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English as a Second Language Teachers' Perspectives of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy for Saudi University Students

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Maysa M. Safi

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

English as a Second Language Teachers' Perspectives of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy for Saudi University Students

by

Maysa M. Safi

MS, Nova Southeastern University 2011

BS, Youngstown State University, 2006

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

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December 2020

Abstract

For many years, the integration of English language into Saudi Arabia's culture, education, and curriculum were not of importance. A gap in literature exists regarding this phenomenon of localizing regional teaching practices, or pedagogy, to better meet Saudi students' learning needs while adhering to the social, political, and cultural constraints of Saudi society. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the perspectives of university-level English as a second language (ESL) teachers who have taught in Saudi Arabia concerning the use of culturally relevant pedagogy to provide students with effective and engaging instruction. The conceptual framework was based on the culturally relevant pedagogy of Ladson-Billings, exploring teachers' perspectives about localizing pedagogy to improve Saudi students' ESL skills. The research questions focused on ESL teachers' perspectives about providing culturally relevant pedagogy to improve English language proficiency. Ten ESL teachers with experience teaching Saudi students for a minimum of 3 years were selected. Transcripts were analyzed using NVivo and open coding. Findings indicate that ESL teachers use student learning opportunities during instruction to reflect cultural competence built on cultural knowledge and experiences brought to school. Findings about culturally relevant pedagogy support may benefit educational stakeholders involved in developing programs to better fit the needs and language proficiency of the Saudi students. The implications for positive social change are reflective in how ESL teachers support students' cultural backgrounds as an asset and build on the knowledge Saudi students possess through assisting them in learning new concepts while supporting their academic and cultural identities.

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Dedication

First and foremost, I want to thank Allah for giving me the strength, knowledge, and perseverance to chase after my dream. I sincerely hope and pray that this dissertation will benefit society and the educational community. Secondly, I dedicate this journey to my entire Safi family, who continuously supported and encouraged me. So many times, I wanted to give up and succumb to the idea that I was not cut out for this. Yet, my family would remind me again and again to pick myself up, dust myself off, and continue to move forward.

I want to dedicate this journey to my parents, David Adam (Fawaz) Safi and Nihad Safi, and my siblings (Deema, Yazan, Jenna, and Lana), for always believing in me, instilling confidence in me, and encouraging me. If it were not for their continuous support, prayers, and encouragement, I would not be writing this dedication page now. Baba, this doctorate is for you. You are the one who pushed and pushed, and consistently reminded me of the opportunities that I had that you never did. You are the one that encouraged me, believed in me, and always wanted my siblings and I to be the best that we could possibly be. I hope you are forever proud!

Additionally, I want to thank my loving husband, Belal Khaled, who has seen me through it all, especially crying over returned drafts of this dissertation over and over again. He never lost faith in me, supported me through the ups and downs, and did all that he could to allow me the time and energy to work through my courses and the writing of this dissertation. He always reminded me to keep my eye on the prize and how proud he was of me. I cannot thank him enough for being my rock and for his continuous support.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my children, Ryan, Rami, and Tamara. They witnessed me working endless hours and called me “Dr. Momma”—they knew how badly I wanted to get my degree and encouraged me too. Ryan, you were always so proud of me and did what you could to help me focus on my work, and I appreciate that so much; Rami, who came up with the nickname Dr. Momma and always asked when I was going to graduate, more excited than I was about becoming a doctor in education; and Tamara, who innocently asked so many times, “Momma, are you done workin’ on your laptop?” I dedicate this dissertation to each of you and hope that one day, you chase after your dreams and excel in everything that you do, you put your heart into it, and that Allah grants you success and happiness in this world and the next.

Finally, I want to thank each and every person, both friends and family, who always supported me, prayed for my success, and asked about my progress and my well-being. I love each of you so much and could not have possibly done this without you!

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Firstly, I must acknowledge that by the grace of Allah, I am able to tell of my experience in writing a dissertation and have now attained a doctoral degree. Without Him, I would not have been able to do this. Alhamdulillah (praise be to Allah) for listening to my prayers and for answering them in allowing me to succeed. I pray that this dissertation benefits mankind and that it serves as a sadaqa jarriyah (perpetual charity) on my behalf.

Secondly, I would also like to acknowledge the guidance of my committee members. This includes Dr. Michael Brunn, Dr. Billie Andersson, Dr. Jamie Jones, and Dr. Richard Penny. All throughout this journey, your feedback and expertise helped me to progress and fine-tune every detail of my writing. I appreciate the positive encouragement and your expertise.

Finally, I would also like to give a heartfelt thank you to all my family and friends who had to listen to my frustrations and achievements. Without your love, support, and prayers, I would not have succeeded. You are the reason I am who I am today, Dr. Maysa Safi.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

For many years, the integration of English into Saudi Arabia's culture, education, and curriculum was not considered important (Mitchell & Alfuraih, 2016). More recently though, with the influence of globalization and the competition for Saudi students to attain scholarships abroad, students are more eager to learn English for a chance to study in an English-speaking country (Alqahtani, 2017). Saudi students are also facing considerable challenges in academic environments such as college classrooms where English may be the medium for instruction or the terminology taught for the subject matter (Macaro, Curle, Pun, An, & Dearden, 2018). In addition, the influx of expatriates and the change of demographics in the country set a language barrier between the expatriates and the natives of the country.

As Saudi Arabia evolved into a more open and globalized country, English language learning started to become the medium for functioning in society, in college classrooms, in businesses, and finally the workforce (Elyas & Picard, 2018). This phenomenon provoked further exploration into English as a second language (ESL) teachers' perspectives about culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) in the Saudi ESL classroom due to the specific needs of the Saudi ESL students and the influence of the still-restricted culture of Saudi society (AlHazmi, 2017). Although ESL learning is essential to a globally based education (Macaro et al., 2018), there is a gap in the practice of including cultural considerations when designing and implementing instructional practices in the Saudi ESL classroom. Helping students succeed in education is a priority

of educators and understanding the impact that culture can have in the classroom is a key component of this success.

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the perspectives of university-level ESL teachers who have taught in Saudi Arabia concerning the use of CRP to provide students with effective and engaging instruction. This dissertation further explored the situation and was guided by the conceptual framework of the CRP of Ladson-Billings (1992). Chapter 1 presents an outline of the study including background, problem statement, purpose of the study, and conceptual framework.

Background

In recent years, Saudi Arabia has become home to many ESL teachers because of the vast government programs funding and promoting the learning of English as a prerequisite to enrolling in any Saudi university (U.S. Embassy - Riyadh, 2016). The intensive ESL programs at the university level stemmed from the fact that, historically, English was introduced as a compulsory subject to the public-school curricula in seventh grade in 2003 (AlShahrani, 2016). In 2005, the country's vision for education changed dramatically, aiming to develop a more knowledge-based economy and reducing the dependence on the oil industry (Faruk, 2013). As a consequence, the number of universities in the country increased from eight in 2001 to 36 in 2015 (AlShahrani, 2016). The Ministry of Education recognized a gap in English language proficiency for most majors (e.g., business, engineering, medicine), and English became a prerequisite for all college students ("Perspectives on Preparatory Year," 2014). English is now the medium

of instruction in the colleges of medicine, engineering, and other sciences (Alshareef et al., 2018; Faruk, 2013).

After the terrorist events of September 11th in the United States, the government of Saudi Arabia made efforts to encourage English language instruction with a vision of developing students' English language skills to be more intuitive with the global society (AlShahrani, 2016). Additionally, 9.5 million expatriates were working and living in the country of Saudi Arabia, and English language instruction was needed to serve as a medium for education and communication (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). The introduction of intensive English language development (ELD) programs was aimed at bridging the English language proficiency gap that many students have at the time of enrollment into universities and addressing the need for more localized pedagogy and culturally appropriate content to close the gap in teaching practices (AlShahrani, 2016). Thus, an influx of ESL teachers was suddenly needed in the country, so universities began to hire ESL teachers from all around the world. But this hiring process has posed a difficulty because ESL teachers were not familiar with Saudi culture, Saudi students' learning needs, or their learning styles (Ahmad, 2019). The hired ESL teachers also have varied years of experience, educational backgrounds, teaching beliefs, and instructional practices in their ESL teaching practices offered to Saudi university students (Burke, 2018). Understanding the perspectives of ESL teachers concerning CRP and practices providing Saudi ESL students with culturally appropriate instruction in the ESL classroom at the college level is important to best prepare students for future academic coursework at a university and make the students better prepared for work after college.

Problem Statement

Currently, a gap exists in the practice of including cultural considerations when designing and implementing instructional practices in the Saudi ESL classroom. There is also a gap in literature with regard to this phenomenon of localizing regional teaching practices, or pedagogy, to better meet Saudi students' learning needs while adhering to the social, political, and cultural constraints of Saudi society. Moreover, there is an insufficient amount of research on foreign teachers' practices when attempting to localize pedagogy in a foreign society (Eusafzai, 2015; Sulaimani & Elyas, 2015). The findings from this study may help address the gaps in practice and literature concerning English language learning and localizing pedagogy. A need exists for more localized pedagogy and culturally appropriate content that may yield more improved English language skills, which can be accomplished through research focused on teacher's perceptions (Aldera, 2017). Ideally, teachers want to integrate effective and appropriate instructional strategies into their teaching practices to better serve their Saudi ESL students (Tawalbeh, 2015).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the perspectives of university-level ESL teachers who have taught in Saudi Arabia concerning the use of CRP to provide students with effective and engaging instruction. The study sites included one of the largest university ELD programs. The findings from this study offer guidance to improve the development, delivery, and content of lessons such as lessons that are focused on the culture relevance. According to the literature, more in-depth information is needed from ESL teachers for an increased understanding of how to localize pedagogy

for Saudi students and provide students with culturally appropriate lessons (Aldera, 2017). It is relatively unknown whether newly hired teachers are prepared in meeting students' learning needs at the local study site. The findings from the study might be used to generate reports on experienced ESL teachers' perspectives about localizing pedagogy, which could be helpful in preparing newly hired teachers to effectively transition into the Saudi classroom. ESL teachers employed by Saudi universities should have adequate opportunities to attend professional development initiatives and take part in collaborative learning opportunities to attain knowledge about practices that are effective in teaching Saudi English language learners (ELLs), while abiding by the local and strict culture and customs of the country ("Perspectives on Preparatory Year," 2014). For effective learning to take place, teaching approaches need to be socially, culturally, and contextually fitted for the target learners of the context, which stems from the views of the teachers in that context (Eusafzai, 2015).

Research Questions

To explore the perspectives concerning the experiences and practices of university-level ESL teachers who have taught in Saudi Arabia, the following research questions were used. The overall guiding research questions asked about the ESL teachers' perspectives about providing CRP to improve English language proficiency at ELD programs in universities in Saudi Arabia. More specifically, the research questions were:

1. What are ESL teachers' perspectives on using CRP in the Saudi classroom?

2. What culturally relevant practices and content do ESL teachers perceive as effective and engaging?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study was the theory of CRP, which was created in 1992 and is defined as a "pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, pp. 17-18). This pedagogy has been referenced with similar terminology such as culturally relevant teaching or culturally relevant education; however, throughout this study, it will be referred to as CRP. CRP is based on the idea that student learning involves social processes and is correlated to the cultural experiences of students (Groulx & Silva, 2010). CRP is an important means to understanding diverse student populations. Ladson-Billings (2014) noted the need for CRP, stating that despite the global culture that is present at many universities, CRP "is still largely absent in the sanctioned university curriculum" (p. 78).

The research question was informed by CRP in that it explored experienced ESL teachers' perspectives about localizing pedagogy to improve Saudi students' ESL skills, specifically speaking and writing. It is the methodology of instruction by which these experienced ESL teachers effectively implement the languages, literacies, and cultures of their Saudi students to support effective practices and content while promoting student engagement and learning. According to CRP, Saudi students should be provided with quality teaching and learning through the concepts of connecting classroom experiences with students' experiences in the social context in which they live. The pedagogical

practices that teachers use should be relevant to students' lives and experiences in addition to being sustainable over changing times, educational reform, curricular trends, and assessment trends (Durden, Escalante, & Blitch, 2015). The research question was informed the theory in that CRP is not considered a practice of solely learning about culture but rather involves creating equity through teaching (Durden et al., 2015, p. 3). Teachers who follow CRP acknowledge the responsibility for community- and student-driven learning (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 83).

As recommended by CRP, staying informed is important for ESL teachers to take on critical reflective practices to implement CRP. Critical reflective practices can allow teachers to create learning opportunities informed by their expertise and judgement (Epstein, 2007). The findings from this study might benefit teachers in the critical reflective process as they provide their perspectives on CRP in the local context. Researchers have suggested that teachers are engaged in two processes to be critically conscious of the sociopolitical dimensions in which they are working (Durden et al., 2015, p. 3). For this study focused on the ESL classroom in Saudi Arabia, the first step might include the teachers' examination of the social identities that their students have and the impact on the students' use of the English language within the larger society. The second process is the use of critical reflective practices, to examine personal ideological stances or views toward the students being taught. An example of this practice could be asking what stereotypes or preconceived notions ESL teachers have about their Saudi students.

In conclusion, CRP is made up of relational, curricular, and ideological dimensions. These dimensions of the framework informed the research questions to explore ESL teachers' perspectives about localizing pedagogy for Saudi students in the ESL classroom. Teachers who want to implement CRP must have a firm belief that students are capable of success, should maintain a positive and safe student-teacher relationship, and view academic progress and excellence as a complex standard which considers students' diversity and individual differences (Gay, 2018; Paris, 2012). Therefore, the framework guided the data collection process through the selective choosing of experienced and successful ESL teacher participants who have worked at the local setting for a minimum of 3 years, have maintained excellent relationships with their Saudi students, and whose classroom performance has been deemed as "outstanding" by administrators through the use of formal evaluative lesson observations.

Nature of the Study

The phenomenon of CRP was explored using a case study, which is a form of qualitative research methodology (Creswell & Poth, 2017). This was most suitable since data collection was in the form of semistructured interviews and other forms of data collection such as documentation (e.g., lesson plans) and notations. The purpose of the qualitative case study was to explore the perspectives of university-level ESL teachers who have taught in Saudi Arabia concerning the use of CRP to provide students with effective and engaging instruction. A purposeful sampling technique was used to select 10 to 12 ESL teachers who teach ESL to Saudi students at the local study site (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Using an inductive reasoning approach, I used NVivo to analyze the data I

collected from participants. In Chapter 3, a further explanation of ethical procedures, participant protection methods, data collection procedures, triangulation efforts, validity, and results are explained.

Definitions

Communicative language teaching: This method of English language teaching mainly focuses on interaction. The method applauds student-centered classes where students take responsibility for their own learning processes. Students are welcome to share ideas and experiences. Students are also encouraged to use language taught in class in the real world by doing role plays, interviews, surveys, and playing games. Pair work and group work in this method are definitely a plus (Savignon, 2018).

Culturally appropriate instruction: This instruction includes teaching practices which are best suited for a particular culture or group of students (Mason, 2017). Culture refers to the ethnic, social, and traditional aspects of a common social group (Mason, 2017).

Culturally relevant pedagogy: This type of pedagogy is another term that is similar to culturally appropriate instruction but is more commonly known as a conceptual framework created in 1992, which is defined as an empowering pedagogy to use with students, promoting cultural references intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically (Ladson-Billings, 1994). It is made up of relational, curricular, and ideological dimensions (Brown, Boda, Lemmi, & Monroe, 2018).

Culturally responsive instruction: This type of instruction is another term referring to culturally appropriate instruction (Toppel, 2015).

Direct method: The direct method approach was a step up from the grammar translation method (Barrot, 2017). For example, vocabulary is taught by using pictures, teaching manipulatives, or miming. Grammar is taught inductively, and correct pronunciation is emphasized. Students are expected to ask and answer each other's questions and take a major part in speaking during class *(*Barrot, 2017).

English language development (ELD): ELDs are programs aimed at bridging the English language proficiency gap (AlShahrani, 2016).

English language learner (ELL): This is a student who is learning ESL in addition to their native language (Shelton, 2016; Verplaetse & Migliacci, 2017). In this study, the ELLs are university level Saudi students who are attending ELD programs in an effort to improve their English proficiency to be better prepared for their future college studies.

English as a second language (ESL) teachers: This term refers to teachers who teach ESL to ELLs. In this study, ESL teachers are teachers who teach specifically Saudi freshmen students entering ELD programs at universities (Verplaetse & Migliacci, 2017).

Grammar-translation method: This method is this oldest foreign language teaching method known (Benati, 2018; Chang, 2011). This method requires the learner to translate words or entire texts. In addition, students need to memorize vocabulary words and grammar rules. The students do not learn to communicate effectively in this way because the main focus is on written language (Benati, 2018).

Language acquisition device: A concept that supports how infants or students learn and acquire a language (Yang, Crain, Berwick, Chomsky, & Bolhuis, 2017).

Localized pedagogy: This is a pedagogy that includes methods of instruction or instructional practices that are the best fit or contextually tailored for a particular group of students, sometimes referring to students of a common culture or background (Goh & Blake, 2015). In this study, local pedagogy in English language teaching was explored.

Monolingual classroom: Students in a monolingual classroom share the same first language and commonly share most aspects of a particular culture (Hinton, 2016). English language teaching in monolingual classrooms is different from multilingual classrooms where students are very diverse, and there are a variety of students' first languages.

Situational approach: A situational approach is a type of teaching method focusing on situations that students may encounter in the real world rather than focusing on grammatical structures (Mwanza, 2017). This method allows the learner to apply what is learned to real life. However, this method would not suit students if the situations learned are not applicable to their individual lives.

Structural approach: A structural approach is a type of teaching method that is sequential in that it is supposed to teach the students grammatical structures by building upon what was learned before (Escamilla & Del Olmo, 2018). The problem with this method is that it places emphasis on grammar while other language skills are relatively ignored.

Assumptions

I intended to interview ESL teachers at one of the largest university-level ELD programs in Saudi Arabia who have successfully taught ESL to Saudi students for a

minimum of 3 years. My assumption was that, in addition to "outstanding" performance evaluation records based on classroom observations, 3 years was an adequate time to provide credible data about appropriately localizing pedagogy for Saudi ELLs. I also selected 3 years as the minimum as this is the general time frame that institutions expect their educators to acclimate to their students and the community that the school serves. I also assumed that the participants would respond willingly in an accurate, honest, and thorough manner. ESL teachers are specialized and collaborate and communicate information and practices that have proven beneficial to students. Therefore, another assumption was that this study could be used to provide other similar ELD programs with data about localizing pedagogy and providing culturally relevant instruction by ESL teachers to college-level Saudi ELLs.

Scope and Delimitations

The participant pool consisted of 10 to 12 ESL teachers with a minimum of 3 years of experience in teaching ESL to Saudi students entering their first year of university. The ESL teachers also had observation scores and evaluations that are outstanding or "5" on a scale of 1 to 5. As the focus was to explore the perspectives of university-level ESL teachers who have taught in Saudi Arabia concerning the use of CRP to provide students with effective and engaging instruction, these criteria transfer to effectively localizing pedagogy and ensure that the teachers are providing students with culturally appropriate instruction in various ways. The teachers' perspectives about culturally relevant characteristics of teaching English to Saudi students in the ESL

classroom at the university level were explored; therefore, only ESL teachers teaching at ELD programs at the university level were selected for this study.

