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Exploring Language Teacher Identity (LTI) Construction and Negotiation of Saudi in-service English language teachers engaged in a one year Abroad Teacher Development Program: a Narrative Inquiry

by

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Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

School of Modern Languages

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Exploring Language Teacher Identity (LTI) Construction and Negotiation of Saudi in-service English language teachers engaged in a one year Abroad Teacher Development Program: a Narrative Inquiry

By

Fahd Alenezy

Research on learner and teacher identity has gained momentum. In recent years, more attention has been shifted to teacher identity, and especially language teacher identity (LTI) and study abroad. However, exploring preservice and novice English language teachers' identities on study abroad has been researched including periods before, during, or after an abroad learning or teaching experience. Therefore, my study attempts to investigate in-service English language teachers' identity construction on a study aboard experience. More specifically, it aims to understand LTI construction and negotiation by qualitatively investigating LTI construction of three experienced English language teachers of Saudi background over time and space through positioning during their learning and teaching journey including their one-year study abroad experience, which is the top-down cascade BLCSI study abroad program.

Drawing on positioning theory and three dimensions of narrative inquiry: temporality, sociality, and space in order to construct the participants' stories and narratives, this narrative inquiry research obtains data through semi-structured interviews, research projects during the abroad experience, and the BLCSI study abroad policy documents. The stories narrated by the participants of the study are configured and thematically analyzed.

Findings of the study show how the participants construct their LTI through encountered challenges during the study abroad experience. Data also revealed how the BLCSI program policy constructed their LTI and how they align their LTI with the persona in the BLCSI program policy, and how this changes throughout their learning and teaching journey. The findings further demonstrate how they negotiate their identity by agentively dealing with such challenges, through the influence of their surroundings, through positioning, and by envisioning their future. The study mainly highlights the importance of bottom-up study abroad programs for LTI construction in relation to teacher development in confirming of claims that support bottom-up design of teacher development programs.

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Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name:	Fahd Saud Alenezy

Title of thesis:	Exploring Language Teacher Identity (LTI) Construction and Negotiation of Saudi in-service English language teachers engaged in a one year Abroad Teacher Development Program: a Narrative Inquiry

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

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4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
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Abbreviations

Acronyms:

LTI: Language Teacher Identity

BLCSI: Building Leadership for Change through School Immersion

MoE: Ministry of Education.

NTP: National Transformation Program.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Overview of the study

Research on identity has been very productive over the past years (Block, 2021). Studies into language teacher identity (LTI, henceforth) have helped us to understand important aspects of identity, such as how English language teachers construct their identity, and how it intersects with teacher education, programmes planning, practicum and language teaching, in general. Including LTI, they are still powerful constructs through which we can give an account of the rationalities that inform what teachers do, and the decisions they make while they are carrying out their daily professional practices. Learning is a central aspect of teacher education, and consequently learning is central to identity construction of teachers who participate in teaching abroad programs offer insights into the ways in which teachers make sense of their learning and teaching experiences (Benson et al., 2012).

Research on LTI is still expanding; accordingly, one of the avenues still to explore in LTI involves abroad programs, specifically teacher development abroad programs. This is a trajectory that some countries pursue to develop their education and English language teaching and learning contexts. Thus, these contexts become potentially rich fields for exploring LTI as it inevitably plays a significant role in teacher development in relation to study abroad programs. (Varghese et al., 2005; Hunter and Kiely, 2016; De Costa and Norton, 2017; Barkhuizen, 2021).

Like any other country pursuing development and change generally, and more specifically in education in participating in global issues, Saudi Arabia has been very concerned with educational reform and development. Much of the policy focus has been on teachers' development. Therefore, several programs have been launched with the aim to train experienced public (elementary, intermediate, and secondary) schoolteachers to gain what is considered in the system as 'highly recognized standards of teaching quality'. Examples of such programs and projects are those such as "Tatweer" (a local teacher development program, see 2.2.3 and 5.3) and the "BLCSI" program (2.2.4). The BLCSI program is the one that I am interested in. It is literally taken from the Arabic word "ابتعاث", which stands for Building Leadership for Change through School Immersion (hence forth, BLCSI). This is because it involves sending experienced teachers abroad to different contexts for training and professional development of their teaching (see section 2.2.4). I am interested in the fact that experienced teachers are being exposed to different and new teaching experiences in an overseas context. I want to explore this phenomenon in

which they construct and negotiate their LTI through during the study abroad experience and in relation to their learning and teaching journey over time.

It is very relevant to explore the construction of LTI before, during, and after an experience of learning and teaching abroad, this area of research in the literature has already been overlooked (e.g., Benson et al., 2013). This is especially the case for English language learners and students and preservice teachers learning and/or teaching abroad. Although sending student teachers and novice teachers abroad to gain some learning or teaching experiences has been explored (e.g., Trent, 2011, Cheung et al., 2014). little research has been conducted into understanding the construction of LTI of experienced English language teachers, rather than novice and pre-service teachers who embark on programs abroad for teacher development.

This chapter presents the research questions, followed by the motivations and rationale behind the choice of the research topic. Then, it sheds light on the significance of the study. Lastly, it gives a brief description of the structure of the study.

1.2 Research aims and questions

This study aims to investigate LTI construction through understanding how Saudi ELT teachers engaged in the BLCSI study abroad program construct their identities over time and space through positioning. It also aims to understand how they navigate the structure of the BLCSI program in relation to the BLCSI program policy documents. In addition, its objective is to understand how their engagement into two different contexts influence their teacher development. This study, therefore, seeks to answer the following questions, main and sub questions (see section 4.3):

1. How did three Saudi experienced English language teachers engaged in study abroad experiences construct and negotiate their identities in different contexts?
    a. What conditions and possibilities, before, during, and after the one year abroad, might have influenced LTI construction and negotiation?
    b. How do English language teachers position themselves and how are they positioned by others in relation to their fellow teachers, mentors, supervisors, and school leaders, and their students?
2. What can we learn from the experiences of these experienced teachers abroad, in terms of language education in Saudi Arabia?

1.3 Rationale of the study

This study involves personal and academic motivations. In terms of my personal motivation, I had my first contact with English language in intermediate school (the 7th grade) in a public school. I had foreign national English language teachers. At the intermediate level, my English language teacher taught me for three years in such a way that I started to see English language was my favourite subject. In the secondary level starting from when I was 15 years old, I had struggled to continue liking English language as the teacher's way of teaching was not as expected to be on a high level. In my last year of the secondary school, my older brother had graduated from teachers' college majoring in English language teaching. He started to teach me English language at home and I started to become attached to the subject again, gaining confidence in practicing English language with him most of my time at home. I started to like learning English language and dreamed of becoming and English language teacher. Luckily, when I graduated from high school, I applied to study English language major in my brother's teachers' college in my city. After I entered the college majoring in English language, the real journey started there. The English language program was a total of four years, including three and a half years of English language study and then a half year of practicum of English language teaching.

I had taught English language for one semester as part of the teaching practicum before I graduated from college. Then, I went to study abroad, in the US, in order to improve my English and obtain my master's degree in English language teaching. In the final semesters of my master's, there was some teaching practicum divided into two phases. The first phase was observation, and the second phase was observation and partial teaching. I realized that teaching in a different context, with different textbooks, students, lesson plans, curriculum, educational system, etc. was a very interesting and informative experience for me. I had the chance to help in teaching and preparing a section assigned to me by the host teacher, which mostly involved teaching grammar; however, it was challenging to teach grammar to mature immigrants. A positive point here is that I had the experience of teaching English language in an English-only context even though I did not have the chance to be in charge of teaching the whole course. This experience reflexively changed my perspectives about teaching English language for when I returned home. Unfortunately, when I returned home, I did not have the opportunity to teach in public schools. Instead, I taught university level students. Although the context was different, I tried to adopt some of the teaching strategies and methods I had observed and practiced abroad into my lessons. That was very inspirational and motivated me to improve my teaching and become more effective. My students also found the various activities that I used as enjoyable and informative.

From my personal motivation came academic motivation. Academic motivation involves the context of learning and teaching in Saudi Arabia for various levels of teaching experience including pre-service, novice, and in-service English language and other subject teachers. At first, I was keen on investigating pre-service English language teachers' identity construction. Then, I shifted my focus to in-service English language teachers and the BLCSI study abroad program for several reasons. Firstly, there was a low number of English language students and as a result, the English language major was transferred to a different faculty (faculty of arts) and included no practicum as part of its curriculum, at the end of the four-years college study. Instead, practicum teaching became available through a one-year diploma in education for graduates of English language and other majors at their own expense, which meant that looking for practicum English language students as participants for the study would be difficult. Secondly, the Ministry of Education (MoE) placed great importance on teacher development through such initiatives and training sessions and the BLCSI study abroad program was one of the biggest initiatives they launched. Thirdly, the literature has several calls for studies on in-service English language teacher identity construction involving study abroad programs (Benson et al., 2013; Reeves, 2018). Therefore, I became interested in studying English language teachers who participated in the study abroad program to understand their transformation and how they construct their identity over time and space.

Another factor is that this study involves school immersion in schools overseas as part of the BLCSI study abroad program which gives it more strength. This is because it is:

> "a learning-by-doing experience. It differs significantly from the traditional study-abroad programs in that it makes guided immersion in actual practice the key strategy for changing the knowledge, skills, and behaviors of the program participants" (Building Leadership for Change through School Immersion, 2017, p. 3)

Therefore, I investigate LTI construction through the lens of positioning theory through which teachers are involved in new experiences in the study abroad context in relation to their overall experience of English language learning and teaching and this may contribute to the research on LTI.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the field of knowledge and practice in relation to LTI and teacher development. A contribution of my study is to extend this focus on identity to the investigation of language teacher identity construction by considering in-service EFL teachers' experiences from Saudi Arabia before, during, and after undertaking a one-year study abroad (teacher

development) program in various contexts (Trent, 2011). Exploring language teacher identity construction is better investigated over a long period of time and within various contexts in order to obtain accurate findings and extend our understanding of language teacher identity negotiation and construction. Benson et al. (2013) asserts that investigating language teacher identity "allows us to see how particular segments of [their lived] experience, such as a period of study abroad, may have particular significance for identity development" (p. 19). By adopting positioning theory (Davis and Harré, 1990), this study contributes to our understanding of English language teachers' identity over time and space through various discursive practices, highlighting which stories help us understand how they make sense of their lived experiences (p. 46) and negotiate their identity construction. In this sense, narrative inquiry is central to understanding stories and making sense of lived experiences (Clandinin et al., 2007; Barkhuizen, 2020).

Research on identity remains as "an important ongoing conversation about language teacher identity … and social change" which extends our understanding of language teacher identity (De Costa and Norton, 2017, p. 11). Among other scholars, Skott (2014) emphasizes the need to understand the role of teachers in relation to emerging classroom practices. He also highlighted on the shift in "acknowledging the significance of context, focusing on some understanding of person-in-practice" (p. 26) in which more interest included research on teacher identity (Olsen, 2008) in various settings and contexts (Benson et al., 2013). For example, Burns (2017) maintains that "research on what these identity tensions [and challenges] might mean for teachers who become teacher researchers is still very much an unexplored (roller coaster) track" (p. 136). Another important aspect of study abroad is school immersion which Reeves (2018) affirms that studying "immersing teachers, through field experiences, in a new school setting with new institutional ways of being is one promising strategy" (p. 7).

Jackson (2017) calls for more studies on language teacher identity to understanding its construction over time involving in-service language teachers; she indicated that "while large-scale studies can track the L2 identity development and professional identities of pre-service or in-service teachers, it is also imperative that more focused, smaller-scale projects investigate identity changes in individuals over time" for example, investigating "narrativized accounts of selected participants could illuminate the process of identity construction in L2 speakers before, during, and after participation in a teacher education program" (p. 118). Furthermore, she concluded her calls regarding research on language identity by drawing researchers' attention to studying language teacher identity and study abroad to understand "[h]ow L2 teachers construct and negotiate their identities in study abroad contexts" (p. 118). Therefore, this study contributes to the field in which it attempts to study in-service English language teachers' identity construction over time and space including their study abroad experience.

In answering the call of scholars to construct such research, this study involves using positioning theory in a narrative inquiry study to investigate in-service English language teacher identity construction and negotiation throughout their learning and teaching journey. Their lived experiences of learning and teaching involves a Unique study abroad program, specified only for in-service teachers (see 2.2.4). Participants of this study are English language teachers who experienced teaching in different levels of English language in public schools.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of **ten chapters**:

Chapter one is the introductory chapter. The chapter opens with an overview of the study. It also presents the research aims and questions. It then demonstrates the rationale for undertaking this research. It concludes with the significance of the study and a structural section of the thesis.

Chapter two gives a detailed background of the BLCSI study abroad program including theoretical and conceptual presentations, descriptions and discussions considering the context of this study in relation to the literature and the nature of the BLCSI study abroad program.

Chapter three is concerned with theoretical and conceptual grounds of the study. It discusses the concepts of language teacher identity in light of positioning theory in relation to other concepts such as study abroad and English language teaching. The last section reviews relevant studies conducted on language teacher identity and abroad experiences.

Chapter four presents on the methodology of the study. It sheds some light on narrative inquiry as a central means to this study. A brief description of a pilot study I conducted is provided. It then moves on to provide an explanation of the design, participants, the analysis and the procedures of data of the study.

Chapters five, six, seven, and eight are the analysis sections of the study, involving data collected from the BLCSI policy documents and three English language teachers (Ali, Sami, and Omer), participants in this study. The analysis of chapters present stories of the participants in a thematic way in light of positioning theory. The analysis chapters also include introduction and conclusion sections.

Chapters nine and ten offers a discussion (in chapter nine) of the results of the study in relation to the literature. The conclusion chapter (chapter ten) provides a summary of the main findings and results of the study. It also restates the research aims and questions. Then, it provides

contributions, limitations, implications, and recommendations for future research. Lastly, it concludes with a personal reflection on the study.

Chapter 2 Study Context

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the background to the study. It explains the motivations and rationale behind the choice of the research topic, then places the study into context by describing the history of teaching and learning English language in Saudi Arabia, and the aims of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. It then looks in more detail at the programs offered to Saudi teachers for teaching aboard.

2.2 Background and context of the study

2.2.1 English language in Saudi Arabia

The first development in Saudi Arabia started with the discovery of oil, in 1938 (Nurunnabi, 2017), which was a transformational point for the country economically and internationally (Mansfield, 1985). This led the country in sending its employees overseas to study engineering and oil studies. Due to the universal nature of the English language, it was soon realized that it was important to learn English and it was added to the school curriculum for the education of the next generation (Al-Issa, 2011) so they would be able to participate in the international market and have an economic influence around the globe (Poveda, 2019; Patino and Poveda, 2023). Over time, the importance of English language (learning and teaching) has increased as it has led to the development of oil related studies and general education. King Fahd University for petroleum studies has also been established, and Saudi students have been equipped with the necessary English level to enter certain universities and for engaging with global development (Al-Hazmi, 2006).

As attention toward teaching English language increased, the government employed qualified foreign English language teachers from other countries owing to the limited number of Saudi teachers who specialized in English language teaching. This is largely because the implementation of English language learning was new to Saudis, and they needed time to acquire this language in order to obtain jobs in Oil Companies and other fields including English language teaching in schools. A few years ago, several universities were established that offered more difficult majors that required high levels of the English language, for example English language teaching, engineering, medicine, etc. The agenda behind this is that other fields of education besides oil related studies have been developed in order to achieve a rapid development on all fields that

serve the society and help the country to increase its global position. English language has been the medium of instruction in those fields. That was because most knowledge needed have been in books and materials written in English language. Therefore, the necessity of implementing English language in university and school curricula was inevitable.

In the era of King Abdullah (2005-2015), more than 20 universities, including their branches, were opened across the country. Alongside this, teacher training programs have been created to support English language teachers of Saudi backgrounds. In addition, the scholarships of study abroad programs have been developed and extended for many years to come. This involves learning the English language and obtaining bachelor's, master's, and PhD degrees. In addition, the program has been opened to a large number of students—not just university students, but also to universities' faculty members so they can obtain postgraduate degrees. Then, in the current era of King Salman, the scholarship abroad program has been extended to public school teachers. One of the programs launched late in 2015 was "Eifad"(which literally means *sent on missions* and taken from the Arabic word إيفاد. It involves sending public school teachers to study abroad for one year. They then return to Saudi Arabia except when teachers have obtained admissions to study their master's degree. Then, they would have the opportunity to continue their higher education studies. Recently, this program has been developed and refined in terms of selecting the best ranking countries all over the world in education and also selecting the teachers who will participate in this program (more details of this program are provided in section 2.2.4). This brief description is an indication of the importance of English language in the development of Saudi Arabia over the years. More specifically, the next section will shed light on the education and English language teaching in Saudi Arabia.

One of the reasons for sending Saudi students and employees to study abroad is, of course, to bring back knowledge and new experiences in order to localize and develop knowledge at home. Another reason behind this agenda is to localize and offer more jobs for Saudis. Saudi Arabia has even partially funded the private sectors to offer more jobs for Saudi citizens even though the public sector has always been the preference for Saudi. This move is therefore intended to encourage more recruitment in the private sector, too. After Vision 2030 was launched, Saudis started to realize that having a job in the public or private sector can be similar as long as the job is secured. Furthermore, even in the public sectors, employees can keep their jobs as long as they are productive, and work efficiently based on regular evaluations. Even in some sectors, promotions have been made competitive.

2.2.2 Education and English Language Teaching in Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia, English language is the main foreign language introduced to and taught in public schools, colleges, and universities. That is because of its importance underpinning a considerable number of educational, professional, and social fields within the country (Alqahtani, 2018). It has also been an essential component of communication in economic and health domains, as explained earlier (Alqahtani, 2015) as well as other sectors like higher education, where English language is used as a medium of instruction in some departments such as business, medicine, nursing, and engineering (Alfahadi, 2012). Similarly, English language has been introduced in public schools as a core module in the intermediate and secondary stages, then in the last three grades of elementary stage, and recently in all elementary school stages.

More than a decade ago, the opinion was that English language should not be included in the elementary stage at school but should be developed in the intermediate and secondary stages in terms of English language teaching (Al-Hazmi, 2006). Now, English language is taught from the fourth grade at the elementary school and even in some cases from the beginning of the elementary school (Van Tol, 2016, p. 1). The reason for the original objections to this may have been a wish to focus on improving teachers' teaching rather than focusing on introducing English language at the elementary stage. Still, the idea of teacher development is an ongoing trajectory that the MoE has been pursuing. Consequently, the MoE has launched several programs and projects that have teacher development and leadership as their aim, in order to achieve its educational objectives related to the Saudi vision 2030 (more details in the next sections 2.2.3, 2.2.3.1, 2.2.4).

Similar to other countries, education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is guided by several intrinsic principles. One of these important principles is that education plans should be connected to other general plans regarding development (Supreme Committee of Educational Policy, 1995). There is thus a connection of plans between education and development plans; development has always been sought in education. One of the essential components in facilitating the vision of the MoE is to build a "Globally Competitive Knowledge-based Community" which requires the teaching of English language as a foundation (MoE, 2017).

