

The Saudi Teachers' Identities in Teaching English as an International Language

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List of Abbreviations

EIL:	English as an International Language
ELT:	English Language Teaching
KSA:	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
L2:	Second language
NESs:	Native English Speakers
NNESs:	Non-native English Speakers
NNESTs:	Non-native English speaking teachers
NS:	Native speaker
NSs:	Native speakers
PNU:	Princess Norah University
TEIL:	Teaching English as an International Language
TESOL:	Teaching English to speakers of other languages
UK:	United Kingdom
US:	United States
WEs:	World Englishes

Statement of Authorship

This thesis contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any educational institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

The research for this thesis received the approval of the Monash University Standing Committee for Ethical Research on Humans (reference: CF14/952 - 2014000394).

(Signed) (Date)

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Abstract

This study investigates some Saudi university level English teachers' attitudes towards the English as an International Language paradigm and its influence on their identities as English speakers and teachers. The study used a qualitative case study approach. The data was collected from six Saudi English teachers in College of Language and Translation at Princess Norah University, Saudi Arabia through in-depth semi-structured interviews.

The study identified a strong relationship between identity construction as a legitimate speaker and teacher of English on the one hand, and embracing cultural and linguistic diversity of English on the other, which resulted in high self-confidence among some of the participants. The research findings revealed that the participants have different perceptions regarding EIL principles and the legitimacy of different varieties of English. Most interestingly, although all of them agreed upon the advantage of using EIL for international communication, the reasons given by participants varied based on their personal beliefs and experiences.

Regarding their identity as owners of the language, it was a point of contradiction and ambivalence as most of them were not familiar with the concept of EIL and were used to the unitary view of the English language as exclusive to native speakers.

The study provides some suggestions for Saudi English educators to raise their self-confidence through embracing the diverse and international view of the English language.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This chapter presents a brief outline to the study. It starts with the background to the research problem and provides a description of my initial aspiration for carrying out this study. It is then followed by the aims and the design of the research. The research questions, the significance of the study, and the organisation of this thesis are lastly described.

1.2 Background of the study

I totally understand how difficult it is choosing a research topic as your choice affects the entire research process; yet, I had no difficulty deciding on my own topic since I had already spent tremendous time reading and thinking about teaching English as an International Language (EIL). Those dedicated hours of reading and investigating shaped my own stance and piqued my interest in the area of teaching English as an International Language. I specifically picked to study Saudi teachers' attitudes towards teaching English as an International Language in order to understand the main reasons for substandard English skills among Saudis from the perspectives of Saudi teachers.

As a Saudi English teacher, I understand how difficult is for Saudis to be them selves in English rather than imitating native speakers. For this issue, I strongly blame the education system in my country for being responsible for selecting the English materials

and pedagogical approaches that glorify native speakerism and neglect non-native varieties of English. These old-fashioned materials and approaches need redevelopment to correspond with the English status today. However, this process cannot be done before studying the attitudes towards English diversity from the point of view of Saudi teachers in order to fully grasp the educational landscape in Saudi Arabia and to investigate the possibilities and the challenges of implementing changes at both pedagogical and curricular levels. Previous studies have shown that language attitudes are shaped through many factors such as linguistic, social and political factors (e.g. Edwards & Giles, 1984; Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2006; Haig & Oliver, 2003; Zaid, 2008); therefore, it is of paramount importance to investigate the attitudes of Saudi English teachers before taking any further action.

My intention was to improve the effectiveness of teaching English through integrating different varieties of English in teaching materials. This research also attempts to illuminate the matter of identity and its relationship to learning English as a second language. In other words, it is clear that English belongs to everyone uses it as it has become the global language of communication, business and development all over the world. Therefore, Saudis, like others from Expanding Circle countries (Kachru, 1997), should take ownership of their use of English, having no hesitation or fear to express their own cultural values and traditions through communicating in English.

1.3 Research aims

The main objective of this research is to discover Saudi teachers' attitudes towards the legitimacy of different varieties of English in relation to the English as an International Language perspective or EIL. In the era of EIL, English is considered a tool required to communicate with both native and non-native speakers. Given the fact that non-native speakers outnumber native speakers (Graddol, 1999), non-native varieties of English are not to be neglected in teaching English as a second language. Studying the attitudes of Saudi teachers towards variety and standards in English is requisite to get the picture of how English teachers in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) perceive EIL and whether they are willing to make changes to accommodate in their teaching strategies or not.

1.4 Research design

This research employs a qualitative method to gain in-depth insight into the perceptions of some Saudi teachers' towards teaching EIL at the English Department in the College of Languages and Translation in Princess Norah University PNU. Unlike quantitative research data, qualitative data seeks to convey subjective interpretations, and multiple views of the researched issue (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). In qualitative research, context has a major influence on behaviours. Thus, qualitative studies are best at investigating social phenomena as they usually take place in naturalistic settings, allowing researchers to capture a fuller and more holistic picture about the situation under study (Dornyei, 2007, Creswell, 2003 and Neuman, 2003).

1.5 Research questions

The research seeks to answer the following questions:

- (1) What are these Saudi Teachers' attitudes towards teaching EIL?
- (2) How do these Saudi teachers perceive different varieties of English?
- (3) How does the orientation to NS model affect their identity as legitimate speakers and teachers of English?
- (4) To what extent are they willing to make changes to accommodate into the English curriculum and pedagogy?

To answer these questions, I adopted a semi-structured interview technique since it has the potential to provide a deeper and broader scope of the issue being studied. The format of this type of interview is open-ended as it attempts to encourage interviewees to elaborate on the emergent issues in an exploratory manner. This study recruited 6 participants, with about forty minutes interview, guided by nine questions concerning their attitudes towards teaching EIL. These interviews will be then analysed, transcribed and interpreted to draw conclusions in a textual form. By analysing interview data, I identified some attitudinal responses of these Saudi teachers towards EIL and the factors affecting their responses.

1.6 Organization of the thesis

This thesis consists of main five chapters. Chapter One is the introduction of the thesis, in which the background of the study and the aims of the research are highlighted succinctly. Chapter Two reviews the literature on the different issues related to teaching English as an additional language and EIL, and discusses the context of Saudi Arabia as the focus of my study. Chapter three describes the methodology adopted in this research with a focus on the qualitative case study method. Chapter Four reports findings of the interviews and discusses the findings in line with the research literature. Chapter Five presents the conclusion of the thesis and the recommendations for further research. Following these chapters, appendices and a list of references used throughout this study are attached as supplements.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

This chapter will review some research literature about English as an International Language (EIL). It is followed by the description of Saudi Arabian context, the growing presence of English in the KSA context and a description of the problems with English that I am investigating. The subsequent parts of this section outline some theories pertaining to the notion of identity in learning a second language and finally the gaps in the previous studies in the context of KSA.

2.2 English as an International Language (EIL)

As a result of the spread of the English language in the process of globalisation, many scholars have given profound attention to the effect of English learning on learners' local identities (e.g., Block and Cameron, 2002; Pennycook, 1998, 2007; Phillipson, 1992, 2008; Risager, 2006), which as they believe, results in transnationalism. Other scholars however perceive the spread of English as evident manifestation of 'linguistic imperialism' as English acts as invasive, or perhaps threatening, tool for other cultural beliefs and values (e.g., Phillipson, 1992, 2008; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). From these perspectives, English is dominant and hegemonic. For instance, it might be globally

agreed upon that one must know English to benefit from the advances of science and technology. This picture of the prestigious status of English language in the world and the privileges of learning it is strongly reflected in Saudi perceptions about acquiring English.

A further group of scholars suggests that the English language is no longer an entity exclusive to native speakers but has grown into 'the most widely taught, read, and spoken language that the world has ever known' (Kachru & Nelson, 2001, p. 9). This unremitting dispersion of English, along with its spin-off linguistic variations, has led to the emergence of many World Englishes, or WEs (Kachru, 1986, 1992). In the 1980s, Kachru distinguished among three concentric circles as a means to portray the use of English in different countries: the Inner Circle, Outer Circle and Expanding Circle. The Inner Circle represents the countries that use English as their native language, such as Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. In the Outer Circle countries, which includes former colonies like Sri Lanka, Nigeria and India, English is an official second language. The Expanding Circle is the largest group of countries, encompassing those where English is widely used and studied as a foreign language, for instance, China, Japan and Saudi Arabia; the latter being the focus of this study.

Several recent reports have shown that the Expanding Circle holds the fastest growing population of English speakers. In 1999, Graddol predicted that the number of non-native speakers would triple to reach 462 million over the following five decades. Today, 80%

of communication in English occurs between non-native speakers from all over the world, which indicates that most language exchanges take place in an effort to correspond within and across cultures (Sharifian, 2013). This huge shift has led to the development of the 'English as an International Language' (EIL) paradigm (e.g. Matsuda, 2012; McKay, 2002; Sharifian, 2009).

The meaning of the concept 'English as an International Language' (EIL) has been varied according to different scholars. Some scholars (e.g., McKay, 2002; Sharifian, 2009) have referred to it as an example of “paradigms or perspectives” while other scholars have conceptualised it as “the functions or uses of English in international contexts” (e.g., Matsuda & Friedrich, 2010) or as “a variety of English” (e.g., Tomlinson, 2003; Widdowson, 1997). EIL is more concerned with the uses and functions of English in diverse sociocultural contexts by speakers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. However, some scholars (e.g., Seidlhofer, 2003) are confused between EIL and “International English” and have used these two different terms interchangeably. Drawing on Sharifian’s argument (2009), the use of an adjective before English “often suggests a particular variety (e.g. Australian English or Singaporean English) and ‘International English’ can suggest a particular variety of English”, however; the EIL paradigm recognises “English, with its pluralised forms, is a language of international, and therefore intercultural communication” (p. 2). In this context, speakers from various backgrounds tend to negotiate linguistic and cultural differences to achieve effective cross-cultural communication.

As the EIL paradigm acknowledges the diversification of English uses and users, the recognition of Kachruvian world Englishes in English learning and teaching is irreversible (Matsuda, 2002, 2009; Matsuda & Friedrich, 2010; Sharifian, 2009). (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2010, p. 3). Most EIL scholars argue for the equal status of the varieties of English from Outer and Expanding circle countries and for “the importance of inclusivity and pluricentricity in approaches to the linguistics of English worldwide” (Bolton, 2005, p. 204).

The emergence of WE and EIL has influenced the approaches of teaching and learning English and challenged the view of English as a static and monolithic property of the native-speakers of English. As a result, the topic of EIL has gained much interest in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). On the other hand, the “monomodel” approach (Kachru, 1992) or the “native- speaker” model (Kirkpatrick, 2006) of ELT has gained a great amount of criticism in the context of international communication, and therefore many suggestions and implications have been provided regarding *teaching method* (Brown, 2006; Kumaravadivelu, 2003), *instructional model* (Kirkpatrick, 2006; Matsuda & Friedrich, 2012), *curriculum and teaching materials* (Brown, 2012; Gray, 2002; McKay, 2003, 2012b; Marlina & Ahn, 2011; Marlina & Giri, 2013; Matsuda, 2005, 2012b), *language testing and examinations* (Canagarajah, 2006; Hu, 2012; Jenkins, 2006; Lowenberg, 2012), and *ELT preparation programs* (Dogancay-Aktuna, 2006; Dogancay-Aktuna & Hardman, 2012; Manara, 2012; Sifakis, 2007).

Based on the previous discussion, EIL considers all varieties of English in all circles as equal, and the main objective of language teaching is to facilitate intercultural communication with speakers from various backgrounds. As Saudi Arabia is enhancing and expanding its social, economic and political relationships with other countries, intercultural communication has become inevitable.

2.3 The Saudi Arabian Context

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is a large state situated in Southwest Asia with a population of 27 million. It is an absolute monarchy and operates under a political system prescribed by Islamic law (Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, 2013). The official language spoken is Arabic, which has been described as having a 'distinctive ideologically faith-based integrative and unifying role among Arabs' (Abuhamdia, 1988, p. 34).