Although ESL researchers may use a conceptual framework based on the sociocultural theory, CRP was selected as the conceptual framework for this study as it is correlated to the cultural and linguistic experiences of students. In alignment with the conceptual framework of this study, the teachers' perspectives of university-level ESL teachers who have taught in Saudi Arabia concerning the use of CRP to provide students with effective and engaging instruction are under examination in this study. Finally, aspects of CRP may provide effective and engaging ESL learning is possible. Future studies may find benefits from exploring the perspectives of instructors who are part of language development programs.

Limitations

One potential limitation was access to teacher participants, and considerations were made for the time and geographical difference. Due to cultural and social restrictions regarding video recordings, conducting an observation of students and teachers in their classroom was not allowable. The local culture and Saudi students are against video recording as part of a cultural restriction. In addition, school policy restricts the use of cameras or video recordings on campus.

Personal bias was also a potential limitation to this study. In the past, I have held the position of an ESL instructor in Saudi Arabia, and my experiences create a potential bias to the information provided throughout the study. To reduce personal bias, I used an interview guide for conducting the interviews to remain consistent and clear throughout

the data collection process. Some discussions with other experts in the field included ESL teachers who have experience in teaching in a Saudi classroom to help me develop the interview guide. The interview guide was based on the guiding research questions and the conceptual framework with a focus on culturally relevant teaching.

Additionally, the study focused on the perceptions of university-level ESL teachers who have taught in Saudi Arabia concerning the use of CRP to provide students with effective and engaging instruction to best meet students' learning needs. The study did not take into consideration students' perspectives or experiences about culturally relevant instruction. Exploring students' perspectives could be a future recommendation following this study.

Significance

To promote effective teaching that is culturally sensitive to local society, certain principles and practices that may be drawn from the data analysis are encouraged to be adopted as a means to make a significant contribution to the study site. More specifically, a report on instructor needs contributes to improving newly hired teachers' practices in ESL programs at the study site in Saudi universities.

According to an academic coordinator at the study site, teachers hired at ELD programs in Saudi Arabia have varied qualifications and years of experience in the field of English language teaching. The findings from this study are important to enhancing the experiences that ESL Saudi students have while learning English as a prerequisite for their university studies. The findings are also important because experienced ESL teachers' perspectives about providing culturally appropriate instruction help improve

overall English language teaching and learning. Providing culturally appropriate instruction may also be beneficial for administrators in the ESL field in Saudi Arabia who provide curriculum and instructional development opportunities for newly hired ESL teachers.

To promote positive social change, the findings of this study encourage effective culturally relevant teaching practices that promote a positive learning environment of mutual respect and student engagement. Experienced ESL teachers' perspectives on localizing pedagogy also guided me to suggest changes and improvements to the preparation of newly hired foreign ESL teachers to effectively teach English to Saudi students. Findings of the study can benefit ESL teachers at the local site and their Saudi students by helping newly hired teachers explore pedagogy that is adjusted to fit the students' needs or practice strategies that were deemed effective by experienced ESL teachers at the local study site. Other uses of the findings could be to integrate effective professional development initiatives for newly hired ESL teaching staff. Future and ongoing research on this topic may be beneficial to university language departments, language development projects, ESL supervisors, ESL instructors, and ESL researchers by providing guidance and insight about localizing pedagogy in Saudi Arabia (Alqahtani, 2015). With the findings from this study, teachers' perspectives could provide insight into the most effective and suitable instructional practices in ESL for Saudi students at the local site.

Summary

Within Saudi Arabia, change is the paradigm to improve the future generations' English language skills to promote the language as the global mode of communication in their education and the workforce. By developing English language skills, students will be better equipped for the changes happening within their local society as well as prepare them to function in the global world. ESL teachers' experiences embrace the ideas of multicultural appreciation and developing pedagogical applications best fit for the local context (AlSubaie, 2015).

To address the gap that exists in the practice of including cultural considerations when designing and implementing instructional practices in the Saudi ESL classroom, a need existed for more localized pedagogy and culturally appropriate content that may improve English language skills (Ovando & Combs, 2018). In this exploratory case study, experienced ESL teachers' perspectives on the implementation and application of culturally appropriate instructional strategies and ideas could help newly hired ESL teachers in understanding and utilizing CRP. Through the implementation of such strategies, students' participation and enhancement in their English language skills are more likely to increase (Dianbing & Xinxiao, 2017).

This chapter presented an introduction to the study, background information, the problem and purpose of the study, the guiding research question, a conceptual framework, and the nature of the study. Also included in this chapter were definitions relevant to the study, assumptions, scope, and delimitations. Limitations to the study and the significance of the study are also present. The following chapter presents a literature

review about CRP and how the theory applies to ELLs and ESL in the Saudi university-level classroom. Chapter 3 presents a description of the qualitative design, methodology, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis. This chapter also provides information on ethical considerations and participant protection rights. Chapter 4 presents the research reflections, and Chapter 5 presents discussion of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The following literature review supports the development of this dissertation. The empirical research presented provide evidence to support my aim to explore the experiences and practices of ESL teachers concerning how they localize pedagogy to best meet students' learning needs. The research is also aligned with my problem statement concerning the gap with regard to this phenomenon of localizing regional teaching practices, or pedagogy, to better meet Saudi students' learning needs while adhering to the social, political, and cultural constraints of Saudi society as well as my research questions, which are central to this study. The literature search strategy along with an in-depth synopsis of the conceptual framework and its alignment to this dissertation are included in this chapter. The key concepts and variables are also identified and explained in this chapter.

Literature Search Strategy

The Walden library served as an effective tool in finding information about the learning theories. CRP was searched under the terms *culturally relevant teaching*, *culturally responsive teaching*, and *culturally relevant education*. Additional search terms were used to explore the phenomena, including *English as a second language*, *English language learners*, *English language education in Saudi Arabia*, and *the influence of socio-culture on education in Saudi Arabia*. I reviewed the articles that I found relevant and used their references to gauge subsequent searches for related sources. Another source of information was Google Scholar, which I used to find additional current peer-reviewed articles. Following the Google Scholar search, I used the resources available

through the Walden library to look up and gain full access to specific journal articles. There was an abundance of research on *English language learners, English as a second language, multicultural education*, and *culturally relevant pedagogy*. However, little research was found on *culturally relevant pedagogy*, specifically about ELLs at the university level in Saudi Arabia. The research I did find pertained to Saudi students' perspectives of specific educational practices. One specific study even recommended further studies into teachers' perspectives on *culturally relevant teaching* in the Saudi ESL classroom (Aldera, 2017). According to the author of the study, Saudi students had a negative attitude toward ELL due to the lack of a culturally sensitive approach to teaching ESL, which further justifies the need for CRP in the Saudi ESL classroom and exploring teachers' views about culturally relevant teaching practices (Aldera, 2017).

Conceptual Framework

To guide the foundation of this study, I considered many learning theories. Some of the theories I considered included Vygotsky's (1986) theory of constructivism and Weimar's (2013) pedagogical approach of learner-centered teaching. However, due to the sociocultural aspects of this study and the influence of culture on pedagogy, CRP was more suitable for this study. CRP is defined as "pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, pp. 17–18). When Ladson-Billings (1994) began researching diversity and educational practices, three important components were noted: a diverse student population, the struggles of diverse students, and stagnant teaching practices. Ladson-Billings noted that with an increase in the

cultures, languages, and diverse student populations, a change was needed in the teaching approach that would encompass the needs of all students and not just the majority of students. Culturally relevant teaching "utilizes student culture and transcends the negative effects of the dominant culture" (Landson-Billings, 1994, p. 136). This is a pedagogy that highlights the potential of every student to succeed.

Academic success, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness are the three major domains of CRP. Ladson-Billings (2014) explained how intellectual growth and student success are results of classroom instruction and learned cultural competence. Ladson-Billings conveyed that students learn to appreciate their culture in a CRP focused classroom as they gain knowledge of other cultures and gain a sociopolitical consciousness that will help them identify, analyze, and solve problems in the real world. Furthermore, the researcher described the importance of CRP as an evolving theory because culture is also ever-changing. The exploration of teachers' perspectives and experiences to link teaching practices and strategies along with a deep understanding and appreciation of culture is the foundational notion of this conceptual framework and is in alignment with this study (Brown et al., 2018). The three major domains of CRP are relevant to Saudi culture and society and can be classified as influential to the social, economic, and cultural factors in globalizing Saudi Arabia's education system (Faruk, 2013).

CRP is an important framework to consider because localizing pedagogy is an area of research that is lacking, but through localization of pedagogy, students can be socially and culturally empowered (Eusafzai, 2015). To avoid problems, a connection

should be made between the community and the school. Additionally, “pupils’ backgrounds must be taken into account when considering their learning in class” (Hramiak, 2015, p. 2). It is important to know the cultural backgrounds of students because cultural information is needed to access prior knowledge, gauge student interest, and increase student engagement in the learning process (Saint-Hilaire, 2014). Further, diverse groups of teachers may have beliefs or perspectives that differ from one another depending on their backgrounds and experiences (Ogay & Edelmann, 2016). This study may offer specific ideas and guidelines for developing teachers’ practices to better serve Saudi students, which is aligned with the concepts presented within CRP.

Previous research has also supported that application of CRP concepts. Borrero, Ziauddin, and Ahn (2018) explored the perspectives of pre- and in-service teachers about CRP as a teaching framework. The teachers identified generalizations related to students’ ethnicities and then attempted to confront these generalizations through authentically centering their students’ experiences in their teaching and building curriculum which aimed to highlight students’ strengths (Borrero et al., 2018). Researchers in education also continue to explore how CRP is used in teaching practices and findings have shown that teachers still consider the phenomenon in its preliminary stages of development (Borrero et al., 2018; McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2017). Findings from several studies have indicated that educators continue to adhere to simple notions of culture, increasing the need for a larger movement toward curriculums with cultural relevance in pursuit of educational equity (Borrero et al., 2018; Irizarry, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Paris, 2012). Simplistic and static notions refer to the teachers’ uses of cultural examples in

teaching practices without considering the authenticity or cultural relevance of the material (Borrero et al., 2018; Cloonan, Fox, Ohi, & Halse, 2017).

Teachers' perspectives and input about CRP are important for teacher preparation and evaluation (Borrerro, 2016). Through the exploration of teachers' perspectives related to the conceptual framework of this study (CRP), successful strategies can be developed, and teachers have the opportunity to connect their experiences and practices with pedagogical and curricular development (Adams, Ellis, & Jones, 2017; Camangian, 2010). Teachers' perspectives can assist in the development of teacher preparation programs and support the learning of all students involved. Professional collaborations, educational community, and understanding personal teaching beliefs are all important aspects to navigating CRP and teaching practices (Borrero, Flores, & de la Cruz, 2016). Through the exploration of teachers' perspectives and experiences with CRP, teachers can also explore current research and make connections between the conceptual framework and teaching practices. This is especially important to this study because the exploration of perspectives on CRP have not been done before on students studying ESL in Saudi Arabia from the views of teachers, especially as the country shifts its education goals to becoming more globalized. Through this study, recommendations for scholarly, political, and social movement toward equitable, transformative education can be achieved for English education in Saudi Arabia (see Bondi & Matthews, 2017; Lipman, 2011; Vossoughi, Hooper, & Escudé, 2016; Yosso, 2005).

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts and Variables

Second Language Acquisition

English is considered the world's most influential language in sectors such as business, computer, education, research, and medicine (Altbach, 2007; Pulcini, 1994; Wang, Li, Tang, & Chen, 2016). English became the most widespread language in the 20th century, especially since the world is being dominated economically, politically, and militarily by the United States and even more so with U.S. culture (movies, music, media, and books; Cook, 2016; Pennycook, 2017). There are approximately 6,000 languages spoken worldwide (Negrisanu, 2008), but English helps people from different cultures and countries come together and communicate effectively using the same language (Wang et al., 2016). The English language may be considered by many individuals as a world language, which is a language spoken internationally and learned by many in order to communicate with people of all backgrounds. Currently, English is unofficially adopted as the world language (Bailey, Gorlach, & Arbor, 1986; Pennycook, 2017).

In learning multiple languages, L1 refers to a native language spoken at home and L2 refers to a second language that is learned (Bergmann et al., 2015). There are many theories on whether L1 and L2 are learned or acquired (Bergmann et al., 2015; Brevik, Olsen, & Hellekjær, 2016). Two of the most prevalent are behaviorism (Budiman, 2017) and Chomsky's universal grammar theory (Yang et al., 2017), which was originally formed to explain L1, though some linguists have used it to hypothesize about L2. Behaviorists believe that language is learned through "imitation, practice, feedback on success, and habit formation" (Lightbown & Spada, 1999, p. 11). Most people have

experienced this with their own children. Children do not imitate everything; they select what to imitate (Lightbown & Spada, 1999, p. 13). Behaviorists hold this theory for both L1 acquirers and L2 acquirers.

Universal grammar theorizes that there is something innate that humans are born with that allows us to acquire language; language acquisition device guides those acquiring a language (Yang et al., 2017). Universal grammar explains why children of all cultures, ethnicity, and social status acquire their first language around the same time. No other justification can explain how children newly experiencing life learn something so intricate and intense (Hawkins, 2016).

Further, there are many differences between learning a foreign language, second language learning (L2), national language, and mother tongue language (L1; Bergmann et al., 2015). Language learning for L2 can be divided into two parts: acquisition and learning (Krashen, 2004). Language acquisition (a subconscious process) occurs with a series of inputs that the learners comprehend slightly above their level (i + 1), received in a relaxing, conducive atmosphere and is later able to re-use as outputs (Krashen, 2004). Learning occurs when language is taught and studied, then used to monitor spontaneous communication.

Another major factor in language learning is the critical age hypothesis (Dwaik & Shehadeh, 2015). Age accounts for approximately 50% of ultimate L2 attainment. Students who are older in age find it more difficult to learn a second language (Yates & Kozar, 2017). It is thought that language acquisition device is operative as long as brain lateralization is not complete (pre-puberty). The age in which one learns a language is

directly related to the amount of effort spent in accomplishing the task. With age, however, learners become more self-conscience which may be beneficial because they are more aware of their learning needs, but it may also mean that students may not be willing to take risks in the classroom (Merino & Lasagabaster, 2018).

Motivation is also necessary for language acquisition to occur (Saville-Troike & Barto, 2016). Motivation is defined as the drive to complete a course to reach a goal, in this case learning a language. It consists of two types, intrinsic and extrinsic (Ng & Ng, 2015). Intrinsic comes from within the individual; it relates to one's positive attitude or desire to achieve for one's own satisfaction/reward. Extrinsic motivation is fed by outside factors such as a job promotion, passing an exam, some other social factor (Ng & Ng, 2015; Woodrow, 2017). Further, a welcoming and relaxed environment must be established to enable and support learners in achieving their goals (Woodrow, 2017). Teachers also need to be conscious of the demands that are present in language learning, and individual learners' abilities and feelings need to be accounted for when correcting errors and delivering reinforcement/feedback (Alizadeh, 2016). For example, if learners are unsure of themselves, they may shut down when explicitly corrected in front of their peers or not providing timely feedback might discourage the learners' progress (Zulfikar, 2019).

Another way in which students acquire a second language is through immersion (de Vos, Schriefers, ten Bosch, & Lemhöfer, 2019). More than likely, immersion is due to a fusion between behaviorism and universal grammar. Many L2 learners have found themselves in situations that demand that they learn the language to function (e.g., living

in a foreign land, working in a place that the main language spoken is different from the one of their home countries). In situations like these, the learner must be determined, have patience, and be resilient (de Vos et al., 2019). To facilitate the language learning process, the student must be willing to be in contact and interact with the surrounding environment, making mistakes, and learning from them (Shadiev, Hwang, Huang, & Liu, 2018). Failure to do so will impede and even prevent the learning process to take place (Shadiev et al., 2018).

Language learning is a complex process whether it is L1 or L2. People who study a foreign language face many different learning challenges (Keeves & Darmawan, 2007). Young children can carry on conversations with peers or adults, even if the language is not their native language (Mackey & Gass, 2015). Being fully immersed in the environment where a second language is spoken helps children acquire that language quickly (de Vos et al., 2019). Research has also supported the idea of using stories and songs to promote vocabulary acquisition (Coyle & Gómez Gracia, 2014, Speaker, Taylor, & Karmen, 2004). Thus, children acquire language much faster than adults (Ribot, Hoff, & Burridge, 2018). They can learn and memorize more vocabulary, and their comprehension in both languages exceeds that of adults. Research has even shown that babies can listen and respond to sounds and noises as early as in their mother's womb (Das, Jana, Arora, & Sengupta, 2020). Learning a second language post-puberty is difficult after completing college or being assigned to work in another country. Language acquisition device theory confirms this. However, L2, both in formal and informal

learning situations is not out of reach for post-puberty individuals, but motivation is a key factor (Cocca & Cocca, 2019).

The learning of a language (1 or 2) takes years and perhaps never really stops, as language is "not fixed but is rather a dynamic system" (Larsen-Freeman, 2006, p. 590). Learning a language depends on aptitude, perseverance, opportunity to learn, ability to understand instruction, and quality of instruction. The number of years that a student is exposed to a foreign language is also important, which may take between 6 to 7 years (Carroll, 1975, 2018), and the most effective age to learn a foreign language is from the age of 10 to 12 (Cahyono, 2017). The key features of learning a foreign language are the time spent learning in the classroom, practicing, and the amount of computer time spent to strengthen language skills (Keeves & Darmawan, 2007).Methodologies used to teach language can be placed into two categories: formal approach and active approach (explained more explicitly in the next section). Kibler (2010) focused on students' use of L1 in the classroom in order to write for a monolingual teacher. Results showed that better L2 students acted as language brokers (L2 assistant) in order to help L1 students. The language broker is the student who helps the struggling student with expressions in L1 prior to writing. The study gave insight to the benefits and methods of language learning (Kibler, 2010).

Finally, language is intercultural (Ogay & Edelmann, 2016). Some cultures may present different accents and dialects of English than other cultures. It varies widely depending on time, place, and social environment (Bergmann et al., 2015). Since a living language is continuously changing and developing, language 10 years ago is not the same

as language today. Every day new words are derived from other words (morphology; Akmajian, Farmer, Bickmore, Demers, & Harnish, 2017). Culture is a major factor in the development of language (Xiao, 2017). In conclusion, language is far more complex than what it seems. There is no limit to studying language, language acquisition, and communication.

Language Learning Theories Defined

This section presents a historical overview of language learning theories. The information presented highlights historically significant research, as well as current thoughts on language learning. Cook (2016) expressed the importance of the approach to teaching language learning. The formal approach emphasizes reading and writing. The rule is taught, and application by students should follow. Usually, this method is used in an English for academic purposes class (Wilson, 2016). For example, using a processing approach to teach writing is very common. At this level of learning, students should be taking on more responsibilities for their learning. A formal language learning approach is used in many universities and colleges today in the form of lecture halls. Communication is an important component of the active approach (Cook, 2016). Examples are given and the students discuss what the rule may be. In this case, students are fully participating and are acting as active learners. The teacher is more passive and allows for discussion between learners. The students teach each other and discuss/debate topics (Cook, 2016). These approaches to learning fall under one methodology of teaching, however, there are other methods that are equally important.