The literature has predicted "economic, social, and political drivers of EFL and TESOL in Saudi Arabia over the next decade including neoliberalism and privatization" (Moskovsky and Picard, 2019, p. 157). Nowadays, other sectors, including health care, have been privatized while education remains in the process of being privatized. Some English language teachers will therefore need to work in private sector schools. However, the case of financial matters in the private school sector in relation to benefits for and salary of Saudi teachers are still not enticing.

The monthly pay to Saudi teachers is still around $800-$1000 which is not comparable with public school sector which starts at around $2000 funded by the government. Therefore, the private school sector encounters reluctance by teachers including English language teachers. Many teachers see teaching in the private sector only as a way to gain teaching experience but not as a permanent job even though private schools provide suitably designed buildings and appropriate number of students in each class which is the opposite of some of the public schools and especially recently when a big number of schools faced closure around the country, which has resulted in an overwhelmingly large classes (Alrabai, 2019).

In recent years, the MoE implemented neoliberal policies (Tayan, 2016) relating to public school teachers' assessment, ranking advancement, knowledge evolution, and teaching development. For example, yearly ranking advancement which entail an increase in teachers' salary was linked to passing a theoretical exam (Professional Licensing Test for Teachers) designed to test teachers' knowledge and practice in relation to their content specialization and general educational theories. This test, hence, promote continuous learning and development with the reward of financial advancement. These techniques are current and occurring drivers towards the neoliberalism agenda including privatization of public-school sectors, where the MoE in Saudi Arabia is still trying to minimize the impact of neoliberalism on teachers (Moskovsky and Picard, 2019).

In terms of school curriculum including English language curriculum, the curriculum design focused on teacher-centered approaches (Alhawsawi, 2013; Alshahrani, 2016) which resulted in promoting a teacher-centered over student-centered learning environment (Ahmed, 2014). However, curriculum has been continuously reformed (2014-2020) to promote student-centered approaches but teachers, including English language teachers, still tend to rely more on traditional approaches to teaching which foster teacher-centered approaches (Alqahtani, 2019). Therefore, teacher development workshops and programs have been launched and implemented to train teachers to adopt to student-centered curriculum design and methods (Picard, 2019).

2.2.3 Saudi Arabian's Vision 2030

In 2016, the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammed Bin Salman has announced a new vision for the thriving future of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In line with this vision, the country is seeking potential and developmental changes in industry, the economy, education, etc. This long-term vision is called the *2030 Vision of Saudi Arabia (Vision 2030, 2016)*. The Crown Prince stated that this vision is seeking "a strong, thriving, and stable Saudi Arabia that provides opportunity for all. Our vision is a tolerant country with Islam as its constitution and moderation as its method". The

goal of this vision is “to build a thriving country in which all citizens can fulfil their dreams, hopes and ambitions. Therefore, we will not rest until our nation is a leader in providing opportunities for all through education and training, and high quality services" (Al-Saud, 2016, p. 6). That indicates the strong determination to change the country into a leading country in many fields. In order to succeed here, it was also asserted that “all success stories start with a vision, and successful visions are based on strong pillars” (p. 5). Basically, the vision can be seen as a reform of the core aspects and disciplines within the country of Saudi Arabia, one of which is education. It was emphasized that investment in education and training is very essential to provide the next generations with the knowledge and skills required to secure jobs. Regarding this matter of education, the Crown Prince clearly stated that through this vision, the investment will be made “particularly in developing early childhood education, refining our national curriculum, and training our teachers and educational leaders” (Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, 2016, p. 36).

To develop education in Saudi Arabia, not only does the curriculum need to be reformed but also the idea of developing and training teachers needs to be given serious consideration. The MoE has started to introduce teacher development projects within Saudi Arabia. Among them is Tatweer program (Tatweer, 2014). The MoE established a partnership with the Tatweer company for educational services and Teaching Development Initiatives (Mitchell and Alfuraih, 2017). The aim of Tatweer is to provide Saudi teachers, including EFL teachers, with training sessions and teacher development workshops in Saudi Arabia which are professionally prepared and locally located (Mitchell and Alfuraih, 2017). This development of teaching involves not only EFL teachers but also different disciplines. These training sessions and workshops are carried out throughout the academic year, and recently more intensive teacher development workshops have been provided in the summer break. Teachers are encouraged to take part in these workshops as they are optional.

As the educational aims have not been met for almost more than a decade due to the changes in curriculum and evaluation standards, the Tatweer program was considered to be insufficient as it was more theoretical than practical. Therefore, from this local program comes the idea of teachers' training for leadership and professional development outside Saudi Arabia (overseas) in order achieve the objectives of Vision 2030. As it was difficult to send a huge number of teachers to study and train abroad for professional development, the MoE has set certain standards for those who want to join the overseas development program (see Appendix A.2). Currently, the Tatweer and the overseas program are working to complement each other. For teachers who do not have the chance to join the overseas program, Tatweer is another option within their reach. Before shedding light on the overseas program (BLCSI), the next section will briefly describe the National Transformation Program.

2.2.3.1 National Transformation Program (NTP)

The NTP is an initial and essential part of Saudi Vision 2030, and the aim was to achieve it by the year of 2020. It was developed to “help fulfil Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030, and to identify the challenges faced by government bodies in the economic and development sectors” (NTP, 2016, p. 10). To realize the goals of the National Transformation Program (NTP) 2020, around 36 initiatives were identified, involving all sectors, including education, within the government (NTP, 2016, p. 100-102). The main initiative amongst them is “the comprehensive framework for continuing professional development for teachers and educational leaders” (NTP, 2016, p. 100) which involves the development of teachers. Not only does Saudi Arabia through the Vision 2030 seeks development and change education but it also intends to be a leading country in all sectors (NTP, 2016, p. 6) and more specifically to “enhance the image of education system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia” (NTP, 2016, p. 102). In a nutshell, these initiatives were developed to achieve the strategic objectives developed by the MoE, which will be discussed further in the following paragraph.

The NTP identified strategic objectives to address the challenges and establish the 2020 interim targets. In the education sector, six strategic objectives were identified. One of these objectives that the MoE tried to achieve by the year of 2020 was to "improve recruitment, training and development of teachers" (NTP, 2016, p. 60). This objective is seen as second-to-top priority in in the education sector transformation. That indicates that the improvement of education not only relies on “the improvement of curriculum and teaching methods" (p.61) but also on the development of teachers through training and professional development programs. In other words, if teachers are given professional development and training, then there is a chance of improving education. The next section 2.2.4 discusses the overseas program (BLCSI), which involves the development of teachers as part of the objectives to identify challenges for 2020 to achieve the Saudi Vision 2030.

2.2.4 The BLCSI Program

In the past decades, worldwide, there has been an increased interest in teacher development and learning through launching innovations and initiatives. Due to globalization, internationalization, and technological development, education has undergone educational changes and curriculum reforms in the pursuit for quality teaching and learning. Seeking development in education is not only limited to innovations and changes at a national level, but it is extended to overseas contexts in relation to student and teacher development and learning. More specifically, it gives more attention to teacher learning and development as teachers are key pillars in the process of

teaching, learning and education, generally. In some developing countries, oversea teacher development programs are organized in which teachers would have multiple opportunities learn and develop their teaching in parallel with contemporary changes and reforms in education and curriculum.

The **MoE** in Saudi Arabia has launched several programs for teacher development and learning, in order to achieve the Saudi Vision 2030. Among them is the BLCSI overseas program. As MoE has undergone several, if not continuous, changes and reforms in education and curriculum, the BLCSI was designed to help teachers adjust with themselves to the changes, as well as to be part of the change, seeking better education for 2030. It was critical for MoE to take the first steps urgently to initiate such initiatives such as the BLCSI in order to realize the interim objective of the National Transformation Program (NTP) by 2020. Such decisions in a limited time are deemed challenging in terms of realizing better outcomes and achievable results. However, these initiatives have to be taken somehow in order to gain experience and knowledge to attract the attention of teachers.

In the following sections, The BLCSI as an overseas teacher development program is thoroughly described in terms of its provenance and structure in addition to linking it to LTI based on the literature and motivations and goals of the BLCSI. This program is based on different types of teacher development, it is located in a top-down cascade tradition. These traditions are discussed in detail in the next sections. Lastly, the link between this chapter and chapter five will be explained, as chapter five includes a critical analysis of the BLCSI policy documents.

2.2.4.1 The BLCSI provenance

It is widely accepted that opportunities of teacher development to be provided for teachers on a regular basis (Johnson and Golombek, 2016) in both teacher education programs and also in in-service education. Teacher development for in-service teachers can help teachers develop their teaching through new knowledge and experiences and be agents of change in their context (Watson, 2014). It may also be related to the influence of globalization and internationalization by competing for the quality of education. It is identified in the literature that teacher development is an important key in improving the quality of schools (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 1993). In addition, it may be concerned with competing for economy leadership specifically in the middle east, Asia, and Worldwide pursuing the objective of being among the top knowledge economy countries (Nurunnabi, 2017). There are several types of teacher development programs evident in the literature. In-service education teacher development programs are mainly located within two essential traditions: top-down and bottom-up, in addition to the cascade tradition. Details and discussions of these traditions are presented in the following sections.

2.2.4.2 Top down

The BLCSI is located in a top-down tradition. It is organized by Ministry of Education (MoE) in which policy makers plays an essential role in establishing this program. It is fully funded and sponsored by the MoE so that this program is designed as an abroad teacher development program for experienced teachers, including EFL teachers, in public schools. Over the past couple of years, recently to be more specific, Education in Saudi Arabia has been experiencing a quite number of changes and innovations. Such innovations and initiatives are provided by a top-down policy. The top-down approach is concerned with how educational changes are planned, disseminated, and enforced (Goh and Gopinathan, 2008). In this sense, the BLCSI is already structured and designed by MoE so participants are only doing what is expected from them.

Farrell (2013) describes top-down professional development as in "many times, the teachers who are in the front lines of these institutions have not been consulted and as a result do not have any real commitment beyond attending. This type of professional development has often been called top-down professional development because it comes from above by the administrator" (p. 17). Therefore, as a top-down BLCSI program, it is argued that "top-down professional development can render teachers as mere implementers of the ideas of others" (Carpenter and Krutha, 2015, p. 707). It seems that MoE does not treat teachers as opinion leaders and agents of change. It, for example in the BLCSI, rather follows traditional approaches of teacher development programs. In traditional teacher development programs, teachers are seen as "objects who must implement the ideas and strategies mandated by purported experts" (Carpenter and Krutha, 2015, p.708). Failure, or more precisely not being able, to achieve the development of education through innovations and initiatives, MoE always holds teachers accountable. MoE is implicitly implementing, what is called, "an effectiveness agenda that often appeared to construct teachers as deficient and needing improvement" (Kiely and Davis, 2010, p. 280). Even though initiatives are launched aiming for teacher development, neglecting the importance role of defining teachers' needs before designing such initiatives can lead to unsuccessful teacher development.

Over the past 20 years, there has been a shift from top-down to bottom-up approach of teacher development (Hodgson & Spours, 2015; Jones & Patton, 2018; Mansory, 2019). Hence, it has been argued that successful teacher professional programs are designed to meet what teachers need to develop, following a bottom-up tradition. The process of "teachers' needs analysis" is a very critical stage to be undertaken before designing teacher development programs. Some studies that evaluated teacher development initiatives asserted "the importance of a participant-led agenda: the focus of the training has to connect with a felt need on the part of teachers" (Kiely, 2019, p. 88). Successful teacher development program always take into account teachers' needs.

In teacher development programs, the first step to consider before designing such programs is to do analysis of participants' needs (Siedow, 1985). Addressing needs analysis of participants of teacher development programs is evident, in the literature, for its enabling role of designing suitable programs for the targeted participants (Czerniawski et al., 2017).

A recent study by Mansory (2019) was conducted based on a bottom-up approach considering addressing the needs of English language teachers. He recommended that teachers' voices and concerns must be heard and appreciated. This may potentially determine the overall professional development aspirations and the level of quality of teachers' teaching. This indicates the importance of bottom-up approach when designing teacher development programs. However, it is evident that top-down teacher development programs are not successful in achieving better, or the expected, outcomes from teachers unless such programs are well established and coherently designed. Kiely and Davis (2010) posited that there is a need for "programs of teacher learning that are coherent in design and implementation in order to have trustworthy research studies of their impact" and "In terms of research we need credible evidence of actual procedures, both in the teachers' classrooms, and in the CPD programs process" (p. 292). Therefore, Kiely (2019) draws on the assumption of (Kiely and Davis, 2010; Burns and Edwards, 2014) that the "engagement by teachers in CPD programs is derived from a sense of relevance to their work" (p. 88). He also supports the view, in alignment with the work of Harland and Kinder (1997) on "CPD impact in UK mainstream education," that emphasizes "the importance of relevance and agency in order to achieve positive outcomes of CPD initiatives" (p. 88). That means achieving positive outcomes of teacher development programs is connected with the design of the program in which it has to be related to teachers' needs and should support teachers' agency in learning and beyond.

The BLCSI has been conducted following a top-down tradition with the intention of realizing learning outcomes, which are more achievable following the bottom-up tradition instead. It is noted that there is a contradictory between the planning and design of the BLCSI and the outcomes expected to be achieved after the program completion. The reason of this contradiction and quick design of the program is that the bottom-up approach takes some time to be conducted which will slow the process of achieving the NTP 2020 interim objectives, taking into consideration the big vision's objectives by 2030. This includes other initiatives in education and other sectors are racing to attempt to achieve the vision objectives within the timeframe; however, there should be a more better planning for teacher development programs before initiation.

The likely-to-be shift in design of the BLCSI from top-down to bottom-up is that taking into consideration the whole process of the 1st cohort alongside its participants' suggestions and amendments to be made for the next cohorts. It is like commencing the program first and then comes the amendments, so that what has actually happened to the first, second, and third cohorts of the program. For the reorganization of the 2nd cohort, the 1st cohort was a trial to learn from. The 2nd cohort is another step to adjust the third cohort and other cohorts afterwards. The 3rd cohort is mostly designed based on the first and second cohorts taking into consideration the previous participants' voices, suggestions, and reflective experiences of what they should have provided with during their abroad experiences. That is apparent due the changes made to the second cohort. The length of the program was extended to 12 months instead of 6 months, more specifically, the school immersion phase was extended to 9 months instead of 3 months (see appendix 4). This process of modifying and amending the BLCSI should have been taken in the first place but the reason that this process came late because of the nature of the abroad contexts and the various options of qualified universities in education which will provide the experiences that meet teachers' needs. Kiely and Rea-Dickins (2005) stated that "Understanding the stakes involves working not only with the program aims and objectives, but also with emerging constructs and dynamic relationships as the program is implemented" (p. 12).

Within the Saudi context, teachers in public schools have been experiencing motivations and support for development and change through other initiatives and training workshops before the design of BLCSI. Li and Edwards (2013) concluded, in their study, that "although there is always the risk of resistance to top-down policy reform, there was clear evidence of early majority participation in change" (p. 406).

Top-down TD programs do "not encourage participation and commitment" (Suzuki, 2008, p. 273). However, if it is fully funded and sponsored, and may be rewarding upon its completion, then it would be competitive for participation in addition to its nature as an abroad experience (in a different country). The part of commitment, it is achievable if the program is well designed and supervised. However, the commitment to achieve the learning outcomes or the cascade of the abroad learning experiences may not be attained.

It can be drawn on Kiely's (2009) question: "is the program effective?" in which the answers to that "are small" since they "are not proposals for major change, but rather tweaking local provision and practices based on emerged insights and creative ideas" (Kiely, 2019, p. 85). Thus, the BLCSI might be the same case as the MoE targets a big change through the BLCSI program when in reality, it may only ever lead to small changes. The consumption of government bughet for the program then becomes more questionable.

2.2.4.3 Cascade

The BLCSI is also conducted considering the Cascade approach. Since only a certain number of teachers are selected, following a certain criterion for the selection process, it is expected from teachers, who participate in this program when they return home after the program, to cascade what they have learned from the BLCSI and share their experiences to other teachers in their own context. In fact, the selection of participants, trainees, is critical in order to achieve Cascade. Therefore, "the targeted trainees must be selected carefully, instead of calling for every teacher including those who may not need the training" (Suzuki, 2008, p. 276). The BLCSI might be successful in this process since the MoE has equally distributed the opportunities of participation in the BLCSI between all regions within Saudi Arabia (see appendix 2A and 2B). The ideal target of the Cascade process is to be diffused to reach a wide range of schools within the country, as possible. This may help the country to save time and money. That is to say, spending money on a selected group of teachers for a certain period of time for the great benefit of all teachers within a short period of years for developmental purposes.

The cascade, or multiplier, model or approach is often utilized in a disseminating manner through the transmission of information and knowledge from a group of teachers to other teachers (Leu, 2004; Ono and Ferreira, 2010; Slimani-rolls and Kiely, 2018). This process means that some teachers undergo some training through teacher development programs and then the knowledge they have acquired is transmitted to other teachers. The adoption of this approach is often popular in many developing countries, including Saudi Arabia, as it is time-effective (Leu, 2004) and cost-effective (Hayes, 2000). Even though the dissemination of information and knowledge learned to other teachers is quicker and can be delivered to a big number of teachers in a short period of time while the cost of such is training programs is minimized, the values of the knowledge transmitted might be lost during the process of cascading (Solomon and Tresman, 1999). This is attributed to the fact the knowledge to be transmitted is provided by "normally desk-bound experts" (Slimani-rolls and Kiely, 2018) and that the teaching learning and teaching contexts are relatively neglected (Eraut, 1994). However, the BLCSI has targeted experienced teachers, who do not only obtain the content of knowledge from desk-bound experts but also immerse in the observation of teaching contexts. This gives a credit to the relevance of the trainees to the field of teaching and teacher learning contexts in which the disseminated knowledge is not only transmitted but might be reformed by the influence of trainees' experiences of reflexivity, reflection, action research.

Hayes (2000) stated that cascade model is popular in large-scale innovations. He also asserted that it has to meet participants' needs. He posited a criterion that cascade training programs have

to meet in order to be successful which one of which is “the method of conducting the training must be experiential and reflective rather than transmissive” (p. 144). The BLCSI is designed based on the process of experiential learning and reflection.

The training approach of teacher development programs in many English language speaking countries is based on “constructivist principles: it is student-cantered, interactive, and inquiry-oriented” (Li and Edwards, 2013, p. 393). It is also asserted in the literature (Diaz-Maggioli, 2012; Freeman, 2009; Li, 2018) that most teacher development programs, in nature, following a top-down tradition are input-based programs in which teachers are expected to improve their practices by incorporating the new knowledge into practice. Hunter and Kiely (2016) stated that “such input is often learner-centered, and learning-centered” (p. 56). The BLCSI falls within this tradition in which participants develop their English language skills and immerse in schools and learn new experiences of the targeted contexts which play an important role in their learning and professional development. It is also a task-based program to the extent in which participants experience new challenges at the beginning of the BLCSI and attempt to solve these challenges at the end of the program by incorporating new possible ideas that would solve the occurring challenges and reflecting on their experiences in both contexts, the abroad context, and their own context. Professional development programs follow certain criteria. Kiely and Rea-dickins (2005) argued that “Policy-based criteria” are “established through professional considerations … based on education policy, articulated as program quality indicators, which can include program design and resource factors, staff qualifications or process factors such as instructional strategies and learning materials” (p. 13).