With the rapidly growing number of expatriates settling in Saudi Arabia, a figure which currently mounts to over seven million (Saudi Arabia: Facts & Figures, 2009), the country finds itself challenged internally with the responsibility of embracing diversity at both multicultural and multilingual levels. The majority of these expatriates come from India, Pakistan, Egypt, Yemen, the Philippines, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

Despite increasing demand for multilingualism across the state, Saudi Arabia still, linguistically, relies heavily on its native language. Indeed, the Arabic language is dominant in almost all areas of Saudi people's lives, from family conversations to official procedures. Unlike the countries in the Kachruvian Outer Circle, using English intra-nationally is not the universal answer for dealing with issues of diversity in Saudi Arabia. A large number of foreign residents, mostly from Asia, do not necessarily understand or speak any English; therefore, promoting greater use of English in Saudi Arabia could complicate the situation even further, creating another linguistic split. Nevertheless, as citizens of an oil-rich country that has experienced accelerated growth and advancement in all sectors, many Saudis go abroad for vacation every year, often encountering cultural and linguistic challenges due to their limited English usage (Parker, 2013).

Following September 11, 2001, where 15 of the hijackers involved in the terrorist attacks in New York City were identified as being from the KSA (Bahgat, 2003), the curriculum of Saudi schools and universities was largely blamed for fostering a mindset of hostility and intolerance towards the West (Friedman, 2002). Consequently, the US began to influence politics in Saudi Arabia and to call for 'reforms' at both the government and educational levels (Sharp, 2004). In response to these demands for drastic change, all anti-Semitic and anti-American statements have been removed from textbooks and classroom materials, and more English teaching has been encouraged (Charise, 2007). However, the rise in English instruction is not only a result of these events, but also a reaction to economic pressures that are driving expectations for greater learning of English and Western culture in the Saudi curriculum (Al-Essa, 2009).

In contrast to the exclusive and overriding use of their native language in local situations, Saudis today are facing a growing need to equip themselves with the tool required for international communication; namely, the English language. At an economic level, Saudi Arabia is expanding its relationships and engagements with other countries by undertaking joint ventures and enterprises with foreign investors and businessmen. Given that most of these business transactions are conducted in English, it would undoubtedly be extremely useful for more Saudis to become competent in both spoken and written English (Al-Seghayer, 2011).

2.4 The Growing Presence of English in Saudi Arabia

In response to the opportunities presented by the tide of globalisation, as well as the general external and internal need for the use of English, some forward steps have been taken to incorporate English into the Saudi domain and way of life. As of 2011, the Ministry of Education decreed that the teaching of English for both boys and girls would commence from Grade 4 in all primary schools, instead of at junior high school; thus, establishing the presence of English as a mandatory component of basic education in the KSA (Al-Seghayer, 2011). This was a timely move to raise the standard of language education in public schools and, consequently, to power the nation's development.

At university level, one of the biggest investments towards this trend is the King Abdullah Scholarship Program, which was launched in 2005. This program provides full funding for 125,000 students to study overseas in reputable Western universities, at an annual cost of SR9 billion to the Saudi government (Bashraheel, 2013). This year, the total number of graduates of the program hit 47,000 (International Exhibition & Conference on Higher Education, 2013). Another influential strategy is the English language Preparatory Year Program (PYP) operated in most, if not all, universities in the country, of which the chief aim is to improve the English proficiency of students before they begin undergraduate study (Al Qahtani, 2013). Overall, these government initiatives serve as a salient example of the current urgency among Saudis to better integrate themselves into the English-dominated global environment.

2.5 The Scope of the Problem

The international necessity to learn English presents a challenging task to Saudi people for several reasons. For instance, here is a large linguistic distance between English and Arabic, as each language belongs to two different family trees (Semitic and Indo-European); there are limited cultural links between Arabs and most English native speakers (NSs); and there have been many recent influences of sociopolitical tensions (Parkinson, 2008). Besides these factors, the inadequate status of English language education in Saudi Arabia (particularly the poorly designed curriculum) also contributes to substandard English skills (Al-Miziny, 2010; Al-Essa, 2009; Alalmee, 2008; Alkhazim, 2003). In my point of view, students in Saudi Arabia feel alienated in the

English language classroom as their identity and culture are quite different from the English culture. Bearing in mind that some Saudi teachers are not aware of this issue, the problem has become even more complicated. In this case, the teacher transmits the cultural components of the target language either knowingly or not, which in turn causes students altering their identities or feeling confused when they encounter the new culture. This is where culture and identity interacts with second language acquisition.

Due to the concerns expressed by Saudi educators and the sociopolitical factors explained above, a number of reforms have been introduced into the pedagogical approaches at both school and university levels. These reform missions have dominantly been directed by Western textbooks as the default curriculum, and the problem is that the ideologies embedded in these textbooks conflict with the Arabic and Islamic ideologies. This has led to theoretical debates on and fears about English as a 'missionary language of imperialist, Judeo-Christian values' (Pennycook & Makoni, 2005, p. 137). Furthermore, this has also resulted in a fear of colonisation and a potential loss of local culture and identity among many teachers and Islamic scholars in Saudi Arabia (Elyas, 2011). On the whole, it is clear that issues of sociocultural identity and representation need more attention in foreign language classrooms in Saudi Arabia. Here, many linguists argue that language learning is problematic when there is a great deal of incongruence between home and classroom discourses, or even when the culture presented in class materials is alien and incomprehensible (see Canagarajah, 1993; Pennycook, 1989, 1994).

2.6 Theoretical Overview of Identity

The representation of Self and Others has been a topic of inquiry in research areas of language learning because of the acknowledged differences between the cultures of L2 learners and the target cultures. In the case of English and based on a postcolonial perspective, native speakers of English are often referred to as the Self and non-native speakers of English as the Other. Scholars in the area of ELT have attempted to analyse such cultural differences, including cultural values and beliefs experienced in teaching, classroom interaction, and curriculum, and rhetorical devices of writing and speech (e.g. Hinkel, 1999). However, much of the work that has been done in this topic has tended to essentialize and polarize the culture of L2 learners. In the case of East Asia, for example learners are depicted as particularly opposite and different from the culture of Self (referring to the culture of English-speaking countries). Such a polarizing view of Self and Other has gained much criticism from various angles in applied linguistics (e.g., Holliday, 1999; Kubota, 1999, 2001; Littlewood, 1999; Pennycook, 1994, 1996, 1998; Spack, 1997a, 1997b; Zamel, 1995, 1997). This scholarship not only criticises the image of the Other created by the Self but also regards the Other as legitimate speakers of the language.

A source for the analysis of this binary is Said's description of it as Orientalism, which refers to this a clear-cut distinction between the East and the West as implying "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" which

is manifested in stereotyping and describing Arab culture and learners as being passive and inferior (Said, 1978, p. 3). As a result, Said called for opening new horizons of understanding the Orient based upon self-representation rather than relying on second-hand representation. The point he makes here is that the Orient should be described by its own cultures, beliefs, and values, not through the lenses of European imagination. In this vein, culture is “a site of discursive struggle in which various political and ideological positions compete with each other to promote a certain cultural representation as the truth” (Kubota, 2001, p. 10). Therefore, I argue that non-native English teachers in general and Saudi teachers in particular need to represent themselves in a position that allow them to be more powerful. However, if they are still struggling to conform the NS norms, they will not be able to move towards self-representation successfully and to identify themselves as legitimate speakers and teachers of English.

The subject of identity has gained much attention within different fields such as anthropology, psychology, and sociology (see, for example: Smith 2010, Johnson 2012, and White, 2013). Identity in this sense draws on the poststructuralist approach to the notion of subjectivity. Weedon (1997) explained subjectivity as “the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world” (p. 108). She also pointed out that subjectivity signifies the concept of individuals as changing, diverse and contradictory over time and space. This post-structuralist formulation contradicts the humanist perceptions of the individual which has historically dominated in the West. Whilst humanists perceive “the

individual” as an essential and fixed core, poststructuralism regards the individual as dynamic, multiple, and fluid.

With regard to second language learning, a growing body of literature draws on the accounts of subjectivity and the related concept identity. Danielewics (2001) defined identity as “our understanding of who we are and who we think other people are” (p. 10). Poststructuralist theory highlights a mutually interdependent relationship between language and identity. According to this theory, language is “the place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed” (Weedon, 1997, p. 21). According to Leveridge (2008), language, culture and identity are intrinsically interconnected and language is used as a medium to express ones' identity and culture. Drawing on prior scholarship, I believe that learning a second language affects the learners' identity and their sense of belonging to a specific community, given the fact that identity is an integral part of culture and language. At the same time the converse is also true, that is; the learner's identity affects the process and outcome of learning of the second language. Therefore, of paramount interest to this study of learning an additional language in the context of KSA, is that students who are studying English are challenged to adapt their identities in trying to accommodate the differences between their own culture and Western cultures. This situation often results in students feeling uncertain or confused about where they belong in the community.

According to Norton (1995), students need to develop “an awareness of the right to speak” for the purpose of becoming a legitimate speaker of the English language. Norton further explains that when a learner takes up a particular position within a specific discourse, he or she might resist that subject position and form a “counter-discourse” which gives him or her a powerful position instead of his or her previous peripheral position (2000, p.127). Miller (2003, p. 175) also shares the same concept with Norton and thinks that recognition as legitimate speakers of English means “having the right to speak, and having value to what is spoken”. Miller also emphasises that being audible to others is an important condition in order to assert one’s legitimacy of using the language (p.47). On the other hand, Parmegiani (2010) highlights another condition that is essential to claim oneself as being a legitimate English speaker. Parmegiani argues that there is a need to shift from “birthright paradigm” to an “appropriate model” when discussing about English, its legitimate users, identity and power. “Birthright paradigm” recognises only individuals whose native language is English as legitimate speakers whereas “appropriate model”, as the name suggests, gives no priority to the inheritance of English and encourages the effective appropriation of English as an additional language (ibid, p.361). The concept of appropriation of English is not new and has been discussed by many scholars in the literature (e.g., Widdowson, 1994; Canagarajah, 1999). However, it is imperative to note that appropriating the English language for each learner is not an easy task, especially considering the dominance of the Inner Circle speakers.

Prior research on the topic of learner identity is centered mainly around immigrants' experiences in learning a second language in their host countries (e.g., Norton, 1995, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2001, 2002; Pavlenko, 2001, 2003). The work of Norton Peirce (1995), for instance, which investigated immigrant women's participation with the members of Canadian community, referred to language learners' social identity as complex, subject to change, and as areas of personal struggle. As Pavlenko & Lantlof (2000) suggested, participation can be promoted by intentional social interactions with members of the target culture and by continuous attempts to construct meanings through new contexts. This challenges the prior perception of learners as being isolated from the social world (Naiman et al, 1978, as cited in Norton & Toothy, 2001) and leads to the understanding that learning a language is a struggle to reconstruct a Self, a task that involves following conventions that diverge from past ones in order to match the new contexts. Based on the participation metaphor explained by Pavlenko & Lantlof (2000), learning a second language is not an easy task. This study will focus on the particular case of Saudis where English language learning entails crossing a cultural border or reinventing themselves, which might involve losing parts of their first culture to fit in another one.

Moreover, Norton Peirce (1995) borrowed from Bourdieu the notion 'investment' which, reintegrates the poststructuralist conceptions of identity with human agency. Unlike previous conceptions of 'motivation' in language learning, 'investment' refers to the relationship of learners to the target language and to their multiple and ambivalent desires to practice it. For better understanding, investment is highly interrelated with the notion

of 'cultural capital', including knowledge, credentials, skills, and backgrounds of different groups within their specific social forms (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Cultural capital takes place based on different exchange value in different social realms. Therefore, investment strives to acquire cultural capital because “[i]f learners ‘invest’ in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital” (Norton Peirce, 1995, p. 17).