Some of the major methodologies used in teaching ESL are the natural approach, the communicative approach, and the humanistic and learner-centered teaching approach (Cook, 2016; Hall, 2017). The natural approach, developed by Krashen and Terrell (1983), is very much like the way children learn their mother tongue. Students build a large comprehension of words in the language long before they can speak it. The communicative approach is self-explanatory. It emphasizes communication. The main goal of the communicative approach is to produce students who can communicate well in the language being learned. This is commonly used in language learning institutes worldwide, especially for beginner students and students who are learning the language to improve communication skills (Cook, 2016). Moreover, the humanistic approach also emphasizes communication, but on a more individual level. Lessons being taught may be relevant to students' social and emotional needs. Students control what they feel they need to learn, and the teacher is viewed as a guide and an expert to the students (Cook, 2016).

The natural approach, which may be indirectly connected to the universal grammar theory, is based upon comprehension of the language before production (Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Roussel, Joulia, Tricot, & Sweller, 2017). Students learn a wide range of vocabulary before they can speak the language, which is done by exposing the learners to the language (listening, reading, or writing). Some aspects of the language may be above the competence level of the learners (Cook, 2016). This approach helps the student to analyze the meaning of the word, master it, and be able to effectively use it. The meaning of the language is presented through contextualization (Butler, 2017).

Speech takes time and may come after many hours of studying. After the student has built enough confidence to speak, the student will have internalized a broad range of vocabulary that can be used to communicate. The student may be actively involved in classroom-related decisions and syllabus-making.

Secondly, the communicative approach is based upon the concept that communication precedes language structure (Cook, 2016). This approach means that students can speak or piece together sentences, but they may not be fully correct. Although the communication approach may not result in completely correct sentences, it is an effective method for students to express themselves in the language being taught (Cook, 2016). Just like the pragmatic perspectives of teaching, the language being learned is directly associated with real-life situations and the language used in everyday life. The language being taught is related to the task performed. The teacher may use a mixture of finely tuned and roughly tuned language. Rivers (2018) noted that some of the language may be comprehended by the student, and at the same time, some may not. The student will learn by looking at the context of the language (called the output hypothesis– students learn from what is said or written). Speech is strongly encouraged. This approach also teaches the student to relate the different structures of the language in communication (Cook, 2016; Rivers, 2018). A mixture of approaches also provides the student a better comprehension of the language. For example, the teacher sets lesson plans and supports the learning of students. The teacher serves as a facilitator during a lesson which is communicative. According to the study conducted by Burns, Pierson, and Reddy (2014), the impact of collaborative learning environments is explored, and learner

centered instruction is defined as central to the ideas of this dissertation where the students' optimal learning environments are explored to better meet their needs. Teachers share their experiences about the theory of communicative language teaching.

Lastly, the humanistic and learner-centered approach is based upon the consideration of the student's emotions before language skills (Cook, 2016; Weimar, 2013). The language being learned is directly associated with the student's needs. The teacher should treat each student on an individual basis, and students and teachers are on the same level. The teacher is not superior but is regarded as a guide or expert in language teaching (Cook, 2016; Wilson, 2016). The language is learned through lessons that are often relevant to the students' individual life. Cook (2016) indicated that speech is related to real life situations (pragmatic perspectives). For example, some situations may require that students discuss various situations, express different opinions about specific topics, carry on culture-related discussions, and effectively use the language in daily interactions. Like the natural approach, the students set their own syllabus after discussion with the teacher (Cook, 2016; Hall, 2017). The students are directly responsible for what is being taught and what they should know for testing.

Methodologies of teaching ESL are varied. Each methodology has its own merits and disadvantages. They are also related to each other in that each methodology is an effective form of classroom teaching. Each student has special needs and abilities. Teachers may correctly identify which methodology is the most applicable to individuals or groups of students.

Cooperative Language Learning

Using a historical overview, this section explains cooperative language learning. The information presented includes historically significant research as well as current thoughts on cooperative language. Cooperative language learning (CLL) has been widely used in the L2 (second language) classroom and has enhanced literacy and language acquisition among ELLs (Allison & Rehm, 2007). Based on the principles of cooperative language teaching, there are two key techniques: think-pair-share and jigsaw. These techniques encourage student activities that involve brainstorming, critical thinking, and sharing of ideas with another student. Strategies such as think-pair-share are common in an ESL classroom (Mahmoud, 2014). In Saudi Arabia, Mahmoud (2014) examined cooperative language instruction on the improvement of writing and writing proficiency. Mahmoud (2014) discussed the advantages of using CLL instruction and stressed the impact on students the instruction had (Mahmoud, 2014). One of the aims of Mahmoud's (2014) study was to identify the success of CLL in changing classrooms from being teacher-centered to student-centered. This shift to student-centered learning allowed students to actively take part in language acquisition and for teachers to be facilitators or guides in the process. From a Saudi cultural standpoint, this is a relatively new teaching methodology (Mahmoud, 2014).

Cooperative language learning refers to a method of instruction in which pairs of students or small groups use various learning activities to practice and improve their understanding of language (Babu, Suresh, & Pariventhan, 2017), specifically ESL in this study. Through the use of CLL, there are four major cooperative language learning

techniques which are introduced: increasing the amount and the variety of language production, increasing students' responsibility, developing students' social skills, and promoting critical thinking skills. There have been many research studies which supported the use of cooperative language learning as a culturally relevant teaching method specifically in the L2 classroom (e,g, Toppel, 2015; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2017). Group members in the CLL is responsible for helping the members of their group to learn collectively, thus creating an achievement in accomplishing a task as a group (Moeller & Catalano, 2015). Positive interdependence is created, which is defined as a positive, conducive classroom atmosphere where students' cooperation makes up the classroom structure, unlike the traditional method which is centered on a more individual competitive structure (Johnson & Johnson, 2018).

The idea of positive interdependence also teaches social skills and promotes cognitive skills and communicative learning strategies through communicative focused interactions (Johnson & Johnson, 2018). Johnson and Johnson indicated some strategies include changing grouping patterns. One example is random grouping methods based on colored cards or puzzle pieces. Another grouping method is more purposeful and is teacher-selected. This grouping method allows for the teacher to put students who are more proficient with students who may be less proficient in an effort to encourage peer learning. Another strategy is to keep the same groups for a specific period of time and assigning each member of the group a responsibility. For instance, one person in the group serves as the discussion leader, another as the scribe, the third is the speaker; the students can rotate roles during different group sessions (Maher, 2010). The philosophy

of CLL is to respect and highlight individual group member's abilities and contributions, and the underlying premise is basically consensus-building (Tapper, 2018). From a cultural perspective, CLL may be an effective learning strategy because social interactions and protocols are important to the culture of Saudi Arabians.

CLL has been widely used in many ways as an extension of language teaching. The focus on two techniques of CLL are think-pair-share and jigsaw which can be used in an L2 classroom (Mahmoud, 2014). In simple terms, *think-pair-share* is an active learning activity where a teacher asks a question, and each student thinks of the answer. Next, each student discusses responses with a partner, and then members of the whole class shares their responses. The other strategy is called *jigsaw* where differentiated, but predetermined input is given. Each group member has a different piece of information, so students are regrouped into topic groups composed of people with the same piece of information to master the material, prepare to teach it, and finally return to home groups to share their information with each other. Students synthesize the information and demonstrate the synthesis of all the information to the whole class. This example of using the CLL method has shown to yield better results in writing and speaking (Maher, 2010; Mahmoud, 2014), which demonstrates the benefits of cooperative learning.

Students can benefit from cooperative learning in four main ways (Cawkwell, Talbot, & Boylan, 2016; Laal & Ghodsi, 2012). To begin with, cooperative learning can help with increasing language production (Olsen & Kagan, 1992; Short, 2017). In teacher-centered classrooms, students tend to be passive learners (Ali & Säberg, 2016), because the focus is on their receptive language skills (reading or listening). However, in

classrooms where cooperative learning is implemented, students' opportunities to produce language through speaking or writing is termed the output. Student output is increased through collaborative learning activities because they are required to interact with other group members during activities. One of the challenges which may be suggested is the statewide training of this and other teaching methodologies that are similar to CLL (Cawkwell et al., 2016), changing the teaching and learning cycle as deemed appropriate by the culture of the people of Saudi Arabia, students and parents alike. The learning paradigm varies about the teaching methodologies that are deemed as effective or acceptable. Teachers should be trained to look at the main objectives of a lesson and create a lesson plan that is student-centered (Ali & Säberg, 2016). Students can practice the target language while employing a variety of language forms by negotiating meaning through different types of interaction. In short, this kind of language use through interaction increases the amount of students' production, and it is beneficial for students to develop their L2 acquisition through cooperative learning (Ali & Säberg, 2016; Cawkwell et al., 2016).

Through cooperative learning, students will be encouraged to take responsibility to complete given tasks (Mahmoud, 2014; Short, 2017). Being assigned a role, each group member has an assigned responsibility to fulfill. Students are required to cooperate with each other to achieve the common goal. In addition, having a responsibility promotes students' autonomy by allowing them to make their own decision in the group. For example, participants can complete a community-based project in which they work collaboratively together to produce documents for a certain organization or company in

the community. These documents benefit the organization or company in some way. In this way, students are presented with a real-world scenario. The project is hands-on, and it requires that participants work together. In sum, cooperative learning increases responsibility, promotes life-long learning, and assists L2 acquisition (Short, 2017).

Cooperative learning can develop students' social skills by collaborating and interacting with peers. If teachers group students according to personality, compatibility, learning styles, or language proficiency levels, students can have opportunities to practice the language while promoting interactive communication skills. Through interactive cooperative learning activities, students can develop work ethics such as respecting group members and committing to achieve completion of assignments while practicing conversing in a new language (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2017).

The aforementioned grouping techniques are essential to students' development of a second language and enhanced the development of their critical thinking skills. Collaborative learning is commonly used with productive skills, specifically writing activities and improvement of speaking. In addition, cooperative language learning requires students to ask and respond to a variety of question types which allow for deeper thinking, fostering the development of critical thinking (Sousa, Tiraboschi, Lago, & Figueiredo, 2019). In teacher-centered classrooms, most students will not participate in the discussions; whereas, by implementing cooperative language learning strategies requires that every group member take part in the activity or discussion (Ali & Säberg, 2016).

Another technique of CLL is correspondence through the use of technology. This has been used in a number of studies, one of which focuses on the use of Blackboard on a pre-service teachers' course about the methods of English language teaching (Hussein & Al-Emami, 2016). Consequently, CLL in technology has been used to train teachers as well as incorporated in the ESL classroom in Saudi Arabia. A separate study was conducted to see if there is an effect on students' persuasive writing skills through a blog-based peer-feedback program (Sayed, 2010). The participants of this study were 27 business management students who used peer editing online to give each other feedback. Because this group had the ability to correspond on the blog freely, results of a post-test showed that their persuasive writing techniques improved (Sayed, 2010). Cooperative learning via technological platforms that are available is used to aid ELLs and teachers alike.

Research studies showed that cooperative learning is beneficial to learners' second language acquisition (Cawkwell et al., 2016; Laal & Ghodsi, 2012). Roripaugh (1992) studied the differences in the quantity and quality of student language in cooperative learning activities versus in teacher-centered activities with adult learners of English as a foreign language. The author found that students who worked in groups on learner-centered activities showed a much greater variety of functional language usage such as disagreeing, hypothesizing, and requesting. Researchers in the field suggested that opportunities of interaction can be beneficial for L2 learners' language acquisition which is grounded in the theory of communicative language teaching (Shao, Pekrun, & Nicholson, 2019).

Research conducted in Saudi Arabia showed the effects of teacher-centered classrooms on students of university level who were asked to write a paper prior to entering the university (Almugren & Ahmed, 2009). Students' mistakes were analyzed and after 3 years of being exposed to the communicative language teaching method, the same writing was asked of the sample of students. Overall, in regard to spelling, punctuation, and grammar, the post-test writings were improved. One limitation of this study was that the sample size was small and only consisted of 36 female students majoring in English at a university in Saudi Arabia (Almugren & Ahmed, 2009).

Teaching Productive English Language Skills in the Monolingual Classroom

For this study, the ESL classroom consists of a majority of monolingual (Arabic-speaking students only) at the English Language Skills Development Preparatory Year Program (ELSD-PYP) in Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, the ESL teachers are diverse; some are native, and some are non-native speakers of English; some are proficient in Arabic while others are not. Monolingual classes have challenges and benefits (Hinton, 2016). Some of the benefits could be teaching students who share a similar culture or share similar learning difficulties due to the effects of their first language on second language acquisition. However, there are also challenges; the most obvious is the use of the learners' L1 in the classroom, which can be overused and lead students to off-task behavior (Kibler, 2010). Sharing a first language is in the students' comfort zone, and therefore, it poses a greater challenge especially if the students live in a non-English speaking environment, and their only access to communicate in English is during class

time (Hinton, 2016). On the other hand, students who study abroad in English-speaking countries are immersed in the language and culture.

Teachers deal with the practical implications of using the students' L1 in the classroom (Alshehri, 2017). Many teachers initially belonged to the school of thought which viewed such usage as negative and detrimental to the students' acquisition of the target language, but the majority have come to view it in a more positive light. Many other teachers in the field accepted the general taboo status of the learner's mother tongue usage and followed the assumption that *L2-only approaches* were the best way to ensure communicative competence (Rathert & Cabaroğlu, 2020). However, challenging this stance and questioning the motives behind it, even allowing for the possibility that the movement against using L1 may have sometimes been for commercial reasons, shows that the possibilities of using the students' L1 is a valuable resource (Benesch, 2018).

Mastering academic writing skills is considered to be a challenge among ELLs, and this is especially true for Saudi students. According to Graham and Eslami (2020), writing is a difficult skill for L2 learners to master. They concluded that there is something disabling about not being able to communicate through writing (Graham & Eslami, 2020). Illiteracy or a lack of competence in this area is both stigmatizing and disabling and can exclude L2 learners from positions of power and prestige (Barrot, 2018).

An eclectic approach to teaching writing to monolingual classes in Saudi Arabia draws mainly on the process and genre approaches. The process approach is effective because it helps students initiate the writing process and taps into their creativity. It also

helps them gain confidence in writing and see themselves as writers. Raimes (1983) indicated that when learners write, they have an opportunity to be adventurous, be creative with the language, and take risks. Risk-taking is something which is difficult for Saudi students because their previous language experience has mainly involved controlled and assessed writing at the sentence-level. They have also relied heavily upon translation. Translation as an academic activity is a common, traditional method in language teaching. Students naturally translate into their native tongue regardless of the teacher's approval. However, an over-dependence upon the students' L1 obviously limits their exposure to English; therefore, translation should be used appropriately. An appropriate use of translation using the process approach is at the pre-writing stage when students' limited vocabulary in English can prevent them from expressing their ideas. A crucial balance has to be struck in monolingual classes between frustrating students and encouraging idle behaviors (Atkinson, 1993). The process approach is not irresponsible and does not favor creativity over a concern for the final product, focusing on the route and ignoring the destination. In addition, it fully meets the needs of L2 learners who are unfamiliar with the conventions and constraints of writing for an unfamiliar readership (Tribble, 1996).

It would be unfair to leave students to find their own way through the complexities and nuances of different genres. It is part of the writing teacher's role to make students aware of forms and patterns that are part of the language learning process (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Although students' writing could be creative, their final product must be comprehensible. Without the insight provided by a consideration of the

sociolinguistic view of language, the students' writing will be lacking substance (Richards & Renandya, 2002), and the use of unauthentic English could hinder their writing.

For students to write or speak well, they need to learn the strategies to appropriately write in the second language (Cook, 2016). One study used different activities to help students learn to write both a response paper and collaborative writing activities. The main idea of this study was to prepare students to write before they write. As mentioned in the study, the authors stated that giving students food for thought and asking them to write is not enough. Students must learn to *cook* (write; Eberly & Trand, 2010). One additional point mentioned was the fact that not all good readers are good writers, and not all weak readers are weak writers. However, when students improve in writing, it is likely that they will also improve in reading (Eberly & Trand, 2010). According to this study, students should be taught writing in a step-by-step format. The authors also stated that direct translation from their first language would be detrimental to their writing. On the other hand, using L1 to get the message across (for example, learning to use proverbs or idioms) could be helpful.

Historical overview. This section uses a historical overview to explore significant research on teaching productive English language skills. An important aspect in teaching writing is being aware of the students' affective filters. Their negative stance to writing is often made worse by the use of certain correction techniques (Raimes, 1983). Many student errors can be linked to their L1, and so learners in monolingual classes usually share many common errors. The focal point of Bitchener's (2008) study

was to explore the effects of stipulated corrective feedback in helping to improve accuracies of new writing; as well as examine and compare how the four specified types of corrective feedback affect accuracy. The research provided up-to-date verification that corrective feedback is helpful in developing ESL learners. It defined the two different types of corrective feedback (direct and indirect) and then compared them in aiding L2 writing accuracy (Bitchener, 2008).

Teachers often rely on resources to teach writing to ELLs. Some of the skills which they focus on are pre-writing stages, correction techniques, editing, and the teacher's role in providing constructive feedback. The importance of student interaction, motivation, and engagement is vital. Raimes (1983) and Scrivener (2002) offered a historical context recommending the use of student-centered methods to teach writing, such as communicative language teaching. To sum up, a teacher who is proficient in the students' first language can offer critical insights and guidance to the influence of the students' L1 on L2 in writing. It is also crucial to teach students self-correction skills and peer-editing strategies, which will enable them to become better writers. Using student-centered methods to teach productive English language skills (speaking or writing) is particularly important for monolingual students living in a non-English speaking country (such as the context of this study in Saudi Arabia) where their exposure to English may be limited.

The Saudi English Language Learner: Learning, Culture, and Identity

In order to facilitate learning, a welcoming and relaxed environment must be established to enable and support learners in achieving their goals (Burns et al., 2014;

Cook, 2016). Teachers must be acquainted with the diversity of learners who they will meet in the classroom. The diversity of learners includes the various language levels within the class, students' cultures and backgrounds, and their attitudes about learning a language. If teachers are not familiar with the diversity of the classroom before the course begins, the teachers must be willing to find out more information on these aspects. Based on these findings, teachers must then prepare and conduct lessons accordingly (Cook, 2016).

Teachers need to be aware of the demands that are present in language learning. Individual learners' abilities and feelings need to be accounted for when correcting errors and delivering feedback. For example, learners unsure of themselves might shut down when explicitly corrected in front of their peers, and failure to provide timely feedback might discourage the learners' progress (Zulfikar, 2019). On the other hand, it is not mandatory that one attends class in order to acquire a second language. Many L2 acquirers have found themselves in situations that demand that they learn the language in order to function, i.e. living in a foreign land, working in a place that the main language spoken is different than the one of their country (de Vos et al., 2019). In situations like these, the learner must be determined, have patience, and be resilient. In order to facilitate the language learning, one must be willing to be in contact and interact with the surrounding environment. Failure to do so will impede and even prevent the learning process to take place.