The cascading process of knowledge and learning experiences may seem to be the main objective of the BLCSI. MoE may expect results of change and development on the long run. It may intend to invest in teacher learning by initiating future development programs for teachers in different places around the country with the help of participants of BLCSI in designing and delivering such development initiatives since they have experienced different learning experiences from different contexts and cultures around the world. This motivation might implicitly accelerate the process of teacher development for teachers all around the country, which saves time and money, in which may contribute to better students’ learning outcomes. These hidden objectives are ideal and might not be appropriated properly and be a waste of time and money; however, MoE cannot know the results unless it has to take this urgent step even though BLCSI should have been designed based on teachers’ needs. Learning from the 1st cohort of BLCSI indicates that MoE trying to correct the random initiation of the program with no clear structure and goals. The 2nd cohort was amended in which a BLCSI proposal (BLCSI, 2017) were sent to host universities of inner circle English language native speaking countries (see appendix 4). Clear objectives, goals,

structure, design, expected learning outcomes were detailed in the proposal of the 2nd cohort of BLCSI to be met by the host universities. This is not to compare between the two cohorts; it is rather to understand the planning and design of both of them. In this sense, it clearly seems as an indication of making up for the mistakes of the 1st cohort. It may seem that voices of participants of the 1st cohort were heard, and their suggestions were noted.

The cascade process might be achievable to some extent based on the learning outcomes expected from teachers. However, some learning outcomes can be achieved, if possible, overtime. The longer the period of time to achieve one of the objectives, the less effective the process of cascade because the information and knowledge teachers learned and experienced abroad might be encountered by stagnation. Stagnation in learning and development can be avoided if follow-up development schemes are provided for the return teachers. It is argued that teacher development programs are not effective as they are typically delivered within a short period of time as workshops with little or no follow-up sessions (Pianta, 2011). Robinson (2002) also argues that even though cascade programs offer training to in-service teachers but little or no follow-up sessions are not provided in the sense that follow-up sessions help teachers deal with the implementation of the long-term objectives. However, the cascade, at least, helps teachers better understand any new reforms or changes (Rogan and Grayson, 2003).

There have been some critiques to the cascade approach in which some research has shown its failure. Some research relate its failure to the model of cascade itself (e.g. McDevitt, 1998) and some other research considered its failure based on the less quality of its planning and implementation (Department of Education and Science, 1988). Some learning outcomes that are related to the cascading process may seem ideal and hard to achieve. This may be attributed to the conditions and challenges that the participants may encounter when they return home to teach. This is to say that these ideal learning outcomes might be challenging for the participants to achieve. Therefore, this is the opportunity for the researcher to investigate the real challenges and conditions in relation to the participants trying to achieve these ideal learning outcomes and how they are going to deal with them.

2.2.4.4 The BLCSI structure

BLCSI as a program for teacher development has been targeting experienced teachers (2-18 years of teaching experience) which are selected based on specific standards. MoE has obtained partnership with host universities from the inner circle (English language native speaking) countries based on their top ranking in the department of education. Regarding the selection of participants, it is offered to the targeted teachers (English language teachers, content teachers, school principals, and school advisors) from all regions and cities in Saudi Arabia. So, the chance of

participation is equally distributed to all areas in Saudi Arabia, except for bigger cities are given more spaces for participation. The idea here is that any teacher within the Saudi Arabian border can compete to join the BLCSI. The BLCSI is mainly organized by the MoE and supervised through Saudi Cultural Bureaus in the host countries and run by the host universities.

Being a systematic BLCSI, it seems that it may be designed in a systematic way in which the participants go through several components, presented in the next paragraph. The question here is that whether the BLCSI is really or ideally systematic. Systematic design of such a program may enable participants to construct clear goals and expectations (Plews et al., 2014). In addition, it may help them make use of their experiences and be reflective when dealing with unexpected new challenges and experiences (Larzen-Ostermark, 2011). Debriefing sessions after the immersion experience might be beneficial for them to reflect constructively on teaching and learning in overseas different contexts (Yang, 2011). On-going advice, guidance, scaffoldings, and supervision during the program help participants to avoid misunderstandings of language, pedagogy, and culture (Hepple, 2012) in which effective guidance help participants in developing their understanding of the environment, educational systems, themselves, and other people around them (Ogay and Edelmann, 2016). In a nutshell, the BLCSI has to make sure that it is not payed teacher vacation but a critical intercultural professional development (Plews et al., 2010).

The BLCSI is designed though several components (see appendix 3). They are:

- *English language learning* (for the first three months). In this phase, participants develop their English language skills which will prepare them for the next phase of immersion, academic writing and research, and interactions with mentors and peers.
- *School immersion* (for 9 months, for three days every week in public schools). The immersion in schools helps participants gain insights of their host teachers' teaching practices (Li and Edwards, 2013) which is the main component of the BLCSI and helps connect participants with other component in building their reflections about their experiences.
- *University level courses*, which focused on the contemporary and up-to-date methods, strategies, and techniques of teaching (during the school immersion period for two days every week).
- *Mentoring* in which each a group of 5 participants are assigned to a university faculty member as a mentor for advice and guidance (as an academic advisor) and they meet frequently with their mentors during the 9 months phase to reflect on their immersion experience and university study and oversee the progress of the participants' reflective projects; besides, they assign further readings for participants to help them understand

theoretical frameworks related to the practices observed. Mentoring helps participants receive feedback and guidance from their mentors (Richards and Lockhart, 1994; Richards and Farrell, 2011).

- *Peer-discussions* in which participants regularly to discuss what they have learned from their experiences. Gibson (2002) suggested that it is worth moving talk from chatting to a more discussion-focused manner. For example, in groups of development, the focus can be directed to teaching, design of courses, and teaching materials. Mahoney (2005) stated that discussing articles over regular meetings is advantageous.
- *Attending and participating in seminars and workshops* offered by the host universities for participants on a regular basis performed by faculty members of education; participants can also participate in doing seminars and that can be discussed and planned for in advance with their academic supervisors.
- *Development of research skills* in which participants are encouraged to do research by making use of the library resources; they also do their university courses assignments and prepare for presentations.
- *Working on an ongoing reflective project* which is required by participants once they commence the school immersion phase. They start to develop a final reflective paper reflecting on their journey of BLCSI learning experiences and the possibility of implementing their projects in the Saudi context when returning home. Keeping a diary (Richards 1992) leads to productivity as part reflection, discovery, and evaluation of oneself. Journaling as a form of reflection also might be helpful which opens investigative venues for experienced teachers (Allwright 2003).

Teachers in the BLCSI act like learners in which they learn English language skills and then learn by observations of teaching practices and engagement with host teachers during school immersion; in addition, they learn from university courses by doing discussions, seminars, workshops, and research. They learn by living the experience in a different context and culture. The learning process is flexible during the discovery of participants' learning where interaction is a key element in their learning.

According to Strange and Gibson (2017) study abroad experiences are usually located in two learning theories: Experiential Learning and Transformative Learning Theory. Experiential Learning Theory is concerned with the learner' process of learning is through engagement in experience and reflecting on what have been learned through this learning experience (Bain and Yaklin, 2019). It is argued by Strange and Gibson (2017) that this theory is important in which it helps students in developing "the type of action oriented experience that is likely to induce transformation" (p. 88). Transformative Learning theory assumes that adult learners can change

how they perceive their lives through “reflection, active learning, and placing [themselves] in uncomfortable situations” (Strange and Gibson, 2017, p. 86). In the case of BLCSI, participants as learners are put outside their comfort zone in different contexts and cultures by being engaged in such situations which are different form their own life experiences (Vermillion, 2019). Potential transformation and development in classrooms to be achieved are based on the essential role of structure and continuity (Kiely and Davis, 2010).

The transformational process may not be possible due to the nature of the program as a top-down approach TD which did not seek to identify teachers’ needs beforehand. However, the design of the program may have some potential. Its structure involves learning of English language, school immersion involving observations, university-level courses, mentoring, peer-discussions, research skills, seminars, and training workshops. I would say it is comprehensive and may inform teachers’ needs. However, the two contexts, teachers’ own context and the abroad contexts, are different which may result in difficulties in implementing what have been learned from the abroad experience. However, since teachers are agents of change, they may adjust their learning experiences to what fits in their own context. Less positive impacts found by some studies (e.g., Nguyen and Walkinshaw, 2018) conducted on similar teacher development programs in terms of the abroad training in different contexts and cultures turned out not fitting in their own contexts. However, there is still a room for investigating “the impact on the work of teachers after the program” (Kiely, 2019, p. 88). That is maybe why the BLCSI is planned through phases with latent intention of achieving its objectives over time. Therefore, participants working hard through these phases of learning and experiences may lead to possible achievement of the expected outcomes.

2.2.4.5 The BLCSI learning outcomes

The learning outcomes (objectives), presented in *table 1*, are ideal and hierarchical. They are not impossible to achieve but they may not be wholly realized. They are ideal like any outcomes expected to be realized at the end of any teacher development program. For example, the first objective is concerned with improving English language competence, some participants might struggle with developing one of the English language skills since the phase of English language learning is only three months; therefore, if one objective is not completely realized, then this may affect the achievement of other objectives. However, MoE might have considered sending a good number of participants with intention of having at least 80% of participants success in achieving almost all these objectives. The number of participants varied in different cohorts, and increasing from one to another, e.g., the 1st cohort involved only 1020 participants while in the 2nd cohort

involves 1307 participants, with 512 extra spaces for more just in case (see appendices 2 A and 2 B).

The hierarchical process here, as shown in the table, that they are organized step by step taking into account the whole period of the BLCSI, from the start to the end of it, and the afterward period, returning to teaching, taking into consideration continuity and sustainability of what has been learned and put into practice. For example, the first three objectives are supposed to be achieved during the BLCSI period. This involves improving their English language competence which might be relatively achieved. For the participants specialized in English, it might be highly possible to achieve advanced results in their English language competence. For other participants, the three months period might not be enough to be competent in English language. However, by going back to the criteria in which participants have met before joining the program, they should have at least attained the minimum results in IELTS or TOEFL. It also involves the participants' engagement with practical and authentic use of language to make a better understanding of the language use when teaching, for example being exposed to the right use of language in authentic situations. In addition, It is concerned with participants development of their skills of research to know more about English language teaching methods and approaches during the abroad experience and put them into practice when they return home.

For the 4th objective, they are expected to use effective strategies of teaching English. Based on their knowledge development and research for better and effective strategies of English language teaching, after their return home, they put the suitable strategies into practice for effective teaching and learning. However, some strategies might not be suitable for or compatible with their own contexts because of possible challenges or factors, or they might be not convinced about such strategies to be implemented. That is because this objective leads to the next one, no. 5, which is about assessing the teaching strategies they are going to implement taking into consideration their suitability with the outcomes of the curriculum. So, this is another effort they are expected to do. That is to say that this objective is linked with the previous one; therefore, if the previous objective is not attained, then this objective might not be functional. For example, nowadays, the curriculum is reformed to be suitable for the use of CLT, then only such teaching strategies to be implemented in which the assessment of these strategies is discussed at the end of the semester and alternatives are sought. However, will the adoption of CLT, as teaching method, which is compatible with the current curriculum, be affected by, for example, classroom size, which is discussed in object no. 7? The number of students in classrooms matters in terms of the successfulness of applying a new teaching approach or method. However, the viability of the assessment of English language teaching strategies does not have to be related to the expected

implementations of new English language teaching strategies and they only need to develop the assessment skills and participate in the reform of the curriculum.

Teachers are also expected to create such learning environment, objective no. 6, that facilitate better learning for all learners considering their individual differences and special needs. So, this objective may promote students' needs analysis in which teachers might enhance learners' learning for better learning outcomes. However, this is a skill that needs to be developed overtime and maybe distributed to all teachers to be collaborative in achieving better learning outcomes for students. This objective leads to objective no. 8 which is about building strong affective relationship with the students to promote learning. That is to say that teachers are required to be more interactive with students. I am wondering whether teachers were not interactive before joining the program or this objective means that teachers should develop better skills of how to be more interactive with their students. It is to implement student-centred approaches in teaching to be more involved with students in promoting strong relationships with them.

Some objectives take some time to be, possibly, realized. For example, the last objective, no. 11: "leading transformation of practice school-wide," indicates that this does not happen right away, and its effectiveness is realized when most of the previous objectives are achieved and also when there are follow-up sessions provided in their own context. That is to say that it could be realized by 2030 "Saudi Arabia Vision 2030".

In the case of BLCSI, these learning outcomes were not identified before the commencement of the first cohort of the BLCSI and they were presented before the commencement of the 2nd cohort. That is an indication that through and after the first cohort, MoE came up with these objectives while observing and listening to participants of the first cohort. Therefore, this indicates the development of reorganizing this BLCSI and making it a possible lens to achieve the expected outcomes from participants. In addition, presenting these objectives based on the participants' suggestions of the first cohort, I assume, these objectives should be shared with participants of the next cohort before joining the program to encourage their commitment in realizing these objectives. Then, participants may share their opinion about the expected outcomes and may add more or omit some based on their needs.

The possibility of achieving some, if not all, objectives is very low. This has to do the participants' willingness for change, suitability of the learned experiences in a different context, and culture, to their own, and overcoming contextual constraints. Because of the change implied in the Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, there is a possibility of some objectives to be achieved. For, example, teachers may experience teaching English language through music and want to implement such

experience to their classroom in participants' own context. Here is a gap between the two contexts because of different cultures. This gap between what have been learned and processed from the different context and culture and their own original context can be noted in which implementation of such learned experiences are to be made. In their own culture, teaching music is not part of the curriculum, so it would be the same of implementing such a strategy in teaching English language through music. Unless the gap of culture becomes narrow in light of achieving internalization as part of the vision 2030. Recently in Saudi Arabia, music has been allowed in restaurants and public places even though this decision was refused by a major number of people; therefore, it is highly expected that schools may come next in allowing music for educational purposes.

Some objectives may not be achieved because of contextual factors. With the very recent changes in Education regarding classroom size, due the closure of a big number of schools that their buildings have been rented, there have been, so far, a degree of discontent by teachers since this move undertaken resulted in an over-saturation point. That is because of the capacity for each classroom that has over-exceeded the limit number of students in each class, in all stages of public schools. According to the latest official announcement by MoE (see appendix A), the 1st stage in elementary school has been raised to accept 35 students per classroom, and the rest of elementary stages accept 40 students per classroom. In addition, the intermediate and secondary levels, the capacity of students per classroom has been raised to 45 students per classroom. This is an overwhelmingly unplanned procedure was undertaken by MoE. I am curious about participants of BLCSI, how they are going to deal with this unexpected dilemma by the time they are expected to "manage the classroom effectively", objective no. 7.

For objectives no. 9 and no. 10, there is a chance of adopting some useful phone applications for the purpose of learning in classrooms. However, phones are not allowed in classrooms in the Saudi context. In addition, some schools' classrooms are still not equipped with, the basic, technology tools. For professional development, there is a possibility of using technology since there are centers equipped technologically that can be used for workshops and training sessions. For the activation of communication with parents, MoE has launched an initiative to support being in touch with parents and have regular meetings between schools and parents to discuss students' learning matters. So, the objective no. 10 may be partially applicable for enhancement. The objective no. 9 is likely to be attained over time by building communities of learning teachers and fostering the culture of collaborative learning and peers-learning**.**

Participants may not have high expectations of learning from the BLCSI. Some may have the willingness for development and change in education and teaching, but some factors may hinder

their expectations and efforts. Therefore, there is a possibility of identity transformation towards their teaching practices, actions, and interactions with others. It is worth investigating this topic to understand how they construct their LTI over time including their study abroad experience.

Based on the objectives and expected outcomes of BLCSI, it is a synthesis of the two approaches of language teacher development: informing and responsive. Hunter and Kiely (2016) introduced a new notion as a means of synthesizing the two approaches as "an innovative mechanism" and called it "the Idea" which is considered as "an element of input that can inspire teachers and be appropriated for their own practice" (p. 37). In this case of the BLCSI, teachers learn new approaches, theories, and methods related to language teaching in which the transmission process take place (informing approach). At the same time, and onward, they reflect on their own practices by trying to better understand their own actions and teaching practices (responsive approach). An extension of the Idea is that teachers are expected to cascade their abroad learning experiences to their peers and other colleagues on a school, state, or national level.

The policy of BLCSI is partly impact focused. It focuses on the transmission of strategies, methods, and techniques in which it is expected from teachers to implement such experiences in their classroom practices (Harland and Kinder, 1997; Kiely and Davis, 2010). By looking at the learning outcomes of BLCSI, MoE expects teachers to meet a number of outcomes of the program to be implemented in their schools and context, even if the transmission process takes a long time to be achieved. Not only transmission is targeted in BLCSI program, but also achieving transformation of the outcomes which may seem challenging for such factors such as classroom size, curriculum reform, lack of technology tools in some schools, etc.

Study abroad contexts highly influence LTI. Guskey (2003) stated that "the complexities of these varied contexts introduce a web of factors that influence whether or not a particular characteristic or practice will produce the desired results" (p. 750). It is posited that "professional development activities frequently are designed to initiate change in teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions" (Guskey, 2002, p. 382) and therefore their identity. Therefore, by the exposure of abroad learning experiences, with influence of contextual factors, the expected outcomes might be somehow realized which then indicate an identity transformation on the personal and professional levels in relation to their teaching practices and actions.

The role of context in shaping teachers' BAK are evident in the literature, specifically in relation to engaging teacher development tasks. Context "determines what teachers view as possible, and therefore should shape teacher education and development strategies" (p. 38). Therefore, the relationship between context, experience, and teachers' BAK is crucial. For example, the curriculum design or class size, as part of the context (Kumaravadivelu, 2006) play an important

role in determining the way teachers teach and what strategies and methods of teaching they use. Even though teachers may hold different views about a teaching method, the application of this method might not be possible for certain contextual factor, and then they adopt a teaching method that is compatible with context and class size. In my study, the exposure to abroad context experience may have an influence on the original context and teachers' BAK as part of teacher learning and development.

The notion of Idea in Hunter's and Kiely's paper (2016) is an extension of the work of Ellis (2010) regarding the 'ideas' as "the topics or inputs provided to teachers as potential starting points for transformative new thinking. From such ideas, personal explanations of practice and new personal professional directions can be formulated" (Hunter and Kiely, 2016, p. 39). It is also concerned with what Ellis (2009a; 2009b; 2010; 2013 as cited in Hunter and Kiely, 2016) commented on regarding "the role of new theory in pedagogic and curriculum enhancement reflect a shift from a theory-centered, to a teacher-centered process for development" (p. 38). That indicates that the focus of development has recently shifted to the development of teachers. This is the case with my current study in which the MoE intends to invest in teachers' development through abroad experiences, especially for English language teachers that they improve their English language skills and their research skills through university level courses and develop their teaching practices by living the experience through engaging in school immersion. From this abroad experience, it might be a starting point for "transformative new thinking."