The concept of investment has been the focus of many recent studies, in an attempt to demystify the intricate conditions under which language learning occurs (e.g., McKay & Wong, 1996; Angelil-Carter, 1997; Skilton-Sylvester, 2002; Pittaway, 2004). These studies presented different forms of investment such as classroom interaction and social life, yet, the learners practiced their agency to (re)construct their identity through the way they selected and shaped their investment. Similarly, my research focuses on the types of investment in English language learning made by Saudi students as Arabs and Muslims, since the notion of investment has the potential to examine students' goals and agency.

2.7 Addressing the Gaps in the Research

As a solution for the issues described above, scholars such as Kachru (1990) and Bhatt (2001) have called for the contextualisation of English teaching in Saudi Arabia within the framework of “World Englishes.” From their perspectives, English pedagogy in countries such as Saudi Arabia should include local elements rather than focus on standard English. Through this, students can enhance the feeling of inclusiveness and

see themselves in the text they are using in the classroom rather than being totally detached from the learning content and context. In this case, teachers in their teaching practices must empower students to build more confidence in their culture through including some of their local cultural aspects while exposing them to the English culture(s).

There is also growing sensitivity toward the power and politics in English language teaching in general and teaching English as an International Language in particular. According to Cook (2002, 2005), many non-native English speakers strongly believe in the old values and hierarchies of the NS model, and they regard it as a symbol of perfection in language exchange, reducing non-native English speakers (NNESs) to permanent language learners. As a result, NNESs are deprived of any voice in using the language, and they are often invited to imitate inner-circle models, which becomes the ultimate goal of the English learning. The work of Phillipson on linguistic imperialism (1992), for example, has argued that teachers need to be aware of their own power and influence on the dissemination and expansion of the English and its implications, and has encourage teachers to increase students' awareness about the language so that they have the potential to fight for equal power relations and social justice (e.g. Canagarajah, 1999; Friedrich, 2007). However, without the awareness of the promising potential of EIL, students may internalise an imperialistic view of the world and consequently feel that their marginalized position in international communication is inescapable (Pennycook, 1998, 1992). Bourdieu (1984) calls this a 'misrecognition' and other writers use the term 'false consciousness'. Bourdieu describes misrecognition as a phenomenon resulted from cultural and symbolic forms of capitals, which creates

societal unequal power relations and hierarchy. Although Bourdieu's concept is more general than limited to language, it explains the tensions and conflicts that emerge when people encounter different contexts or different varieties of language as in the case of my study.

Some Islamic scholars go further and propose that all Western values and ideologies should be removed from English teaching materials, and thus English should be taught as an 'Islamic Language' (e.g., Argungu, 1996; Makoni, 2005; Mahboob, 2009). In recent years, many articles have discussed Islamic culture and English materials, most prominently on the TESOL Islamia website: <http://www.tesolislamia.org/> (e.g. Ghazi & Shabaan, 2003; Ratwanati, 2005; Karmani, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c). Also, there is a large body of literature which has highlighted the social-cultural aspects of attitudes towards learning English, and the impact of English culture(s) and Westernization on Arabic learners and teachers (e.g., Al-Haq & Smadi, 1996, Al-Eid, 2000; Al-Balushi, 1999, 2001, Syed, 2003; Al-Qahatani, 2003; Karmani, 2005a, Al-Issa, 2005). The literature, in the context of KSA, has centered at the training courses of English teachers, and the attitudes of these potential teachers towards English culture(s) and English teaching (e.g., Al-Hazmi, 2003; Al-Qahatani, 2003; Al-Sayegh, 2005). Limited research however, has been focused on cultural issues in the classroom in relation to English textbooks in KSA (e.g. Al-Asmari, 2008, as cited in Elyas, 2011). However, the attitudes of teachers towards teaching English as an International Language (EIL) and its potential to liberate Arabs, particularly Saudis, from the hegemony of the West (Orientalism) has not been explored to date. This thesis intends to open a discussion on the possibility of teaching

English as an International Language in the context of Saudi Arabia, trying to highlight the reasons behind Saudi teachers' attitudes toward English diversity.

A few studies have explored the factors affecting the English teachers' roles within the Gulf context (e.g, Al-Banna, 1997; Clarke, 2006, 2007). The influence of culture and language on professional identity has been studied vigorously and intensively in the general literature, most notably by Clarke (2005, 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2009, and 2010). Less attention has been given to how language teaching identity and the 'clashes' of identity within individual teachers affect the learning process in the KSA context (e.g. Elyas, 2011).

In the light of the previous literature, the issues of self-representation and identity are of significant interest in this study as they have a great influence on language learning and teaching. Particularly, English teachers from Outer and Expanding circle need to be set in the right context to establish their legitimacy as speakers and teachers of English and to be more confident in their teaching practice. That is, they need to go beyond the NS model which places them in peripheral position and downgrades their self-confidence.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This chapter describes the ontological and epistemological stance of the research, the research design and the description and selection of the participants, followed by the data collection methods and research tools. Finally, the reliability, validity, ethical considerations and limitations of the research are discussed.

3.2 Research Approach

3.2.1 The ontological and epistemological stance of the research

Overall, this research adopts a social constructionist approach with respect to the nature of knowledge (see, e.g., Audi, 1998; Huemer, 2002; Fumerton, 2006), aiming to understand the ways in which individuals and groups (in this case, Saudi English teachers) construct their social reality in terms of knowledge and power, in regard to the teaching of the English language at one Saudi university.

The ontology underlying this thesis is constructionism, which means that social practices and phenomena are constructed and reproduced by social agents (Bryman, 2012).

Constructionists believe that knowledge and truth are created, not discovered, by the

mind (Schwandt, 2003). In this theory, reality is socially and historically constructed by individuals. Therefore, individuals attach meanings to their experiences and practices in everyday encounters and thus shape their identities. From the perspective of constructivists, the intricate realm of the participant's experiences can be unpacked through his or her own point of views (Mertens, 2005). As the aim of this study is to reveal the Saudi teachers' perceptions towards English diversity and the concept of EIL from their own voices and experiences, the ontological position of my research aligns with my research question.

Therefore, the epistemological stance in this research is interpretivism, which is used to “understand the subjective world of human experiences” (Cohen et al., 2011, p.17).

Interpretivism inspires researchers to understand the world around them by interpreting social reality through attaching meanings and relevance to those individuals who belong to that world (Bryman, 2012). Thus, by taking an interpretivist stance as a researcher, my research aim is to comprehend Saudi English teachers' points of view regarding teaching English as an international language and the role of cultural identity in teaching or learning a second language.

3.3 Qualitative case study

Qualitative research, as the name suggests, places emphasis “on the qualities, on entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 8). As qualitative research is oriented towards understanding the social realm from the perspective of the participants in it, conducting interviews with Saudi teachers who have the important knowledge about the issue being studied is imperative to induce valid results. Qualitative interviews emphasize the significance of listening and getting the participants' point of view. Thus, I chose a variety of open-ended questions, trying to elicit the most data possible in the time available. Moreover, because qualitative research is more concerned about unveiling respondents' meanings and views, involving the participants in commenting on the outcomes of the study will be sought in this study.

One of the major characteristics of qualitative research is the inductive link between theory and research, which means that the pre-existing conclusions and expectations regarding a specific phenomenon are not necessarily applied by the researcher in understanding a situation (Mertens, 2005). This is in harmony with my interpretivist standpoint, which allows me to see and interpret reality from a subjective viewpoint. According to Bryman (2004), social researchers can make sense of human actions by gaining access to “people’s commonsense thinking” based on their own perspectives (p. 14). In order to do this, qualitative researchers must pay attention to the social context in which participants share their perceptions, experiences and attitudes. Specifically, this

study examines the participants' perceptions of EIL and cultural identity in learning and teaching a second language through their interpretations of the world around them.

Regarding the research design, I chose the case study research design. According to Cohen et al. (2011), a case study is adopted to provide “a unique example of real people in real situations”, which helps the readers to obtain a thorough and full understanding of the phenomena in question (p. 289). Adapting small scale in depth qualitative case studies allows the researcher to generate rich data and understand phenomena within their specific context. Merriam (1998) points out “the interest in a case study is in processes rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, a discovery rather than confirmation” (p. 19). In my study, the participants' attitudes towards English diversity will be examined as a phenomenon that undergoes the process of change under the influence of sociocultural factors. In this case, the choice of a case study is consistent with my constructivist ontological position because it makes sense of human behavior through recognizing it to be dependent on its context.

In addition to the above-mentioned reasons, another reason to adopt qualitative methods is that the researcher is included as a part of knowledge production. This means that the researcher can use his/her prior knowledge and experiences as a valuable source of data rather than as an “intervening variable” (Flick, 2002, p. 6). Although some scholars criticize this approach as being too impressionistic, others, such as Gadamer (1976),

argue that it is impossible to set aside our prior assumptions when undertaking a qualitative research project (as cited in Usher, 1996). He also mentions that including the researcher's knowledge is *de facto* one of the challenging factors in conducting a research project because "this knowledge is put at risk, tested, and modified through the encounter with what he is trying to understand" (p. 21). Based on the previous discussion, I strongly believe that my own position as an emic in this research project is of paramount importance. I share the same background as my participants because I am a Saudi English teacher; yet, living in the same country does not guarantee that all Saudi people share the same values and lifestyle; there are some differences among Saudis. In some ways I share with them a similar point of view and this provides rich insights – an insiders perspective. On the other hand I may express myself differently and this offers divergent perspectives. Throughout the study, there are slight differences between me and the participants and among participants themselves with respect to the issue I am studying. These divergent views may provide a broader understanding of the studied issue.

3.4 Participants of the study

3.4.1 Participant descriptions

The target group of this study was female Saudi English teachers who are currently teaching in one of the universities in the KSA. Due to the strict laws applied in Saudi Arabia that mandate segregation between males and females in both private and public schools (see Ramazani, 1985; Falah & Nagel, 2005), I recruited female Saudi teachers to

be a part of this study. More specifically, the participants involved in this research project were six English teachers who work at the College of Language and Translation at Princess Nora University (PNU) in Riyadh. The ages of the participants ranged from 25 to 28. The majority of the participants were Bachelor's degree holders, with only two Master's holders. The criteria that all participants shared were being female Saudi English teachers at tertiary level and having more than two years of teaching experience. Based on these criteria, this study wished to investigate the participants' perceptions of different varieties of English and the role of culture and identity in teaching or learning a second language.

Table 3.1

Description of participants

Participant's name	Age	Qualification	Teaching Experience
Hanan	25	BA in English Translation	Two years and six months
Reem	25	BA in English Translation	Two years
Aseel	28	BA in English language and literature MA in Linguistics	Four years
Salma	27	MA in Linguistics	Three years
Lama	27	BA in English language Currently doing a master in Linguistics	Three years
Norah	28	BA in English Language	Two years

3.4.2 Participant selection

As a first step, I sent an invitation to participate to Princess Norah University (PNU), asking the Dean of the College of Language and Translation for permission to conduct research in the department. After obtaining this permission, I advertised for participants by posting an ad on the University's website, explaining the research objectives and procedures and providing my contact details for potential participants. Willing participants contacted me to confirm their participation. I employed opportunity, or convenience, sampling, which means that the researcher uses those subjects who are available, because this thesis must be completed within a four-month time period. The objectives and procedures of the study were thoroughly explained through the explanatory statement. It was clearly stated that participation is voluntary and would not imply benefits for or harm to the participants. Those who agreed to participate in the study signed the consent form on the day of the interview.

3.5 Data collection

3.5.1 Interview

As previously mentioned, the focus of my research relates to interviewees' attitudes towards implementing EIL principles in the context of the KSA and their points of view on promoting cultural identity in their teaching practices. In search of these answers, I investigated their perspectives on these issues and interpreted the meanings of the points they made when answering the interview questions (see appendix 1). Therefore,

employing interviews as a method of data collection allowed me to obtain a picture of the participants' interpretation of social reality. Drawing on Walliman (2006), interviews are "particularly useful" for qualitative research because they help researchers to collect participants' interpretations of the social world, which is at the heart of qualitative research (p.92). In order to achieve this, the interview type adopted was semi-structured. The interviews were composed of set questions that were subject to change given the interviewees' previous answers. The interviews were held with the teachers in their offices during their office hours. Ensuring a sense of privacy was extremely important for participants in order to help them communicate freely and openly in a place in which they feel comfortable and in a position of power (Temple & Young, 2004; Kumar, 2005; Heather & Young, 2007).