Language learning is a complex process. Children fluently carry on conversations of depth with peers and adults. Learning a second language post-puberty is difficult as

most adults can attest to after completing college or being assigned to work in another country. Language acquisition device theory confirms how difficult learning a language can be (Nikolov & Djigunović, 2006). However, L2 acquisition, both in formal and informal learning situations, is not out of reach for post-puberty individuals, but motivation is key. Learning a new language (L1 or L2) may take years of continuous development. Thornbury (2008) expressed that language is not a process that is fixed; however, it should be seen as a complex system.

Another aspect of ESL learning is students' perspectives about error correction. Culturally speaking, students feel ashamed and correction of errors is viewed as culturally sensitive. For this reason, Alamri and Fawzi (2016) explored Saudi students' preferences in terms of feedback on oral error correction. Their research provided evidence for a teaching strategy which may be culturally sensitive and provides information about effective pedagogy in students' oral language learning. Another researcher, AlAsmari (2015), provided a detailed report on students' traditional styles of learning verses teachers' use of the *communicative language teaching* approach. A questionnaire instrument was used to get feedback from teachers on the challenges they face in implementing more communicative, student-centered lessons. The report is of significance to my study, because I explored the perceptions concerning the experiences and practices of ESL teachers concerning how they localize pedagogy to best meet students' learning needs.

Writing challenges. Writing in English is another challenge for Saudi students. Cook (2016) noted in her studies that she found that "spelling mistakes made by L2 users

of English" were similar to the same mistakes made by native English speakers (p. 94). She concluded that difficulties in writing English stem from the difficult spelling system of the language rather that writing issues (Cook, 2016). A study conducted by AlFadda (2012) explored Saudi students' perspectives on challenges faced in academic writing. This study is relevant because AlFadda aimed to distinguish between students' needs as learners and the objectives being set forth. According to AlFadda (2012), it is important to understand what linguistic difficulties Saudi learners face in order to prepare them for university level academic writing.

A relevant and relatively new study conducted by AlHaysony (2017) explored various language learning strategies of Saudi students according to gender. The instrument used in the study will be the strategies inventory for language learning (SILL), which explores student strategies to learning the English language. Alresheed, Leask, and Raiker (2015) explained that the use of computer-assisted learning is not easily integrated into a Saudi ESL classroom because of potential religious and cultural restrictions. On the other hand, Saudi students are highly motivated by technology and consider it a successful strategy to learning English (Alharbi, 2018).

Educators of higher education students may need to consider methods appropriate for the students' age and experiences. Saba (2015) explored Saudi students' perceptions and defined student-centered pedagogy verses teacher-centered pedagogy. This was a case study of two students who engaged in whole-group discussions as well as collaborative writing strategies in small groups. Another study conducted by Unruh and Obeidat (2015) examined the perspectives and experiences of Saudi students with regards

to learning English in Saudi Arabia. Participants shared their experiences of common educational practices within the country and strategies which students used to improve their English language skills.

Educational reform. Saudi Arabia did not have an official education system until about 60 years ago. But by 1990, approximately 70% of the population were literate (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 2017). The country's vision was to have 100% literacy by 2024 as part of a major educational reform in the country (Unicef.org). More recently, a focus on the development of English language education has also become an objective. The various methods of language teaching that were used in the history of Saudi Arabia were the structural method in which the focus is on the result of learning each structural step and grammatical rule and being able to master it. Teachers used this method mainly because English grammar is different from grammar in Arabic. In fact, one study examined the interference and effects of grammatical differences on Saudi students' writing skills (Alizadeh, 2016). According to Saudi students, grammar skills are to be mastered before correct form and structure of language is produced by the learner. However, language learning theories have emerged concluding that grammar is more effectively taught in context and not as a separate entity as is the case with Arabic grammar (Cook, 2016). Grammar is one important aspect of language, yet there are other language skills which are now more prominent in language learning. These are reading and listening, which are receptive language skills, and writing and speaking, which are productive language skills.

The Saudi English as a Second Language Classroom and Curriculum

The ELSD program is a part of the PYP. Through this program, students are required to take approximately 4 hours of English per day in addition to three other one-hour courses in order to prepare for university level courses (e.g., PYP courses, objectives, course descriptions, and study plans). Because the curriculum in the government schools is still under development, students face language barriers when they are admitted into university (Alshammari, 2016). According to Alshammari (2016), university level English language instruction is not compatible with Saudi society. Alshammari claimed that:

> Western angle is particularly prevalent [and] English courses are based almost entirely on U.S. textbooks, which typically do not give any consideration to the Arabic or Islamic culture, and contrast sharply with the traditions and values of the Saudi lifestyle. (p. 367)

As a result, the PYP-ELSD was designed as a liaison between high school and university. Thus far, the curriculum is continuously changing, and the stakeholders involved are continuously developing the program to better fit the needs and language proficiency of the students. PYP-ELSD development is very difficult because there are more than 9000 students entering the PYP-ELSD every year, and more than 300 teachers are involved at the study site. In addition, the university admits only students of a certain proficiency level and grade point average after going through the PYP-ELSD. Admission is done to limit the number of students entering the university and to take in only the students who show potential to succeed in their field of study. For example, a student wanting to get

into dentistry school would need to score at least a 6 on the IELTS exam and have an overall grade point average of 3.79 at the end of the PYP-ELSD.

An insight into students' perspectives about textbook use and the influence of culture on language learning was explored in a study conducted by Aldera (2017). This study supports my premise that CRP is important as a focus in language learning. To add, the author suggested that more research needs to be done in this area from the views and experiences of the teachers (Aldera, 2017). According to a study by Alqahtani (2015), current English textbooks may or may not be relevant to Saudi ESL students. This study focused on Saudi English teachers teaching the government-provided English curricula, in which they could not decide which activity or methods need to be applied to effectively teach the book (Alqahtani, 2015). Saudi English teachers also did not know how to apply the new methods and strategies. This is evidence that appropriate pedagogy needs to be explored to better meet students' needs.

Alrashidi and Phan (2015) discussed the challenges of teaching and learning in Saudi Arabia with a detailed description of the history of education in the country along with sociocultural, religious, economic, and political influences on modern education. Their research findings were significant because the findings provided additional insight on challenges Saudi students face when learning English and the importance of English language education to Saudi society and the future of education in Saudi Arabia. A detailed report published by the U.S. Embassy served as a guide to any potential American teachers thinking of taking on a contract in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The

report detailed various aspects of life in Saudi Arabia as well as policies pertaining to work in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (United States Embassy-Riyadh, 2016).

The development of the curriculum was extremely difficult the first year, but subsequently the curriculum was improved to better serve the average Saudi student (Alshammari, 2016). As this curriculum was being developed, modifications were very common and completed on a day to day basis. At the end of every semester, focus groups were made up of supervisors, university officials, teachers, and students who met to discuss the pros and cons of the curriculum. These focus groups were extremely important because the developers of the curriculum got to hear firsthand what difficulties the students and teachers were facing. Changes were then made to better fit the needs of the students (Alshammari, 2016).

Determining the content of a language program depends on many factors. Firstly, the knowledge, skills, and values that students need to learn are determined ,and this includes the intended learning outcomes and the experiences that are going to be provided to achieve these results. The last step is to assess how the teaching and learning process can be planned, measured, and evaluated for the program's success (Alshammari, 2016).

Generally, students and teachers are accustomed to teacher-centered English language classrooms (Alshammari, 2016). Students are not allowed to speak unless called upon at which time they must stand up before speaking or giving an answer. Teacher talk time is high, and the students are passive learners. Another challenge is that teaching happens by following the book, page by page. The goal is for students to finish their

assigned classroom textbook by a certain deadline set by the Ministry of Education, and as a result, supplemental resources are rarely used (Alshammari, 2016). Mahboob and Elyas (2014) concluded that very little research has been conducted in the region on the topic of English language education in relation to culture and society.

Integration of Technology in the Saudi English as a Second Language Classroom

Computers and the internet are used to help improve teaching practices and student achievement (Banditvilai, 2016; Oppenheimer, 1997). Technology is used as an effective supplementary tool to language learning. Each ESL classroom consists of students with varied needs. Therefore, the learning tasks should be varied in order to account for these differences (Banditvilai, 2016). Differentiation will enable all students to be engaged in the learning process. Additionally, when selecting tasks to be adapted to a digital format, an ESL teacher is expected to consider the learners' knowledge on the topic, their skills, and their attitudes. Another benefit of technology integration in language learning education is to encourage students to be self-directed learners, to take responsibility for their learning of the language (Banditvilai, 2016). Access to technology also means that students are exposed to articles online, social media, research, all of which are considered authentic forms of language. With all the advancements in technology, students can learn much more. Learning can be extended to outside the classroom. Students become more engaged in the learning process and experience a heightened sense of achievement. Through the use of technology, students may be willing to take a greater responsibility towards their learning.

Students are empowered in their learning because of computer and internet use in their learning tasks. The integration of technology in education is one of the main objectives of ELD and more specifically; it is an expectation for each teacher to use technology to enhance teaching on a daily basis (professional development coordinator, personal communication, May 8, 2016). ESL teachers at the specified ELD site are appropriately integrating technology into their teaching. In addition, they receive periodic training and in-service sessions related to technology integration during professional development weeks. The ESL teachers are familiar with the expectations of using computers and the Internet to provide instruction during teacher orientation at the beginning of each academic year ("ELSD Curriculum & Educational," n.d.). Through some of the professional development workshops, teachers get training on how to effectively integrate technology into their lessons. Currently, the ELD uses a smart board software that allows students and teachers to interact with the material presented on the board.

Training for teachers could be conducted to address how to use this technology to develop tasks that create critical thinking and ensure that understanding is taking place. Assessment of the tasks is important to reinforce strategies that ensures that learning is meaningful. Through appropriate training, teachers may embrace and implement the usage of computers and the internet into the language learning process. Teacher training on the integration of technology allows teachers to be confident in their abilities in using technology and learning platforms in the classrooms (Banditvilai, 2016). The following

objectives are some potential objectives that teachers may experience with training opportunities.

- Integrating Technology Objectives
  - Provide greater access to authentic language
  - Encourage and support higher order thinking and problem-solving skills
  - Establish student directed learning
  - Create collaborative learning environments and information sharing
  - Construct atmosphere that mimics what will be encountered in outside world
- Technology Integration Plan Principles
  - All students have exposure to technology universally during their learning
  - Teaching staff are well-trained in techniques that best incorporate and utilize technology into teaching
  - Technology skills are learned in context of meaningful application
- Key Issues
  - Students are trained in how to approach information, make hypotheses, analyze the information, draw conclusions, and transfer knowledge.
  - Professional development sessions are provided to teachers periodically that ensure effective technology usage. Teachers may receive incentives for taking part in trainings.
  - Technology support may be timely and available to teachers, students, and staff members.

- Potential Impacts
    - Learning becomes student centered rather than teacher centered.
    - Technology may supplement course books for extra practice or more information.
    - Students experience language learning in real-life applications, thus recognizing its importance

The Common First Year program provides many students in Saudi Arabia with a foundational year of learning that will serve as a framework for future studies ("ELSD Curriculum & Educational," n.d.).

Saudi Arabia's English as a Second Language Education Initiatives Toward Globalization

Sharifian (2013) presented the notion of English as an international language. The researcher applauded the concept of "providing students with examples of cultural conceptualizations from multiple varieties of English [and believes that] English language teaching pedagogy should also involve creating natural opportunities for learners to engage in reflecting and explicating their cultural conceptualizations" (p. 10). In Saudi Arabia, Arabic is dominant because it is the original language of Islam. The country follows Islamic law, and, mainly for this reason, there was never a second language. Saudi Arabia was never under European power, so in the history of this country, no other language besides Arabic was ever introduced or taught in schools. Modern Saudi Arabia, as it is known today, was established in 1932 and did not flourish until after the oil boom. After the establishment of Saudi Arabia, the government

realized it needed to train its citizens in foreign language, mainly English, in order for government officials to be able to communicate with the vast numbers of foreigners pouring into the country for work (Braine, 2005). Saudi Arabian officials realized that the country needed a more global education system, especially in terms of English language education (Braine, 2005). Until recently, students in government schools were only introduced to English in seventh grade (AlShahrani, 2016). However, private schools and international schools did offer English or French as a core subject from kindergarten onwards. Because these types of schools are expensive, underprivileged Saudi families do not have access to financial aid to help them attend such educational institutions. Families of different financial rankings want their children to be fluent in English, and there is a demand for English speaking graduates (Fallatah & Syed, 2017). There are many Europeans and Westerners working for and investing into some of the largest and most successful companies in the world in Saudi Arabia (Fallatah & Syed, 2017). The Ministry of Education is continuously working on improving the English curriculum for governmental schools, and government officials want to introduce it earlier, but this will take time and effort to gain acceptance from society to raise the standards regarding English language teaching (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014).

AlShahrani (2016) provided a historical perspective of English education in Saudi Arabia. This research also provided evidence that there is a language proficiency gap that Saudi students face in learning English with a focus on the vision of becoming more globally connected through language. The focus of a study conducted by Faruk (2013) was on the influence of social, economic, and cultural factors in globalizing Saudi

Arabia's education system. Faruk's (2013) study also provided information on the policies implemented in Saudi Arabia's English language education. This study could offer specific ideas for developing a PD program to better serve the ESL teachers.

Pavan (2013) provided facts and figures on the developments of Saudi Arabia's education system, in particular the objective to provide Saudi students a globally recognized and high-quality education. The report also gave insight on the goals set forth by the Ministry of Education to better women's education in Saudi Arabia. The study provided facts about the history of the developments of education in the Kingdom. Pavan's (2013) study could serve as a source for the literature review and as a guide to better understand the country's educational goals and cultural and social influences.

A Saudi journal article was published that focused on the basis by which the PYP was founded (Al-Shehri, 2017). The program was made with an aim to improve students' ESL skills, among other gaps. It provided background information as well as global perspective about the foundation of the PYP and is important to my dissertation because the teachers who I will be interviewing teach ESL specifically for the PYP.

According to Tawalbeh (2015), a study was conducted about current professional development initiatives at a similar ESL program, specifically Taif University English Language Center, and these were found ineffective from the perspectives of the participants who take part in the study. One of the main concerns was professional development initiatives did not focus on specific techniques which would be applicable to their classroom situations.

English Language Skills Development–Preparatory Year Program Goals and Objectives

As previously mentioned, Saudi Arabia did not have an official education system until about 60 years ago. After the development of curriculum was underway, most educators in the Saudi governmental sector used various pedagogies in an effort to meet students' needs. The aim of the current qualitative case study was to explore the perspectives of university-level ESL teachers who have taught in Saudi Arabia concerning the use of CRP to provide students with effective and engaging instruction. The PYP is designed to link students from high school into the university. The main objectives of the PYP is are to improve English language proficiency skills and teach students the appropriate skills needed to be successful in college (Tawalbeh, 2015). The mission of the PYP is to utilize state-of-the-art technology that promotes success in a high-quality program (Tawalbeh, 2015). The target students are 18 to 19 years of age. There are more than 8,000 students and over 300 teachers in the PYP (2,500 female students and 90 female teachers), and over 50,000 students enrolled in the entire university. The program is located at a purposed teaching center made specifically for first year college students. The project is well-funded by the Saudi government. Because developing students' English language skills have become a main concern of educational and governmental officials the English language curriculum and syllabi are under continuous development (Ministry of Education, 2019).

One of the main goals of the PYP is to offer a high-quality program that instills high ethical values in students (Ministry of Education, 2019). Students should be

equipped with the skills needed for success in their academic lives in their field of study (university life) and in their professional lives, emphasizing self-development and creativity. The following are some goals that the program sets for itself and for its students:

- Instilling in students the principles of self-discipline, commitment, and responsibility
- Enhancing students' self confidence
- Enhancing students' leadership skills/initiative to achieve
- Developing proficiency skills in the English language (reading, writing, speaking, listening)
- Developing communication, learning, thinking, and research skills
- Encouraging creativity and self-development
- Involving students in university life and excelling academically
- Improving students' language skills to enable them to be more qualified for jobs
- Allowing students to broaden their intercultural and global knowledge
- Taking advantage of the benefits of e-learning
- Improving students' awareness of health and fitness; eating healthily (PY: Vision, Mission, Objectives, 2015).

Objectives in Measurable Terms

According to the Ministry of Education (2019), one of the main objectives of the PYP is to offer a program that encourages ethical values in students. Objectives are often

created when creating a program to assess the effectiveness and success of the program. In education, learning objectives are often developed in measurable terms (Schoepp, 2019). There are many measurable objectives that can be recognized for assessing the effectiveness of the main objectives of the PYP, which are to improve English language proficiency skills and skills needed to be successful in college. Measurable objectives of a program's success can be ascertained from either the instructor or the student.

- Student achievement recognition. Students who work hard and make good grades are recognized by the administration (e.g. Dean's list).
- Successful completion of program. Students that are having their needs met are successful in the program and can demonstrate success through the completion of a self-learning project. A self-learning project is a selected piece of work or problem-based study completed by the student individually on his/her own time that demonstrates a mastery of the knowledge and information gained throughout the course.
- Positive instructor feedback and evaluations. The success of a program is often reflected in the positive comments left by former students. This can be measured by positive feedback shared with the institution or through course evaluations that are completed by students.

Summary and Conclusions

The different methods of learning or teaching a language are complex and theoretical. The importance of English language to function in society, language acquisition, and communication are all significant to this study. Learning or teaching a

second language is more complex than what it seems. There is no limit to studying language, language acquisition, and communication. Even though learning a language is complex, language is the main form of communication. It is the most significant practice of passing on information. People learn different languages for various reasons, but any language learned is one more way to communicate with others and gain more knowledge. Whether it is through body language, reading, writing, speaking, or listening, simply put, language is main form of communication of cultural and social norms, educational information, and functioning in society. The following chapter presents the methodology for the study and includes the research design, methodology, procedures, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the perspectives of university-level ESL teachers who have taught in Saudi Arabia concerning the use of CRP to provide students with effective and engaging instruction. The need to enhance the English language skills of Saudi students is becoming an important aspect of their college careers and employment after college (Cook, 2016). The conceptual framework, CRP, could provide a foundation for effective curriculum, instruction, and assessment of these students in ELD programs across the country. In this chapter, the qualitative research design, methods, procedures, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis are all addressed.

Research Design and Rationale

When conducting research, researchers must choose an appropriate qualitative or quantitative methodology. Quantitative methodologies are often selected to support research with a focus on generalizing findings (Johnson & Christensen, 2019) as well as gathering meaning from participants (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Qualitative methodologies are used when the focus of research is on gathering in-depth information on beliefs and experiences (Johnson & Christensen, 2019). For this study, a qualitative methodology was selected to explore perspectives using a case study approach. With effective experiences and practices of ESL teachers as a focus, a qualitative design supported the overall guiding research question, which asked about the ESL teachers' perspectives

about providing CRP to improve English language proficiency at ELD programs in universities in Saudi Arabia. More specifically, the questions asked:

1. What are ESL teachers' perspectives on using CRP in the Saudi classroom?
2. What culturally relevant practices and content do ESL teachers perceive as effective and engaging?