Table 1 Expected outcome from English language teachers

At the end of the program, teachers are expected to be able to:
• Develop strong reading, writing, listening and speaking skills in English (at least a C1 score on the Common European Framework of Reference or its TOEFL or IELTS equivalent). • Develop deep understanding of the social and cultural context underlying English language use. • Develop strong knowledge of the approaches and methodologies related to language acquisition. • Use effective English language teaching strategies. • Use assessment strategies that are aligned with the instructional strategies and the outcomes of the curriculum. • Create equitable learning environments that promote learning for all, including for students with special needs. • Manage the classroom effectively. • Build strong affective relationship with the students to promote learning. • Lead cultural transformations in their schools with particular focus on transforming professional collaborations among their peers through professional learning communities. • Appropriate technology effectively to support teaching and learning, professional development and communication with parents. • Lead transformation of practice school-wide.

Source: Building Leadership for Change through School Immersion, 2017, p. 7

The BLCSI objectives, discussed earlier, relate to teacher practices envisioned in Saudi vision 2030. One of the main objectives of Saudi vision 2030 is to "invest particularly in developing early

childhood education, refining our national curriculum and training our teachers and educational leaders" (Saudi vision 2030, p. 34). *Training teachers* underpins working on the development of teacher practices. Developing teacher practices appears to be necessary "to improve education planning, monitoring, evaluation, and outcomes" (Saudi vision 2030, p. 41).

There are some aspects of language teacher identity which relate to teacher practices. Firstly, being an ambitious teacher leads to developing oneself personally and professionally in terms of learning, teaching, and communicating with others including teachers, students, and parents, researchers, and so on. The word *ambitious* is repeatedly mentioned in Saudi vision 2030 which provokes language teacher identity construction. It is also emphasized that the BLCSI "project is an ambitious long- term endeavor to transform the knowledge, skills and attitudes of Saudi education professionals" (The BLCSI proposal, 2017, p. ii). This emphasis on being ambitious plants ambition in education professionals including language teachers which in turn be part of their teacher identity construction. Through the BLCSI program, language teacher identity is constructed as they engage in various international communities whereas education and teaching practices are more advanced. This leads to a significant aspect of language teacher identity as teachers are viewed as change agents.

This aspect of teacher as agents for change underpins the importance of developing teacher practices in order to achieve Saudi vision 2030 objectives, as stated that its "main goal is for these professionals to transfer what they learnt through immersion to their schools and serve as change agents within their areas of practice in their Education system when they return to Saudi Arabia" (The BLCSI proposal, 2017, p. 3). As an agent for change, language teachers need to cascade their abroad learning and knowledge. Therefore, their language teacher identity as change agents is imposed through changing and developing their teaching practices and cascading their abroad learning to their colleagues and other education professionals.

Training teachers is planned through school immersion during the BLCSI abroad experience. Through school immersion, language teachers construct their identity through apprentice of observation and teaching abroad. Observing and teaching abroad hugely benefit language teachers on both personal and professional levels as they can enhance their teaching practices and develop their learning and teaching skills which become part of their language identity construction. Even though the BLCSI policy program only focused on apprenticeship of observation and neglected the significance role of teaching abroad, language teachers, being ambitious and change agents, agentively participated in teaching sessions in various fields (see 7.4.48.4.5).

Training teachers abroad is primarily linked to *change*. The central focus of the BLCSI program is "more specifically … to trigger and sustain changes in participants' practices in the areas of teaching and learning, school management and leadership, and student counseling" (The BLCSI proposal, 2017, p. 3). Here, *change* is inclusive of changes in teacher practices in various aspects such as teaching and learning. Developing and changing teacher practices brings change which is sought through the program. This leads to an implicit objective of constructing the participating teachers' identities in which neoliberal persona is imposed to change language teacher identities (more details are discussed in section in 5.4).

2.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, it was presented that what the context prevails in relation to how education is evolving and changing over time, and it continues to evolve and change in terms of its policies, curriculum, and agenda. As a result of such reform and change in education is teacher development initiatives such as the BLCSI study abroad program. In the next chapter, more theoretical grounds are discussed in relation to LTI construction and study abroad in relation to positioning theory and therefore empirical research is presented.

It is important to note that this chapter includes and a detailed description of the BLCSI program. Therefore, for the purpose of this study which is to understand LTI construction of the participating teachers, it is crucial to analyze the BLCSI program policy documents (as in Chapter 5). It helps us understand the full picture and nature of the BLCSI program in order to understand how the participating teachers engage in such a unique study abroad experience. In addition, analyzing and understanding the structure of the BLCSI study abroad program unfold for us the agenda of the program including its expectations from the participating teachers and the imposed persona that are ascribed to the participants and expected for them to have at the end of the program.

Chapter 3 Literature Review

3.1 Literature Review

3.1.1 Introduction

Research on LTI in applied linguistics and English language teaching and learning has grown exponentially in the last two decades (Duff and Uchida, 1997; Varghese, 2000; Johnston, 2003; Morgan, 2004; Pavlenko, 2003; Varghese et al., 2005; Tsui, 2007; Block, 2010). A list of books involving identity and language practices included more general overviews (e.g., Joseph 2004; Block 2007; Riley 2007), research monographs (e.g., Norton 2000; Kanno 2003; Miller 2003; Block 2006) and collections of chapters (Pavlenko et al. 2001; Benson and Nunan 2005; De Fina et al. 2006).

More recently, several studies have explored LTI, which were included in edited collections and monographs (e.g. Barkhuizen, 2017; Cheung, Said, & Park, 2015; Yazan & Rudolph, 2018) in the sense of examining and theorizing identities of language teachers, during pre-service teaching training and in-service professional environment, focusing on their negotiations, construction, performance, and positionings in relation to different categories of social identity such as gender, race, nationality, language, religion, and so on (Block, 2014).

LTI has undergone major shifts in how it has been understood during the last few decades. Our understanding of it has shifted from viewing teacher identity as ascribed, acquired, or innate attributes (essentialists view) to conceptualizing it as socially mediated and constructed, situated within contexts, changing, and emerging continuously by the influence of many factors (poststructuralist view). LTI is understood to be essential to teacher growth and practice in addition to general change socially and politically (Barkhuizen, 2017a).

In the next sections, I explore the complex notion of language teacher identity (LTI) and the theoretical framework of this study including LTI and study abroad through narrative inquiry drawing on the positioning theory of Harré and Davis (1990) developed by Bamberg (1997) which will help me understand LTI construction and negotiation from a positioning theory perspective. Considering the empirical research on LTI, this research presents a narrative inquiry into LTI, positioning, and reflexivity.

3.1.2 Conceptualizing and Understanding LTI

Research on identity has gained its momentum in language teacher education, applied linguistics, and other disciplines, more specifically in recent years as the focus of identity research has involved language teacher identity (LTI). In light of research on LTI, several scholars endeavored to define identity; however, it has been a complex construct to be defined so far. The notion of identity itself has been viewed in various related terms such as *subjectivity*, *self*, and *self-consciousness* across disciplines like philosophy, psychology, and sociology (Block, 2007). Over the years of research on language teacher identity, there have been a use of several concepts referring to identity. For example, Hall (1995) referred to identity as *identification* which is defined as "made not only by those who ascribe identities onto people but also by individuals themselves as they realize how they are identified by others" (Kerschbaum, 2014, p. 5). Weedon (1997) referred to *subjectivities* in reference to identity defining it as "the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual" (p. 32). Elsewhere, Harre used a different concept for identity as *positioning* assuming it was related to the ongoing and constant positioning of persons while interacting with one another (Block, 2007).

There has been a shift in understanding identity as there has been no agreed upon definition of identity. This shift has come in respect of the current understanding of identity as not a fixed, innate, coherent, and stable, but as fluid, dynamic, complex, multiple, historically and contextually situated, and socially negotiated and constructed through discourse (Pavlenko, 2003; Norton, 2013; Varghese et al., 2005; Block, 2007). Duff and Uchida (1997) provided an advancement understanding of notions of identity which has become central to understanding LTI recognizing the multifaceted nature of how identity is represented.

Among scholars who tried to define identity are Varghese and his colleagues (2005) who see identity as "transformational and transformative…is not context free…, constructed, maintained and negotiated through language and discourse" (p. 23). Clarke (2009) views it as "a complex matter of the social and the individual, of discourse and practice, of reification and participation, of similarity and difference, of agency and structure, of fixity and transgression, of the singular and the multiple, and of the synoptic and the dynamic" (p. 189). Norton (2103), on the other hand, proposed that identity is "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how that person understands possibilities for the future" (p. 45). Hall (2013) also views identity as "socially constituted, a reflexive and dynamic product of the social, historical and political contexts of an individual's lived experiences" (p. 31). Trent (2015) understands identity as "in part socially constructed, the process involved in becoming and being a teacher are also deeply personal" (p. 46).

More specifically in relation to LTI, Block (2015) indicated that "such an identity may be defined in terms of how individuals, who both self-position and are positioned by others as teachers, affiliate to different aspects of teaching in their lives" and that they are "related to factors such as one's ongoing contacts with fellow teachers and students as well as the tasks that one engages in, which can be said to constitute teaching" (p. 13). According to Olsen (2008), teacher identity is "the collection of influences and effects from immediate contexts, prior constructs of self, social positioning, and meaning systems (each itself a fluid influence and all together an ever-changing construct) that become intertwined inside the flow of activity as a teacher simultaneously reacts to and negotiates given contexts and human relationships at given moments" (p. 15). Sachs (2005) emphasizes that its centrality as a concept in the teaching profession as "it provides a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of 'how to be', 'how to act' and 'how to understand' their work and their place in society. Importantly, teacher identity is not something that is fixed nor is it imposed; rather it is negotiated through experience and the sense that is made of that experience" (p. 15).

Along these definitions of teacher identity, Yazan (2018) defines LTI as "teachers' dynamic self-conception and imagination of themselves as teachers, which shifts as they participate in varying communities, interact with other individuals, and position themselves (and are positioned by others) in social contexts" (p. 21). Kayi-Aydar (2015) also defined teacher identity from a poststructural perspective as "multiple presentations of self which are (re)constructed across social contexts and demonstrated through actions and emotions" (p. 138). Recently, Barkhuizen (2017) proposes a comprehensive definition of LTI as "Language teacher identities (LTIs) are cognitive, social, emotional, ideological, and historical—they are both inside the teacher and outside in the social, material and technological world. LTIs are being and doing, feeling and imagining, and storying. They are struggle and harmony: they are contested and resisted, by self and others, and they are also accepted, acknowledged and valued, by self and others. They are core and peripheral, personal and professional, they are dynamic, multiple, and hybrid, and they are foregrounded and backgrounded. And LTIs change, short-term and over time—discursively in social interaction with teacher educators, learners, teachers, administrators, and the wider community, and in material interaction with spaces, places and objects in classrooms, institutions, and online" (p. 4).

Based on various definitions of teacher identity, Yazan (2018) identified common aspects of the conceptualization of teacher identity:

"Teacher identity includes teachers' conceptions and beliefs about themselves as teachers … Teacher identity involves others' expectations and social positioning … Teacher identity is dynamic

and evolves constantly … Teacher identity is constructed and reconstructed in social contexts and interactions … Teacher identity develops through teachers' commitment to, participation, and investment in the profession" (p. 27).

For this study, in line with the mentioned definitions, LTI is viewed as a complex, multifaceted, and dynamic, and reflexive product that is constructed and negotiated across time (short-term and over time) and space through its relation to emotional, historical, social, and political contexts of a person's lived experiences and the sense is made of those experiences. This shows the ways in which LTI constructed, negotiated, and impacted by several dimensions like struggle and harmony, inside and outside, contest and resisted, and foreground and background. Most importantly, the short-term and over time discursive change of LTI as teachers engage in social interactions with others within wide range of learning and teaching contexts, more specifically the context of study abroad. Therefore, this definition guides my interpretation and understanding of teachers' (participants of the study) narratives and stories through their positioning of themselves and others in the sense of their LTI negotiation and construction during their lived experiences.

3.1.3 Theoretical Framework

3.1.3.1 Positioning Theory

Research on identity through the lens of narratives has been given more attention in applied linguistics in the recent years. By sharing stories, people can reshape who they are, position themselves in stories, and respond to different characters over time and space in the past, present, and future (Frank, 2012). According to Soreide (2006), understanding the construction of identity "as a process of narrative positioning is useful, because it opens up an understanding of teachers as active agents in their own lives and the construction of teacher identity as a dynamic and changing activity" (p. 529). Positioning theory, therefore, may potentially be useful in the analysis of narrated selves.

Positioning theory "has its roots in linguistics and is best understood as part of a broader movement toward more fully realized multidisciplinary, multimethod research" (Harré and Moghaddam, 2011, p. 129). It also "crosses national boundaries and is gaining a broad international following" (Harré & Moghaddam, 2003; Moghaddam & Harré, 2008, 2010). The notion of *positioning* came from the notion of *subject position* by Foucault (1969) which referred to the ways that people are positioned through discourses which determine the privilege and power in which they may be expected or allowed to exercise (Depperman, 2015). Positioning theory was first initiated by the theorist Harré in social psychology and developed by Davies and Harré (1990) and applied to various disciplinaries and contexts.

Positioning theory is concerned with studying "conversations and narratives in order to understand self" (Davies and Harré, 1990, p. vi) by "positioning the self in terms of the categories and story lines" which "involves imaginatively positioning oneself as if one belongs in one category and not the in the other" (p. 47). Such categories include, regarding this study, teacher/principal, incompetent teacher/competent teacher, teacher/learner, and so on. Positioning of self through the process of social interaction in terms of story lines, "the stories through which we make sense of our own and others' lives. Stories are located within a number of different discourses, and thus vary dramatically in terms of the language used, the concepts, issues and moral judgements made relevant and the subject positions made available within them" (p. 46). Davies and Harré (1990) described that reading anecdotes becomes a fragment of autobiography in which individuals organize conversations into two ways: "the 'logic' of the ostensible topic or storylines which are embedded in fragments of the" individuals' "autobiographies" (p. 48). Story lines, in stories within discourse, are productions of narratives and conversations where positioning is identified. In the narrative, story lines depict "fragments of lives" in which each storyline is established around different dimensions such as "events, characters, and moral dilemmas" (p. 50). Looking into story lines, a set of characters in such imaginative events in the narrative may carry possible different interpretations as such positionings perceived differently by the reader. That is to say, the narrators position themselves from their point of view of the events; this positioning may differently be interpreted. Positioning is about how the narrators present themselves in story lines. It is identified "by extracting the autobiographical aspects of a conversation in which it becomes possible to find out how each conversant conceives of themselves and of the other participants by seeing what position they take up and in what story, and how they are then positioned" (p. 48). In a nutshell, people position themselves and others within context as "known characters in shared story lines" (p. 49). The shared story lines, in which positions are included, are not only moment-by-moment actions but also are situated in the grounds of past, present, and future individuals' lived experiences as they make sense of those positions including their social expectations. Positions are viewed as "discourse spaces in which participants make sense of each other, themselves and the nature of the events that are being reported" (Poveda, 2004, p. 398).

Davis and Harré (1999) defines positioning as "a discursive process whereby people are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines" (p. 37). Positioning has two types: *reflexive* and *interactive*. *Reflexive positioning* "in which one positions oneself" is distinguished from *interactive positioning* "in which what one person says positions another" in the process of positioning oneself as well during interactions (Davies and Harré, 1999, p. 37). **Reflexive positioning** is also referred as self-positioning as it is related to an

individual making meaning of the world which takes place in every interaction and conversation in which an individual "wants to express his/her personal identity" (Van Langenhove and Harré, 1999, p. 24). Reflexive positioning, here for example, is regarded to what is expected of teachers as English language teachers. Therefore, this type of positioning may help us understand LTI construction and negotiation of the participants of this study through their language learning history and their reflection on their past and present teaching, and their experience abroad. Block (2015) for example examined two trainees' (from Spain) identity construction on study abroad in the UK. During their experience abroad, their reflection on and comparisons between their previous teaching experience and their current training for teaching in a different context enabled them to align and adopt their teaching methods and raised their awareness. Therefore, being reflexive of their past and present teaching experiences helped them adopt teaching in the new abroad context.

Interactive positioning, otherwise, involves how individuals position one another relationally and contextually in a discursive manner (Davies and Harré, 1999). Therefore, interactive positioning, which is related to level 2 in Bamberg's positioning analysis, may enable me to better understand teachers' narratives of how they, through their interactions with others in their stories including their interaction with me, position themselves in relation to others within their stories including their colleagues, peers, students, mentors, supervisors, school principals, workshop presenters, and so on. Hence, it can be understood interactive and reflexive positionings are complementary to each other in understanding LTI construction and negotiation. Kayi-Aydar (2015), for example, investigated three ESL student teachers' positional identities in relation to their mentors. One of the examples of interactive positioning, in her study, one participant positioned her mentors as "too laid back" referring to their ways in teaching and mentoring comparing to the context where she comes from in which lesson planning is considered an important aspect in the classroom so she positioned herself as an organized teacher thinking highly of own context.

Werbinska (2020) has conducted a study on one English language teacher's professional promotion examination on Poland. Drawing on positioning theory (Davies and Harré, 1990) and small storying (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008; Barkhuizen, 2010, 2016, 2017) as a framework for the study's analysis, the participant's, an in-service English language teacher, reflexive and interactive positionings in relation to committee members were analyzed. It was found that the participant positioned herself as "a self-respectful colleague, a legitimate member of a community of practice, and a professional" (p. 143). On the other hand, she was assigned to a different level teaching as this indicated for her that she was positioned as an ineffective teacher which was noted in her narratives "the feeling of failure (I'm dumbfounded)" (p. 148) because there was a question that she could not answer as she positioned herself as a good teacher. The

feeling she was exposed to was frustration as she felt frustrated as she felt that the examiners positioned her as a good teacher. Being frustrated dominantly lead to lack of confidence till the end of the examination. We can learn from this that the participants may encounter moments of struggles and conflicts which may affect their positionings within narratives.

Reflexive and interactive positionings reflect "clusters of beliefs about how rights and duties are distributed" (Harré et al., 2009, p. 9) as well as "moral orders" (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999) within interactions in which what people are allowed or expected to do is determined. Harré and Dedaic (2012) referred to individuals' potential acts as repertoires of acts that are considered passable in specific contexts according to those individuals' positions. A moral order is defined by Harré (1987) as an an organized "system of rights, obligations and duties obtaining in society, together with the criteria by which people and their activities are valued" (p. 219). Moral order has two modes: *personal and moral.* A mode is related to the way in which something is expressed, experienced, or done. According to Glazier (2009), **moral** positioning is defined as "a fairly fixed positioning in which one stands because of his/her perceived role. Associated with that role are particular behaviors and norms" (p. 827). On the other hand, **personal** positioning is referred to, as Van Langenhove and Harré (1999) posited, "individual attributes" (p. 22) including attitudes (e.g. being a caring teacher), ideological alignments (e.g. the teacher expecting to get extra paid for extra work done), and prior exchanging experiences (e.g. cooperating with another college in a school environmental initiative). Glazier (2009) elucidated that personal positioning "is what makes one's moral position more dynamic" (p. 827). That indicates the interconnected aspect of personal and moral positionings.