Before I conducted interviews with my participants, I performed a pilot interview with a friend who met the criteria for a suitable participant. She is a Saudi English teacher with over two years of teaching experience. This pilot interview was a great help for me to "decide not only the order and the wording of questions but also the themes to investigate in greater depth" (Corbetta, 2003, p. 271).

The interviews were conducted in English and lasted for 40-50 minutes. At the beginning, I opened with a free conversation about various topics, including personal information, to build rapport and trust. Then, I briefly introduced the concept of English

as an international language (EIL) to ensure that the participants were completely familiar with the topic. I gave them the opportunity to read the principles of EIL (see appendix 3). The last part of the interview was dedicated to answering the questions. The interview consisted of roughly ten open-ended questions, each probing into the participants' attitudes towards EIL and the impact of teaching and learning English on the Saudi identity. The interviews were audio recorded on the researcher's device. As semi-structured interviews were used, the questions varied and novel ideas pertaining the specific situations emerged during the interviews. The semi-structured interviews allowed me to gather in-depth data, while the mood of the interviews was conversational and relaxing.

Nevertheless, one possible downside of the semi-structured interview is that the researcher may stick tightly to the set questions, preventing the emergence of important issues. To mitigate this problem, during the interviews, I took notes regarding the main points covered by the participants and then asked the participants to further develop their interpretations. For example, I asked questions such as, "What do you mean by this?" "Can you give an example of this?" and "Can you elaborate on this?" By doing so, I believe that I managed to explore more interesting and new ideas from the participants, rather than being totally reliant on the pre-planned questions.

Because they are considered in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews have another drawback: they may be regarded as “intrusive” by the participants (Minichiello et al., 2008, p. 70). Participants may give more information than is actually needed and consequently feel embarrassed. However, I believe that this was not the case in my research project, because there was a friendly atmosphere and a sense of equality between the researcher and the interviewees. The participants felt comfortable sharing their perspectives because of the rapport and trust that I built at the beginning of each interview.

3.6 Data analysis

In the transcriptions, grammatical errors made by participants were left unchanged unless they seriously affected the meaning and content. Additionally, some Arabic expressions used by participants are included and translated in the transcriptions (see Appendix 2 for a sample of transcript). However, as the process of transcribing data is time and effort consuming, I only transcribed the parts I found useful in my study, including all verbal and some non-verbal features such as laughter and pauses.

Qualitative researchers explain the data collected based on the “participants’ definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories, and regularities” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 537). According to Walliman (2006, p. 131), adopting a qualitative analysis entails developing a sense of “art” because qualitative data is not as systematic and scientific as

quantitative data. Thus, qualitative researchers must take into accounts humans' feelings, beliefs and attitudes, which are abstract.

As a novice researcher, I employed thematic analysis as my primary tool for data analysis as it allowed me to integrate an element of narrative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Riessman, 2008; Bryman, 2012). Thematic analysis, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), is flexible because it helps the researcher to identify themes in several ways. This flexibility makes thematic analysis compatible with the constructionist paradigm, especially in investigating “ the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society” (ibid, p. 81).

Here, I adopted the six main phases of thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). First, I familiarized myself with the data by reading and re-reading the transcriptions several times and noting initial ideas. Although this step is time-consuming, it helped me understand the extensive data. Second, I generated initial codes by manually using a highlighter on the margins of the participants' transcripts. Specifically, I highlighted the most interesting ideas in the interview transcriptions. Then, I sought themes by using a mind map to arrange the codes I made. After that, I collected all the data relevant to the emergent themes. It is important to mention that the process of coding depends on whether the themes are more “data-driven” or “theory-driven” (ibid, p.88). In my research, I coded the data based on my research questions, and therefore, the

analysis is “theory-driven”. This helped me to critically link the theories I presented in the literature review (see Chapter Two) with the data I collected. The next step is reviewing all these potential themes through a thematic map and evaluating the themes in relation to coded extracts, as well as the data that I highlighted. Finally, I carefully determined each potential theme and produced a clear definition for each one. This led to four main themes guided by the research questions:

- the teachers' awareness of English as an International Language
- their perception of the legitimacy of different varieties of English
- their attitudes towards appropriating English
- their identity as a point of contradiction and ambivalence.

Besides thematic analysis, the use of narrative analysis was useful as this study aims at exploring the Saudi teachers' perceptions of different varieties of English from their experiences which can be understood as stories. I extracted narratives in order to understand different and contradictory meanings as well as looking into individuals and social transformations. Although many scholars (e.g., Cortazzi & Jin, 2012; Watson, 2012; Riessman, 2008) have argued that there is no clear and fixed definition of the concept of narrative, the flexibility of narrative analysis lies in understanding “the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.81).

3.7 Reliability and validity of the research

Drawing on Nunan and Bailey (2009, p. 64), internal validity “has to do with whether a study has been designed in such a way that the claims made by the researcher can be confidently upheld”. To put it simply, the value of qualitative research is centered on providing a rich, detailed description of the data using power of words. With qualitative research, internal validity is established due to the “being there” feature (Babbie, 2005, p. 321) and the use of triangulation (Mertens, 2005).

3.7.1 Triangulation

Being an *emic* researcher helped me become more attuned to the interviewee’s meanings and views; however, I still had to be careful about taking-for-granted their meanings, which may easily bias the process of collecting and interpreting the data. Creswell (2008, p.266) suggests that “the researcher determines the accuracy or credibility of the finding through strategies such as member checking or triangulation”. Therefore, I employed triangulation to ensure the internal validity of the study. The triangulation strategy is “the process corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data or methods of data collection in description and themes in qualitative research” (ibid). I employed the triangulation strategy to examine “each information source and find evidence to support a theme” (Merriam, 2009, p.216).

3.7.2 Member checking

After transcribing all the interviews, a report of data was emailed to each participant to check whether the interpretations made by the researcher were correct and whether their point of views were attended precisely. This is known as ‘member checking’. After reading the report, the participants were also given the chance to comment or clarify any point that they had made in the interview. This clarification and/or information-adding were received through email.

Furthermore, many direct quotations of the participants were included in the data analysis to avoid bias and respect the participants’ points of view.

With regard to authenticity, this research is significant because the data came from the participants’ perspectives and voices. The richness of the data will help the readers gain a better understanding of the Saudi English teachers’ attitudes towards different varieties of English, along with the impact of English learning on cultural identity.

3.7.3 Researcher Reflexivity

Another factor in assessing the validity of qualitative research is the researcher’s reflexivity (Bryman, 2012; Cohen, et al., 2011). Within my research, I play important

roles as both insider and outsider, which is central to the construction of knowledge. According to Bryman (2012), “the researcher is viewed as implicated in the construction of knowledge” through the position he/she chooses (p. 394). Therefore, acknowledging my positionality within the research project allowed me to acknowledge my role in the construction of knowledge and to be “reflexive about the interview relationship and the social conditions that affect the conversation” (Hesse-biber & Piatelli, 2012, p. 567). However, even though taking a reflexive stance is helpful in producing thick, authentic data, this strategy increases the subjectivity of the research.

3.8 Ethical considerations

As noted earlier, my positioning as an insider acts as an influential factor in my own research. Experiencing the same roles and sharing a common linguistic and cultural background with my participants may, to some extent, affect the data collection and data interpretation processes. This, on the one hand, helped me generate rich and deep data because the participants felt more open to me due to the fact that I belonged to the same context. On the other hand, some people may feel that I am prone to bias in interpreting and reporting the data because of the “attachment to a particular perspective” (Habibis, 2010, p. 108). However, I believe that my role as an insider within my research had a very low level of influence on my participants’ accounts because I was clear and reflexive about my role, and therefore, the readers will understand my own values and perspectives.

One incident that happened during data collection will explain this further. I may have changed one of my participant's perspectives regarding the importance of encouraging students to express their identities while speaking English and convinced her to see the social world from my point of view. However, I did not impose my perspective on her; she understood my point through my questions and her answers as I asked her, “Why do you think that the American accent must be adopted by students in the KSA?” Her answer was “because I want them to be prepared if they're going to travel, for example. They will not hear the Saudi accent.” Then, I asked her, “So you think they will hear the American accent, even if they travel to Asian countries?” I continued, “Do you think most people here travel to America?” She interrupted, “Yeah, as you were talking just now, I realized what you meant. My perspective has changed (laughing). I get it.” At this stage, I further asked how she changed her perception, attempting to elicit her own meaning and interpretation and avoiding my own subjective view. Her answer was, “So, regardless of their accent, they're going to be understood. If I train them to use the American accent and they are going to Malaysia, they are going to be understood, so, yeah, so it's fine for them to expose their culture when they are speaking English because eventually, the result will be the same (laughing)”. Based on this example, I think that the possibility of affecting the participants' interpretations was present but this is compatible with a project of this nature, which understands knowledge as socially constructed. .

In presenting the data, the issues of confidentiality and privacy are also avoided by using pseudonyms instead of real names.

3.9 Limitations of the study

This research has some limitations that must be acknowledged. Adopting the case study approach falls short in terms of representing external validity, or generalization to other populations (Merriam, 1998; O'Toole & Beckett, 2010; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2009; Bryman, 2012). Therefore, the case used in this study cannot represent all Saudi English teachers in KSA universities. Bearing in mind the time and word limits of this thesis, I could not recruit more participants, and therefore, the value of my data speaks for itself, but it cannot be generalized to other Saudi English teachers. Overall, this study is confined to the aforementioned six participants within a specific context: Saudi Arabia's Princess Nora University. Therefore, the findings of this study are suggestive rather than conclusive. As previously mentioned, the data has been inevitably influenced by my own positioning and viewpoints because I share the same characteristics with my participants. This can be attributed to the crucial role of the researcher in a qualitative study .

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Overview

This chapter aims to:

- Report and analyse the data obtained from the interviews which were conducted as proposed in Chapter Three.
- Discuss the findings in light of the research questions and literature review presented in Chapter Two.

As presented in Chapter Three, after coding data in light of research queries and literature review, four main themes arose relating to Saudi teachers' attitudes towards EIL and the influence of ELT on the Saudi identity:

- **teachers' perspectives about English as an International Language,**
- **their perception of the legitimacy of different varieties of English,**
- **their attitudes towards appropriating English**
- **their identity as a point of contradiction and ambivalence.**

The findings of the interviews were coded according to these themes, forming the basis of this chapter. Under each theme, I present what the participants said about it and discuss their responses in light of the previously reviewed literature. In the data analysis and discussion, pseudonyms are used to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. Data are presented without grammatical corrections, as they were transcribed from interviews held in English with a limited usage of Arabic expressions by participants.

4.2 Study Findings and Discussions

4.2.1 Theme 1: The teachers' perspectives about English as an International Language (EIL)

The participants reported different attitudes towards EIL. Interestingly, although all participants showed their interest regarding the concept of EIL, their perspectives varied based on their personal experiences and visions. Some participants thought that teaching English as an International Language is promising in their context, giving their justifications.