Additionally, culturally relevant teaching was the conceptual framework for this study, which was originally developed by Ladson-Billings (1994). The central concepts that are associated with culturally relevant teaching pedagogy are cultural and linguistic experiences (Groulx & Silva, 2010). ESL teachers effectively implement CRP methodology to the languages, literacies, and cultures of their Saudi students to support effective practices and content while promoting student engagement and learning. The research paradigm was qualitative because of its nature to explore views or perspectives of a particular group or individual (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

A quantitative approach was not suitable because of its deductive methods where the researcher uses a "close-ended stance by identifying variables and selecting instruments to collect data before the study begins" (Creswell, 2012, p. 128). On the other hand, the qualitative approach is more inductive in nature. In other words, the researcher asks participants to share their ideas, thoughts, experiences, and uses the responses to build themes through a coding method of analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Further, a case study approach helps researchers explore a system that is specific and functioning (Cahyono, 2017). A program, such as ESL learning, is a bounded system as it is specific and functions to enhance the skills of students.

In addition to the quantitative method, other qualitative designs were not suitable for this research. In qualitative research, ethnography is used to explore cultures and phenomenology is used to explore an event, activity, or phenomenon over a long period (Creswell & Poth, 2017), which was not appropriate based on my timeframe. Grounded theory has a focus on identifying an explanation or theory that supports an event and a case study uses different data sources to explain an organization or event (Creswell & Poth, 2017). As the focus of the study was not concerned with developing a theory based on views of the participants, a grounded theory was not suitable. Narrative research explores the life of an individual and is presented in a chronological narrative (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The purpose of the study was to explore the perspectives of university-level ESL teachers who have taught in Saudi Arabia concerning the use of CRP to provide students with effective and engaging instruction; therefore, a narrative study was not appropriate. One other research consideration was using a phenomenological study, which identifies the essence of lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2017). However, lived experiences were not the focus, making this research strategy unsuitable.

Using different data sources, such as interviews, notations, and lesson plan materials, an exploratory case study approach was suitable because of the study's nature to explore the perceptions concerning the experiences and practices of ESL teachers concerning how they localize pedagogy to best meet students' learning needs. An exploratory case study supports the examination of a case in order to deem further research necessary (Yin, 2017). Exploring the perceptions of ESL teachers concerning how they localize pedagogy supported the use of an exploratory case study approach.

This approach helped in identifying a need for producing a document, which will make substantial recommendations to the current ESL teacher orientation program at Saudi universities. An orientation document may also be used to provide insights about ESL teachers' professional development needs to effectively teach Saudi ESL students at other university-level ELD programs across the country.

Role of the Researcher

The role of a qualitative researcher is a human data collector and one who analyzes the data collected all while maintaining objectivity (Merriam, 1988). I did not have any professional or personal relationships with potential participants; therefore, I had no power over participants. My role as a researcher did not affect participants in any way. However, I have held the position of an ESL instructor in Saudi Arabia in the past, and my experience may have influenced my personal beliefs about CRP. To ensure validity and reduce personal biases, I used an interview guide (Appendix A) that ensured the same questions were asked of each participant and the questions remain consistent. To review overall findings, I used member checking after conducting the interviews by sending an interview summary to each participant for verification of concise summarization of participant responses. I also used triangulation to develop common themes between the interviews, notations, and lesson plan materials.

Methodology

Participant Selection

Population. In this qualitative case study, I selected potential participants using a specific set of characteristics relevant to the focus of the study and my questions (Lodico,

Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). The population of this study was approximately 85 ESL teachers at the selected site of study. All the participants were ESL teachers at one of the largest university-level ELD programs in Saudi Arabia who have successfully taught ESL to Saudi students for a minimum of 3 years, thus they were information-rich with data that could be collected from them (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Sampling. A purposeful sampling strategy (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006) was used to notify 10 participants. ESL teacher participants were those hired to teach ESL students at the study site for at least 3 years. For credibility purposes, the participants taught for the past 3 years. With the university's consent, this information was provided to me by the university administration. I e-mailed the teachers an invitation to participate, I also provided an introduction to my study and a small questionnaire to all participants who met the criteria. The questionnaire (Appendix C) served as a tool to collect information about teachers' backgrounds and experience.

Instrumentation

For my study, the main data collection tool was a semistructured interview. First, semistructured interviews were conducted using the protocol (Appendix A). Second, application of elicitation techniques was guided by the indicators on the Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Teacher Reflection Tool by the Coalition of Essential Schools (Appendix B) and focused on planning materials. The participating teachers brought their own lesson plans and materials and discussed their choice of teaching materials as it related to CRP.

Triangulation was conducted using the interviews, notations, and curriculum plan materials. The interviews were a set of semistructured questions that allowed participants to share perceptions and experiences. Questions were developed using the research questions. Three field experts were used to review the interview questions; however, no changes were reported necessary based on expert feedback. Additionally, I took notes throughout the data collection process (during and after the interviews). Notations included notes about lessons, planning, resources or other information on teaching shared by participants. Curriculum plans included lesson plans and materials that were examined relevant to the ESL teachers' teaching plans.

First, a demographic data questionnaire was sent to participants after the consent was given to conduct interviews; this questionnaire was used to gather information on each of the teachers including background, education qualifications, years of experience teaching ESL to Saudi university-level students, and languages spoken by the teacher. Once consent was given, I asked teachers to complete the demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C) and share a sample lesson plan, worksheet, or any other teaching material which they used. Participants could share a lesson and teaching materials which they felt were effective in teaching Saudi ESL students. All participants sent in a lesson plan, and some shared worksheets or power point presentations, which they created as a teaching aid to teach their students.

Second, interviews took place using the interview protocol questions and probing. Third, the Coalition of Essential Schools CRP teacher reflection tool was used after the initial interview questions to attain more data. I asked the participants to look at the

indicators and sort, in order of importance, which indicator specifications were most important to least important in the Saudi ESL classroom. The teachers read the indicator specifications and then provided justification for what they thought was most important to least important. The technique of ordering and sorting refers to Barton's elicitation techniques (Barton, 2015). After answering all the interview questions and utilizing Barton's elicitation techniques using the CRP teacher reflection tool, using a pre-selected lesson plan, teachers shared the steps and procedures of how they taught a particular lesson. The teachers shared their teaching aids or materials that they used in class and provided justification for why or how they used them, giving me insight into why they chose particular content or how they taught the lesson taking into account the students' needs and learning styles. Participants also shared why they felt that particular teaching strategies were effective with Saudi ESL students. During the interviews, I took some notes of key words and ideas which the participants could elaborate. I thanked each participant and closed the interview.

English as a second language teacher interview guide. The ESL teacher interview protocol (Appendix B) was my copy of interview questions asked of each participant in English. The interview questions included the final questions that were in the review approved by the three field experts used to review the interview questions. The CRP teacher reflection tool by the Coalition of Essential Schools was also intended to probe ideas and perspectives about culturally relevant teaching in the participants' classrooms. The interview guide also served to identify characteristics of Saudi ESL

students and how students learn best. The questions in the interview guide were created in alignment with the conceptual framework of CRP (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Lesson plans and materials examination. During the individual interviews, time was taken to examine and discuss culturally responsive teaching plans, where teachers provided a demographic profile of their students, described how they would implement the plan, and identified sample resources, lessons, and relevant literature books that might suit the community of learners. Sample resources (i.e., books or websites that offer teaching ideas) were used as a data source to indicate teacher perspectives and understandings of the issue of CRP. The use of teachers' lesson plans or materials provided evidence about the content teachers use or find relevant to teaching English to Saudi students. Lesson plans also provided some evidence about how teachers planned to deliver lessons to localize pedagogy to meet Saudi students' learning needs in the ESL classroom.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Recruitment. The head of the department at the study site was contacted for permission and with final permission from the university's administration, I obtained a list of ESL instructors teaching in the ELD program. I then contacted the teachers with information on the purpose of the study and solicit participation for my study. By using purposeful sampling, I ensured that all participants met the pre-set criteria and that they were potentially information rich, meaning they had the experience and knowledge about what best practices are fit and suitable for teaching ESL to Saudi learners.

Participation. I sent an e-mail invitation to the potential participants. Identified teachers had a minimum of 3 years of experience in teaching ESL to Saudi students entering their first year of university and also had an observation score and evaluation that were outstanding or "5" on a scale of 1 to 5. There are 65 ESL instructors teaching in the ELD program, many of whom met the criteria to participate in this study. Considering those factors, the sample size was set for approximately 10 to 12 ESL teacher participants. If the purposefully selected participants decided not to participate, this would not affect them negatively in any way. Ten participants were included in the final participant group.

As with many case studies, data saturation was needed, and that was the point when I aimed to conclude the data collection process because no new relevant information emerged from the interviews. To attain data saturation in this study, it was recommended to have the consent of at least 15-20% of the total population to be interviewed depending on participants' willingness to take part (see Saunders & Townsend, 2016).

I used multiple data collection methods by integrating the use of individual interviews first and followed with other data that will form a triangulation to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings. Overall, three methods of data collection were used: interviews, notes, and document analysis (i.e., lesson plans and teaching materials). Using the recommendations of Creswell and Poth (2017), three experts in the ESL teaching field reviewed the interview questions for clarity and appropriateness. The purpose of review was to test the interview questions for clarity and consistency

(Creswell & Poth, 2017). However, none of the experts offered suggestions for updating or rewording questions.

I began by welcoming and reminding the participants of the confidentiality of their responses (Lodico et al., 2010). I informed participants that there were no right or wrong answers, stating that confidentiality is of utmost importance, and that the session would be recorded for data collection purposes. I asked some general questions about the participant's understanding of CRP in the Saudi classroom or among Saudi ESL learners. The interview was guided by a CRP teacher reflection tool (Appendix C). More in-depth information about each teacher's lessons and plans on localizing pedagogy in the Saudi ESL classroom were shared and participants referenced documents that demonstrate effective culturally appropriate instruction to Saudi ESL students. Using the recommendations of Barton (2015), elicitation techniques were used to promote a comfortable environment that encouraged an open and honest exchange of information. Elicitation techniques included arrangement tasks that encouraged justification of selected answers. During an interview, sorting and ordering provided information, themes, or ideas can promote and provoke meaningful conversations and detailed answers (Barton, 2015). During this interview portion, participants discussed pedagogical indicators and shared lesson plans and materials that were kept for further data analysis.

Interviews were held via Zoom to gain first-hand experience and guide further exploration of the experiences and views of the participants. I selected a quiet and confidential space to connect to participants for the interviews. The interviews lasted approximately an hour, and they were audio recorded and transcribed. Through the

examination of the indicators on the CRP teacher reflection tool (Appendix C), data, rich in details, was recorded. The interviews provided me an opportunity to ask ESL teachers guiding questions, which focused on teacher-student interactions and student-student communication, which are culturally relevant. It was also an opportunity for participants to share individual classroom practices and explain some of the strategies used to localize appropriate instruction in the Saudi ESL classroom. I also asked the participants to share a sample lesson plan or resource material, which they found effective and used in their classes. The lesson plans and teaching material provided another level of documentation. The interview questions, lesson plans, and teaching materials provided data for analysis and answers to the research questions.

The interviews and sharing of lesson plans were scheduled via Zoom, and I selected a quiet and confidential space to connect to participants for the interviews. The interviews and sharing of lesson plans took place at one time per participant and included audio recording with the participant's permission. One of the key aspects of the individual interviews was to examine a sample lesson plan, which the teacher used in the classroom. While looking at a sample lesson plan, the teacher was expected to provide reasoning for selecting the material and to discuss the implementation of various strategies, which would be suitable for the students' culture.

As I concluded the interviews, I debriefed each participant and asked probing questions to ensure that the participant had no more information to add. I did this by asking the participant, "What else can you tell me about..." I thanked the participants for their time and effort in giving me information about their perspectives and experiences.

The semistructured interviews were recorded and transcribed. As a follow up, member checking involved providing participants with the opportunity to get a transcript of the interview and a summary of the study findings sent to them via email. Member checking is often used to enhance trustworthiness and verify validity of information (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). To signal the end of the study, I sent an email of gratitude to each participant to thank them for their participation and inform them that their participation was complete.

Data collection. I used semistructured individual interviews to explore each teacher's understanding of CRP followed by an examination of the participant's sample lesson plan and teaching material, as explained by the participant. This method of data collection was needed to enhance data richness and validate emerging themes. The combination of data from interviews, documentation (e.g., lesson plans), and notes taken throughout the interview process allowed me to triangulate data.

The guide used in my study was the Coalition of Essential Schools Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) Classroom Teacher Reflection Tool (2006; see Appendix C). The tool was used during the interview using the indicators as an instrument to examine the lesson plans and materials used by the teacher participants. The tool was inspired by Ladson-Billings' (1994) theory on culturally responsive teaching, which recognizes the significance of integrating students' culture in learning. The tool provided descriptors, which suggest various ideas that implement culturally effective teaching strategies. The participants and I used this tool to examine the relationship between the lesson plan and teaching materials that a teacher participant brought to the interview and the descriptors

listed in the tool. The discussion involved reviewing the different indicators found in the tool and how they relate to the teacher's lesson plan and teaching material (Appendix C).

Data Analysis Plan

Open coding and thematic analysis were used to present the data. Open coding is a stage in the analysis process in which the transcripts are read thoroughly, and headings are written down to describe all major aspects of the data gathered, excluding irrelevant or unimportant information (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The headings should account for almost all the interview data (Burnard, 1991). A well-established analysis of qualitative research, thematic analysis is "the process of deriving themes from textual data and illustrating these with some representational tool" (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 387).

For this qualitative data analysis, I summarized information collected to identify themes or commonalities using a narrative format. I analyzed the collected data. This analysis included transcriptions, researcher's notes, and follow-up questions (Lodico et al., 2010). Once the data analysis was complete, the findings were organized by research question relevancy. I used the following steps to organize the data analysis process.

1. After each interview, I had a transcription of the interview created. I reviewed the transcript, and each study participant received a summary of the interview to ensure the information was accurately captured.
2. To gain an overall impression of the gathered information, I reviewed the transcripts a second time. This helped begin the process of identifying common themes from the participant responses.

3. Using the web-based software program, NVivo, I uploaded the interview transcripts for analysis.
4. Using a combination of my analysis of participant interviews and NVivo computer-assisted analysis of data, I identified themes and common factors.
5. Data from the themes were then coded by presenting common variables and factors that can be sorted into categories. Coding was be done by hand as I examined transcripts, notes, and other documentation for common themes. An analytical program was used to help with the coding process.
6. Analyzing the codes, themes, commonalities, and frequencies of codes helped me understand the ESL teachers' perspectives on localizing pedagogy to provide Saudi students with effective and culturally appropriate classroom instruction.

The data were transcribed using a qualitative research tool called NVivo. NVivo, a software which is used in qualitative studies, organizes and analyzes unstructured information-rich narratives collected by researchers in the form of videos, audios, or transcriptions. It can yield reports that assist the researcher in finding insights to questions asked (Houghton et al., 2017). Through analysis of the ESL teachers' semistructured interviews, the software provided me with a report, which helped in identifying themes and patterns about CRP using open coding. The information gathered was in relation to the research questions identified in this study. Discrepant case sampling and negative case sampling were not used for this study. If a discrepancy had been

identified, action would have involved assessing the discrepancy and determining an appropriate response. No discrepant cases were noted.

Trustworthiness

Shenton's (2004) model for establishing trustworthiness focuses on different aspects of research. Using Shenton's (2004) model as a reference, the sections including credibility, transferability, and confirmability are included. This is the model used to ensure criteria were met in my qualitative research study. Trustworthiness was enhanced firstly through the implementation of commonly known research methods of case study design. In addition, reporting directly about participants' perspectives and experiences enhanced trustworthiness. Finally, triangulation of data through the use of the semistructured interviews, and examination of lesson plans and teaching materials and notations enhanced the trustworthiness of the data (see Flick, 2018).

Credibility

The ESL teacher participants support credibility in the study because they have the qualifications and experiences necessary to provide insight into providing culturally appropriate instruction at the study site. In addition, my relevant qualifications and experiences as an ESL teacher and researcher added to the credibility of the study as I acted as the key instrument for the data collection and analysis of my research (Shenton, 2004). Identifying concepts in the literature review helped establish credibility.

With appropriate consent procedures in place (see Appendix A), participants were identified and contacted through email and had the option to decline taking part in the study. A consent procedure ensured that only participants who were freely willing and

interested in the study participated and this was a tactic to ensure honesty in informants. 2004). Participants also had the option to receive a summary of the interview through email and could provide feedback if they found mistakes or missing information in the transcripts.

Participant interviews were recorded to ensure validity. Using iterative questioning to probe the elicitation of more data during the interviews enhanced credibility (see Van de Wiel, 2017). Triangulation of data allowed the extrapolation of convergent themes to support the validity of this data collected, specifically interviews and lesson plans or materials in this case study (see Creswell, 2012). The interview protocol was reviewed to ensure alignment with the research questions.

Transferability

Transferability is the ability for this research study to be applicable elsewhere with other participants and in some cases, other methods (see Daniel, 2019). In this study, ESL teachers shared their perspectives of CRP and provided examples of how CRP appropriate instruction was presented to university-level Saudi ESL students. The findings, based on their input, may be used to provide future ESL instruction.

There may be variance in the teachers' backgrounds or the students' culture. However, the participant recruitment procedures, data collection methods, and interview questions protocols were consistent and could be replicated elsewhere in other environments where there are other university-level Saudi ESL teachers and learners. Through the documentation of emerging themes and convergence of data sources, transferability was enhanced (see Creswell, 2012).

Dependability

Dependability is defined as the ensuring of reliability through replication of the same context, methods, participants, and similar results would be obtained (Amankwaa, 2016). To increase dependability, processes of the study are reported in detail to ensure another researcher could repeat the study, proper research practices are followed, and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the processes is completed. Three ESL field experts reviewed the interview protocols and interview questions to determine clarity and appropriateness for the interview. Again, multiple data collection was intended to confirm the convergence of emerging themes (see Shenton, 2004).

Confirmability

Confirmability procedures ensure that the findings of the study are based upon the data provided by participants and that there is a minimal intrusion of the researcher's biases (Amankwaa, 2016). The findings also present how data does not reflect the preferred outcomes or characteristics of the researcher (Shenton, 2004). Confirmability is enhanced when the participant interviews are purely their own opinions and perspectives. Internal reliability is met using consistency and commonality of the participants' responses (Creswell, 2012). As a researcher, I intended to maintain reflexivity. My input on the research study was one of a personal interest in identifying the perspectives of university-level ESL teachers who have taught in Saudi Arabia concerning the use of CRP to provide students with effective and engaging instruction. The aim of this study was to gather findings to support future ESL teachers in the region about effective strategies of instruction used in teaching Saudi ESL students at the college level.