When individuals present themselves in story lines, they position themselves with a bundle of attributes, including rights and duties. Harré (2012) describes positioning "as the attributes of a person or group relevant to positioning and, in the other sense, as an attribution of rights and duties" (p. 1) by defining it as the "processes by which rights and duties are assigned, ascribed, or appropriated and resisted, rejected, or repudiated" (p. 6) in social action. Positioning is related to situationally positioning others or oneself with certain obligations, rights, and duties through conversation (Rex and Schiller, 2009). The word *rights* refers to what an individual is owed by others; whereas the word *duties* means what an individual owes to others (Harré et al., 2009; Harré and Moghaddam, 2011). Rights and duties are related and cannot be separated as Harré emphasized that "for every duty there is a right and for every right there is a duty" (2012, p. 197). An example of *rights* in language teaching contexts is when English language teachers are free to use diverse teaching approaches where they see suitable in delivering their lessons. At the same time, an example of duties, they have to fulfil their obligations of finishing all the lessons accordingly in time before the end of semester.

In their introduction of their edited volume on positioning theory, van Langenhove and Harré (1999), in agreement with the poststructural affirmative view on continual change, see positioning as a recursive and ongoing process in which people are positioned and repositioned in a continuous way within various contexts and interactions. They introduced three orders in which the process of positioning occurs: first-order, second-order, and third-order positionings.

First-order positioning (interactive) occurs when individuals position themselves and others, either intentionally or tacitly, within moral space in their narratives and stories. Second-order positioning (reflexive) is referred to the ways that the presented positions are accepted, revised, or contested (Harré and van Langenhove, 1999); in other words, how positions are negotiated by interlocutors. Interlocutors here are participants and the researcher of this study. The third-order positioning (both interactive and reflexive) occurs beyond the initial interaction between the narrator and others within the story. It indicates the implicit meaning of the presented story lines. It is precisely "talk about talk" as emphasized by Harré and van Langenhove (1999, p. 21). In other words, it is the combination of the firs- order and second-order positioning in which the interlocutors explicitly discuss and make meaning of interactions within the storied/stories told.

Similarly, Kayi-Aydar (2019) involving positioning also takes into account other modes: "first-, second-, and third- order positioning" (p. 11). The initial positioning may lead to the second and third positioning. In her explanation of these three modes, she relates the first-order positioning as a moral order positioning. For the second-order positioning, she called it a repositioning which is personal positioning. The third-order positioning is reflexive as it happens in "retrospective discussion of previous acts of positioning" (Deppermann, 2015, p. 373).

An example of these three-order positionings is when a teacher position himself or herself as having the authority of his or her classroom (as a first-order positioning). However, this positioning of authority matter, underling duties and rights, has to be confirmed and accepted by others such as students, other teachers, principals, supervisors, and with whom he or she interact. Therefore, this positioning might be challenged or resisted by others which results in the process which the teacher re-negotiates his or her positions including the afforded rights and duties (second-order positioning). The teacher then, after the initial interaction with other where the positioning of authority occurred, may discuss what has happened with another individual or an outsider while re-negotiating that positions. This, therefore, results in a possible re-engaging in the first-order and second-order positioning involving his or her positioning of self and others within that initial interaction (third-order positioning). In this sense, first-order, second-order, and third-order positionings are discussed, made sense of, and negotiated in their story lines with the researcher, of this study. More specifically, the third-order positioning might only occur while the

interaction between the teacher and the researcher, of this study. This will help the researcher understand participants' identity construction and negotiation through their positionings in interaction within their contexts.

Bamberg (1997) built on positioning theory by offering three levels that help in analyzing teachers' positionings: how characters are positioned in relation to one another within the story, how the narrators position themselves within the story, how the narrators position themselves in relation to the audience, dominant discourses, or master narratives. Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008) argued that narratives "are aspects of situated language use, employed by speakers/narrators to position a display of situated, contextualized identities" (p. 2). They defined narrators as the speakers who tell their stories and that characters indicate whoever engaged in the storytelling (e.g., self and others) in space and time. For example, when a teacher position him/herself as a parent characterizing themselves as caring teachers and may characterize others as strict teachers by giving narrative accounts of these characteristics.

It is evident that there is a link between identity and positioning theory in which positioning theory can be applied to research on LTI in which positioning theory (Davies and Harré, 1990) remines central to research on LTI and positioning. Through the analysis of how teachers position themselves or are positioned by others in their stories can help us to understand who language teachers are (Kayi-Aydar, 2019) as they "commit themselves practically, emotionally, and epistemically to identity-categories and discursive practices associated with them" (Deppermann, 2013, p. 4). That is to say, language teachers evolve over time in their knowledge, emotions, and practice by commitment to their job which can investigated in depth through their positionings in their narratives. Deppermann (2013) further elucidated that positioning helps capture the action-oriented, practice-based, and situated nature of identity construction. In analyzing identities, positioning theory revealed its usefulness "as the accumulations of certain positions over time ascribe certain identities to individuals, and therefore, there is a strong link between positioning and identity" (Kayi-Aydar, 2018, p. 119). Kayi-Aydar (2015) carried out a narrative inquiry study on how one teacher candidate (student) who majored in Spanish language negotiated her identity over time and space and how her identity negotiations interacted with her agency. An example of positioning in the study, "Her lack of participation in Spanish classes was therefore not related to her character or being shy but the way she was positioned by others" (p. 148) indicated the negotiation of her identity. An important finding, among others, related to the participant's imagined identities is the important role of language teachers play in contexts where teachers reflect on what type of teachers they hope or fear to become.

3.1.3.2 LTI and ELT

Language reserves a very important place in the field of ELT. Weedon (1987) maintains that "the common factor in the analysis of social organization, social meanings, power and individual consciousness is language" which 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" (p. 21). This indicate the significance of language in identity construction of individuals, especially English language teachers, as language is the link for communication between individuals.

Scholars have invested in research on identity and Second language acquisition for the past 30 years (e.g., Block, 2007; De Costa and Norton, 2016; Miller, 2014; Norton, 2013). In the field of identity and ELT, several scholars carried out research on LTI (e.g., Duff and Uchida, 1997; Barkhuizen, 2017; Cheung et al., 2015; Kayi-Aydar, 2019; Tsui, 2007; Varghese et al., 2005). Gaining momentum in this area of research as they have been attempting to understand language teacher identity construction in light of establishing and developing theoretical and methodological innovations (De Costa and Norton, 2017) in various contexts.

From the theoretical side, De Costa and Norton (2017) asserted that research development on LTI have included theoretical frameworks of “the ecological turn, teacher socialization and investment, and teacher affect” (p. 5). For example, Wenger’s (2000) theory of community of practice has been largely applied to research on over-time LTI construction (e.g. Kanno and Stuart, 2011) in which they used community of practice theory to understand how student teachers develop their experience in managing emerging obstacles while assisting their university teachers. Regarding the methodological innovation in research on LTI, researchers have mainly focused on narratives in teacher identity research (Barkhuizen, 2017) taking into account theoretical constructs such as positioning theory (Barkhuizen, 2010). In Barkhuizen’s (2010) study, self-positioning of an immigrant English language teacher was explored in the context of New Zealand.

A very recent study by Li (2020) investigated seven novice EFL teachers. It examined their identity construction in the context of Chinese secondary English language classes in China. The data reported in this study was derived from a large study on teacher learning. So, the data involved video recordings of teacher’s teaching in classrooms and follow-up interviews. Inspired by a perspective of interactional construction, conversation analysis was adopted to analyze the data. The study aimed to shed light on identity construction of novice language teachers in classroom practice by focusing on the multiple and fluid nature of identity. However, it did not take a narrative approach or ethnography into account like most of the research on professional identity

but aimed to make “a methodological breakthrough and advance the social and dialogic nature of teacher identity” which specifically examined “the moment-by- moment positioning of novice teachers in their classroom practice and seeks to illuminate how they use interactional resources and strategies to construct professional and social images” (p. 58).

The researcher discussed the data based on two prevailing themes: developing practical knowledge and constructing language-related identity. She posited that “how teachers position themselves influences the pedagogical decisions they make in teaching, as well as the degree of student participation and the learners’ positioning” (p. 70). It was highlighted that identity construction is not a matter of selecting appropriate social roles from a wide range of choices; rather, it is a process of building personal practical knowledge, utilizing linguistic resources and performing social roles. In addition, by discussing the multidimensional identity construction, it was noted that there was a close relationship between linguistic competence, teacher knowledge, and social roles and identity.

Considering the various research on LTI and ELT, positioning theory and LTI will be the main focus, in my research, in the field if English language learning and teaching in various contexts including study abroad contexts.

3.1.3.3 Positioning Theory and LTI

Within language teacher education, positioning theory may potentially be illuminating in the research on identities of language teachers (Kayi-Aydar, 2019). LTI has been researched by adopting and focusing on various theories. Tsui (2007) adopted Wenger’s community of practice to explore Chinese EFL teachers’ multiple identities in relation to their struggles and negotiation of meaning of their EFL learning within reference to the institutional construction and his personal reconstruction of identities. Menard-Warwick (2011) draw on the Bakhtinian framework (2000) in examining Chilean EFL teachers cultural identities impacted by their teaching approaches. Kayi-Aydar (2015b) adopted positioning theory in investigating how a bilingual teacher candidate negotiated her identity by creating racial categories and distancing herself from the non-white category. It was highlighted that her racial positioning contributed significantly to her identity construction.

In another recent study involving positioning theory, Kayi-Aydar (2018) adopted Bamberg’s three level of positioning analysis. She, in her study, focused on the life history stories of three pre-service Latina teachers in USA. The study aimed to explore how they positioned themselves as English language learners and Spanish language teachers in their oral narratives. It also aimed to investigate how their previous learning experience as minority learners formed their present

professional identity as language teachers. In light of Bamberg's analysis framework, it was indicated that they felt isolated throughout their education because of their ethnic identity and language background as well as their socioeconomic class. They negotiated memberships in different communities across settings in their lives. By understanding the struggles and conflicts they experienced, they tried to bring out strategies of how to overcome these struggles. Clearly, the use of Bamberg's analysis framework helped the researcher in understanding the negotiation and construction of language teachers' identities through narrative accounts where they encountered struggles and conflicts and their attempts to counter them.

Several other studies also used positioning theory involving language education contexts. For example, Trent (2012) investigated the self-positioning of native-speaking English language teachers as well as how other stakeholders positioned them as a dynamic process of identity creation in schools in Hong Kong. To explore how the instructors discursively positioned themselves within their schools and how they perceived others to place them, in-depth interviews were conducted with each participant. The results revealed that some local English language teachers and school administrators seemed to challenge the participants' self-positioning as professional language instructors by casting doubt on the relevance of their teaching experiences and methods in the context of English language classrooms in Hong Kong.

Soreide (2006) used positioning theory in her narrative study investigating how five Norwegian (female) elementary school teachers construct and negotiate several possible teacher identities through the use of narrative resources. She approached narrative positionings of teachers in two ways: negative positioning and positive positioning. Negative positioning involves "distancing, opposition and/or rejection of the available subject positions" while positive positioning denotes "identification with and recognition of the available subject positions" (p. 534). Based on positioning theory, she was able to identify multiple teacher identities such as "the care and kind teacher, the creative and innovative teacher, the professional teacher, and the typical teacher" (pp. 536-538). She proposed her positioning theory framework (negative and positive positioning) for future work in teacher education in order "to understand why teachers present themselves in certain ways, it is therefore necessary to understand how they construct their narratives and narrative identities" (p. 545).

3.1.3.4 LTI and Narrative Inquiry

Since the late 1960s, narratives have gained researchers' interests in multidisciplinary fields which over time "in what is now known as a narrative or discursive turn in the humanities and social sciences, narratives became both an object and, in the form of narrative inquiry, a legitimate means of research in history, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and education" (Pavlenko,

2007, p. 164). Pavlenko (2007) maintains that *narrative* is central in the process of narrating where individuals "give their lives meaning across time" (p. 164) and that "narratives are powerful devices to understand people's experiences, actions, knowledge, and ultimately, identity" (Leigh, 2019, p. 3). Therefore, recent research on LTI construction and negotiation has been focusing on narrative to understand teachers' identities. In narrative inquiry research, its main focus is to investigate individuals' values and meanings that are attached to their experiences by telling and sharing stories (Moen, 2006). In this sense, it goes "beyond the use of narrative as rhetorical structure, that is, simply telling stories, to an analytic examination of the underlying insights and assumptions that the story illustrates" (Bell, 2002, p. 208). Studying LTI by focusing on narratives, Clandinin et al. (2007) emphasized that narrative inquiry is seen as "the study of experience as story" (p. 22). In this sense, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) posited there are three dimensions central to the narrative inquiry process: temporality, sociality, and place, which are explored in a simultaneous way during the narrative process. Temporality is concerned with paying attention to the past, present, and future of individuals, places, events, and things under study. Sociality is related to social and personal conditions simultaneously. For place, it is referred to the place to where our experiences are linked and "where the inquiry and events take place" (Clandinin and Connelly, 2006, p. 480). Similarly, Barkhuizen (2016) using small story approach referred to these three dimensions as: *who*, *where*, and *when*. By *who*, he relates it to "the characters in the story, their relationships and their positions vis-a-vis each other" while *where* means "the places and sequences of places in which the story action takes place" and *when* is referred to "the time in which the action unfolds, past, present, and future" (p. 661). Therefore, in narrative inquiry research on identity, these dimensions are central in analyzing the data obtained. Bell (2002, p. 209) gives us an understanding of using narrative in research, such as ELT:

- "Narrative allows researchers to understand experience.
- Narrative lets researchers get at information that people do not consciously know themselves.
- Narrative illuminates the temporal notion of experience, recognizing that one's understanding of people and events changes".

Several studies have explored LTI construction and negotiation by focusing on their participants' narrative accounts related to their lived experiences. For example, in her qualitative study, Ruohotie-Lyhty (2013) explored the professional identity consdtuction of two foreign language teachers during the induction period of their teaching experience from a narrative perspective. She sees narrative identity as "in the form of stories is continually undergoing change in the processes of social interaction in which individuals make sense of themselves through narratives (Heikkinen, 2002)" (p. 122). The study highlighted that the participants' initial identities affected

how they experienced the induction. The storytelling processes also affected how the induction was experienced; for example, the storytelling process that one of the two participants adopted resulted in the formation of two distinct identities instead of the rebuilding of a positive teacher identity: an ideal and coerced identity that are always at odds with one another.

Another study, among several studies that explored LTI construction and negotiation through narratives, was conducted by Tsui (2007). She investigated an EFL teacher's, from China, professional identity formation through narrative inquiry over a period of 6 months, using interviews and reflective diaries, which reflected the teaching experience of 6 years. In a nutshell, "Through storytelling, teachers engage in narrative 'theorizing' and based on that, teachers may further discover and shape their professional identity resulting in new or different stories" (Beijaard et al., 2004, p. 121). The use of narrative approaches in exploring LTI serves its purpose to be an effective way in understanding teachers' identity construction and negotiation.

A very recent study carried out by Barkhuizen and Mandieta (2020) examined the experience of an English language teacher, a leader of a blended learning innovation carried out with a group of English language teachers in a Colombian university, in order to identify how the various facets, work together in his life to dynamically and continuously construct his multiple identities. The researchers viewed language teacher identity as cognitive and social. The data was collected over one semester using interviews, classroom observations, and official documents analysis.

They adopted narrative thematic analysis in order to "uncover the participants' personal and professional stories of managing the change to blended learning" by looking for "themes concerning accomplishment, conflict, or tension; the emotions that their work evoked; and the decisions and attitudes that teachers adopted as a result" (p. 8). The researcher maintains that "there are aspects of being a teacher that contribute more obviously to the construction of their teacher identity" (p. 6) including the variety of roles and associated functions, moral stance, emotion, experience and history, practice, and materiality. The findings of the study showed that the teacher's stories exposed multiple identity dilemmas. In addition, tensions were negotiated between work and guidance to other teachers.

3.1.3.5 Agency

Agency has been debated widely in the literature (Ahearn, 2001) such as Giddens' (1979) structures and agency and Biesta et al.'s (2015) ecologiocal agency. Agency is significant to the field of identity construction and teacher professional development (Biesta et al., 2015). Therefore, it is important to understand agency as it is a considerable concept in various studies

such as educational reform (Bergh and Wahlstrom, 2018) and language teacher identity (Kayi Aydar, 2015).

Agency is a complex concept to be defined. Ahearn (2001) refers agency “to the socioculturally mediated capacity to act” (p. 112). However, it is viewed as "a temporal embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past ... oriented toward the past ... toward the future" (Emirbayer and Bische, 1998, p. 963) as teachers “make choices and take responsibility for their decisions and actions (Richards and Schmidt, 2013, p. 18). Aligning with this previous view, Poveda (2004) also emphasized that the narrative construction is one of the ways that individuals use to show their agency in which their narratives a significant role in "the elaboration of possible future courses of action" (p. 417). Therefore, understanding of identity construction allow language teacher to investigate their capacity to change by either resist or comply such positionings (Trent, 2017). For example, in the case of the BLCSI program in this study, English language teachers construct their language teacher identity by developing a new sense of agency as change teachers within their abroad and local contexts considering the possibility of resisting or complying with becoming a change agent and may find other realistic choices to resist such positioning.

Kayi-Aydar (2015) postulated that agency is linked to positioning in which the act of positioning is intertwined with agency, so they mutually influence one another from moment to moment in recursive and complex ways. Yazan (2019) is also in line with Kayi-Aydar's perspective in regard to that the process of refusing or taking subject positions in storylines which shows being capable to enact agency informs the construction of identities. Beijaard et al. (2004) emphasized that agency involves sense-making of selves in relation to professional development. For example, policies in language teacher education, for example the BLCSI program policy, require language teachers to enact their agency and negotiate their positions (Biesta and Tedder, 2006) which result in identity construction. Enactment of their agency occurs by combining their intentions for change with the capacity to act within their context in response to those policies (Yazan, 2019) even though policies cannot be determined what possible actions are taken in response (Ball, 2006). Thus, the capacity to exercise agency is crucial to teacher identity because, Danielewicz (2001) points out, teachers “need to feel capable of action” (p. 163).

To understand agency, understanding who the teachers are and what surrounds them is needed. Kayi-Aydar (2019) highlights that "understanding language teacher agency begins with understanding who teachers are and what their sociocultural, language, and educational contexts look like" (p. 4). Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate (2016) viewed agency in two different types: “The first form of agency is with respect to participation in the work community, the second form of agency

is the capacity to use experiences and participation in the development of professional identity" (p. 319). They defined the second form of agency as identity-agency, arguing that teachers' professional identity may not be developed without the possibility for agentic action. Lai et al. (2016) emphasized on the importance of understanding the nature of teacher agency because the agency is needed not only in constructing and reconstructing teachers' professional identities, but also in influencing and transforming their professional practices. Therefore, understanding agency may require "an understanding of the ecological conditions under and through which agency is achieved" (Biesta and Tedder, 2007, p. 146) by recursively analyzing and reflecting on past experiences and future trajectories (Robinson, 2012).

Tao and Gao (2021), in their recent book publication, presented a variety of conditions where the enactment of agency matters. Among those condition, at the chronological level, is teacher agency in ongoing professional development. They gave an example of how Qian, a case teacher in a previous study (Tao, 2017), exercised his agency during his ongoing professional development in writing textbooks and exploring innovative pedagogies by doing course projects. Tao and Gao emphasized that "language teachers need to exercise agency continuously in addressing challenges at different points intime to sustain their professional development (Tao and Gao, 2021, p. 19).

