do you think that you are prepared to teach these language aspects (Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening) at least the same way you learnt them? Why? Why not?

10. Use ONE word to express how you feel about yourself as a teacher of English at this point. ***Follow-up questions:*** Why did you choose this word? What does this word suggest about your opinion about your preparedness to teach English next year?

11. How do you feel about the way you have been assessed during the Bachelor of Arts programme? ***Probe:*** Was it in line with the theory you have learnt and your practical experiences? Did the types of assessment prepare you to assess your students next year?

12. How well are you prepared for implementing the theory around teaching English? ***Probe:*** Is there anything specific you learnt during the Bachelor of Arts programme that you can apply in real-life situations?

13. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

9.5 Questions for Interviews with EFL teachers at the ELC…………………………

Interview with EFL teachers

Dear EFL teacher,

Thank you for participating in this study. This interview investigates Saudi Arabian final-year student teachers' preparedness to teach English as a foreign language and would take approximately 1 hour of your time.

Please note:

All your responses will be kept CONFIDENTIAL and would only be used for research purposes. Your identity will not be shared with a third party. Your participation is voluntary, so you can withdraw at any time. A brief summary of the findings of the study will be given to you if you are interested. If you need any further explanation, you can contact the researcher at ahmedabd_99@yahoo.com.

Thank you

A. Biographical information (mark with 'X')
1. How long have you been teachers' interviewer and observer?

1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	More than 20 years

2. What is your gender?

Male	Female

3. What is your highest academic qualification?

BA	Hons/PGDE	MA	PhD

Questions for the interviewers and teachers' interviewers and observers?

12. You have interviewed hundreds of Saudi candidates so far. Have you ever interviewed any newly graduated candidates?

13. What do you think of their language ability in general?

14. Do you think they (newly graduates) are prepared to teach English as a foreign language? Why? Why not?

15. Do you think their program prepared them well to teach English?

16. Do you think they need any further training or study like doing a CELTA or DELTA to be able to teach English well? Why? Why not?

17. As a recruiter, if you hire one of these newly graduates, what do you think they need to be efficient teachers?

18. Have you ever observed any of these newly graduates' classes? What did you notice in general?

19. Are they able to teach the four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking)?

20. Which skill are they good at?

21. Which skill are they weak or poor at?

22. Do you have any other comments?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you

9.6 Questions for Interviews with two Professors at the DLT……………………………

Interview with professors teaching final year students.

Dear professor,

Thank you for participating in this study. This interview investigates Saudi Arabian final-year student teachers' preparedness to teach English as a foreign language and would take approximately 1 hour of your time.

Please note:

All your responses will be kept CONFIDENTIAL and would only be used for research purposes. Your identity will not be shared with a third party. Your participation is voluntary, so you can withdraw at any time. A brief summary of the findings of the study will be given to you if you are interested. If you need any further explanation, you can contact the researcher at ahmedabd_99@yahoo.com.

Thank you.

A. Biographical information (mark with 'X')
1. How long have you been working as a professor at the English Language Department (DLT)?

1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	More than 20 years

2. What is your gender?

Male	Female

3. What is your highest academic qualification?

BA	Hons/PGDE	MA	PhD

Questions for the professors who teach year four students (would-be teachers)

1. You have taught hundreds of year-four Saudi students so far. Have you ever thought of their language ability? I mean:

   A. When they speak, do they speak English fluently and accurately?

   B. When they write, do they write cohesive and coherent pieces of writing?

   C. When they read, do think they have the right reading skills that enable them to deal with a variety of texts?

D. What about their listening skill? can they comprehend different accents and dialects?

2. What about their teaching ability? Do you think they are prepared to teach English as a foreign language after they graduate? Why? Why not?

3. Do you think they will be able to teach the four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking)?

4. Which skill are they good at?

5. Which skill are they weak or poor at?

6. Have you ever observed any of these students teaching? What did you notice in general?

7. Do you think their programme prepared them well to teach English?

8. Do you think they need any further training or study like doing a CELTA or DELTA to be able to teach English well? Why? Why not?