Ethical Procedures

The regulations on the protection of human subjects require that participants in this study remained anonymous and their responses confidential. The names of participants were replaced with numbers in the report and data presentation. Confidentiality issues were addressed during the data cleaning process which involved removing identifiers and modifying any data which would lead to recognizing participants. Data collection and participation remained confidential. No vulnerable populations were included in this study. As the personal information was kept private, there was minimal risk in taking part in this study. All information from the data collection process is kept in a secure database or file (depending on if the information is in digital or paper form), and I am the only one to have access to this database. Participant information is kept confidential and shall be stored securely for 5 years before being destroyed. Following these guidelines to attain approvals and designing participant consent forms guarantees the protection of participants (see Creswell, 2012).

Institutional Review Board

The purpose of the IRB approval (04-02-20-0424723) was to ensure that potential benefits outweigh potential risks (Research Ethics FAQs, 2016). Each participant was requested to sign an informed consent which fully explained the purpose, risks (if any), and procedures involved in taking part in this study (see Institutional Review Board Guidebook, 2015). The sampling strategy may also be of interest to the IRB because any cases of perceived coercion of participants to take part must be minimized as much as possible (Research Ethics FAQs, 2016).

Ethical Considerations

Therefore, the sampling strategy ensured that participants do not believe themselves obliged to participate in the study. An invitation and an information sheet about the guiding research questions was sent to all potential participants requesting their participation. The information sheet included the purpose of the research, risks and benefits, a statement of voluntary participation, confidentiality procedures, and contact information for the local ethics committee members at the university where the ELD program is held (in the event that a participant needs to raise any concerns about their rights). I kept in mind that willingness to participate in a study such as this one "will depend on how well the participants understand what the study is about, what will be expected of them if they participate, and how their privacy will be respected" (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2016, p. 6). The data collection process began only after receiving consent forms from the willing participants.

Summary

Chapter 3 presents an explanation of the research methodology and implementation. The research design (case study), my role as the researcher, and the methodology are included. Information on the methodology presents details about participant selection, instrumentation, procedures for recruitment, and data collection and analysis. In addition, information about the trustworthiness of the research study is presented and ethical procedures are listed, including information on protecting participants' rights. The next chapter, Chapter 4, presents the findings of the data analysis through the convergence of data from interviews and lesson plan materials.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of university-level ESL teachers who have taught in Saudi Arabia concerning the use of CRP to provide students with effective and engaging instruction. The findings from this study (a) provide information that could guide the development, delivery, and content of lessons, such as lessons focused on the cultural relevance; (b) help present the gap noted between the literature and what occurs in the local setting; and (c) could be used to generate reports on experienced ESL teachers' perspectives about localizing pedagogy, which could help prepare newly hired teachers to transition into the Saudi classroom effectively. Two primary research questions guided this study:

1. What are ESL teachers' perspectives on using CRP in the Saudi classroom?
2. What culturally relevant practices and content do ESL teachers perceive as effective and engaging?

Participants' experiences and feedback added insight to the research questions posed in this study. By listening to and analyzing the experiences of these ESL teachers, valuable information was obtained about localizing teaching practices when teaching to Saudi university students. In this chapter, I address two research questions with supporting evidence, including both quotations and feedback from the participants.

Setting

The results of this qualitative study were based on interviews of 10 ESL teachers at one of the largest university-level ELD programs in Saudi Arabia. Although the

location of the participant site is one of the largest university ELD programs in Saudi Arabia, the setting for the interviews was via Zoom. I selected a quiet and confidential space to connect my Zoom interviews with participants.

Data Collection

Sample

There were 10 participants who were each interviewed using the ESL teacher interview guide, informed by the probe study and ESL teaching material from all 10 participants. Three participants chose not to disclose their age. Of the seven who did, six are in their 20s and 30s, and one is in the 50s age range. Three out of 10 participants have their master's degrees. One participant has a Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) diploma, and the other seven have bachelor degrees. Nine out of 10 participants have Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) certification. Five out of ten participants have Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) or Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) certification. Three participants have Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults (DELTA) certification. Table 1 summarizes the participants' characteristics.

Table 1

Characteristics of Participants

Participant	Age	Education	Certification	Years of experience	Teaching assignments	First language	Language other than English
Participant 1	29	Masters	CELTA	7	Beginner Level ESL, Intermediate Level ESL, Advanced Level ESL	English	Gujarati
Participant 2	33	Masters	TESOL Diploma TEFL/TESL Certification	11	Advanced Level ESL	Arabic	No
Participant 3	25	Masters	CELTA DELTA	25+	Advanced Level ESL	Georgian	Russian
Participant 4	N/A	Masters	CELTA DELTA	25+	Intermediate Level ESL, Advanced Level ESL	English	Arabic
Participant 5	55	Bachelors	TEFL/TESL Certification CELTA	25+	Beginner Level ESL, Intermediate Level ESL	Arabic	No
Participant 6	37	Masters	CELTA	11	Beginner Level ESL, Intermediate Level ESL	English	No
Participant 7	37	Bachelors	CELTA	10	Beginner Level ESL, Intermediate Level ESL	Tegra	Arabic
Participant 8	31	Masters	TEFL/TESL Certification CELTA DELTA	10	Advanced Level ESL	Urdu	No
Participant 9	N/A	Masters	TEFL/TESL Certification CELTA	11	Advanced Level ESL	Hindi	Urdu, Telugu
Participant 10	N/A	Bachelors	TEFL/TESL Certification CELTA	10	Elementary/ Pre-Intermediate ESL Level	Urdu	Arabic

Procedures

With a purposeful sampling approach, participants were recruited through a list of ESL instructors teaching in the ELD program at the university. Based on an initial contact e-mail and pre-screening, eligible participants participated in individual semistructured interviews. All 10 interviews were conducted online via Zoom.

During the semistructured interviews, participants recalled their experiences working with Saudi students in ESL classrooms and their perspectives on their students and the use of CRP in Saudi classrooms. Participants also evaluated indicators on the observational teaching tool, which allowed me to gather more supporting data. Although 60 minutes was the projected amount of time for the interviews, several participants had much to share and some interviews went over the approximated time. The interviews lasted from 1 to 1-and-a-half hours and were audio-recorded and transcribed. Participants shared lesson plans with me, which included PowerPoint presentations, classroom activities, and practice worksheets. During the interviews, the Culturally Relevant Teacher Reflection tool was used to probe more information from participants by using elicitation techniques guided by the indicators on the tool (Appendix B).

Data Analysis

I conducted an inductive, thematic analysis to identify participants' perceptions of CRP in Saudi classrooms. Transcripts were uploaded into computer software, NVivo 12, and coded manually using the software and then compared to the manual coding initially completed during the interview collection. Using recommendations on transcripta (Boyatzis, 1998; Miller & Crabtree, 1992; Weitzman & Miles, 1995), data were first

summarized and paraphrased, and outlines were generated for each interview. Milani and Hashemi (2020) also recommended highlighted four main phases of coding. Considering the recommendations of past researchers, four phases of coding were conducted: (a) open-coding to develop initial categories, (b) focus coding to identify central themes, (c) axial coding to group similar data, and (d) final theoretical content analysis.

Open coding is the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing qualitative data (Flick, 2018). The frequency of the themes and keywords of the reported events were compared and contrasted, listing similarities and differences, with the goal of identifying emergent themes and keywords that distinguished between expected and unexpected boundary violations and planned and unplanned inter role transitions.

Focus coding is the process of examining the codes to determine how useful they are and thus helped ensure that the differentiation between each experience was maximized (Boyatzis, 1998; Lofland & Lofland, 1995). Focus coding was conducted by noting the number of times a preliminary theme was present in the subsample data. As a result, codes were eliminated that were not used frequently, redundant or overlapping codes were collapsed, and vague codes were elaborated upon.

Next, the codes were organized according to the procedures of axial coding, which involves grouping data together using a paradigm (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014). The paradigm was based on several studies of Saudi students. For example, literature has been conducted on Saudi students in ESL classrooms using methodologies of CRP instruction (e.g., active versus passive;

Alghamdi & El-Hassan, 2016). Important cultural norms and behaviors of Saudi students (e.g., inappropriate content) have been a focus of empirical studies (Alqahtani & Pfeffer, 2017). Additionally, a paradigm was based on studies with a focus on religious importance and interests of Saudi students (e.g., technology; Wiseman, Al-bakr, Davidson, & Bruce, 2018). Studies with a focus on Saudi students and prior learning experiences (e.g., teacher-centered learning focus on good grades) also helped form a basis for coding (Alghamdi & Deraney, 2018).

Results

Three distinct themes emerged from the data (see Table 2). The major themes identified from the results of this study included:

1. CRP is necessary to create learning environments that are emotionally and intellectually safe environments that are respectful of students.
2. Saudi students have cultural pride among a shifting cultural landscape.
3. Teachers engage in student-centered instruction to facilitate active participation among their students.

Themes 1 and 2 answered the first research question: What are ESL teachers' perspectives on using CRP in the Saudi classroom? Theme 3 addressed the second research question: What culturally relevant practices and content do ESL teachers perceive as effective and engaging? Each theme is discussed in further detail in the following sections.

Table 2

Themes and Subthemes Developed from Qualitative Analysis

Theme	Subthemes
Emotionally and Intellectually Safe Environments	• Awareness of culturally deemed inappropriate content and behaviors • Students' learning style and language proficiency • Understanding students' motivation for learning English
Cultural Pride Among a Shifting Cultural Landscape	• Pride in cultural heritage and language • Conservative and religious
Student-Centered Instruction to Facilitate Active Participation	• Incorporating activities and activities of interest to ascertain classroom engagement • Concept checking questions • Guided discovery • Communicative English learning • Group work and group discussion • Student-led activities

Theme 1: Emotionally and Intellectually Safe Environments

Participants discussed the intersectionality of CRP and promoting social, emotional, and intellectual safety in classrooms. One participant shared that "It is up to the teacher to create an environment in the class, which is productive, which is positive and where students can participate and feel equal and be heard as well" (Participant 8). Successful teaching and learning can only come about when there is an optimal learning environment. Reflective of the findings on optimal learning environments of Barton (2018), the feedback from participants support how learning environments are characterized by caring and respectful relationships between adults and students and among peers that foster a sense of belonging and facilitate academic, social, and emotional skills. In an optimal learning environment, each learner's different needs are addressed with attention to equity and continuous growth. Participant 10 stated,

> I think their perspective is to be understood, and only once we know that they are comfortable with a better rapport. They can see that the teacher is trying to understand them at their level and trying to cater to their cultural needs and ideals; it will be a successful classroom … because when it comes to talking about your own identity, talking about where you come from your beliefs, your festivals, your rituals, your culture, in other words, your traditions, you're very passionate about sharing it.

Theme 1 is broken into three subthemes: (a) awareness of culturally deemed inappropriate content, (b) students' learning styles and language proficiency, and (c) understanding of students' motivation for learning English.

Subtheme 1: Awareness of culturally deemed inappropriate content and behaviors. When developing teaching materials and classroom activities, all 10 participants expressed the importance of screening the material for content that is considered inappropriate among Saudi students. Participants defined inappropriate content in two ways. First, topics that challenge the norms of the current culture of Saudi life. One participant shared that "Topics that are that are going against their traditions or illustrations which are inappropriate or women with few clothes, for example, because this is something which is not acceptable in Saudi Arabia" (Participant 6). The second way to filter material was to look for negative opinions on Saudi culture and the country. One participant shared that "As a teacher, you are not allowed to discuss your views. If they're not good views if you think there's something about the country" (Participant 1). Examples of content that could challenge Saudi cultural norms are depictions of romantic

relationships, different religions, different family types, alcohol, revealing clothing, and music. When asked to place Saudi cultural identities in order from most to least importance, religion and gender were the highest-ranked identities, each receiving the high ranking of importance from five participants.

Being aware of culturally deemed inappropriate content is important when designing teaching materials because teachers do not want to inadvertently offend Saudi students or teach with anything that violates their culture and religion. Participant 5 affirmed this sentiment, sharing "We have to be aware of the culture. And we have to apply it in our education and our teaching students because they can be offended if you say something against their culture, their religion, their traditions." Presentation of inappropriate content and even the lack of knowledge on cultural norms can also make students feel uncomfortable. Participant 7 discussed how not understanding gender norms in Saudi Arabia can led to discomfort for female Saudi students:

> I know how uncomfortable it is for them or how strange it is for them to be in a mixed [gender] classroom. And a lot of the teachers might just teach them as normal, and try and encourage them to work in groups, but there are so many underlying things of what's considered respectful or appropriate. So, it can be very uncomfortable for Saudi women and Saudi men to have to work together.

Participant 7 continued to discuss gender awareness in the classroom:

> I think that's important for a teacher outside of Saudi Arabia to be aware of gender. Because even looking at a woman, holding eye contact for too long, or speaking to her about things might be misinterpreted because they wouldn't even

> talk to each other or look at each other, or sit close to each other. And it was interesting for me because when I was in England, I could see how uncomfortable it is for them but not all the teachers understand that, especially if they've never been to Saudi.

Overall, participants agreed that adopting a CRP that maintains respect for students' cultural norms and avoids culturally deemed inappropriate content was important to establish healthy learning environments where students feel respected and feel comfortable learning.

Subtheme 2: Students' learning styles and language proficiency. Participants also expressed the importance of understanding the different learning styles among their students and the different levels of English language proficiency entering their classroom.

Cultural learning differentiation. Participants shared taking time to understand their students' varying cultural learning needs to differentiate the material effectively. One participant shared, "I think, in terms of the performance of diverse students, to make learning more effective for them, I think that's number one" (Participant 4). Participant 9 delved deeper into how teachers incorporate knowledge of their students' culture into their lesson plans:

> Most of the Saudi learners are kinesthetic or visual learners. So I have to blend in both styles, and I have to be very careful that I have some activities where they can get up and do some activities and some visuals … before the beginning of any semester, I usually have a quiz to see their learning styles. And throughout my

> experience, most of them are visual and kinesthetic. So, I have to blend these two styles to deliver my lesson.

Participants shared their perspectives on the learning needs of students that reflect the localized culture and discussed students' prior learning experiences in Saudi Arabia and how that affects learning differentiation. Participant 3 described the teacher-centered instruction experienced by most Saudi students before entering university. Concerning prior learning experiences among students, Participant 3 shared that:

> When they come into universities when they come into the foundation year and are learning English, they are very passive learners, because it's the teacher who is the be-all and beyond. And they believe that whatever the teacher says is correct, and I believe this contributes to the prior experiences that they've had from school.

Teacher-centered instruction in Saudi Arabia involves a lot of memorization of the given material, which participants say hinders students' critical thinking skills. One participant explained how students' "previous high school experience has been as passive learners. So, they've been in large classrooms, especially if they went to government schools, where the teacher is the giver of knowledge, and they memorize it" (Participant 4). Also, because teacher-centered instruction is the norm among Saudi students, other types of instruction can be met with resistance. Participant 5 discussed how she combats student resistance to more active teaching styles. Participant 5 shared trying to:

> Encourage peer correction. But this group may not deem this to be culturally appropriate because students expect the teacher to be the only one who corrects

> them. So, if I ask them to correct each other, then we have to discuss about it because this is not what Saudi schools do. It's always the teacher who provides the correct answer.

Because this type of active learning involves a learning outside of the cultural norm, the teacher had to explain the purpose to encourage participation. Participant 5 continued to explain how students needed guidance to engage in an atypical activity. Participant 5 shared:

> So, if I want the students to correct each other, I would always have to have a discussion with them and say, this is what I'm planning to do. And this is why we're doing it. So, what do you think, are you comfortable with your friends correcting you? and then you discuss it.

Language proficiency. Participants also adapt lesson plans to their students' level of English language proficiency. Considering students' abilities was also discussed among participants. Concerning student capabilities, one participant explained:

> Whatever their level is, I adapt the lesson to their level, and they're comfortable with it. So, for example, if I come in, and students are at a beginner level, I've created a lesson plan for them. I might change it the next day because they might not be beginners. They might be pre-intermediate, might be able to do more than what I expected, or they might be able to do less. (Participant 1)

Participants adapt their lesson plans depending on the level of support their students need and the type of lesson they are working on. Participant 10 shared:

> So, we have different activities depending on what we are doing. You know, sometimes we use videos, pictures so that they understand what's happening in the class because some of the words they don't understand. So, I try to find different videos to make them understand the concept of the lesson.

When evaluating language proficiency, four participants noted the effect of cultural immersion on their students' language capabilities. Students exposed to more cultures seemed to have higher English language proficiency. Participant 3 stated:

> If you look at some of the better universities, the students already come with a really good level of education. Their English is already pretty advanced; they sound like natives; they can communicate like them. They're well-traveled, and even their writing and everything is at an excellent standard, so it depends on the university and the background of the student and the education they come into before entering the university.

Participants shared that prior schooling, university experience, and travel influenced students' language proficiency. When conducting an evaluation of student needs, Participant 3 continued to explain by sharing, "So, my view is it depends on the experience they already have and the level they come in like before joining." Participant 3 continued to share that students from more prestigious schools are more accepting of western culture and language acquisition. Participant 3 also explained:

> Lower Level A students, and because they come from public schools, they are very traditional. They don't know a lot about global issues of the world as much as Level C students. Level C students mainly come from high-level students; they

> usually come from private schools, and lots of the students have traveled abroad or lived abroad. They take pride in being more like, for example, westernized, they're more open-minded and not as traditional.

Subtheme 3: Understanding students' motivation for learning English.

Participants noted that just because students enrolled in their English program, that did not mean that students necessarily had an interest in learning the language. One participant shared:

> We're in an Arabic speaking country. So, we cannot assume that all students will have the same interest in learning the language. The Saudi government is putting a lot of effort into helping their students learn the English language, but not all of them are motivated the same. (Participant 2)

Participants 8 stated:

> Sometimes English is made imperative for them to study, and they don't have their free will to review it. It makes a big difference if you're interested in exploring a language, whereas you're forced to study a language. So, you might have cases where students wouldn't want to do their best because this is something they're not interested in. Or they're just doing it for the sake of a degree that they have to get or a compulsory course.

Theme 2: Cultural Pride Among a Shifting Cultural Landscape

Saudi students are very patriotic. They have a love of their language, religion, and culture. One participant shared, "I understand that they love their language, and they love their religion. They love their traditions. They're very patriotic" (Participant 4). Theme 2

is divided into two subthemes, including a) pride in cultural heritage and language, and b) conservative and religious.

Subtheme 1: Pride in cultural heritage and language. When discussing the cultural reflective teaching tool, seven out of 10 participants noted that cultural heritage and language are an important part of the Saudi student identity. One participant shared, "People are very related to their traditions, and they are very connected to them. So, they cannot just simply ignore them" (Participant 2). Saudi students are particularly proud of their native language and their cultural traditions.