We study English ahh...as something separate from our own culture...usually we use English as something related to their culture not our own...so this doesn't help us in expressing our own culture...so this way to study it as an international language...this will be able to help us in expressing our own culture and language as well. (Reem)

I don't have anything against it because what we actually do that we teach language...as language instructors...we teach language by exploring the rules uhh...exploring um the formal and some informal speech within grammar or even within lexicon and so on...and then what we do we give the students these rules and up to them to apply it and here where I believe the concept of the international English comes because they do get the rules...they do get the concepts...how they adapt them to their own cultural context where the International English comes from. (Aseel)

Yeah definitely...it's really important to introduce students with this concept because it will help them to have a better...a sensitive ear towards uhh different languages...and we have to highlight the differences...it will help them in their future career which they are going to be definitely interpreters...students have to

be acknowledged of these things. (Lama)

However, other participants did not believe in this concept due to their strong attachment to standard English. From the data, two of the participants perceived the EIL paradigm as an inappropriate method of teaching English, as it affects the “*purification*” and the “*charm*” of the English language . As Hanan reported, English should be taught using standard English because “*the language [English] has an identity in the first place*”. She added that “*we have to go to the English culture because this is the source, this is the origin of the language even if it's now becoming an international language*”.

I still think that we should teach it as English because the language has an identity in the first place. And um...That what I am... I really love the concept... but I still... Maybe I am still biased or I don't know, but I still think we have to have [like] basis...We have to go to the English culture because this is the source, this is the origin of the language even if it's now becoming an international language...There has to be something that's the base...You have to preserve the feeling of the language...the culture, the style of the language...What are things that are usually expressed in English.. you know sometimes you have to be bright...sometimes you don't see yourself expressing sadness when someone asks you “how are you?” or “Good morning”...So. These are the things have...have a good something about English and I think they should be preserved because that's...that is part of the charm of the English language

I believe that Hanan's attitudes towards EIL is influenced by her attraction to the American culture as she expressed how “*happy*” she was when she was mistaken by native speakers as a native speaker of English, particularly “*American*”. Her desires to be thought of as an “*American*” is because she views English as a “*civilized*” language (Kubota, 1998, p. 298). In this case, her view contributed to the misperception of the

superiority of the West held by Westerners and non-Westerners as a result of the spread of English (Pennycook, 1998) and Orientalism (Said, 1978).

Similarly, Salma attributed her disagreement with the principles of EIL to her strong belief in the division between native speakers of English NSE and non-native speakers of English NNSE.

I don't agree with that...it could be applicable as a means of communication but not as a variety of language...the Saudi accent will not be considered ah...a variety of English even if they follow the rules of English because we are Saudis...we are not native speakers of English and as non-native speakers of English, we will not be considered as a variety of language.

Drawing on Higgins (2003), the division between NSE and NNSE creates a dichotomy that impedes learners from owning English, as they are prevented from being legitimate English speakers. This explains why Salma did not accept the concept of EIL as she emphasised that “*the Saudi accent will not be considered a variety of English even if they [Saudis] follow the rules of English because we are Saudis..we are not native speakers of English and as non-native speakers of English, we will not be considered as a variety of English*”

On the other hand, the four other participants expressed a positive attitude towards EIL. As reported in their interviews, teaching English as an International language has the potential to help learners express their own culture (Reem), develop “*a sensitive ear*” towards different varieties of English (Lama), integrate some aspect of their own culture (Norah), and communicate efficiently in English (Aseel). As presented in the literature, students need to be aware of such potential of EIL, avoiding an imperialistic

view of the world and inferiority in international communication (Pennycook, 1998, 1992) which may result in 'misrecognition' (Bourdieu, 1984). I suggest understanding the diffusion of English, its users and uses of the language is critical in order to be aware of the power inequity resulting from the language's colonial history (Canagarajah, 1999).

Norah's suggestion regarding the importance of infusing local culture into the English language classrooms is supported by many studies that suggest that students learn better when they can relate to the materials they are using (e.g., Ladson-Billings, 1995; Howard, 2003). As explained in Chapter Two, the greater the cultural gaps exist between home and classroom materials, the harder it is for students to learn English.

I think it's important here for us to teach English using some aspects of our own culture...we cannot integrate uhh English culture all the time...you know because umm maybe people are not really open for other cultures...they do not accept other cultures until now and so umm we are limited in using concepts of other cultures...so we are forced to use our culture in teaching them English.

Norah also noted that she once had to exclude a chapter about *music* and *singers* and replace it with one about great Saudi leaders. She reported that the students felt more *engaged*. Thus, it is extremely important to integrate regional aspects of the local culture into the English curriculum in Saudi Arabia.

Although the data indicates that the participants have different perceptions regarding the importance of implementing EIL in the KSA context, a consensus exists among all participants concerning the feasibility of its implementation. All participants, including

those who disagreed with the concept of EIL, believe that it is feasible to implement EIL principles in their context while giving different suggestions for it. For Aseel, who taught a unit about EIL in the University, EIL should be introduced briefly to students in a separate course but not within the basic curriculum.

We can introduce them with the concept and everything about it and let them go and figure it out...we can't just give kind of fixed rules to follow...because International Language as I believe changes from one time to another.

Aseel asserts that EIL promotes an autonomous process of exploring cultural differences where students are encouraged to notice cultural differences rather than having them spoon-fed by teachers. Likewise, in the International English Language Teaching community, as claimed by Robinson-Stuart and Nococon (1996), no culture stands alone as being superior or inferior. Nevertheless, teaching EIL promotes students to seek “general empathy” towards other cultures and to develop a “positive intention” to contest stereotypes about other cultures for effective communication (Hinkel, 2001).

Salma, on the other hand, thought that teaching English as an International Language is helpful at an early stage of learning English because “*the most important thing at the beginning [of learning] any language is communication*”. She also added that “*most of students apply [EIL] without knowing the term itself*”. Salma views teaching EIL as a communication advantage, a belief shared among many linguists (see Chapter Two).

The participants also reported that this paradigm can be applied with a clear plan and clear goals, yet it will be very challenging at the onset. From Hanan's perspective,

students will struggle to determine “*what's correct and what's not, especially because we don't have such a Saudi English, even if there are some expressions, they are regarded as wrong and people joke about them*”. To overcome this difficulty, students need to understand that cultural differences are not meant to be judged as right or wrong and should take an intercultural stance. According to Byram (1997), in order to be an intercultural learner or speaker, one needs to observe and reflect on the way that other cultures assume their social relationships through language and compare cultural practices and norms of others with his or her own.

Aseel, however, mentioned “*we kind of like to set rules and follow them...this is the basic challenge and the second one would be people try to be... or aspire to be perfectionist*”. In this context, as suggested by Cook (2002, 2005), glorifying the native status as a perfect source of language use minimises non-native speakers and teachers of English to permanent language learners, and therefore denies them the right to own the language. As mentioned earlier, the only cure for this situation is non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs) finally embracing the pluralistic and dynamic view of the language, which can help them claim their own ownership of the language as teachers.

4.2.2 Theme 2: The Saudi teacher's perception of the legitimacy of different varieties of English

As presented in the literature review, the tremendous expansion of the English language in diverse sociocultural and sociolinguistic forms has resulted in the development of new recognised varieties of English. Therefore, acknowledging the legitimacy of all varieties of English allows students and teachers to avoid the monolithic view of English culture which leads to the embracement of Western ideological superiority. In Saudi Arabia, as mentioned in Chapter Two, teaching English by depending on inner-circle norms neglects students' real linguistic needs and fails to empower them with their right to claim ownership over the English language. To understand and overcome NNESTs' subordination to NS Models in KSA, a number of questions are raised: What are the perceptions of Saudi teachers towards English diversity? Who should be presented as model English speakers in English classrooms and why? Which culture should be taught as an English-speaking culture? In this section, the answers for these questions are given from the perspective of my research participants.

All participants, except Salma, accepted the legitimacy of different varieties of English.

I think they're OK... I can understand them [and] but just they feel a bit plain. They don't have the charm. [you know] I just watched a TED video of a speaker and I liked the way he expressed himself. I really tried to look the name up. I wanted to read more if he was a writer and he has... I wanted to adopt more the

way he speaks because this is how I want it myself to speak and how I want it to sound because he sounded so smart...The words he used are [like] big words...You know this is an AMERICAN person and educated American person who has an opinion and has to say something. (Hanan)

I think it is OK...it's fine...it's not something than can be said as right or wrong since it is English...it is used and people are using it to communicate...I don't think it is a problem. (Reem)

I have nothing against them...What I believe in I do belong to that group of scholars that language is a means of communication, so as long as you go and use the language effectively and you deliver your point of view...that's it...you have used language perfectly. (Aseel)

Yeah...you know we used them last semester in speaking and listening classes for translating...I don't teach translation but this what I heard that translator teacher and speaking teacher expose their students to different dialogues...different pronunciation of English to let their students aware of other ways to pronounce English.(Norah)

However, Salma strongly refused to perceive different varieties of English as “varieties” of English.

It is English...it is a correct way of using English if the grammar is correct...there is no problem...the problem is that I will not consider this as a variety of English...I will consider this as an accent but not as a variety of English.

Given the above findings, all the participants perceived different varieties of English as something acceptable in international communications. However, all participants (except Aseel) showed their preference to the standard English model in pedagogy.

Reem and Lama reported that they prefer a single model because learning multiple English models is confusing. Aseel, on the other hand, put all varieties of English on the same scale without any sense of bias or partiality. According to her, “*language is a means of communication*”, so if someone can communicate and deliver his/her point of view, “*that's it*”; he/she can “*use language perfectly*”.

Aseel's view is aligned with Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (2006), who clarified that dialectologists have claimed that all forms of a language have equal status without any exception; nevertheless, people are likely to favor some languages or varieties of a language over others, and this is how language attitudes and linguistic stereotypes develop. Therefore, these varieties cannot “*be said as right or wrong*” (Reem); they should be described as “*different*” (Hanan).

The issues of power and politics are worth-mentioning when explaining different varieties of English because the influence of these varieties reflects the power and ideologies behinds them. This is interesting in the Saudi context since Saudi Arabia never was colonised and it has a relatively equal relationship with the West because of oil. However, as explained in Chapter Two, increasing awareness and sensitivity toward the socio-political aspects of English language teaching is critical and students as well as teachers should be empowered to combat linguistic imperialism and inequity.

On the contrary, when I asked Salma about her attitudes towards different varieties of English, she asked me: “*How I perceive different varieties of English including Indian accent, Filipino accent, (laughing) Saudi accent, Egyptian accent of English as a variety of English?! As my answer was “Yes”, she showed her denial to call these English uses and forms as varieties of English. She instead “considered them accents”. She also compared the case of English to Arabic: “We can't say that Indian dialect of Arabic as a variety of Arabic”. Although I explained the ever-emphasized position of English in cross-cultural communication is different from any other language in the world, Salma remained biased to other varieties of English: “what I believe is that dialect should be native variety of the same language”.*

The only way to explain Salma's limited perception of the English language is that she is used to NS model which makes her resist acknowledging other English users, especially those from the Outer Circle. She also expressed her concerns regarding the negative impact of accepting such varieties on English by asking: “*Do you think that we will lose the language by using these new usages or words that come into the language that the native speakers themselves don't have idea about these words?*” As stated in Chapter Two, current representations of the English language belonging to Inner Circle speakers fail to recognise the growing use of English among non-native speakers of English. Therefore, students, along with teachers, may be shocked when encountering differences from Inner Circle English and may be disrespectful of such varieties. In Salma's case, this seems to be what is happening.

Regarding which culture should be presented in English classrooms, different definitions are reported by some of my participants. Salma defined the target culture of English as follows:

The common culture...the culture that is used in media..you know we are in globalised world now..we use the same culture used in media...used in television...in the Internet...the culture that most of our students know.....American culture and British culture more than Australian or Canadian culture.

Salma thought that the US/UK culture should be taught as the default English culture since “*we are in globalised world* and students are more exposed to these cultures”. In a similar vein, Norah defined the target English culture as “*all the cultures of the countries speak English*”. I further asked her about her willingness to teach Indian, Pakistani or Chinese cultures. Her answer was: “*maybe but I will not focus because they don't have English as their first language*”. Similarly, Hanan reported that “*I think I'm mostly affected by the American culture, and British culture comes second*”.

Hanan's, Salma's and Norah's point of view is similar to many teachers from other Expanding Circle countries who tend to focus on Inner Circle norms and cultures. As a response to this, Halliday (1978) and Berns (1990) point out that language is more complicated than a mix of linguistic and metalinguistic knowledge; it is a dynamic system imbedded in a social context. Thus, understanding the diverse forms and functions of English along with recognising the social (power) context are crucial for acquiring the language.