Several empirical studies have investigated agency, identity, and positioning. Trent (2017), for example, investigated stories to leave by amongst former early career English language teachers in relation to discourse, agency, and teacher attrition. He found teachers had limited agency made available to them in their discourse as they shared experienced frustrations and disappointment as they were denied such opportunities to construct new preferred teacher identities. He emphasized on the need in establishing new spaces for teachers to exercise their agency so they can construct new preferred identities. Sanczyk (2020) also conducted a study on adult English language learning involving English language identity and agency. Its findings illustrated that participants exhibited a strong sense of agency in supporting their culturally and linguistically diverse students, and their identity as explorers contributed to their strong sense of agency. It also highlighted the importance of exposing teacher to diverse experiences and well as the significance of exploring such factors that influence their identity and nurture their sense of agency.

Another recent narrative case study conducted by Kayi-Aydar (2019) to explore a English language teacher's agency in the development of her professional identities. The findings of this study showed that there is a complex connection among her background race and ethnicity, power differentials, and past experiences in constructing a dynamic identity and agency. Robinson (2012)

also carried out a study in relation to constructing teacher agency in response to the constraints of education policies. She explored how teachers' professional agency emerged when such conflicting strategies were imposed on them by education policies reform. Her study found that strong collegial relationship and collaboration promoted the construction of their professional agency by being adapted to such strategies required by the new reform. She highlighted that professional agency is constructed through the collective actions of the teachers as it "seems to emerge through processes such as compliance, resistance and negotiation to adapt and adopt policy reforms" (p. 244).

The aforementioned discussion of agency informs the narrative analysis of the participants of my study. The three cases of my study experienced two different spaces, local and abroad. They engaged in the abroad experience as they were expected to enact their agency as agents for change in addition to the imposed neoliberal persona. Having limited agency imposed by the BLCSI program policies, they acted agentively as they were in a different abroad context from their local context. For example, practicing teaching abroad was agentively enacted which was not imposed by the policy documents of the program. Therefore, such discussions of agency from the literature inform how the three cases of my study resist or comply by the imposed policy of the program in which a sense of agency was made available to them within the abroad context. Therefore, sharing their stories by reflecting on how they made such decisions and took some agentic actions towards to achieving professional development goals and constructing their imagined identities gave them the possibility of making sense of such valuable experiences to them. Hence, making sense of how they construct their identities over time and space was possible through sharing their experiences.

3.1.3.6 LTI and Study abroad

Throughout recent decades, the attention paid to the idea of exchange programs has surprisingly increased, especially for students, and the number participating in such programs has been a corresponding rise (Leutwyler & Meierhans, 2016). Similarly, in teacher education programs, there has been an increase in the amount of attention paid to exchange programs (Mahon, 2010). Therefore, exchange programs can involve both students and involve teachers. One of several programs underpinning exchange programs in the form of mobility programs is ERASMUS (European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) (Doyle et al, 2010; Juvan & Lesjak, 2011). It appears to be the most popular one among other exchange programs that has learning as its main purpose. Several studies have been carried out regarding the ERASMUS exchange program in terms of students' learning (Doyle et al, 2010; Ozdemir, 2013; Endes, 2015; Dolga et al, 2015; Holmes et al., 2016) and student teachers' training and learning (Ersoy & Gunel,

2011; Aydin, 2012). The same goes for other funded exchange programs similar to ERASMUS where students and student teachers are sent to other universities in other countries with the objective of enhancing their learning and training. In fact, studies on exchange programs such as Wernicke (2010) are also linked to the development and learning of experienced teachers.

The focus of investigations on study abroad programs involving in-service teachers has been widely common through American exchange programs. Therefore, a large number of studies have been conducted considering the results of study abroad programs involving American teachers as participants (Thompson, 2002; Choe, 2012; Allen, 2010). In different contexts, few studies have been carried out involving Asian teachers participating in study abroad programs for training purposes (Kurihara & Samimy, 2007; Cook, 2010). Few other studies have also considered language teachers in the context of professional learning (Gleeson & Tait, 2012; Allen, 2013; East, 2013). The aforementioned studies and a few others have investigated the effectiveness of study abroad programs with regard to various aspects of learning and training such as intercultural competence, language development, the development of professional learning and teaching practices development, and changes in beliefs. Even though there are a few studies conducted on teachers and language teachers involved in teaching and training abroad programs, few studies have been conducted on exploring in-service language teachers' identities on study abroad.

Teacher development or teacher learning (Kiely and Davis, 2010) is an essential area of ELT which includes study abroad programs. Research on teacher development in ELT has involved preservice, novice, and in-service teachers in relation to understanding their identities construction. Involving school immersion during study abroad programs, Trent (2011, similarly a chapter in Trent et al., 2014) investigated teacher identity construction by considering the experiences of eight preservice English language teachers teaching English language as a second language from Hong Kong as they undertook a short-term international experience program (which was a 6-week period school immersion as part of a one-year long full time Postgraduate Diploma of Education, in Australia. It explored the discursive positioning of those teachers and their positioning by stakeholders, as part of a dynamic process of identity formation, in schools in Hong Kong. The data, in this exploratory qualitative study, was conducted through three rounds of semi-structured interviews over the one year abroad course and analyzed by using discourse analysis, in a recursive manner. Some themes were reported in this study such as "immersion as boundary encounters," "autonomous vs mechanical teachers," "confident vs threatened teachers," "relaxed vs formal teachers," "trajectories of identity development" (p. 185). The themes discussed in the study were based on Fairclough's (2003) model of identity formation were engagement, imagination, and alignment in an international experience program, and identity conflicts.

The results of the study emphasized the "value of problematizing participants' experiences of study abroad programs" (p. 193). The results showed that the instructors repositioned themselves in a range of alternative topic roles because they believed that certain local English language teachers did not accept their self-positioning as professional teachers. It also suggested that due to their difficulties balancing their past, present, and future teacher identity trajectories, identity conflicts had an influence on how the student teachers perceived the program. However, the student teachers created strict distinctions between the various professors and forms of instruction they encountered both at home and abroad.

Benson et al. (2012) also explored second language identity construction of EFL student teachers from Hong Kong during a study abroad period. The researchers focused on in-depth narrative accounts of the participants experiences during their study abroad in order to understand their second language identity construction. Benson and his colleagues emphasized the appropriateness of narrative approach to analyze the data. That is because "self-narratives play an important role in the construction of identity" and that narrative is "well-suited to the description of the development and change in individuals" (p. 181). The researchers discussed five facets of identity based on the discussed literature on study abroad. The facets of identity discussed include: "(1) people's inner sense of who they are, (2) the identities they project to others, (3) the identities that are recognized or ascribed to them by others, (4) imagined identities, and (5) socially-validated identity categories" (p. 176). Benson and his colleagues concluded that "a focus on second language identities opens new avenues for study abroad research. The durability of second language identity-related developments in study abroad is a matter that deserves further research" (p. 190). On a different venue in research on study abroad, Chan (2017) investigated language learning and identities of Hong Kong preservice EFL teachers prior to participating in an eight-week study abroad program in the UK. The study showed that as participants shared their comments, expectations, and concerns about the study abroad context, instructors equipped them with skills and strategies and raised their awareness of what lied ahead. Participants also learned from previous participants' stories who returned from abroad and finished the program.

3.1.3.7 Empirical work

The growing interest on second language teacher identity has been evident in the literature (Pavlenko, 2003; Block, 2005; Bucholtz and Hall, 2005; Norton, 2013; Barkhuizen, 2016). Li (2020) maintains that research on teacher identity "lies in three critical aspects: student learning, teacher development, and pedagogy" (p. 59). How teachers position themselves to their students may affect their learning outcomes (e.g., Mercer, 2016). Classroom practice and its impact on second

language teaching is related teacher identity construction (e.g., Duff and Uchida, 1997). There has also been more research on the complex relationship between teacher learning and teacher identity construction (e.g., Tsui, 2007). In Barkhuizen's (2016) longitudinal study on imagined identities over time, it was evident how Sela (the participant) has revised her imagined identity and reflected on her lived identity experiences as a teacher over a period of time "because of further professional development, the circumstances in her personal life, and actually beginning to teach" (p. 659). These aspects may serve as lenses for my study on empirical research on LTI. Along with other aspects might be reorganized as learning to teach, actually beginning to teach, circumstances in teachers' personal and professional lives, and further professional development.

Some research has looked at understanding the complex relationship between teachers' identity negotiation and teaching practices. For example, in their ethnographic study, Duff and Uchida (1997) showed the contradictions, complexities, and tensions faced and experienced by the four teachers as they negotiated their sociocultural identity. Flores and Day (2006) have looked at the experiences and contexts related to teachers' teaching and practices as influences on shaping and reshaping teachers' identities. Emotions and socialization were apparent in their study. An example of the influence of context in their study, participants "emphasized that the less positive experience of their first year of teaching (and of their teaching practice) led them to feelings of disenchantment and disappointment" (p. 229).

Farrell (2011) explored the professional role identity of novice ESL teachers through reflective practice. He emphasized on Burns and Richards's (2009) view of identity as it "reflects how individuals see themselves and how they enact their roles within different setting" (p. 4). He defines role identities in accordance with Cohen's (2008) definition that they are "powerful organizing structures because people get recognition, positive reinforcement from others, and other rewards when they accomplish roles successfully" (p. 82). These role identities included beliefs, values, and emotions related of teaching and being a teacher. Farrell indicated that emerging role identities subjectively conceptualized from the group discussions and that role identities can only be considered as "provisional rather than definitive representations because more in-depth case studies may be necessary to move beyond these descriptions to see if they hold across different contexts" (p. 14).

Some other research on teacher identity, focusing on TESOL domain, such as (Morgan and Clarcke, 2011; Martel, 2018; Trent, 2014; Olsen, 2008) investigated how teachers' and teacher educators' practices and continuing learning were informed by their identities. It was noted that their practices and learning involved enactment, negotiation, and transformation and formation of identities in addition to their professional identities. These were intersected and intertwined

with other social identities in a complex way. In their contributing studies, they focused on what ways TESOL teachers responded to dominant global and local contexts and congruent ideologies socioculturally, sociopolitcally, and sociohistorically in which their practices, learning, and identities were situated, more specifically how non-native English language speaking teachers constructed their identities in relation to ideologies such as race and nationality.

Tsui (2007) in her seminal work in the field of TESOL, investigated the lived experiences of an EFL teacher involving his struggles with multiple identities. In addition, the interactive relationship between reification and negotiation of meanings as well as the institutional construction and his personal reconstruction of identities were examined. Drawing on Wenger's (1998) theory of identity formation as it is identified as a dual process of identification (models of belonging: engagement, imagination, and alignment) and negotiation of meanings, Tsui addressed related themes that influence identity formation such as membership, competence, legitimacy of access to practice, appropriating and reclaiming ownership of meanings of EFL learning, and power and economies of meaning. Tsui maintains that "membership is inseparable from competence" (p.674) in which the acquiring of competence can be through "engaging in the social discourse and activities, and aligning [ones'] self with the norms and expectations of [a community's] members" (changes added, pp. 674-675). As discussed in her study that the recognition of the participant's competence being a member of the learner community, after two years of marginality which indicates being not recognized as a member in their community, was an essential source of identity formation. Marginality of membership, as Tusi indicated, was the result of "an equal power relationship" (p. 674). Wenger (1998) maintained that marginality and peripherality are different in relation to participation in which the former does not lead to full participation while the latter does. The trajectory of the participant' learning English language was painful, being seen as a "country bumpkin," which affected his lived experiences as an English language teacher.

Some other research focused on identity and investment (e.g., Pavlenko, 2003; Norton and Early, 2011; Kayi-Aydar, 2015; Barkhuizen, 2016). The notion of investment was introduced by Norton (1995) which "represents the historically and socially constructed commitment of learners to language learning" (Darvin and Norton, 2016, p. 1). Research on investment and identity has spread across contexts. For example, Reeves (2009) focused on investments and imagined identities of language teachers in the South American context. Later in 2015, Darvin and Norton developed the investment model, which is built on the notions of identity, capital, and ideology, and has contributed to the research on identity. Darvin (2015) and Barkhuizen (2016) among other researchers have explored identity of language teachers using the model of investment. It was argued by Darvin and Norton (2016) that "investment recognizes that the conditions of

power in different learning contexts can position the learner in multiple and often unequal ways, leading to varying learning outcomes" (p. 3). Kramsch (2013) has emphasized the significance of Norton's construct of investment in research on identity, human agency, and capital in language learning contexts. Research on identity also involved intersectionality of different social categories such as race, ethnicity, gender, and class (e.g., Block and Corona, 2014). Norton and De Costa emphasized that the research on students' identities "must be examined with respect of other categories such as class, gender, and religion" arguing for the importance of focusing on intersectionality as "social categories are often overlapping and interdependent" (p. 94). On online and offline contexts regarding social categories of age, gender, and ethnicity, Christiansen (2015) studied how Mexicans negotiated and constructed their identities through social media.

Some studies (e.g., Shahri, 2018; Wolff & De Costa, 2017) explicitly examined links between emotion and identity. Emotions is a major aspect in teacher identity construction (Zempylas, 2003) as identities of teachers, in research on the field of education, are mostly constructed in and through their emotional experience (Zempylas, 2005). It was defined by Hochschild (1983) that emotion "is from feelings that we learn the self-relevance of what we see, remember, or imagine" (p. 196). Zembylas (2003) reworded, in support of, Hochschild's argument that "emotions are the beacons of our true selves" for the reason that "they provide us with an inner perspective for interpreting and responding to experience" (p. 215). In this regard, Zembylas asserted that:

> "educational researchers can study teacher identity in classroom and school setting where teachers are emotionally engaged in forming their identities; explore the personal, social, and cultural/historical aspects for teacher identity formation; and examine the role of power relations and teachers' agency for teacher identity formation" (p. 215).

As teaching and emotions are interrelated, teaching is defined as "away of being and feeling, historically, in relation to others" (Zempylas, 2005, p. 469). Findings of research on emotions and identity have showed emotions have the power of influence on language teacher identity construction. It was reported that participants had feelings of frustration and shame towards language proficiency (Cho, 2013). Pavlenko (2003) highlighted the participants' expressions of feeling embarrassed, incompetent, invisible, and failing regarding their language use and teaching abilities. In academic contexts related to identities and experiences, Wolff and De Costa (2017) analyzed the narrative experience of a Bangladeshi teacher candidate of English language uncovering complexities in her emotions and identity due to contextual constraints.

On an oversea context, some research have looked at problems and constraints arise for teachers culturally and linguistically (e.g. Block, 2001; Jones, 2000). Their findings highlighted the participants' acceptance of the status quo in the oversea contexts more specifically the processes of teaching training included in these contexts. A recent work, for example, by Block (2015) investigated language teachers' identities during study abroad period. In relation to arising problems and conflicts, he discovered that the participants were in conflict because their current experiences as teachers in the UK were out of sync with their prior experiences as students in Spain as "they acted as agents constrained by structures in the form of practices constituting British educational culture, while subtly and gradually altering those structures through their activity" (p. 22). Therefore, research on LTI on study abroad contexts have mostly focused on preservice teachers.

Some research on identity looked at reflexivity. Riessman, in her seminal work on reflexivity and narrative, understands reflexivity as defined by Myerhoff and Ruby (1982) as "the capacity of any system of signification to turn back upon itself, to make itself its own object by referring to itself: subject and object fuse" (p. 2). Patino-Santos (2019) puts it in a simple way as reflexivity "implies giving a systematic account of the kind of questions we ask and the approaches to collecting the data, the analysis of which will allow us to answer our initial questions, questions that might be modified by the contingencies of the fieldwork and analytical process (p. 214).

Morgan (2004) explored the construct of teacher identity as a form of pedagogy by self-reflection and dependence on participants observation notes. Through reflexivity, Morgan showed that identity is relational in character. In addition, the study also addressed the substantive issue of learner-teacher relationship and revealed how the transformative power of identity influenced the researcher and participants. Norton and Early's (2011) study of LTI underlined the necessity for researchers to explore their own identities related to their research site and participants. De Costa (2015) pointed out how his engagement with the collaborating teacher in reflexivity acts has shown some subsequent influence on their pedagogy. De Costa and Norton (2017) concluded that "enacting researcher reflexivity is essential when working with a vulnerable population such as teachers" (p. 6).

For more details on Norton and Early's (2011) study, it was conducted a narrative inquiry research on 2 researchers (and teachers and students) in order to understand how narrative inquiry can illuminate the ways in which researcher identity is negotiated in language teaching research. Norton and Early draw on a digital literacy study in multilingual Ugandan classrooms to narrate how they used their personal narrative and the procedure through which they asked teachers to share their experiences of instructing in an under-resourced rural school while using English as a

second language. Based on small stories, they collected data using interviews, reflections, discussions, and presentations. The data collected was analyzed using narrative thematic analysis. Through small stories, the researchers enacted their identities by positioning themselves to the participants as “international guests” in the beginning, and then as “collaborative team members,” after that as “teachers” and lastly as “teacher educators” (pp. 424-430).

The researchers discussed the data in respect to the five principles offered by Hawkins and Norton (2009) with reference to a wide range of research on language teacher education and social change. These principles are reflectivity, dialogic engagement, situated nature of programs and practices, responsiveness to learners, and praxis. Drawing on the perspectives of small stories established by Connelly and Clandinin (1990), as well as Bamberg (2004) and Georgakopoulou (2006), it was found that the researchers’ identities were constantly negotiated and changed and that diverse narrative structures were frequently used in order to make more equitable the power relationships between researchers and teachers.

In other strands of reflexivity, what Barkhuizen (2011) calls as *narrative knowledging*. He defines it as “the meaning making, learning, or knowledge construction that takes place during the narrative research activities of (co) constructing narratives, analyzing narratives, reporting the findings, and reading/ watching/listening to research reports” (p. 395). Barkhuizen (2016) used narrative knowledging (short story analysis) in investigating an immigrant preservice (and in-service later in this longitudinal study) English language teacher’s imagined identities. As narrative knowledging involve the participant in creating the story, it “included telling about, reflecting on, and making sense of her teacher education and teaching experiences in the process of constructing short stories during our interviews” (p. 660). This longitudinal study, including narrative knolweding, revealed the participant’s identities construction over time and space. At the end, Barkhuizen believed that narrative knowledging generated a good understanding of the participant’s imagined identities.

For research on identity, positioning, and reflexivity, only few empirical studies investigated these constructs. For example, Patino-Santos (2017), in her longitudinal ethnographic study, explored the forms of reflexivity that emerge in the conversational narratives of Latin American teenage schoolgirls coproduced during sociolinguistic interviews, in a multicultural school in the center of Madrid. The study highlighted the participants have developed some skills in the service industry such as management. The approach of reflexivity also allowed her to observe how reflexivity is “situated” and “reflexive operations” are “shaped by the contextual complexities in which these narratives and acts of reflection are produced” and “identities performed by the social actors are constructed, negotiated and associated with the contingencies of the narrated

situations, and the communicative situation in which they occur" (p. 110). We can gain from this study the call for research involving identity, reflexivity, and positioning on in-service LTI construction, specially who engaged in study abroad experience like the case in my study.