Subtheme 2: Conservative and religious. All 10 participants relayed the importance of religion in their students' cultural identities and how religion plays a part in shaping the curriculum. Participant 1 explained "religion does play a big part in the classroom and in the way that you have to teach. You need to have set times for prayers, and the general views of a lot of the students will be similar and based and shaped on that basis." In the Saudi culture, religion is embedded in students at a very young age. One participant shared how "The students are taught from first grade about religion. This is the first thing they are told. Their whole life revolves around religion. So, I would say they are very religious. I mean religion, and it's basically what everything is based on." (Participant 7)

Participants also noted that Saudi students tend to be conservative, particularly in the way they dress and their interaction with the opposite gender. Participant 8 shared, "Also, the way they dress up, especially when they go out like some people wear a niqab, they cover their faces. Like we have to be very careful." All 10 participants identified

gender as an important cultural identity for Saudi students. This fixation on gender is noticeably seen in the segregation of schools and universities. One participant shared that "In Saudi Arabia, the universities are segregated. So, we teach at an all-female university. All the males will go to our male university" (Participant 6).

Nevertheless, despite this love of their culture, teachers highlighted the shifting cultural landscape in Saudi Arabian youth, such as changes to dress, food choices, and the influx of media and technology consumption. Participant 2 said:

> Now things are changing in Saudi. And we have a mixture of students who are still culturally related to the conservative culture they come from, and a few other students who are open and ready to get into other experiences and are more open to what we usually do in the other countries and other cultures. So, Saudi is in a kind of transfer stage.

Participant 1 concurred, mentioning a lack of strict dress, stating:

> I think the cultural identity is changing with the changes that are happening in the country. So, the way they're dressed. It's changing a little bit. Before it would probably be like blacker clothes and now it's colorful, the things that they're wearing, it's changing. Their culture is changing in the sense that it's incorporating, you know, different cultures.

Participant 9 reaffirmed Saudi students becoming more flexible with their dress, sharing:

> I talked about now things are changing a little bit in the country that only the thing is now I think they're a bit more flexible with the amount of flesh that's shown.

> So, if there's like, ankles or maybe like some part of your arm, it's a bit better it's considered okay now, and some places it's okay to have music.

Cultural shifts among Saudi students can be seen throughout the country. Participants believed that these cultural changes will filter into the classroom and allow for more flexibility in what is taught. Participant 1 stated:

> I would say it's changing because of the changes in the country. For example, there's a lot of like, standup comedy shows with material that wouldn't have been discussed. You know, things about religion or politics or relationships that would never have happened because of the law and stuff. So, I think as those things are opening up outside of the university, I think that could filter across to the universities.

Participant 7 talked about changes to laws that give individuals more freedom. Participants are already incorporating some of these changes into their curriculum. One participant explained:

> Laws that are now coming out to give them more options. For example, they weren't allowed to drive before. So, in a lesson, you wouldn't be discussing why women can't drive or what the issue is. That would be something that would be inappropriate to discuss. Now you can discuss that. Another example, they were limited in terms of the jobs that they were allowed to do, like they weren't allowed to work in all places, or a lot of places that they can work in now like as like traffic, police or mining and those things have opened up to so that would change things in the classroom also. (Participant 7)

The participant continued to explain how changes and small cultural shifts influenced the social environment. Considering students and the Saudi community, Participant 7 continued to share:

> There's more chances for them to work in like mixed work environments, whereas in the past that wouldn't have been there. So, I think the changes that are happening outside the classroom in society with the laws and everything they're seeing that's gonna slowly have an effect in the classroom.

Theme 3: Student-Centered Instruction to Facilitate Active Participation

All 10 participants used student-centered instruction in their classrooms, straying from the traditional teacher-centered instruction typically found in Saudi classrooms. Many of the participants supported the idea that learning is community-oriented, cooperative, and collaborative. Students are encouraged to direct their own learning and collaborate with other students on research projects and assignments which are important to them both culturally and socially. This section is broken into the different CRP strategies employed by teachers to increase engagement: a) incorporating topics and activities of interest to ascertain classroom engagement, b) concept checking questions or concept checking questions, c) guided discovery, d) communicative English learning, e) group work and discussions, and f) student-directed learning.

Incorporating activities and activities of interest to ascertain classroom engagement. Participants try to make learning English more personal. By connecting language to something personal in their students' lives, students can tap into something emotional that will help with engagement. The participants try to trigger engagement by

integrating current topics, music, movies, and fads to create a relevant class culture. Teachers shared engaging their students by asking them to generate lists of topics that they wish to research or learn more about. Participant 3 stated:

> I give them some things that we could base the lesson on, and then they tell you that okay, this is interesting for them, or sometimes you just get a feel for it from the classroom, or you just feel that they might be interested in this thing. But you can ask them what would you be interested in tomorrow? What would be of interest to you? What should we create a lesson on based on these topics? And then they kind of choose them.

Participants listed topics of interest to their students. The top topics were a) culture and traveling, b) food, c) beauty and fashion, d) internet and technology, and e) pop culture and current events. Participant 1 talked about a particular lesson where she incorporated beauty and fashion into a speaking exercise:

> In this lesson, the students are able to sew, discuss a face mask, or whatever, and then they were able to bring in the things and show each other how to use the face mask. It's a speaking activity, and they're discussing what things you need to mix and how you need to mix it and how it needs to be applied and what the benefits are and stuff like that.

Using a video to start a lesson and discussion, Participant 10 incorporated a movie clip that allowed students to discuss different societal norms in other countries. Participant 10 shared:

> It was an American movie clip in which this guy went to China, and he's eating spaghetti. They were making so much noise when they were eating. So, it was about how in some cultures, it's okay to make a noise when you're eating spaghetti, and how in other cultures it's considered bad manners. So, this lesson was about cultural problems. Differences in the culture, from one culture, where something is okay, but in another culture, it's a problem. It's not accepted.

Many participants shared ideas and activities to engage their students. Participant 1 talked about the difference incorporating topics students can relate to can have on engagement:

> Sometimes if you've just got a PowerPoint presentation with a few images, it's okay, it's helping them understand the meaning, but it's not relevant. But if you're perhaps doing vocab or you're doing where you want them to speak, or you want them to discuss things, the images should be interesting and something related. It's good to have a visual because the students are not always concentrating, or they're not always with you, so whenever they want, it can bring their attention back to what you're doing or where you're at and stuff like that.

Participants shared their students' interest in using the internet and technology. To engage students, participants incorporate smartphones, electronics games, and some popular internet sources, like YouTube, into their lessons. One participant shared:

> Instead of writing it on a piece of paper, they write out their paragraph on their phones and send it through the WhatsApp group with the teacher and the entire class. So, as soon as they send it during the class, I can check it, edit it, suggest

> things and send it back to them straight away with a comment, and you know, emoji or star or something. And that's effective. (Participant 4)

Despite interest in culture and traveling and the link between cultural immersion and language acquisition, participants are hesitant to incorporate multicultural information into their lesson plans. One participant stressed, "I don't think I have incorporated a lot of multicultural information. I'm a bit hesitant to still open up to things. Even though all the things are opening up, I haven't introduced a lot of multicultural information." (Participant 9). Participants also run into hurdles with constraints put on them by their universities. Participant 1 shared "The problem, if you're at university, you have a set curriculum, and you have time constraints. And you have set things that you have to cover during the lessons. So, you don't always get to get to do that."

Concept checking questions. Concept-checking questions are posed by the instructor while testing student comprehension to obtain a more reliable measure of the student's understanding. Participant 2 stated:

> I use CCQs, as we learned in CELTA. They are basic strategies that work everywhere and especially in Saudi because students need reminders from time to time need to check their understanding. You need to check their understanding of whether they understood the instructions or not. Because of their culture, they are very pampered, so they need a lot of reminders, and checks for understanding, you need to repeat a lot basically at the beginning levels.

Participants shared that concept checking questions should be relatively straightforward questions, tailored to the speaking level of the students. These questions are designed to

verbally check that grammar, vocabulary, communicative functions, and instructions are understood. Participants also shared how concept checking questions can also open the door to natural communication as students broaden their responses.

Guided discovery. Guided discovery is a way to encourage learners to make their discoveries and explanations for language, with the instructor's guidance. One participant shared, "To create interest in the lesson and clarify the meaning of the vocabulary words, I give a PowerPoint presentation in which I wanted them to elicit the meaning of those words. So, I give them pictures and have them elicit the meaning from those" (Participant 10). Guided discovery is an alternative to the traditional lecture-style of teaching grammar, and it can allow your students to learn more naturally. The teacher, through guided discovery, can help learners gain a more active role in language learning. Instead of just sitting and listening to the teacher talk, the guided discovery gives the students the autonomy to learn on their own, with the support and guidance of the teacher. Participant 3 said:

> I want them to work out the answers for themselves or develop some kind of strategies. I want them to learn the strategies, like skipping unknown words in a text and continue to read. And then if you need to know what this word means, you're going to try to work it out yourself because going to the dictionary is not going to help with your reading fluency because then you have to start again from the beginning.

Participant 7 reaffirmed this by stating:

> I would say I mainly use Guided Discovery. I think it's very effective for Saudi learners. Giving them time to process the structure and allowing them to work to try to analyze and think about the word or think about the structure in their working memory increases the chances of moving that to the long-term memory. It will also prepare them for the future when they are exposed to any item or language to try to think about it by themselves.

Communicative English learning. Classroom activities used by participants guided by the communicative approach are characterized by trying to produce meaningful and real communication, at all levels. Participants' lessons focus on grammar and vocabulary and focus on developing students' competence to communicate in English. One participant said, "So, I aimed to develop fluency and context. When they're talking, they should be able to use whatever we learn in the lesson in context, like in sentences" (Participant 4). Participants are focused on developing English communication skills through the use of strategies where teachers serve as facilitators in the classroom while motivating students to use English as much as possible. Some participants limit speaking Arabic in the classroom. Another shared, "they love to talk in Arabic, but you have to lay down some rules in the classroom concerning speaking Arabic" (Participant 6). Participants want students to practice as much in the classroom since their practice outside is limited. One educator shared how students "only use the language in the classroom. They don't get to use the language outside the classroom as much as they need to" (Participant 7). Participants are adapting their lesson plans to not

only improve grammatical competence but help students practice and develop their linguistic competence. Participant 10 said:

> I also told them on a daily basis they have to watch some kind of TV program and they have to bring at least two to three sentences of information. They had to come and present in the class. So that helped. One week I said, you have to watch CNN or BBC News, and you have to write everything that you hear for at least one minute. Then, they have to come and speak in front of the class about whatever they learned. I told them I don't care if they are using perfect sentences, just as long as they bring the news.

Group work and group discussion. Participants use group work and discussions to improve oral language development and student engagement. Students have more time to speak than in a large group discussion, and students feel more comfortable sharing their answers in a small group setting. One participant shared how, "Before, students never had group work. Now they want a student-centered environment" (Participant 9). Participant 2 stated that students prefer group work and discussion because they find it more interesting and can receive peer feedback. Participant 9 shared:

> Most of the students prefer group and pair work because they find it more interesting. Participating with their peers in class will also help them to learn through peer feedback and other colleagues' feedback. These are critical stages in a successful learning atmosphere.

Because Saudi students are not accustomed to active learning styles, group work and discussions create a safe environment where they can be comfortable asking questions

and having a dialogue about the lesson. Participant 8 also uses group work and discussions to foster an environment where students can engage and question each other. Participant 8 explained:

> The students discuss the question with each other. They asked each other why they thought this was the answer. I encourage a safe environment where I want them to think critically. So, they can question each other and not take yes or no for an answer. And if yes or no is the answer, why do you think yes or no? And the answer is B; they would require justifications.

Participants also use group work and discussion to assist students who need extra help. Participant 6 groups slower learners together, so they can provide additional support while the rest of the class works on the activity. Participant 6 also noted, "Depending on what they are learning, sometimes I put the weak learners together. During the activity, I will sit with them and go through the activities step by step, taking each instruction slow, slowly, getting them to do it." Participants will also group stronger speakers with lower-level speakers to offer assistance. Another participant shared, "Sometimes, I'll have one of the more confident students, who know what they're doing, sit with them and help the others."

Student-led activities. Participants will have students lead learning activities instead of themselves. Participants were experiencing an increase in student interest to have more control of the classroom (Participant 9). Another participant shared, "Sometimes, I write the instructions on the board, and then I get some of the students to

read instructions. And then once they're done, other students will tell the whole class what needs to be done."

Evidence of Trustworthiness

To increase the trustworthiness of the study's findings, I employed strategies suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985). I decreased threats to credibility by implementing a methodological triangulation technique using participant interviews, teacher's lesson plans, and field notes. I also analyzed, coded, and developed themes from all three resources and compared the results for similarities. When applying triangulation, no aberrations were detected as data from the interviews, field notes, and shared lesson plans were all complementary.

To increase dependability, I provided an audit trail by describing in detail how data was collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry (see Amankwaa, 2016). I used a rich, thick description (see Amankwaa, 2016), thus enabling other researchers to make decisions about transferability (known as external validity or generalizability in quantitative research). To increase conformability (known as objectivity in quantitative studies), I attempted to control for bias by constantly comparing data, searching the literature for examples of the phenomenon, obtaining multiple viewpoints (see Amankwaa, 2016), searching for negative instances of the phenomenon, and checking and rechecking data. Member checking was also used to verify the feedback and reported results were accurate and reflective of the perspectives of the university-level ESL teachers who have taught in

Saudi Arabia concerning the use of CRP. No inconsistencies or needed updates were reported by the participants, supporting the trustworthiness of the data.

Summary

This chapter presents the results from interviews of 10 ESL teachers who taught Saudi students in a university English language program. Findings are presented in three sections that correspond with the primary themes that emerged from the results. The purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of university-level ESL teachers who have taught in Saudi Arabia concerning the use of CRP to provide students with effective and engaging instruction. The two primary research questions guided this study included, "What are ESL teachers' perspectives on using CRP in the Saudi classroom?" and "What culturally relevant practices and content do ESL teachers perceive as effective and engaging?" Three distinct themes emerged from the research data, including a) emotionally and intellectually safe environments, b) cultural pride among a shifting cultural landscape, and c) student-centered instruction to facilitate active participation.

Participants in this study believed that culturally irrelevant pedagogy plays an integral part in Saudi classrooms. Feedback from participants supports the necessity for safe learning environments created through an understanding of Saudi culture. Findings from the participants indicated that Saudi students are very connected to their culture and beliefs, and the presentation of classroom materials that negatively contradicts their culture or beliefs can lead to uncomfortable students and unattainable disrespect. Safe learning environments were also created through an understanding of students' learning styles and language proficiency, both of which were influenced by their identity as Saudi

students. Saudi students are used to teacher-centered learning with passive participation. The learning differentiation incorporated by ESL teachers may be met with initial resistance or confusion. Saudi students also have varying levels of English proficiency, influenced by their level of cultural immersion and acceptance of Western culture.

Having CRP in the classroom is also important because the cultural identities of Saudi students are shifting. Gradual changes throughout Saudi Arabia, allowing for more freedoms, are being reflected in Saudi students. Although students still have a deep sense of pride for the conservative culture, students are opening to the changes in the country, such as changes in dress music, pop culture, and internet fads, like beauty and fashion. Participants believed that these changes would also affect classrooms and allow for more freedom in their types of materials and content that can be used.

Lastly, participants described the CRP methodologies that they use in their classrooms. These methodologies all focus on student engagement and active participation. Participants use concept-checking questions to gauge student understanding of concepts. Group work and discussions give students not used to the active involvement of a safe environment to think critically and engage with their classmates in English. Guided discovery also facilitated student interaction and critical thinking. Communicative English learning helps Saudi students move past a focus on providing correct answers and actively practice fluency. Participants gage students' interest in topics so they can include them in lessons.

Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the results and gives recommendations for future research. Implications for prospective ESL teachers working with Saudi students

also are presented. The chapter concludes with recommendations for CRP initiatives and the educators who implement them.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of university-level ESL teachers who have taught in Saudi Arabia concerning the use of CRP to provide students with effective and engaging instruction. This chapter includes a review of key findings relating to the literature on Ladson-Billings CRP, second language acquisition centered on language immersion, language learning theories, cooperative language learning, teaching in monolingual classrooms. This chapter contains discussion and future research possibilities to help answer the research questions:

1. What are ESL teachers' perspectives on using CRP in the Saudi classroom?
2. What culturally relevant practices and content do ESL teachers perceive as effective and engaging?

The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the study, areas for future research, and a summary.

Interpretation of the Findings

Though qualifications and teaching experience may differ, data from the participants showed themes of shared perspectives on using CRP in the Saudi classroom. Three common themes offer a prominent perspective on the use of CRP in Saudi ESL classrooms. These themes have a dynamic aspect to them, as what is culturally relevant changes over time because culture is always changing.

Theme 1: Emotionally and Intellectually Safe Environments

The participants believed that CRP is necessary to create learning environments that are emotionally and intellectually safe environments that are respectful of students.

This perception is reflective of the research question focused on ESL teachers' perspectives on using CRP in the Saudi classroom. This perception of emotionally and intellectually safe environments supports existing literature on fostering a welcoming and relaxed environment to support learner achievement and historical CRP theory literature that encompasses three teacher-student dimensions: social competence, academic success, and critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2014; Woodrow, 2017).

Culturally responsive education is a conceptual construct that acknowledges the significance of incorporating the cultural contexts, desires, and experiences of students in all facets of teaching and learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2014). Participants in this study considered Saudi student identities when developing learning experiences, evaluating learning styles, and when developing lesson plans for their ESL classrooms. The literature supports this practice as necessary for enabling and supporting students in achieving their goals (Burns et al., 2014; Cook, 2016). Student learning opportunities and achievement reflect teachers' expectations, beliefs, values, and norms of learning within classrooms and across schools (e.g., curriculum, standards, and extracurricular activities). Culturally relevant teachers explained what achievement means in their classrooms and how they can obtain it through various measures. For example, one participant shared, "But a lot of the times, you've just got to be clear with what you're asking. And this is universal. So, you're going to ask them, you're going to let them know what what's expected of them" (Participant 1).

Reflective of the second research question on culturally relevant practices and content, ESL teachers shared perceptions of effective and engaging practices. Participants

in this study continuously reminded their students of their expectations: practice developing their overall competence in communicating in English, not just rote memorization of grammar and vocabulary. Participant 10 spoke about a classroom exercise where students went home and watched a television news broadcast in English. Students wrote down their own notes about the program and presented the information to their classmates the next day. Participant 10 expressed to her students that their English did not need to be perfect, so long as they tried their best. Many of the participants shared the teaching expectation for students to engage in the classroom with the material and classmates to practice English. For example, Participant 10 said, "So just to break the shyness in the students, I told the women that if you are not using perfect sentences, I don't care as long as you bring the news."

The emphasis on understanding differentiation needs based on culture and language proficiency is consistent with the literature regarding the diversity of students, particularly understanding the language levels of students within the class, students' cultures and backgrounds, and the students' attitudes about learning a language (Alizadeh, 2016). Safe, productive environments are created by understanding students' learning styles, educational backgrounds, and language proficiency. Generally, students and teachers are accustomed to teacher-centered English language classrooms. Teacher talk time is high, and the students are passive learners (Alshammari, 2016). Each ESL classroom consists of students with varied needs. Therefore, the learning tasks should be varied to account for these differences (Banditvilai, 2016). Participants in this study spoke about their students' shyness and the traditional teacher-centered methodology

employed in Saudi Arabia. Since all the participants employ a student-centered methodology that divulges from the norm teaching strategy in Saudi Arabia, students may feel stressed and uneasy. By defining their expectations and demonstrating a belief that growth in communication is the ultimate achievement, students can feel more comfortable making mistakes. The breaking away from their previous obsession with perfection instilled from prior learning experiences. Traditionally, Saudi universities measure student achievement through the end of course exams. Participants differed in that they measured student success and achievement through progress in overall language communication. This was because participants believed the development of English communication helps increase long-term academic achievement for their students, many of whom will use English further along with their degree programs.