9. If you were a recruiter, would you hire these students after they graduate? Why? Why not?

10. Do you have any other comments?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you.

9.7 Interview Informed Consent Form for Student teachers

Social Sciences, College of Humanities,
School of Education
University of KwaZulu-Natal,
Edgewood Campus,

Dear Participant

INFORMED CONSENT Form

My name is **Ahmed Abdelkader Elshamy**. I am a PhD candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus. The title of my research is: **An investigation into Saudi Arabian final-year student teachers' preparedness to teach English as a foreign language**. This study intends to investigate Saudi Arabian final-year student teachers' (English Major) preparedness to teach English as a foreign language in schools. It is envisioned that this study will inform curriculum designers and education policy makers of EFL teaching in Saudi Arabia. It will also give insight into the challenges Saudi EFL teachers face, if any and suggest possible solutions if required. I am interested in (interviewing you/ giving

you TKT Test/ having a focus group with you/ giving you a questionnaire to fill it in) you so as to share your experiences and observations on the subject matter.

Please note that:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your views in this interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- The interview will take about half an hour.
- The recording as well as other items associated with the interview will be held in a password-protected file accessible only to myself and my supervisors. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding and burning.
- If you agree to participate please sign the declaration attached to this statement (a separate sheet will be provided for signatures)

I can be contacted at my email: ahmedabd_99@yahoo.com, or on my mailto:213571311@stu.ukzn.ac.za ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉ My supervisor is **Professor Ayub Sheik** who is located at the School of Education, Edgewood Campus, Durban of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details: email sheika@ukzn.ac.za Phone number: +2731 260 3138. The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee contact details are as follows: Ms. Phumelele Ximba, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Research Office, Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za, Phone number +27312603587.

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

I, ……………………………………………., hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participate in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire. I understand the intention of the research. I hereby agree to participate.

If you consent / do not consent to have this interview/ focus group recorded, please indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not you are willing to allow the interview or the focus group to be recorded by the following equipment:

	willing	Not willing
Digital Audio Voice Recorder		

SIGNATURE OF CANDIDATE   DATE

9.8 EFL Teachers' and Professors' Interview Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

Dear Professor,

My name is **Ahmed Abdelkader Elshamy**. I am a PhD candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus. The title of my research is: **An investigation into Saudi Arabian final-year student teachers' preparedness to teach English as a foreign language**. This study intends to investigate Saudi Arabian final-year student teachers' (English Major) preparedness to teach English as a foreign language in schools. It is envisioned that this study will inform curriculum designers and education policy makers of EFL teaching in Saudi Arabia. It will also give insight into the challenges Saudi EFL teachers face, if any and suggest possible solutions if required.

I am interested in interviewing you so as to share your experiences and observations on the subject matter.

Please note that:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalised for taking such an action.
- Your views in this interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- The interview will take about half an hour.
- The recording as well as other items associated with the interview will be held in a password-protected file accessible only to myself and my supervisors. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding and burning.
- If you agree to participate, please sign the declaration attached to this statement (a separate sheet will be provided for signatures)

I can be contacted at my email: ahmedabd_99@yahoo.com, or on my mailto:213571311@stu.ukzn.ac.zacell phone: ███████ My supervisor is **Professor Ayub Sheik** who is located at the School of Education, Edgewood Campus, Durban of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details: email sheika@ukzn.ac.za Phone number: +2731 260 3138. The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee contact details are as follows:

MS Phumelele Ximba, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Research Office, Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za, Phone number +27312603587.

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

<div align="center">DECLARATION</div>

I, ……………………………………………, hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire. I understand the intention of the research. I hereby agree to participate.

I consent / do not consent to have this interview recorded (if applicable)

SIGNATURE OF PROFESSOR   DATE

9.9 Indemnity Form ………………………….

Indemnity form

LETTER TO THE HEAD OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

Ahmed Abdelkader Elshamy
English Language Center
Taibah University
Abyar Ali Campus
P.O: 344
Code: 41411
9/4/2018

Head of English Language and Translation Department
College of Arts and Humanities
Taibah University
P.O: 344

Code: 41411

Dear Professor Adil Alsobhy,

<u>Request to conduct a research with final-year students in your school</u>

I hereby request your permission to conduct a research titled: Saudi Arabian final-year student teachers' preparedness to teach English as a foreign language**: A case study of final-year students' (English Major) preparedness to teach English as a foreign language.**

This study intends to investigate Saudi Arabian final-year student teachers' (English Major) preparedness to teach English as a foreign language after graduation. It is envisioned that this study will inform curriculum designers and education policy makers of EFL teaching in Saudi Arabia. It will also give insight into the challenges Saudi EFL teachers face, if any and suggest possible solutions if required.