3.1.4 Contribution of my study

From the aforementioned empirical research carried out concerning identities of language teachers, and learners, it can be noted that their focus has been related to the use of different terms in how to examine teacher identity. For example, teacher identity *construction* (Barkhuizen and Mandieta, 2020; Li, 2020; Block, 2015; Trent, 2011), teacher identity *shaping* (Kanno and Stuart, 2011), *shaping and reshaping* of teaching identity (Flores and Day, 2006), *negotiation* of teacher identity (Barkhuizen, 2016) and of researcher identity (Norton and Early, 2011), complex relationship between sociocultural identity and teaching practice (Duff and Uchida, 1997), teacher identity *formation* (Tsui, 2007; Varghese, 2000), identity *transformation* (Morgan, 2004; Kaiy-Aydar, 2015), and teacher identity *development* (Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013). Therefore, these terms are used in my research interchangeably conveying the same meaning of identity construction.

The length of these studies varies between one semester to several years (ethnographic, longitudinal, exploratory, case studies). In other words, some studies were conducted on different occasions over one year (e.g., Block, 2015) ethnographically over a 6-month period (e.g. Duff and Uchida, 1997) longitudinal over several years (e.g. Barkhuizen, 2016) or case studies for one semester (e.g. Barkhuizen and Mandieta, 2020). In a study which the data is collected the data over a 6-month period; however, it covers 6 years of teacher development (Tsui, 2007). Varghese (2000), for example, conducted an ethnographic study over a two 6-period: the first period was related to teachers and instructors in a teacher development series and the second period targeted teachers in their classrooms.

These studies investigated all types of teachers, preservice, novice, and/or in-service teachers. Several studies involved preservice language teachers teaching languages other than English (e.g. Block, 2015) in the sense of teaching it as a foreign language. Hence, it serves the same purpose of language teacher identity. Another longitudinal study (Flores and Day, 2006) involved 14 novice teachers teaching subjects other than English language looking at how teachers' identity shaped and reshaped over their first two years of teaching. Although most of these studies examined teacher identity construction, the participants targeted were mostly preservice or novice teachers. Little research involved in-service (experienced) English language teachers (Duff and Uchida, 1997; Tsui, 2007; Barkhuizen and Mandieta, 2020) and preservice and in-service teachers

(Varghese, 2000). Therefore, to the best of my knowledge, little research has investigated in-service (experienced) English language teachers who undertook study abroad programs.

It is worth mentioning the prevalent nature of narrative inquiry across most of these studies, where interviews have been the most usable method for data collection, besides some other methods. For the analysis of data, thematic analysis (e.g., Duff and Uchida, 1997; Block, 2015; kanno and Stuart, 2011), narrative thematic analysis (e.g., Tsui, 2007, Norton and Early, 2011; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013; Kayi-Aydar, 2015; Barkhuizen and Mandieta, 2020), discursive positioning analysis (e.g. Pavlenko, 2003), short story analysis (e.g. Barkhuizen, 2016), and other different analysis such as conversation and discourse analysis. Different perspectives, however, were adopted in these studies involving sociocultural theory, cognitive and social theories, grounded theory, discursive positioning theory, interaction conversation, and community of practice theory.

There have been some limitations and recommendations noted in these studies which can be viewed as suggestions for future research. For example, is the study of Ruohotie-Lyhty (2013), it was stated that the former school experiences different university experiences, or different school cultures were not explored. Kayi-Aydar (2015) also asserted that “Studies on teacher identity so far have either focused on the past or future. However, past, present, and future identities are tightly connected and there seems to be little recognition of the rich and complicated nature of the interplay among them” (p. 156). In terms of investigating how English language teachers learn to teach and how this learning-in-practice experiences shape their identities as teachers, Kanno and Stuart (2011) called for research that include “a deeper understanding of L2 teacher identity development as a core constituent of the knowledge base of L2 teacher education” (p. 237). Pavleno (2003) called for future research to investigate “the long-term impact of new discourses, new identity options, and new imagined communities on social and discursive realities in and outside of language classrooms” (p. 266). In supporting this argument by involving abroad experiences to the investigation of language teacher identity, Trent (2011) emphasized the need for “more longitudinal research that investigates the impact of an overseas sojourn on teacher identity construction over an extended time period, in particular as sojourners take up full time teaching positions in schools within their home countries” (p. 193).

Taking into account of these suggestions for future research, to the best of my knowledge, this research fill the gap in which English language identity construction is investigated in the sense that teachers’ lived experiences in the past, present, and future are explored. In addition, teachers are engaged in an abroad teacher development program, so they are exposed to different contexts of English language learning and teaching. Concerning the research on language teacher construction, little research has explored teachers’ positionings within these

circumstances. Block (2010) argued that “identity construction is seen as the negotiating of subject positions at the crossroads of the past, present and future” (pp. 337-338). Duff and Uchida (1997) also confirm “the importance of investigating EFL teachers’ self- image, beliefs about teaching EFL and culture, and role identities in teaching” (p. 477).

For my study that involve English language teachers’ learning and teaching, Barkhuizen and Mandieta (2020) argued that “language teachers’ histories include their experiences of learning and using the target language. Probably less attention has been paid to this aspect of the developing LTIs, but it is a significant contributing facet (Benson, 2017)” (p. 7). This supports my stance as my study involves study abroad contexts of learning, teaching, and professional development. My research aligns with Tsui’s (2007) argument that “relatively little attention, however, has been given to understanding the processes of identity formation, the interplay between these processes and the identities constituted as teachers position themselves” (p. 658) including the neoliberal subjectivities of the BLCSI program design (Codo and Patino-Santos, 2018). Li (2020) also asserted that “the complexity of teacher identity needs to be considered and studied in a social activity in their professional context, particularly from a discursive perspective which makes teachers’ identity visible” (p. 71). Therefore, the contribution of my study is to extend this focus on identity to the investigation of language teacher identity construction by considering in-service EFL teachers' lived experiences from Saudi Arabia before, during, and after undertaking a one-year study abroad (teacher development) program and their positionings in various contexts.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The previous three chapters presented an introduction into my topic concerning how experienced in-service English language teachers of Saudi background construct their language teacher identity over time and space including a one-year abroad experience. Little research has been found in the literature involving experienced in-service English language teachers who engaged in a one-year study abroad experience where their lived experiences are investigated through the lens of positioning theory considering their learning and teaching experiences before, during, and after the study abroad program. Further discussions are presented from the literature. Empirical studies are also explored.

This chapter involves how my research study is designed and what methodology is adopted. It falls within qualitative research as a narrative inquiry study. The following sections present theoretical, procedural, and ethical considerations. They involve my research aim and questions. In addition to the adoption of narrative inquiry as an approach in this study is discussed thoroughly. This is followed by presenting how the setting of this study involving how data was collected through tools such as interviews and documents. In addition, a description of the type of date collection analysis is discussed in detail. Lastly, ethical considerations such as issues of trustworthiness and my role as researcher are presented.

4.2 Narrative inquiry

This study adopts narrative inquiry approach and is located within social constructionism paradigm. Narrative inquiry offers researchers various ways of understanding phenomena. Narrative inquiry falls within an interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivist research seek to understand interpretations and explanations regarding phenomena (Cohen, 2007) which overlap very well with narrative inquiry. The researcher, in this paradigm, is considered to be part of the phenomena as the interpretations and outcomes of the study will be interpreted based on the researcher's understanding of the phenomena with certain degree of subjectivity (Merriam, 2009). That is to say, for example, that the researcher background may influence the overall interpretation of the phenomena as the researcher and the participants might have mutual experiences personally, culturally, and historically. Therefore, it can be said that most of qualitative studies including this study are conducted based on interpretivist paradigm (Merriam, 2009).

Chapter 4

Narrative inquiry, within qualitative research, is defined by Clandinin (2013) as "an approach to the study of human lives conceived as a way of honoring lived experience as a source of important knowledge and understanding" (p. 17). It involves "the social construction of reality, where the focus is on the interpretation and negotiation of the meaning of the social world" (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 52). Social constructionism helps us understand how participants socially construct their realities in teaching contexts and how they subjectively make sense of their meanings in accordance with their professional interactions (Patton, 2014). Even though participants may have some similarities like teaching the same subject (English language) in public schools and participating in the abroad programs, they might experience and construct their realities in a different way (Harré & Van Langenhove, 1999). Meanings of reality, in this sense, are "negotiated socially and historically through individuals' interaction with others and the historical and cultural norms within space that operate in individuals' lives" (Creswell, 2018, p. 99).

One of the ways to study individuals' experience can be through the study of narratives (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Riessman, 2008). Early and Norton (2013) elucidated how identity negotiation is illuminated by narrative inquiry in the sense that narrative accounts are co-constructed and formed in historical, cultural, and social contexts. Many scholars have effectively used narrative inquiry in their research such as Bell (2002), Johnson and Golombek (2002), Barkhuizen (2008, 2010, 2011, 2016, 2021), Pavlenko (2002, 2007), and Norton and Early (2011).

In narrative research, it is agreed that personal narratives may be lacking in terms of the faculaity and transparency of what happened in individuals' lives (Riessman, 2008; Pavlenko, 2007). Narrative may not be realistic descriptions of individuals' events and actions even though they have the tendency in believing what they actually do. However, the interpretations of narrative accounts may offer rich meanings and in-depth data. Riessman (2008) asserted that there are different interpreters and actors involved in narrative research: the narrator who is telling stories, the influence of the listener during the narrator's performance, the interpreter who conducts the text, and the reader who gives final accounts of interpretations of the text if needed. Therefore, the interpretive meanings provided indicate the importance of narratives in social research as they provide productive and interesting materials. More specifically, they are beneficial to research studies that look for representations which are socially constructed that mediate individuals' lives.

My study is described as a narrative inquiry study as it utilizes teachers' narratives of their (before, during, and after) study abroad experiences as data (Benson et al., 2013) in relation to temporality, sociality, and place. Moen (2006) maintained that narrative inquiry's main focus is investigating individuals' values and meanings that are attached to their experiences by telling

and sharing stories. it can be emphasized that narrative inquiry is seen as “the study of experience as story” (Clandinin et al., 2007, p. 22). Barkhuizen (2016) elucidated the importance of undertaking research in which practices are reconstructed. He added that “experiences become narratives when we tell them to an audience and narratives become part of narrative inquiry when they are examined for research purposes” (p. 28). Ochs and Capps (2001) maintained that narratives are told with others. Barkhuizen (2011) emphasizes that “these narratives are typically conversations or unstructured life history interviews” (p. 398). Freeman (2006) also elucidated that a narrative involves “a significant measure of reflection on either an event or an experience, a significant portion of a life, or the whole of it” (p. 131). Studies (e.g., Hayes, 1010; Simon-Maeda, 2004) showed that narratives can be co-constructed with participants to facilitate their understanding of identity construction. Thus, for researchers, narrative approach allows them to understand participants’ experiences (Bell, 2002).

I adopted a narrative inquiry in this research as a way of making sense of fully comprehending the experiences of this study participants as narrative inquiry would provide me with an in-depth picture of the participants’ lived experiences and how they make sense of them (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). It helps explore the participants’ held insights and unconscious assumptions about their lived experiences (Bell, 2002). In other words, narrating is a way by which individuals’ “experience is made meaningful” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 1) as they discursively present their experiences which helps the researcher to understand how they constructed and negotiated their identities. That is because without experiences of learning and teaching and interactions with others within various contexts, the construction and negotiation of identities are not possible. Narrative inquiry helps researchers in studying “experience understood narratively” and shaping “new theoretical understandings of people’s experiences” (Clandinin and Huber, 2010, p. 436). Therefore, narratives about experiences may inform us of identity construction and negotiation and contribute to our understanding of the phenomena.

4.3 Research aims and Questions

The main aim of this research is to investigate LTI construction through understanding how Saudi ELT teachers engaged in the BLCSI study abroad program construct their identity over time through positioning over time. It also aims to understand how they navigate the structure of the BLCSI program in relation to the BLCSI program policy documents. In addition, it intends to understand how their engagement into two different contexts influence their teacher development.

My study seeks to answer the following main and sub questions:

1. How did three Saudi experienced English language teachers engaged in study abroad experiences construct and negotiate their identities in different contexts?
    a. What conditions and possibilities, before, during, and after the one year abroad, might have influenced LTI construction and negotiation?
    b. How do English language teachers position themselves and positioned by others in relation to their fellow teachers, mentors, supervisors, and school leaders, and their students?
2. What can we learn from the experiences of mature teachers abroad, in terms of language education in Saudi Arabia?

Reflecting on these questions, *Q.1* seeks to deeply capture the whole picture of LTI by talking about, through narratives and reflections on, their experiences before they participated in the program, during their abroad experience, and also after they completed the abroad program. By trying to reflect on the past and current experiences including the abroad development experience, this question will help me understand more deeply how LTI is negotiated through their learning and teaching experiences. Their LTI construction is manifested in their positionings, insights, views, reflections, opinions, perspectives, and ideologies regarding their overall experiences, including the abroad experiences, toward their teaching profession. Through getting thick descriptions and detailed information talking narratively about their lived experiences, the negotiation of their identities can be spotted as this will lead to an understanding of how LTI is constructed.

Q.1a intends to understand what conditions and possibilities that they may have experienced during their teaching profession, including the study abroad experience, may influence the construction of their identities. This sub question will help me navigate their lived experiences before, during, and after the study abroad experience more deeply in which I can be able to identify any conditions or possibilities that may have influenced the way they think about their current teaching experiences. In other words, it seeks to look into any factors that facilitate or hinder the construction of LTI before, during, and after their abroad experience. Therefore, this may open a panel of discussion that involve participants' future plans towards construction of their identities.

Q.1b involves teacher's positionings during their teaching and profession and learning experiences. It intends to understand LTI construction through how they position themselves to others and how they are positioned by others in relation to their students, colleagues, supervisors, school leaders, stakeholders, and mentors. LTI construction is indeed related to teachers' positionings during their lived experiences of teaching and learning. Therefore, by

understanding how they positioned themselves to others and are positioned by others within different contexts of teaching and learning, this will help me understand their construction of their identities.

Q.2 intends to understand of how they make sense of their experiences abroad in relation to their teacher development and language teacher education in their local context. This question helps us understand language teacher education including teacher development and study abroad programs and how the structure and implementation of study abroad programs remain significant to teacher development and hence language teacher identity.

4.4 Pilot study

To test the accuracy of the instruments of my study data collection, I have carried out a pilot study. I was only able to conduct an interview with my friend. Unfortunately, classroom observations were not possible because of the long distance between the participants and me. The interview with my friend was carried out in 15/06/2019 in a public place. It was an opportunity to test my interview questions. Even though the interview was only for 30 minutes, it helped in refining my interview questions and how to deal with interviews in general.

I learned from conducting the interview several things, which helped me carry out organized interviews with the participants of my study:

- It was an opportunity to ask the interviewee for his feedback about the questions I asked if they were comprehendible. This resulted in reorganizing and rewording my interview questions. For example, I started with the question: “tell me your story about the abroad program?” so I figured that it was a vague question to ask to the extent it needs more clarification of the context and how that is related to my topic. It is reworded to: “You have participated in this program. Can you tell me your story regarding this program? How did you end up joining this program? What have you experienced during this program?” so the question would narrow down the answer and make it more specific.

- The questions asked was in both languages English and, their first language, Arabic. I intended to use both languages to see which one may be more fit for the interviewee. I thought it would depend on the interviewee’s preference in conveying their ideas and expressions in answering the questions. However, I decided to use their first language, Arabic, as the main means for the interviews as their first language would help them focus more on the stories and information. As a result, they shared with me rather than the

structure and linguistic aspects of their talk to get in-depth information about their lived experiences.

- I also learned when to interrupt the interviewees for more clarification of something mentioned or changing the questions. This also entails training on the timing of interruptions and answers of the interviewee, by managing to keep an eye on the watch to balance the time for other questions.

- Something else important, I think, I learned regarding initializing the interview. I decided to include asking about their background information at the beginning of the first interview as to break the ice and prepare them for the main questions of the first and other interviews. It turned out they the participant felt comfortable with such initialization.

- I learned to use pseudonyms in front of the real name of the interviewee to keep the confidentiality of the participants.

- This pilot study also helped me reconstruct my research questions.

4.5 My research study design

4.5.1 The setting

This narrative study was carried out involving experience in-service English language teachers teaching in public schools (intermediate and secondary levels) in the city of Nally (pseudonym for the city name) in Saudi Arabia. They have taught in all school levels. They have participated in the BLCSI study abroad program. They vary in their teaching experience between 8 and 12 years of English language teaching experience (more details are explained in 4.5.3).

They, as participants of this study, have obtain a bachelor's degree in English language teaching from College of A, Teachers' College as a different name in the past, at university of Nally (pseudonym for the university name). As the University of Nally was established with various Faculties and Colleges, Teachers' College has fused with College of A. Unlike Ali's and Sami's type of study which their four-year study did not include a practicum phase, the period of Omer's study is typical four years in which the first three years and half a year consist of theoretical study more about English language teaching and less related to other general modules whereas the last half year involves practicum or teaching training. However, teaching practicum was added to a one-year diploma study. In the practicum, student teachers put theory into practice as they practiced English language teaching. In Omer's case, the practicum phase was part of the accumulated

grades for the overall evaluation, during the four years of study at the university. During their practicum phase, they were supervised by a member of the university faculty members specialized in English language teaching. In Ali's case, he studied a one-year diploma which was similar to Omer's experience in terms of practicum of teaching, supervision, and assessment. Sami, on the other hand, taught in a private sector school as a teacher within undergoing teaching practicum to practice teaching. In a nutshell, the participants, in different ways, have studied how to teach English, have practiced English teaching for a whole semester, which was about three to four months in length, as part of their teaching training (Ali and Omer), or taught in a private sector school (Sami). After that, they have been experiencing authentic English language teaching as part of their job. During their years of teaching as ELTs, they have participated in a study abroad experience.

As an ongoing development of their teaching, they participated in the BLCSI program to develop their teaching practices and actions within their school environment and to be agents of change. During the BLCSI program, they have engaged in English language learning and teaching experiences. After they finished their BLCSI program, they went back home to teach. I targeted them because they have gone through the study abroad experiences in different contexts and cultures.

4.5.2 Choosing the participants

In October (2019), I started the process of looking for at least 12 participants, in mind. At first, through my friends and relatives, using calls, text messages, or whatsapp, I was able to contact two participants. They were Sami and Omer who gave his initial agreement to participate in my study. Sami was the first one whom I contacted in October (2019). Through Sami, I was able to talk to Ali (as a participant of my study) and other two of his friends Ayman and Mohammed (pseudonyms). Ali expressed his happiness to participate in my study. Ayman and Mohammed gave their initial agreement to participate; however, after nearly two months, I contacted Ayman reminding him about the participation in my study, but he expressed his inability to participate due to some private circumstances. For Mohemmed, I contacted him several times, but he did not reply to my messages. Therefore, two participants (Sami and Ali) agreed to participate in my study and two participants (Ayman and Mohammed) were omitted from participation due to their unavailability or unresponsiveness.