Student learning opportunities reflecting cultural competence build on the cultural knowledge and experiences that youth and their families bring to school. Culturally relevant teachers affirm students' cultural backgrounds as assets, building on knowledge students possess to assist them in learning new concepts while supporting their academic and college-going identities. Available literature also emphasized the importance of knowing the cultural backgrounds of students to access prior knowledge, gauge student interest, and increase student engagement in the learning process (Saint-Hilaire, 2014).

In this study, participants shared using knowledge about students to develop specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes to use in their classroom settings to increase every student's educational performance. Specifically, all participants employ a censure on their teaching materials for content and topics that Saudi students deem

inappropriate. One participant noted, “We have to be aware of the culture. Furthermore, we have to apply it in our education and our teaching students because they can be offended if you say something against their culture, religion, and traditions” (Participant 4). In Saudi Arabia, socioculture, religion, economics, and politics influence modern education (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). The influence of religion, politics, and culture on education was also expressed during participant interviews. Participants shared that in their teaching positions, they avoid using material that criticizes or contradicts the religion, politics, and culture within Saudi Arabia. The English language learning curriculum can also meet difficulties in integration (Alresheed et al., 2015). Participants spoke about the restrictions their universities place on the content of their teaching materials. Schools and universities also have expectations of what teachers can say and show to their students. Participant 1 stated:

> So, you are not allowed to talk about politics or the law or what is happening in the country regarding politics within the classroom. You’re not allowed to say anything against anything like your views about any changes that are happening. Because, you know, that isn’t the same freedom of speech. So that’s now like the law. We were told, like in other universities, that you’re not allowed to do that. So that is like one of the university rules. Yeah, so those things like you’re not allowed to share your views about the country with the students.

Further, exposure to inappropriate material makes students feel uncomfortable and can lead to distrust between students and teachers. Aldera (2017) paralleled negative attitudes toward English language learning to culturally insensitive teaching practices in

ESL teaching. Aldera's findings mirror participant responses on how culturally inappropriate materials can make students react negatively. Participant 7 discussed how not understanding gender norms in Saudi Arabia could lead to female Saudi students' discomfort:

> There are so many underlying things of what is considered respectful or appropriate. So, it can be very uncomfortable for Saudi women and Saudi men to have to work together. So, I think that's important for a teacher outside of Saudi Arabia to be aware of gender. Because even looking at a woman, holding eye contact for too long, or speaking to her about things might be misinterpreted because they would not even talk to each other or look at each other, or sit close to each other. … However, not all the teachers understand that, especially if they have never been to Saud.

This participant went on to say:

> I think you could lose a student if you embarrassed her. And you could lose the whole class if you behave in a certain way. So, the way you preserve them and the way you present yourself in class make or break your class; you can lose them if you start the wrong way.

There is also a need for a more global education system; until recently, there was a late introduction of English into the government school curriculum (AlShahrani, 2016). However, private schools and international schools offer English or French as a core subject from kindergarten onwards. Since these types of schools are expensive, underprivileged Saudi families do not have access to financial aid to help them attend

such educational institutions (Fallatah & Syed, 2017). Participants made references to how students exposed to western culture, particularly students of higher socioeconomic status who have traveled abroad, are more adept at learning English. One participant noted:

> Lower Level A students don't know a lot about global issues of the world as much as Level C students because Level C students mainly come from high-level students; they usually come from private schools, and many of the students have traveled or lived abroad. They are more they take pride in being westernized and think that they're more open-minded. (Participant 3)

Learning a language involves learning and understanding the norms of the culture in which the language is used. Participants who have not been introduced to the target culture or unfamiliar with the norms of the culture in which the language is used may feel disconnected from learning. Participant 3 continued and stated:

> Students who have not been exposed to different cultures are only interested when topics related to Saudi culture, supporting the literature that says university-level English language instruction is not compatible with Saudi society do to the curriculum and textbooks don't offer any thought to the Arab or Islamic community and contrast sharply with the customs and values of the Saudi lifestyle.

Theme 2: Cultural Pride Among a Shifting Cultural Landscape

Cultural pride among a shifting cultural landscape reflects the research questions concerning ESL teachers' perspectives on using CRP in the Saudi classroom and

perceived effective and engaging practices. The pedagogical practices that teachers use should be relevant to students' lives and experiences and be sustainable over changing times, educational reform, curricular trends, and assessment trends (Durden et al., 2015). Furthermore, I described the importance of CRP as an evolving theory because the culture is also ever-changing (see Ladson-Billings, 2014). The importance of the dynamic aspect of CRP highlighted by the literature is reflected in participants' perceptions of the cultural shifts happening in Saudi Arabia. Participants discussed cultural pride among their students and a strong devotion to their country and its religion; however, this cultural pride exists alongside national reforms reversing decades of social restrictions. One participant shared:

> Teaching in 2020 is so different from teaching in 2011, 2012, or 2013. For example, when I first started my experience here, we taught in a very conservative culture where they are not accepting anything related to religion, sex, or music. And now things are changing in Saudi. And we have a mixture of students, those who are still culturally related to the conservative culture they come from, and a few other students who are open and ready to get into new experiences. So, Saudi is in a kind of transfer stage. (Participant 2)

Much of what was once forbidden in Saudi Arabia (e.g., cinema, music, theater, and women driving), is now suddenly acceptable. The social changes happening in the country are also being reflected in it is the ESL curriculum, expanding the list of topics teachers can discuss with their students. Another participant explained:

> So, you would not like in a lesson you would not be discussing why women can't drive, that would be appropriate. Now you can discuss that. So, the things that they could not do before they can do now like, for example, before they were limited in terms of the jobs that they were allowed to do like they were not allowed to work in all places, or a lot of places that they can work in now like as like traffic police or mining and those things have opened up to so that would change things in the classroom also. (Participant 1)

Theme 3: Student-Centered Instruction to Facilitate Active Participation

In this study, each strategy centered on student-centered instruction to localize pedagogy and increase student engagement. The literature on L2 language acquisition focused on individuals finding themselves in positions where they must learn the L2 language to function and be willing to be in contact and interact with the surrounding environment (de Vos et al., 2019). Participants made note that many of their students do not practice English outside of the classroom and are not immersed in Western culture. This poses a challenge in the participants' monolingual classrooms. Sharing the first language is in the students' comfort zone. Therefore, it poses a more significant challenge, especially if the students live in a non-English speaking environment, and their only access to communicate in English is during class time (see Hinton, 2016). To facilitate exposure to English, teachers emphasize limiting L1 speaking in the classroom and practicing communicative teaching practices.

First, cooperative learning can help increase language production (Olsen & Kagan, 1992; Short, 2017). In teacher-centered classrooms, students tend to be passive

learners (Ali & Säberg, 2016) because the focus is on their receptive language skills (reading or listening). However, in classrooms where cooperative learning is implemented, students' opportunities to produce language through speaking or writing is termed the output. Student output is increased through collaborative learning activities because they are required to interact with other group members during activities.

Active participation in language learning is also stressed (see Speaker et al., 2004). Participants in this study move away from Saudi's usual teacher-centered instruction and incorporate more collaborative and community-oriented practices. Participants have students generate lists of topics that they are interested in learning about, share responsibility for instruction by having students explain lesson rules and lead exercise, and create learners' communities through discussion groups.

Communication is an essential component of the active approach (Cook, 2016). To facilitate active participation, many participants use communicative language learning. They choose classroom activities based on what they believe will be most effective for students developing communicative abilities in English. These activities tend to be oral instead of grammar drills, including active conversation to insist on creative and unpredictable responses from their students. These activities also vary depending on the students' language level, but they promote engagement through collaboration. Activities also offer an environment where students can deviate from their obsession with correct answers and be comfortable making mistakes.

Participants also employ cooperative language learning by pairing and grouping students for different activities. Cooperative language learning increases language

production, student responsibility, social skills, and critical thinking (Babu et al., 2017). Participants from this study shared how teachers' practice are more purposeful group selection strategy. Students could be paired up with strong ELLs with weaker ones, placing responsibility on the stronger students to assist their classmates or by language proficiency level. Students of similar language proficiency levels or the same comprehension level of the topic could be paid together. Teachers group students together, so they will help each other learn collectively. Groups create a positive environment based on cooperation, unlike teacher-centered learning, centered on individual competitiveness (see Roripaugh, 1992).

Participants also incorporated cooperative learning through technology. Saudi students are very interested in technology, so participants try to incorporate it into their lesson plans. Teachers use online games to practice concepts and smartphones for blog posts or essay submissions. Participant use of technology aligns with literature highlighting how Saudi students are highly motivated by technology (see Alharbi, 2018). These examples of student-centered instruction to facilitate active participation support the research questions concerning CRP in the Saudi classroom and perceived effective and engaging practices.

Limitations of the Study

There were limitations to this study. First, the results of this study were bound by the specific school context. Although the teachers offer critical insights into their ESL classrooms, they are not necessarily transferable to students in other school contexts. Second, this study's relatively small sample size prevented me from generalizing results

outside the participants' classrooms. However, this study does help with evaluating the impact of CRP on a specific group of students, indicating some practices for other teachers to consider using with their students. With the use of CRP is still in preliminary stages of development (Borrero et al., 2018; Irizarry, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2014; McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2017; Paris, 2012), participants demonstrated the positive effects localizing pedagogy has had on their students, further research into students' perspectives on localized pedagogy would help inform the creation on teaching materials.

Recommendations

Understanding student perspectives on learning English in Saudi Arabia, especially during its cultural shift, may inform researchers how the curriculum needs to adapt to engage with students. Participants in this study discussed how some students are becoming more open to Western ideas, their identities shifting with the country. A better understanding of these shifting identities and motivations for learning English would allow the curriculum to be relevant to the current state of its students. A recommendation is for future researchers to explore shifting cultural identities.

Issues of accessibility may have given rise to a gender bias in the results, as there were no male respondents; thus, it was only possible to explore localizing pedagogy from the perspective of female teachers and students. A focused female study may be regarded as a potential advantage, as much of the existing research concentrates on male students and teachers. Therefore, this study sheds much-needed light on female teachers and students (Alamri, 2011). However, findings also present challenges in comparing the situation in male and female classrooms. Another recommendation is for a comparable

case study on the male teacher perspectives using CRP to teach their male students may elicit different results and shed further light on the research questions.

More research on Saudi students' motivations for English language acquisition could also help to inform curriculum development. Motivation is necessary for language acquisition to occur and has two types, intrinsic and extrinsic (Ng & Ng, 2015; Saville-Troike & Barto, 2016). Intrinsic motivation comes from within the individual; it relates to one's positive attitude or desire to achieve one's own satisfaction or reward. Extrinsic motivation is fed by outside factors such as job promotion, passing an exam, and other social factors (Ng & Ng, 2015; Woodrow, 2017). A study exploring Saudi students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for English language acquisition would be an important step in creating ESL teaching materials. Most of the current ESL teaching materials are Western focused, alienating the Saudi learner. Understanding Saudi students' motivations will help create materials that will better assist in their achievement.

Implications

The study offers support for the argument of more comprehensive reforms to include CRP in ESL classrooms. Although research demonstrates the effectiveness of CRP on student engagement and achievement, CRP is still in the preliminary stages of integration (Borrero et al., 2018). Teachers may use cultural examples in teaching practices without considering the authenticity or cultural relevance of the material (Cloonan et al., 2017). Teachers may fall into this trap who are unfamiliar with Saudi culture and the importance culture and religion have to students. This study presents a

case for comprehensive training programs to prepare ESL teachers to teach in Saudi Arabia. Because of the unique culture and the current state of the cultural shift in the country, perspectives from experienced teachers who have worked in this environment are necessary for the successful implementation of CRP in classrooms (Borrero, 2016). ESL teacher perspectives can highlight what needs to be included to make the curriculum culturally relevant.

Conclusion

The conclusion derived from this study is that localizing pedagogy has helped to increase engagement in Saudi English learners by creating safe, positive learning environments and places emphasis on recognizing their culture within the curriculum. This is important because Saudi students have much cultural pride, and culturally insensitive material can lead to a disruption of achievement.

This study fills a void on localizing pedagogy concerning English language learning. A gap was identified in the practice of including cultural considerations when designing and implementing instructional practices in the Saudi ESL classroom. Participants effectively illustrated how they meet their students' needs while adhering to the constraints of Saudi society. However, these constraints may change with the shifting culture happening now in Saudi Arabia. Fewer social constrictions can open the door for the inclusion of more topics for discussion.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol and Questions

Using the Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Teacher Reflection Tool by Coalition of Essential Schools, I will explore the perceptions concerning the experiences and practices of university-level ESL teachers concerning how they localize pedagogy to best meet students' learning needs as it relates to specific lesson plans, materials, and instructional strategies. First, through a semistructured interview, the participant will answer the questions below regarding his/her understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy and best practices in teaching Saudi students. The participants may refer to their own lesson plans or content material. I will ask follow-up questions probing for more information as the participant speaks. Then the participant will examine the document titled, Coalition of Essential Schools Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Appendix C) and discuss what each indicator means to the participants. I will be asking follow-up questions probing for more information and ask the participant to tell me how or why they apply or do not apply these indicators in the classroom.

The overall guiding research questions ask: What are ESL teachers' perspectives on using culturally relevant pedagogy in the Saudi classroom, and what culturally relevant practices and content do ESL teachers perceive as effective and engaging? The following questions will be used to guide the semistructured interview:

1. What are your [ESL teachers] perspectives on the use of culturally relevant pedagogy in the Saudi classroom?
   A. *(Elicitation Technique of Sorting) Using some common perspectives and ideas on culturally relevant pedagogy, sort in order of importance how each*

component relates to your [the teacher's] instructional practices in the Saudi classroom? Justify your answers.

2. What are your [ESL teacher's] perceptions of the cultural identities of Saudi ESL students?
   A. *(Elicitation Technique of Ordering) Place cultural identities in order of importance and discuss your reasons for placement.*
3. What are your [the ESL teacher's] own ideological views about the students that you teach?
   A. More specifically, how is the Saudi student's academic success in improving their English language skills defined?
   B. *How is success in improving English language skills measured?*
   C. What is the Saudi learner's optimal learning environment?
4. Taking into account Saudi culture, what methodology of instruction do you [ESL teacher] implement to improve English language skills and literacy?
   A. What specific skill sets [as a teacher] do you use to effectively teach in Saudi culture?
   B. Define your role in the classroom.
   C. What instructional strategies are deemed culturally appropriate and how are they used in the classroom? Provide examples of some effective strategies.
5. What effective content or materials do you [ESL teacher] use to encourage student engagement and learning?

A. *What topics are relevant to Saudi students and what topics are considered inappropriate? Provide some specific examples.*

B. *What content is appealing and engaging to Saudi English language learners?*

Appendix B: Coalition of Essential Schools Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

	Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	CES Common Principles Goals apply to all students Personalization A tone of decency and trust Democracy and equity

Benchmark Description: Culture is central to learning. It plays a role not only in communicating and receiving information but also in shaping the thinking process of groups and individuals. A pedagogy that acknowledges, responds to, and celebrates fundamental cultures offers full, equitable access to education for students from all cultures and prepares students to live in a pluralistic society. Culturally responsive teaching is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Teacher Reflection Tool

Date:

TRANSFORMING DESCRIPTOR	Where do we see this in our/my practice?	Where do we see potential to improve this practice? What challenges do you face?	Priority (mark your top 3 priorities)
Culturally responsive teaching **uses the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them**; it teaches to and through the strengths of these students.			
Culturally responsive teaching **acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages (language, history, traditions) of different racial, ethnic, class, religious, and gender groups,** both as legacies that affect students' dispositions, attitudes, and approaches to learning and as worthy content to be taught in the formal curriculum. Culturally responsive teaching builds on and expands students' social capital. It provides students with examples of difference, such as building intergenerational relationships.			
Culturally responsive teaching **builds bridges of meaningfulness between home and school** experiences, between academic abstractions and lived socio-cultural realities, and between school experiences and youth culture.			
Specific culturally responsive pedagogical practices include an **anti-bias pedagogy**, positive perspectives on parents and families of culturally and linguistically diverse students, culturally mediated instruction that teaches students to know			

and praise their own and each other's cultural heritage and historic contributions, communicates high expectations, and uses a **wide variety of active instructional strategies** that are connected to different learning styles. Culturally responsive teaching **incorporates multicultural information, resources, and materials** in all the subjects and skills routinely taught in schools.			
Culturally responsive teachers develop intellectual, social, emotional, and political learning by **using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.** Culturally responsive teachers realize not only the importance of academic achievement but also that of **maintaining of cultural identity and heritage**.			
Culturally responsive teaching creates **curriculum** that invites students to explore complex identities and consider racial group experiences, analyzes opportunity denial, power, privilege and social stratification, represents a diverse range of people thoroughly and complexly, and discusses history accurately and thoroughly.			
The school community uses best practices in **language acquisition** to support academic development and support in both English and native languages.			
Culturally responsive teaching is **transformative** in that it involves helping students to develop the knowledge, skills, and values needed to become social critics who can make reflective decisions and implement their decisions in effective personal, social, political, and economic action.			
Culturally responsive teaching guides students in understanding that no single version of "the truth" is total and permanent. It **does not solely prescribe mainstream ways of knowing and making meaning**. Instead, it presents multiple perspectives on a situation or idea and supports student understanding of them all. Culturally responsive teaching is a movement against and beyond boundaries of traditional ways of knowing. It is that movement that makes education the practice of freedom.			

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Appendix C: Demographic Information

Demographic Information

I am greatly interested in your beliefs and would like you to answer a few demographic questions. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions and mark the scaled statements that follow. The information contained in this document is confidential. The information will be kept confidential and individuals cannot be identified except by the primary researcher for statistical or qualitative purposes. This questionnaire is voluntary.

Please complete this instrument and return it in the envelope to the box provided.

1. Educational Attainment, circle one:
   a) Bachelors of _____
   b) Masters of _____
   c) Doctorate in _____
2. Circle your Teaching ESL certification:
   a. TESOL Diploma (180 hr)
   b. TEFL/TESL Certification (120 hr)
   c. CELTA
   d. DELTA
   e. Other: _____
3. Circle the years of experience completed in teaching ESL:
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
   17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 25+
4. Gender: **Male** **Female** Age:_____
5. How many years have you taught ESL to university students in KSA:
   1 **2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10** 11 **12**
6. Please circle your teaching assignment:
   a) Beginner Level ESL
   b) Intermediate Level ESL
   c) Advanced Level ESL
7. Teaching Observation Score:
   1 **2 3 4 5**
8. Is English your first language?
   If not, what is your first language? _____
9. Do you speak a second language? If so, what is it? _____