Trying to challenge the participants' orientation to standard English, I asked them the following question: During assessment, what is more important, accent or comprehensibility? Why?

Four participants reported that comprehensibility is more important than accent.

Comprehensibility for sure because accent is something I would say it's optional because my brother went to America and studied there and he did not want to speak English like that...he didn't want to adapt the American personality although he can, he still speaks with a Saudi accent if you may say... so he still think I will speak English, I will learn English, I will speak perfect English, but I will still speak with my sound...with how I feel this is my self...I respect that. (Hanan)

Comprehensibility because as long as she is making something coherent and understandable...uh...she gets the message across but pronunciation I think can be worked on later. (Reem)

Comprehensibility...I don't care about accent as much as I care about comprehensibility because umm if you give me a very good accent and a choppy structure...this is not good for me. (Norah)

Comprehensibility because as I said before language is a means of communication. (Aseel)

However, Salma thought which criterion is more important than the other depends on the level of students.

As they are beginners and they are non-native speakers of English...comprehensibility is more important than accent at the beginning...but in ...ahh ..levels such as the 7th and 8th levels... of course ah...they have to care

about their accent, their pronunciation.

Lama, on the other hand, reported that whether to value comprehensibility over accent depends on the subject I am going to teach.

If I am going to teach advanced grammar...no it is comprehensibility but if I am going to teach speaking and listening no I care about both of them.

As noted earlier, English varieties are not only characterized by their different pronunciation features. They encompass a reservoir of cultural, linguistic and sociopolitical elements. However, accent is the most prominent feature of English varieties. Trying to check whether the reason behinds the participants' resistance to non-native varieties of English is merely the accent, it was essential to understand the most substantial aim of language learning and teaching from the participant's point of view. Therefore, the question about what criterion is more important when assessing students was dedicated for this purpose. Four participants thought that comprehensibility was more important than discrete accents while only two participants thought both criteria should be considered, depending either on the subject (Lama) or the level of the students (Salma). This indicates that the majority of participants believe the main objective of learning and teaching English is mutual understanding among interlocutors; this is the same goal as TEIL. Therefore, preparing students to be part of the culturally and linguistically diverse globalised world is the most appropriate way to achieve high comprehensibility.

4.2.3 Theme 3: The participants' attitudes towards appropriating English

Given the international status of English today, NNEs must acknowledge themselves as legitimate speakers of English. As presented in the literature review, appropriation of English is the successful method to reach a high proficiency level and to reject marginalization. Widdowson (1994, p. 84) points out that “you are proficient in a language to the extent that you possess it, make it your own, bend it to your will, assert yourself through it rather than simply submit to the dictates of its form”. In an attempt to understand the participants' perspectives towards appropriating English, I posed the following question: Do you encourage your students to express their identity when speaking English? Why? The answers for this question helped me explore whether the Saudi students are encouraged by their teachers to own the language and whether they are being heard and acknowledged by their teachers as legitimate speakers of English. In this context, “audibility” has the potential to determine the extent to which students can participate in classroom and other interactions in the society (Miller, 2003, p. 47).

Three participants showed their willingness to encourage students to express their own identity, believing this will help students express themselves more freely and improve their English skills.

It is important...I always encourage students to express themselves..express their ideas even if I don't agree with them. I think this enables them to break the ice and speak more...to be more open. (Reem)

yes..I am totally for it..as we said it's part of the language...it's part of the culture when someone asks you “how are you”, you don't usually start complaining..you

usually say “fine” even if you are not really fine and...but I think it is totally OK because sometimes I feel this like a barrier..sometimes I want to say something, you don't find the way to say it so you say whatever and you don't say the real feelings or what you really think, but I still think we should encourage students to express themselves. (Hanan)

I do believe in that because I taught cultural studies for two semesters and the main concept was critical thinking between British society, American society and the Saudi society...higher order critical thinking is a huge thing within this course and it helps me understand that students do learn more when they think about it. When they go and employ their own characters, their own ahh... their own principles..their own umm...critical view of their society and language is just not the purpose here...language becomes the means of conveying the purpose and so subconsciously they are improving their own language. (Aseel)

In contrast, the other three participants reported that they encourage their students to be native-like and improve their Saudi accent.

I never thought of that really (laughing).....we're trying to promote them (students) to use the American accent because their books using the American English.....I only expose them to two which is only the American and the British. (Lama)

Their identity is shown by their Saudi accent?.....Do you think that we will lose the language by using these new usages or words that come into the language that the native speaker themselves don't have any idea about these words. How we can judge in English. (Salma)

No I don't encourage them to do this ...I encourage them to have a good grammar and to pay attention to the grammar not really focused on accent but sometimes I pay attention to accent.. not accent..the right way to pronounce the

word. (Norah)

From the data, Hanan, Aseel and Reem were more welcoming to hear from their students regardless of different perspectives and opinions. According to Hanan, although she believes culture (*the American culture*) is “*part of the language*”, she still thinks “*we should encourage students to express themselves*” because she thinks applying the English culture sometimes makes “*a barrier*” to express our “*real feelings*”. She also acknowledged that the ability of the students to express themselves when speaking English is “*pretty amazing because it is about being you*”. Through the case of Hanan, the realization of the interdependent relationship between “*being you*” and expressing your “*real feelings*” and identity was evident in her previous conversation. Moreover, Hanan explained that when she speaks English, she is different from herself in Arabic: “*I can think in a different way than in just the...the...me, Hanan (pseudonym) in Arabic... I can think differently... It opens new horizon for me...but if I just try to apply the English language to my culture, I may be able to express myself but I will still be confined... in the culture...I don't think that I am going to be another person*”. In her conversation, she acknowledged that if she expresses herself and her cultural values when speaking English, she will not be *another person*, indicating her sense of self through claiming the ownership of the language.

Aseel was the only participant previously exposed to the EIL paradigm and she had taught cultural studies for two semesters. Therefore, she had access to “symbolic resources” through the two subjects she taught, and as argued by Norton (2000), a

learner's identity transforms as he or she gains access to material and symbolic social resources that help them develop a sense of who he or she is and his or her status as a legitimate speaker of English. This what happened to Aseel's subject position as a teacher as she reported:

...higher order critical thinking is a huge thing within this course (cultural studies) and it helps me understand that students do learn more when they think about it... When they go and employ their own characters, their own ahh... their own principles...their own umm...critical view of their society.

In addition to having access to symbolic resources, Aseel took advantage of her teaching experience of critical pedagogy in ELT. These useful experiences may be regarded as various means to assert her legitimacy as an English language teacher and help her empower her students as legitimate language speakers. Having “the awareness of the right to speak” (Norton, 1995, p.10) as one of the common conditions to become a legitimate speaker of English was clearly illustrated in Hanan's and particularly Aseel's cases. However, Hanan was not sure of her sense of her self as an owner of the language, which was clearly seen through her appreciation of American culture and resulted from her lack of symbolic resources and knowledge in society. This causes uncertainty and ambivalence, which further discussed in the next section.

Lama, Salma and Norah, on the other hand, deprived themselves of recognition as legitimate language teachers, as “they ‘happily’ set themselves as the guardians of purity of language use among other NNESTs who don't comply with native speaker norms” (Llurda, 2011). This situation is underlying a self-confidence problem manifested in the vocal defense of native speakers' values which may eventually result

in cases of self-hatred. In order to overcome the paradox of being inferior as being NNEs and not having the right to own the language, teachers need to embrace the cultural and linguistic diversity of the English language; doing so will increase their appreciation of their non-native status as English language practitioners.

In the light of the above discussion, I believe that there is a strong connection between teachers' self-confidence, constructing their identity as owners of the language and critical awareness of the monolingual practice of ELT. In this sense, if NNEs cannot develop self-confidence through avoiding repetition of old language learning practices (as in Salma, Norah and Lama); the construction of their identity will be contradictory.

4.2.4 Theme 4: Identity as a site of contradiction and ambivalence

As can be seen from the previous data, there was a contradiction or even denial among participants (except for Aseel) regarding whether they could teach EIL and embrace English diversity in their teaching practice. In Hanan's interview, she contradicted herself many times as an advocate of standard English and liked being identified as an American with an American accent; however, she also felt that adapting the American culture changes her sense of her self and her identity.

...I still think culture are closely related to the language...you have to tell the students to say "please" because this is part of the culture... sometimes I feel this like a barrier...there are some concepts you can express and you can understand yourself better when you think, read about English things...It is OK to say something in English that you might be embarrassed to say it in Arabic...and sometimes the concepts (English concepts) are a little far from you because they

don't sound...personal...but if I just try to apply the English language to my culture, I may be able to express myself but I will still be confined...in the culture...I don't think that I am going to be another person.

In order to discuss how the identity of the participants was a site of ambivalence and contradiction, I would like to draw on the work of Norton (2000) and Hall (1996).

Firstly, as explained in Chapter Two, Norton (2000) argues that identity is multi-faceted and contradictory, that it “is produced in a variety of social sites, all of which are structured by relations of power in which the person takes up different subject positions” (ibid, p. 127). Consequently, the subject position that is taken up in one context might clash with others in a different context. As suggested by Norton (2000) and Hall (1996), individuals need to constantly negotiate between multiple subject positions offered to them which results in the contradiction of the self. In this study, the diversity of the subject positions taken up by the participants includes a Saudi learner of English, a non-native English speaker and teacher and a legitimate speaker and teacher of English.

To clarify this point, I will take the case of Hanan as an example. Although Hanan tried to imitate an American accent, (believing she will be looked at as the Self), she sometimes feels this like a “*barrier*” exists between her “*real feelings*” and her real self, which is a Saudi English speaker and teacher. This took place because she believes that being native-like is the only way to legitimise her use of the language; as the sometime Saudi English learner, she feels confined to American culture which denies her from expressing her own feelings. On the contrary, she thinks that “*if I just try to*

apply the English language to my culture, I may be able to express myself but I will still be confined in the culture and will not be another person". Thus, the perception of Saudi English speakers as illegitimate users of English, she thinks this subject position deprives herself from being "*another person*", or a legitimate speaker of English. As a result, she chose to be a legitimate English speaker (like an American speaker) when she feels "*embarrassed*" to express her specific context in Arabic like having "*a period*" or when she wants to express her "*individuality*". On the other hand, she chose to be illegitimate English (Saudi English speaker) when she can't find the way to express herself using American expressions to communicate her "*sadness*" when someone asks her, "*How are you?*" Hanan's position in one context contradicted her in another subject position in another context. Hanan's two conflicting positions made her ambivalent to view English as an international language although she reported, "*It has some promise*".

Reem, Lama and Norah were also uncertain about the status of English as an international language.

...this way to study it as an international language will be able to help us in expressing our own culture...they (students) are not going to use this approach EIL...mixing things are going to be confusing to them..because...different varieties reflect different cultures...I would like to stick to one variety...it is better to expose to some varieties of English so you can be familiar...not restricted to one thing and it will makes you weak in your language. (Reem)

...it's really important to introduce students with this concept because it will help them to have a better...a sensitive ear towards uhh different languages...Personally I prefer that she (a student) tries to adapt...to be honest (laughing)..the American

accent...I know it is right...I know it is Ok but I always try to encourage them umm to overcome...not overcome...it's not a problem...it (Saudi accent) is understandable and reflects their culture...regardless of their (students') accent, they're going to be understood...If I train them to use the American accent and they are going to Malaysia, they are not going to be understood, so, yeah, so it's fine for them to expose their culture when they are speaking English. (Lama)

It is important to expose students to such varieties, different dialects, different accents ...because in order to be a good translator, you have to understand all the varieties of English...at the same time students are going to be confused about what's right and what's wrong...I will not make barrier to other cultures...it's important for translators to study the culture...of any country that speaks the language...I don't think it (integrating the Indian culture in the English curriculum) is important...I don't encourage to do this (help students to express their identity through their Saudi accent). (Norah)

Taking the cases of Reem, Norah and Lama, there were inconsistencies regarding their answers about the principles of EIL. In one context, they thought that exposing students to different varieties of English is necessary to equip them with English's diverse uses and users. With the belief that English is an international language, they were able to claim themselves as owners of the language. Contrariwise, they preferred to adapt standard English as a model for their pedagogical method to avoid “*mixing up things*” and “*confusing*” their students, which prevented these three from assuming positions as legitimate English speakers. Within their interviews, the participants' two positions were contradictory, leading them to be uncertain regarding their own position as owners of the language.