The study will be conducted in one section for a period of four to five hours in three meetings. The study will help student teachers to form their perceptions of preparedness to teach English and to find reasons beyond these perceptions. This study will also help me complete my PhD Degree with the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa.

Your school was chosen as a possible research site because after teaching English as a foreign language for more than 25 years, being head of testing for a year under your supervision; and being head of recruitment for more than three years, I understand the challenges that newly graduated candidates face when they are interviewed for a job.

The students' identities will remain anonymous, and they have a right to withdraw from the research at any time. The students will be given a questionnaire, given the TKT, and recorded in a focus group.

I look forward to contributing positively to your teaching and learning environment. Should you require more information on the research, please feel free to contact me on 0542685657 or my thesis supervisor Prof Ayub Sheik (University of KwaZulu-Natal: School of Language & Media, South Africa) on +2731 260 3138 or email him at Sheika@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you.
Yours sincerely
Mr. Ahmed Elshamy

INDEMNITY FROM THE HEAD OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND TRANSLATION DEPARTMENT

The permission is granted for research in my department.

Professor Adil Alsobhy

Signature

Indemnity approved from THE HEAD OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND TRANSLATION DEPARTME

LETTER TO THE HEAD OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

Ahmad Abdelkader Elcharny
English Language Center
Taibah University
Abyar Ali Campus
P.O: 344
Code: 41411
9/4/2018

Head of English Language and Translation Department
College of Arts and Humanities
Taibah University
P.O: 344
Code: 41411

Dear Professor Adil Alsobhy,

Request to conduct a research with final-year students in your school

I hereby request your permission to conduct a research titled: Saudi Arabian final-year student teachers' preparedness to teach English as a foreign language : A case study of final-year students' (English Major) preparedness to teach English as a foreign language.

This study intends to investigate Saudi Arabian final-year student teachers' (English Major) preparedness to teach English as a foreign language after graduation. It is envisioned that this study will inform curriculum designers and education policy makers of EFL teaching in Saudi Arabia. It will also give insight into the challenges Saudi EFL teachers face, if any and suggest possible solutions if required.

The study will be conducted in one section for a period of four to five hours in three meetings. The study will help student teachers to form their perceptions of preparedness to teach English and to find reasons beyond those perceptions. This study will also help me complete my PhD Degree with the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa.

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I look forward to contributing positively to your teaching and learning environment. Should you require more information on the research, please feel free to contact me on 0542685657 or my thesis supervisor Prof Ayub Sheik (University of KwaZulu-Natal: School of Language & Media, South Africa) on +2731 260 3138 or email him at Sheika@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you.
Yours sincerely,
Mr. Ahmad Elcharny

_____

INDEMNITY FROM THE HEAD OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND TRANSLATION DEPARTMENT

The permission is granted for research in my Department.

Professor Adil Alsobhy

Signature

9.10   Ethical Clearance

UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

11 February 2019

Mr Ahmed Abdelkader Mohammed Elshamy (218087107)
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mr Elshamy,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0007/019D
Project title: An investigation into Saudi Arabian final-year student teachers' preparedness to teach English as a foreign language

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 10 December 2018, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisor: Professor Ayub Sheik
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza
cc School Administrator: Mrs Sheryl Jeenarain

[351]

9.11   Editing Certificate

ASOKA ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITING

████████ ████████████████████████ ██ South Africa

CELL NO.: ████████████

DECLARATION

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE DISSERTATION ENTITLED

*An investigation into Saudi Arabian final-year student teachers'
preparedness to teach English as a foreign language*

Candidate: Elshamy AAM

HAS BEEN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITED.

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Prof. Dennis Schauffer, M.A.(Leeds), PhD, KwaZulu (Natal), TEFL(London), TITC Business English, Emeritus Professor UKZN. Univ. Cambridge Accreditation: IGCSE Drama. Hon. Research Fellow, DUT. Durban University of Technology.

9.12   Turnitin Report

Turnitin

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