Salma, on the other hand, did not believe in the promising potential of TEIL to achieve

a high proficiency level in English, sticking to the old values of the NS as the only yardstick to be measured by in ELT. However, Salma was reluctant about the definition of the language competency and whether it is related to being native or native-like or efficiently using English when communicating.

I don't agree with that (EIL)...it could be applicable as a means of communication but not as a variety of language...the Saudi accent will not be considered ah...a variety of English even if they follow the rules of English because we are Saudis...we are not native speakers of English and as non-native speakers of English, we will not be considered as a variety of language...I considered them (varieties) accent and as we all know that when Egyptian speak English, we know without seeing him...we know his nationality is Egyptian...it is not a deficit if you can make the listeners understand you and use very good English and use very good grammar because you are non-native speaker of English...the accent is not a priority...At an early stage of learning the language, communication is the most important thing but to master the language I don't think communication is the most important think..of course pronunciation, grammar, the usage of language, accent...let's not say accent...the correct use of language and pronunciation.

In contrast, after reading the principles of EIL, Salma still felt disadvantaged of being a legitimate speaker of English. She reported, “*We are not native speakers of English, and as non-native speakers of English, we will not be considered as a variety of language*”. From Salma’s perspective, the only way to be proficient in English is to be a native speaker of English. Even “*if you use very good English*”, you will not be competent in English, and that will keep you from being a legitimate speaker of English. Her underlying perception is the “native speaker fallacy” (Phillipson, 1992, p. 195) which means that native speakers of English are superior to the Other (non-native speakers of English). In contrast, she also stated that “*to master the language I don't*

think communication is the most important thing, of course pronunciation, grammar,... accent...let's not say accent...the correct use of language and pronunciation". Salma is clearly ambivalent regarding the status of NNEs. In this sense, taking up one position, which in Salma's case is the position as illegitimate speaker of English, and disregarding another position (legitimate speaker of English) illustrates why efficiency and the legitimacy of non-native varieties of English are contradictory. As a result, identity of the participants undergoes contradiction and ambivalence.

Drawing on the participants' cases mentioned earlier, language learners and teachers will benefit from the exposure to English varieties and the field of EIL to claim their legitimacy as speakers and teachers of English; otherwise, they might be easily affected by the native speaker myth that disadvantages non-native speakers of English from being legitimate speakers and teachers of English. This, in turn, leads to the contradiction of their identity.

Furthermore, I will take the case of Aseel to re-emphasise the connection between self-confidence (as a result of embracing English diversity) and the negotiation of identity. As previously noted, Aseel was the only one who confidently asserted the international status of English and the legitimacy of all varieties of English. Therefore, her self-confidence was clearly observed during her interview as she described herself as a scholar "*I do belong to that group of scholars*" and also "*as language practitioner*". She did not mention non-native or native speaker of English at all during her interview. Therefore, I believe that her knowledge about EIL which resulted in high self-

confidence had strong influence on the negotiation of her identity, eliminating any ambivalence in her subject position as a legitimate speaker of English.

Regarding the other participants like Hanan, Reem, Lama and Norah, their self-confidence was not as high as Aseel, they were still unsure of their status as owners of the language as they still attached to the NS model. Nevertheless, at least they acknowledged the legitimacy of all varieties of English. Therefore, I believe that the conflict in their identity as legitimate speakers of English is less than that of Salma. Salma was not able to view herself as a legitimate speaker of English as she emphasised the dichotomy between NNEs and NEs many times in her interview: “*We are non-native speakers of English*”, “*as non-native speakers of English we will not be considered as a variety of English*”, “*because you are non-native speaker of English*”, “*the native speakers themselves*”.

Overall, in the light of the above discussion and aligned with Norton’s argument, an interdependent relationship exists between embracing English diversity and self-confidence among NNEs and NNEs. If the participants were able to recognise the legitimacy and the efficiency of all varieties of English in ELT, their identities were less contradictory, and they were more confident to claim ownership of English and eventually they became more confident as teachers.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.1 Overview

This last chapter highlights the contributions of the study, its limitations and directions for further research. It also suggests some implications for Saudi English practitioners.

5.2 Contributions of the study

This study explores the Saudi teachers' attitudes towards teaching EIL and its relation to identity formation. Specifically, this study investigates:

- (1) How the participants view EIL paradigm and different English varieties,
- (2) whether the participants are able to construct their identity as legitimate speakers and teachers of English,
- (3) the reasons behind that, and the connection between embracing English diversity and their identity formation as legitimate speakers and teachers of English.

The findings of the study revealed that the participants have different perceptions regarding teaching EIL and other English varieties. Some of the participants acknowledged the legitimacy of all varieties of English, claiming themselves as legitimate speakers of the language. However, they still preferred incorporating standard English in their pedagogy as they believe that it is easier to employ, and students are familiar with it. Therefore, their identity was a site of conflict; they were unable to regard themselves as legitimate teachers of English, which contradicted their previously expressed position as legitimate speakers of English.

One participant did not recognise the legitimacy of diverse forms and users of English, believing that native speakers of English are the only source of information and culture of the language. Consequently, she disregarded her position as a legitimate speaker of English and placed herself in a peripheral position, making her less confident as a user and teacher of English.

In contrast, only one participant was completely enabled to view herself as legitimate speaker and teacher of English as she believed in the international and diverse status of English, eliminating any sign of contradiction in her subject positions and hence increasing her self-confidence. The main reason for her successful identity formation was her access to material and symbolic resources as she taught a unit about EIL.

With respect to the relationship between self-confidence and NNESTs' acceptance of English as a language for international communication, if participants were able to embrace the dynamic and diverse status of the English language not only for their own benefit but also in their teaching practices, their sense of their self as a legitimate speakers and teachers of English was less conflicting and therefore their self-confidence was higher. However, if the process of negotiating their identity was not complete due to lack of knowledge about EIL in the society, their identity was more ambivalent and therefore, their self-confidence was lower. This finding makes a contribution to the literature, namely the apparent strong connection between identity formation as a legitimate speaker and teacher of English on the one hand, and embracing cultural and

linguistic diversity of English on the other which results in high self-confidence among NNEs and NNESTs. However, since it is impossible to generalise the findings from such small scale case study based research, it would be more useful and reliable to use a larger sample for further wider investigation.

5.3 Limitations of the study and directions for further research

Besides the limitations discussed in Chapter Three and above, there are other limitations that I would like to illustrate in light of the research findings. Because of the time and word constraints of the research project, this study is limited to English teachers from only one institution in Saudi Arabia. Widening this would give a more comprehensive scope about the research topic and increase the validity of the data. Additionally, investigating the impact of studying overseas on the identity of Saudi English teachers as owner of the language is another interesting area for further study. Finally, further studies are required to probe into the perceptions of Saudi students towards different varieties of English and EIL as model of English teaching.

5.4 Implications for Saudi English practitioners

In light of findings of the study, a number of suggestions can be offered for Saudi English practitioners in terms of class materials and pedagogy.

5.4.1 Embracing English diversity

To help Saudi teachers to establish their legitimacy of the English language use, the international view of English needs to be embraced. First, teachers can achieve this

through critically reflecting on language learning and teaching practices and through accepting the dynamic and the diverse status of English. For example, teachers and trainee teachers can engage in reading and discussing books which provide a high level of critical awareness regarding the implications of TEIL (e.g. Holliday, 2005; Jenkins, 2007). In that sense, teachers can develop a critical view towards the complexities of teaching English as the world language. Moreover, as suggested by Sifakis (2007, p. 370), there is a need for a transformative approach to teacher training programs that goes beyond a “mere description of the established theories”. This can help teachers be more sensitive to EIL characteristics and more open to change their monolingual model of language teaching. As a result, when teachers are aware of their own positions as legitimate speakers and teachers of English, and their own role in promoting non-centred view of the language, they can integrate different non-native varieties of the language in classroom materials. They can also encourage their students to express their own cultural values when using English, which empowers students to claim their ownership of the language. By applying the abovementioned suggestions, I believe that Saudi English teachers can increase their self-confidence and their sense of their identity as legitimate speakers and teachers of English.

5.5 Closing comment

As explained in Chapter One, the first motive for writing this thesis was my own personal experience as a Saudi English teacher. By studying the concept of EIL and the legitimacy of different uses and users of English, I appreciated my own status as English teaching professional. As the study is completed, I have realised how most Saudi English teachers

experience a schizophrenic situation which resulted from their orientation to NS model as the right teaching method. Therefore, their identity as legitimate speakers and teachers of English is a site of contradiction and ambivalence. However, as revealed from the data, Saudi teachers can assert their authority over the language through incorporating the concept of EIL and embracing different varieties of English. This study has also helped me understand how some of my participants' self-confidence and my own self-confidence can be increased due to believing in the promising potential of teaching EIL.

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Appendix 1 - Interview Questions

1- What are your attitudes towards teaching English as an International Language?

2- How do you perceive different varieties of English?

3- Is it feasible to implement EIL principles into the English curriculum in Saudi Arabia? Why?

4- What are the challenges facing the process of making changes into the English curriculum and pedagogy in KSA?

5- In your perspective, What are the main reasons behind substandard English skills among Saudis?

6- During assessment, what is more important, accent or comprehensibility? Why?

7- Do you encourage your students to express their own identity when speaking English? Why?

8- How much flexibility do you have to add or make changes in the teaching materials? And if you have enough flexibility to do so, what would you like to change or add?

9- Career-wise, do you think Saudi teachers are judged/ discriminated by their accent and identity rather than competency? Elaborate on this

Appendix 2 – Sample transcript of the Interview

I = Interviewer

H = Interviewee

While the interviewee was reading the EIL principles sheet:

H: قبل لا أقرأ جتني فكره We have to have a base...we can't just force ourselves on the language...We still have to have something. يعني (meaning) it still has to have part of its culture there... *Love in Head Scarf* التي اسمها the origin from Pakistan, I think.. but she is from North Africa or something and she lives in Britain, so her nationality is British وكي بس انها مسلمة وزي وكذا...The language لما أقرأ English books from another culture... وكذا و الكلمات حقة الملابس والأشياء ويدخل فيها شوي عربي عن الأشياء Indian فتحسين شوي فيه الإسلامية

I: Did you accept it?.. like...did you accept these words or you think that it's not English?

H: Umm...شوفي...I really I understand انه بس ماأحس انه the kind of culture that attracts me...OK...I am not like into Indian and these stuffs...So I just read it...It was fun, but it was a bit different...There is a different feeling at least. There is a different style of expressing ideas.

I: Yeah.Yeah..So do you think this is a different variety of English?..because this is part of World Englishes, the new paradigm I'm talking about.

H: Yes. Yes.

I: What is your attitudes towards EIL after reading these principles?

H: I still think that we should teach it as English because the language has an identity in the first place...and um...that what I am...I...I really love the concept...but I still... Maybe I am still biased or I don't know, but I still think we have to have like... basis. We have to go to the English culture because this is the source...this is the

origin of the language even if it's now becoming an international language. There has to be something that's the base.

I: You mean the lexis and the grammatical rules?

H: No. Like the feeling of the language. You have to preserve the feeling of the language...the culture, the style of the language. What are things that are usually expressed in English... you know sometimes you have to be bright...sometimes you don't see yourself expressing sadness when someone asks you "how are you?" or "Good morning". So, these are the things have.. have a good something about English and I think they should be preserved because that's...that is part of the charm of the English language. So that's why...it's maybe I love the language, so I am biased...but this is I think part of why we like English...so because it has these characteristics, not just about the language itself...it's about the culture, the feelings of the language or it how it helps you expresses yourself.

I: So when you speak English, you think you express yourself like native speakers?

H: Yes, Yes. I can think in a different way than in just the...the...me, Meriam in Arabic. I can think differently. It opens new horizon for me...but if I...If I just try to apply the English language to my culture, I may be able to express my self but I will still be confined in the...in the culture...I don't think that I am going to be another person.

I: Do you think it is the other way around because you think yourself are confined by your culture conventions, but when you speak English like native speakers, do you think you are confined by their culture conventions or what do you feel?

H: Maybe...maybe sometimes, but I don't know. It's difficult to say...you can't really. It's just feelings...you can't really know for sure if it's...what's right and what's not. But as a feeling I think maybe there's some truth to what you are saying but maybe there is a level...maybe we can...can't expect everyone to have this professional level of being like native speakers or even wanting to be like that...maybe this is a personal goal of mine, but it might not applied to everyone, we might not have to apply it to all students or everyone has to follow this. It could be something personal if you want to study English as an International Language and everybody can study it this way and

people who are more interested in the culture can like...uhh...try to learn English as an English language

I: How do you perceive different varieties of English like Pakistani English, Indian or Singaporean English? What do you think of these varieties of English?

H: Umm...I think they're OK. I can understand them and...but just they feel a bit plain. They don't have the charm. You know I just watched a TED video of a speaker and I liked the way he expressed himself. I really tried to look the name up. I wanted to read more if he was a writer and he has... I wanted to adopt more the way he speaks because this is how I want it myself to speak and how I want it to sound because he sounded so smart. The words he used are like big words. You know this is an AMERICAN person and educated American person who has an opinion and has to say something. I really love the way he spoke and I don't think myself seeing anyone from other culture because sometimes it is a bit simplistic...I don't know...it's just too plain for me...uhh...I'm not...I don't think I'm exposed to such culture because it does not really grab me.. I just read a book, but it just I read it because I had it...that's why...It's not like I'm really interested in watching videos or...So I don't have much of background to judge.

I: So you think that in teaching culture is very attached to the language?

H: Yes. This is what I mostly believed up until now. Now I see what you're getting at in the study so I'm trying to be a little bit less biased but I am still think that culture is closely related to the language, so I have to teach the culture with the language so when you teach the students, you have to tell them to say “thank you” and you have to tell them to say “please” because this is part of the culture, so if they just speak English and they know how to speak English and they don't say “thank you”, they are going to be observed by others as impolite or rude people, so you have...this is part of the feel of the language even if you don't say it in Arabic even sometimes it's OK to say something in English that you might be embarrassed to say it in Arabic. It sounds too rude or...sometimes it's easier. When I was in high school, our teacher told us that what's period and she said that it's easier to go to the doctor and you tell him I have my period than to say it in Arabic and will be less embarrassed and everybody agreed... the students all of them and I was “yes”. It is so much better to say it that way. It doesn't sound personal. It is a bit far away from you. That's why it's easier to use. I think this is part of the charm of English language. And sometimes that the

concepts are a little bit far from you because they don't sound when you say a word like...excuse me...but if you said a dirty word in Arabic, it's too much. You can't take it but people now using not nice words in English and they think it's OK...and it's...you might be a little accepting of...to hear these words than to hear Arabic words because they are very close to you (laughing) and you think they are too much...but the English words for the native speakers, they feel too much...you can see...that I just watched a video about two people discussing using the F words in podcasts and they were talking how people can accept it...they were discussing it like it was very really big subject, so I think it's really big for them, but some people...they just write the initials like it's nothing...so, we had this conversation me and my sister about some people using such words...some Saudi people or Arabs using such words without...feeling it's OK. If you talk to them in Arabic, they are very polite but they still use these words like it's nothing and they know it means they are cursing but I don't know. It feels different (laughing).

I: So you said that culture is very important part of the language, so what's the culture you are talking about because English is not only related to the American?

H: Mostly I think I'm mostly affected by the American culture and British culture comes second but mostly the American culture

I: Do you have a reason for that?

H: No. No. that's...it's just the kind of shows that I watch, the kind of books I read...I find that I chose a book and when I start reading it, I discovered it's an American author...sometimes I get some British books but mostly it's English and American...yeah.

I: Do you think it's feasible to implement EIL principles into the English curriculum in Saudi Arabia?

H. Yeah. Why not? I think...it's very...as a concept it has some promise, but I don't I think it should be just implemented right a way. I think we need study it a bit more and how to apply it to the Saudi culture and if it's going to be good for them. If it's really what we want to get in the end...it's the results that we want to get in the end or not.

I: What are the challenges facing the process of making changes into the English curriculum?

H: I imagine that they will be a lot of difficulties. Just what's your resource...how I tell students if these as you said "with yourself"...how can I tell this is not correct... what do I have as a base for me to go...maybe because maybe there is some bases but I'm not exposed to the subject. And I don't have any background on this subject.

I: So you think the challenges in terms of resources?

H: What's correct and what's not...what's...why something is acceptable and what's not. How we can judge if want to, especially because we don't have such a Saudi English, even if there are some expressions they are regarded as wrong and people joke about them. How can I adapt or make something as a Saudi variety of English... like you said, there is a Pakistani English or Asian English.

I: In your perspective, what are the main reasons for substandard English skills among Saudis?

H: Maybe the way we are approaching it.

I: During assessment, what's more important, accent or comprehensibility?

Why?

Comprehensibility for sure because accent is something I would say it's optional. I respect people because my brother went to America and studied there and he did not want to speak English like that...he didn't want to adapt the American personality although he can, he still speaks with a Saudi accent if you may say... so he still think I will speak English, I will learn English, I will speak perfect English, but I will still speak with my sound...with how I feel this is my self...because when I speak with a different accent, he still does not feel it's me...so I respect that. I didn't think of it before...before I used to think accent is part of the language. You teach with the language accent. I used to advice students because I used to tell them that when you study English, especially in the beginning stages, you decide if you want to have a British accent or American accent and try to expose yourself more to this culture, so you will have more of American accent because sometimes for me because I have been exposed to both especially at the beginning...sometimes some words I will pronounce them with British accent...some words will be pronounced with American accent. It's like...it's not very nice. You want it to sound like a whole. Not just

something a salads of different accents.. I totally respect if some want to speak English but they have to pronounce the word well...they have to pronounce the word correctly but they don't have to speak with an American accent or British accent.

I: Now we will talk about identity. I understood from you that your brother, he is speaking English, but he tries to express his identity. He wants to sound like Saudis. He wants to be a Saudi. Maybe in your case, you want to sound like American because you think when you sound like American, you will be more smart...more prestigious?

H: Yes. Yes. Well...there have been two times where I have been mistaken by natives speakers as a native speaker. They asked me "I heard an American accent, are you American or something?" I said "no", but I was happy. I was happy why? Because they thought I was an American because I sounded an American to a native speaker, so wow...so umm. I don't know. I don't think it's bad to think this way... I don't know it's just something that I want to do. I love the language...I love how I can express myself well in English. There are things you can't express quite well in Arabic. I think the Arabic language is very beautiful. You can actually if you read a lot...if you know the Arabic language well enough (laughing). If you appreciate it well enough, you would be able to express yourself even beautifully, but still in English...I love English. There are some concepts you can express and you can understand yourself better when you think... read about English things. You can understand your individuality and your personal feelings better. And when you understand yourself better, you will understand the world around you.

I: Do you encourage your students to express their identity when speaking English?

H: Ahh...yes. I am totally for it. I don't ...as we said it's part of the language. It's part of the culture. When someone asks you "how are you?", you don't usually start complaining. You usually say "fine" even if you are not really fine and...but I think it is totally OK because sometimes I feel this like a barrier. Sometimes I want to say something...you can...you don't find the way to say it so you say whatever and you don't say the real feelings or what you really think, but I still think we should encourage students to express themselves.

I: Do you think this will enhance their English skills and abilities to speak English? Do you think they will be free to express themselves?

H: Actually some students are pretty capable of doing this. Some students they still speak English and they express themselves. Sometimes you laugh because you...I think it's strange how they manage. They express themselves as they usually do and they are non-challenged about it and they use English. I think it's pretty amazing and I think it's pretty good. I encourage it because it's about being you. You don't have to adapt the identity or gain another identity although I think it's part of learning the language and I read a quote before and it's "if you learn another language, it's like you are living two lives." It's not like you are having two different faces and different personalities no. it's like you really lived two lives. You gained the life of two people or you gained benefits from two cultures. This is how I like to think about it.

I: How much flexibility do you have to add or make changes in the teaching materials? And if you have much flexibility to do so, what would you like to change or add?

H: If I am really...I believe in the change, I may go for it...yeah...why not?

I: Do you have any other responsibilities...maybe the department force you to do certain...

H: Yeah...of course they would have their certain visions and I don't think they would at the time being I don't think anyone ever talked about this...uh...this point or...um idea of teaching English as an international language. And but if there is research about it and people know about it and it's really ahh is an a beneficial something and it helps them express themselves. Why not? We should implement it even on ahh...not the basics but 30% of the curriculum or whatever will be dedicated to helping students express themselves like they usually should or with their identity...not just the culture and the English language.

I: Do you think if you teach them about Halloween, they will be more interested in the subject or if you teach them about Eid Alfiter? When do you think they will be more interested and able to express themselves better?

H: well. I think we should teach them both because Halloween would sound too foreign for some students and sometimes it is good because this is you can attract them. Sometimes this is something I felt. Sometimes English was foreign and when I

learnt it, it was not that foreign anymore and sometimes I feel I want to learn another language. I want to like get the ee...doesn't interest me as much because now I...it's like...it's like a puzzle and you cracked it and it's not interested anymore...it's not really not interesting but I want something else. I want something more. It's not foreign. When I watch a Japanese or Korean show. It feels foreign. They feel different because English now is bit not foreign. So with Halloween...if something is foreign, it might be interesting. And sometimes you can like combine what's different and what's...like Eid Alfiter or Aladha and teach them side by side like a comparison and it will help them understand the other culture and understand their culture and still be able to express themselves...maybe a comparative way of teaching.

I: Career-wise, do you think Saudi teachers are judged or discriminated but their accent and identity rather than competency? Elaborate on this.

H: Yes. Yes. Yes. Definitely. It's a big yes because I've heard some people said "but her accent" even if she was a good teacher but her accent. Yes I would think they would judge by the accent...not a very good something because even if your accent is good when I taught a dictionary skills...when I taught the pronunciation key at the bottom of the page I used to get clips of native speakers even if my accent is good. It...I don't want to force my accent. It's not going to be perfect. it's not going to be native-like so I had to bring clips because you still can be a good teacher. You can help your students along way even if you don't have that accent. You don't really have to have it. If you have it, I think it's a definite plus.

Appendix 3 - Summary of Major Principles and Practices of EIL Pedagogy

EIL Pedagogy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a radical shift from the traditional conceptualization of English language teaching
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is sensitive to the local teaching context and culture of learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is sensitive to achieving balance between local and global concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a viable alternative to a NS framework in terms of norms and cultural tendencies in the curriculum, methods, material design, assessment, teacher qualities, and identity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes and promotes plurality of present-day local and global English uses, users, and contexts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equips learners with a repertoire of sociolinguistic and cultural strategies to better function as competent users in cross-cultural encounters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages English-speaking ownership and participation in (mostly digital) global discourse communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes the importance of local teachers in designing and providing socially sensitive, diverse, and rich opportunities for English language teaching
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a global pedagogical space where multiple identities, realities, varieties, voices, and cultures coexist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examines sociocultural identity in respect to diverse teaching context of use and profiles of users
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redefines the notion of proficiency, authenticity, acceptability, and appropriateness in the learning, teaching, and assessment of the language

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