By the time I contacted Sami, I contacted Omer who was happy to participate in my study. Then, I talked to Omer if he knew some participants who would be willing to participate in my study. Omer connected me to one of his friends in an intermediate school. His friend, Ahmed, was happy

to participate in my study. I asked him if he knew more potential participants. He then sent me a list of around 6 his friends, English language teachers who participated in the BLCSI program. In the beginning of December 2019, I started to contact them. Three of them (Nasser, Salem, and Tareq) were responsive to my whatsapp messages. At first, they expressed their interest to participate in my study. However, Tareq stopped responding to my messages. The other three participants (Yasser, Abdullah, Anas) did not reply to my whatsapp messages or text messages, so after few weeks I excluded them from my study. At the end of January, before I started preparing for my journey of data collection, Nasser and Salem apologized for not being able to participate and withdraw from my study because they transferred to another remote region. Nasser became an intermediate school rector and Salem became a secondary school vice-rector. So, they expressed their inability to participate due their remote distance and their busy schedule of their new positions. Therefore, at this stage, I also excluded Nasser and Salem. Anas, on the other side, expressed no interest to participate in my study. I respected his decision, so I excluded him as well. For Ahmed, from January until mid-March (2020) Ahmed was consistently apologizing for not being able to find an available time due to his position of being an English language teacher in two different intermediate schools with an overloaded schedule of around 30 hours a week. I did an initial background interview of less, then 30 minute long. However, before mid-March 2020, he called me and apologized to me for not being able to participate in my study. I appreciated his efforts in trying to make it possible for me include him in my study, so I excluded him from my study.

To sum it up, I have targeted around 12 ELTs to participate in my study, but I ended up with only three participants due to some encountered difficulties, as mentioned earlier such availability dilemma, transferring to remote regions, personal reasons, expressing no desire to participate. Therefore, among the 12 participants I contacted, only three experienced in-service English language teachers (Sami, Omer, and Ali) were happy to voluntarily participate in this study.

As the sampling size in qualitative studies is very crucial, the number of four participants is acceptable to get in-depth data in this study. It is posited that “the more cases and individual studies, the less the depth in any single case” (Creswell, 2013, p. 101). That means in-depth analysis is importantly needed in each case in this study. Duff (2008) indicated that most of her students’ case studies were conducted with four to six participants. Duff (2014) also postulates that conducting a case study with four to six participants is typical in doctoral research.

Some factors might constrain the number of participants such as “the availability of the participants” (Barkhuizen, 2014, p. 7) which is the case of my study. Barkhuizen (2014) maintains that “choosing the most appropriate number of participants, therefore, requires finding the right

balance between achieving the research goals, meeting the requirements of the relevant research methodological procedures, and managing constraints set by practical and human circumstances" (p. 5). In Farrell's (2011) study on Exploring the professional role identities of experienced ESL teachers through reflective practice, only three teachers voluntarily participated in his study, and thus his study provided significant findings. Barkhuizen (2016) also conducted his narrative study on one participant, Sela, regarding her imagined identities construction over time. Therefore, a small number of participants allows me to give them their space to share their narratives and experiences with me. In a nutshell, choosing this small number of participants, from a practical point of view, has allowed me to be in a close relationship with the participants as the time limit of data collection for my study was only three months, which had happened the difficulties in arranging interviews and observations due to their busy school and home schedules.

Participants of my study were experienced in-service English language teachers teaching in public schools in a city in Saudi Arabia. The phenomenon to be studied here has been to investigate and understand how LTI, of ELTs who participated in the study abroad program, has been constructed and negotiated during their lived learning and teaching experiences before, during, and after the abroad program. For this study, three participants, who participated in the second cohort of the program, has been involved to obtain necessary descriptions in relation to their LTI construction and negotiation. The number of participants included in this study is appropriately considered as reasonable in order to conduct a narrative study in which a comprehensive understanding of their language teacher identity negotiation and construction can attained.

4.5.3 Profiles of the participants

The participants of my study are three: Ali, Sami, and Omer (pseudonyms). Detailed descriptions are provided (in the following Table 2) for each participant, as to introduce and give the reader a general idea of who the participants are.

4.5.3.1 Ali

Ali is an English language teacher. He is 31 years old and single. He has been teaching English language in public schools for 8 years. His journey with English language started in his intermediate school study in his village. He started to like learning English language as it was a new course for him as a learner in the intermediate school level in 2002. He started to like learning English language even though his teacher was tough on them in his teaching. He got encouraged and set his mind on learning this course despite the obstacles he would face. The resonating reputation of English language, being a new major provided in universities for Saudi

teachers in which a teacher job is guaranteed after graduation, was seen as a window of encouragement to focus on learning English language for the future at an early age.

After finishing his high school, he got accepted at TF University (a pseudonym of one of Saudi universities). He was excited as he thought he learned English language very well and he is read for the next step. The first semester in college, he was shocked by a totally different level of English language learning linguistics, phonetics, etc. He did not expect English language to be this hard, so he began to dislike learning it. He barely passed the first and second semester. He then reflected on the past two semesters and thought to revise his planning for the following semesters. With the revolution of technology, he bought an iphone 3 and he started to buy grammar books and English language learning books. He used his phone apps and chatting apps to level up in his English language learning. He was not pleased with the first and second semester he passed. He used his summer holiday to go back and revise what he had been studied as courses and semesters build up one each other. What he did as self-motivation, reflection, and self-learning had helped him advance in riding the boat of English learning.

Before he became an English teacher, he studied at TF University majoring in English language. Immediately after graduation, he did not get a job for teaching, so he took the advantage of studying a one-year diploma in Education, which include a practicum for a length of one semester (8 hours of teaching per week). Then, he got a job and became an English teacher. During his teaching experience, he has taught elementary, intermediate, and high levels public schools.

During the teaching practicum, he had been full of enthusiasm towards learning how to teach for the first time in his life. He taught English language of the first level of intermediate school. He stumbled in the first classes, but then he got used to teaching English language. He followed a traditional way of teaching having in mind his teachers' way of teaching English. For lesson planning, he relied on ready-made lesson plans sold in bookstores. He used to teach his English language classes in the morning and then go to his college for evening courses. So, the practicum semester was exhausting and exciting at the same time.

As a novice teacher, he started teaching in a high school at a village far away from his home, about 4 hours by car. Commuting every day to school was difficult for him, so he rented a stay near his school. His first days at school were not pleasant as he was not treated as a teacher but nearly as a student. On the other hand, he felt a bit comfortable as his college classmate started teaching at the same school. So, they started their teaching journey together. After nearly one year, he transferred to other schools near his family in the city as he taught there for few years. After that, He had participated in the program for one year. He had learned lots of new things that could help him improve his teaching and self. He improved his English language skills and

communication. He had experienced school immersion where he has felt that he had learned a lot from being involved in such an experience. He tried to make the most of the year abroad by learning and obtaining certificates in teaching and learning such as CELTA.

After he finished the program, he returned to Saudi Arabia. To develop himself and his teaching, he has been thinking of delivering some workshops but was not able to do so because of COVID-19. In addition, he has been thinking of continuing his higher education, for a master's degree, but he is waiting for the best opportunity to do so as he wants to get married and settle down first. He has been enjoying English language teaching and willing to develop his teaching as he learned from his abroad experience. He is looking forward being a better English language teacher.

4.5.3.2 Sami

Sami is an in-service English language teacher with a 10-year English language teaching experience who participated in the BLCSI program. His attachment to learning English language started when he studied in Aramco[1] for one year. At the end of his Aramco study, he was advised by someone who worked for Aramco to continue his English language learning for better future and better jobs. Sami then studied his bachelor's degree in English language teaching. After that, he graduated and taught in a private international school, teaching an elementary level, since he did not get an official job by the MoE. After teaching for one year in the private school, he was appointed as an English language teacher teaching in a state secondary level school for one year. During this period, he got married. He then transferred to two different schools: one was a secondary level school where he taught for about five years and the second one was an intermediate level school which he had taught at for three years. The latter was his latest school before joining the program. During his teaching journey, he always volunteered and initiated social activities and initiatives for students. He was ambitious to continue his higher education. The BLCSI was a chance for him to participate and experience studying abroad. He joined the BLCSI program where his curiosity to learn and explore various things was fulfilled. The abroad experience positively influenced his ways of teaching and increased his passion to help his students and others in his society.

4.5.3.3 Omer

Omer is an in-service English language teacher, teaching for almost 12 years by the time of his sharing his story with us. From an early age around 10 years old, he started to get attached to

[1] The word "Aramco" stands for the Arabian American Oil Company which is now named as Saudi Aramco and owned by Saudi Arabia which is specialized in petroleum extraction services (https://acronyms.thefreedictionary.com/ARAMCO)

English language because of his engagement with electronic games in English language. The, he became a reference to his classmates teaching them English language vocabulary, which they studied in school, after school. Besides, he was constantly motivated and encouraged by his neighbour. These factors had triggered Omer's decision to be an English language teacher. He confirmed that his choice to be an English language teacher after the recognition of his English language examiners during the oral exam upon his entry to college. Getting a teaching job in the state sector right away after he graduated helped him realize his dream of being an official English language teacher. During his teaching, he taught in three different schools of different levels: elementary[2], intermediate, and secondary. He was always obsessed with the idea of going abroad to study or teach and live there. His obsession to study abroad faded away after he became a teacher and responsible for his family as it was difficult to go abroad. After the launching of the BLCSI program, his dream and obsession returned. He tried to join the first cohort of the BLCSI program but failed. He did not give up and applied to the second cohort in which he almost failed; nonetheless, he had no intention of giving up. In the last moment, he joined the second cohort of the BLCSI program in New Zealand. He learned from his abroad experience where he improved his English language skills, immersed in public and language schools, and taught English language there. After his return to his same school of secondary level, he tried to appropriate what he had learned and was exposed to into his own teaching but challenged by his supervisors' critiques and the curriculum. He also became a host teacher himself in which he hosted practicum students in his city.

Table 2 Summary of background details of the three participants of my research study (by the time of data collection in 2020)

Participants (Pseudonyms)	***Ali***	***Sami***	***Omer***
Years of teaching experience	8 years	10 years	13 years
age	31	33	35
Year of starting to teach	2012	2010	2007
Level of teaching	Secondary Level (7 years)- elementary and	Elementary level (1 year)- elementary and	Private elementary level (1 year)- secondary level

[2] By elementary school level, I mean, English language as a school subject in elementary school level, between the years of 2004-2011, was officially assigned only to the sixth grade which was the last year of elementary school (translated from: https://makkahnewspaper.com/article/1521564/الرأي/تعليم-الإنجليزية-بدأ-من-الصفوف-الأولى-قرار-ينتظر-منذ-عقد)

	intermediate levels (1 year)	intermediate levels (5 years)- secondary level (7 years)	(6 years)- intermediate level (3 years)
Year of participation in the BLCSI program	2018 (January18 to January19) and the process to participate started from January 2017	2018 (January18 to January19) and the process to participate started from January 2017	2018 (August18 to August19) and the process to participate started from January 2017
Cohort number	2	2	2
Host country	USA	USA	New Zealand
Host institute	Language institute of K	University of M	Language institute of A
Research project topic	Relationships in school context	Classroom design and its impact on learning/hobbies as a way of learning and creativity	Learning resources and teaching tools
IELTS exam pass/not	Pass (from the first try)	Pass, (from the first try)	Did not pass from the first try, then later exempted

4.6 Tools used for data collection

4.6.1 Semi-structured individual interviews

In qualitative research, interviews are widely and commonly used as means for data collection (Dornyei, 2007). Interviews are viewed as active meaning-making device (Holstein and Gubrium, 2004). They are seen as "always already sites of social interaction, where ideas, facts, views, details, and stories are collaboratively produced by interviewee and interviewer" (Mann, 2010). Interviews give the researcher the opportunity to be able to use probing more freely in order to obtain more clarity of information provided by participants and also any additional data (Johnson and Christensen, 2010) in addition to give the results obtained from interviews a further refining (Gray, 2013).

I chose interviews as the main instrument to collect data regarding my research study for two main reasons. The first one is related to the case that interviews with the participants individually

can offer discreet environment for the participants in which they could freely provide details about their lived experiences in relation to experience that could be personal, professional, collegial, sensitive, emotional, agentive, and so on. That is because the participants might not share stories about their lived experiences and make sense of such experiences if they are not interviewed individually. Therefore, the atmosphere of interviews including confidentiality is very crucial for them to comfortably share their stories. The second reason is that doing interviews on an individual basis helped me in aligning my interview questions to the objectives and related aspects of my study (McHugh, 2014). Another aspect I consider is the meaning conveyed through data provided more than the number of words in interviews. The exact wording number in interviews is not as important as the meaning of information provided during the interviews (Mishler, 1986).

I used semi-structured interviews which I believe it would be the best type of interviews for my study. That is because semi-interviews involve more open-minded questions with a clear purpose (Cohen et al., 2007) in addition to the high flexibility in freely formulating more questions depending on the situation (Corbetta, 2003). Therefore, open-ended questions are important to use in this sense as they allow participants to have the opportunity to express their own unique perspectives of the world around them (Silverman, 1993). Open-ended questions also enable me to gain insights regarding the participants' lived experiences and other unanticipated aspects that might arise during the interviews.

Conducting interviews through face-to-face technique has more benefits over other modes of communication such as using emails, online communication, etc. That is because face-to-face interviews facilitate interaction (Fontana and Prokos, 2007). In addition, face-to-face interviews may give participants and researchers the chance to clarify some confusing questions giving account of needed elaborations to be provided beside the benefit of confirming that the participants interviewed are the ones intended for the study (Green et al., 2012). However, nowadays, online interviewing has been integrated as an alternative means for in-person face-to-face interviews, especially during and after the covid19 pandemic through online applications such as Zoom, Micro Soft Teams. Regardless of the design interview setting, interviews remain as an interactional element of discourse (Hufnagel & Kelly, 2018).

Audio-recording is a means of recording interviews for data collection which can help in capturing more accurate data and gain more descriptive validity (Maxwell, 2005). It also enables me to examine the interactions during the discourse (Perakyla, 2005). During my interviews with my participants, I did not rely on video-recordings of the interviews especially during the covid19

pandemic. That was because the participants did not feel comfortable (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994).

In this study, the interviews underline the participants' lived experiences through discursive storying about and meaning-making of their negotiating how their language teacher identity is constructed through positioning over time and space in which their study abroad experiences are included.

4.6.2 Classroom observation

Data collected within classroom contexts in regards to LTI not only involve interviews but also observations as a complementary method. Observations can be a chance to see teachers' actions in the classroom in terms of their teaching beliefs and practices which can be empirical evidence in teachers' natural settings. Observation in this study is based on not being involved in taking part or intervene in teachers' teaching practices; the aim of observation is rather to observation their situated actions.

It is well known that observation is an essential part of data collection in qualitative research (Cohen et al., 2007). Creswell (2005) defined observation as "a process of gathering information by observing and watching the behavioral patterns of people in certain situations or at a research site, to obtain information about the phenomenon of interest" (p.211). In qualitative research, observation is usually utilized in parallel with interviews in order to "ascertain selected participants' perspectives on their actions or behaviors" (Duff, 2008, p. 141). That is because by doing observations, direct and authentic information can be obtained rather than information reported by participants (Merriam, 2009). In addition, Patton (2002) elucidated that observations can support interviews in qualitative research as they can "provide a check on what is reported in interviews" (p. 306).

The significance of observations in qualitative research is evident as they are convenient for studying cases that involve non-verbal actions and behaviors that the observer cannot capture through surveys and interviews (Cohen et al. 2007). Observations are also naturally conducted regarding a phenomenon that being studied in the sense of providing a realistic account (Bailey, 1994) even though taking control of the situation may be lacking. The conduction of observations has to be arranged in advance taking into account the negotiation to gain access to observe classroom teachings and actions.

There are two types of observations in the literature. Patton (1990) argued that observations are classified into two types: structured and unstructured observations in which observations tend to be semi-structured in empirical research. According to Cohen et al (2007) structured, semi-structured, unstructured interviews are three types of classroom observations. That is to say that in the sense of structured observations, observational categories are predefined in which aspects of teachers' beliefs and practices are already known which makes this approach to be very systematic and is suitable for the design of quantitative research. On the other hand, if observations are unstructured, it means only observing with no advance objectives of what to investigate and observing whatever happens inside the classroom. Therefore, semi-structured observation is mostly suited for this study as it is more flexible than structured observations. That is, they can be arranged with the idea of knowing what kind of aspects and information to look for within the classroom context which could be useful as this will allow for conducting further observations that aim to obtain relevant information to what have been noted in previous observations.

The focus of observations conducted is highly concerned with interactional, personal, physical, and context settings (Morrison, 1993). That involves educational contexts where observational information is obtained taking into consideration how these contexts are organized and what features of individuals are noted (e.g., level, class, gender, and so on). In addition, actions and interactions can be noted during observations while paying some attention other aspects such as methods of teaching, educational and curriculum related resources and pedagogical practices as well as any relevant aspects to teaching contexts and teachers' practices in which can be in connection with their teaching beliefs. Therefore, the classroom context and environment can provide an opportunity to conduct observations to obtain rich data in relation to teachers' beliefs and teaching practices.

In the view of the above discussions regarding classroom observations, it can be concluded that observation is a key element in research data collection. It helps gain information by authentically describing and noticing factors such as a behaviour and an event which will contribute to research data collection (Marshall and Rossman, 1989). Therefore, when it comes to collecting data on teachers' beliefs, observation is highly and importantly suitable (Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2011). That is because observation may effectively contribute to obtaining a thorough and holistic idea of the targeted case (Angrosino, 2012).

4.6.3 Documents

Beside interviews, documents are deemed possible valuable resources of information (Weiss, 1994) needed for this study. Patton (2015) maintains that documents "constitute a particularly rich source of information about many organizations and programs" (p. 376). They can provide the researcher with an account of information regarding "the development and implementation of decisions and activities that are central to functions" (Hakim, 2000, p. 46). Such functions like learning and teaching are based on different decisions which can be found in documents.

Documents can be related to any means of gathering data either which could be personal, such as lesson plans, written projects, or public, such as institutional curriculum (Merriam, 2009). It is assumed that documents may provide some answers to questions that could not be answered using other means of data collection (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) and may serve as "a stimulus for paths of inquiry" brought out "through interviewing" (Patton, 2015, p. 377). Yanow (2007) emphasizes that documents "can provide background information prior to designing the research project, for example prior to conducting interviews. They may corroborate observational and interview data, or they may refute them, in which case the researcher is 'armed' with evidence that can be used to clarify, or perhaps, to challenge what is being told, a role that the observational data may also play" (p. 411).Therefore, in this study, important documents obtained such as the BLCSI program policy documents and the participant' final research projects at the end of their study abroad experience highly contributed to the information obtained through interviews in which promoted my understanding of the data and discourse related to the objectives of my study.

4.7 Procedural considerations of data collection

After obtaining approvals from both: the Ethics Committee at University of Southampton and MoE to conduct my study in public schools at the city of Nally and before going on the field trip to collect data, I have contacted the participants. I contacted around 12 participants but ended up with only 4 participants. Due to the short time of data collection, I was not able to find more participants as I was looking not only for English teachers, but more specifically who participated in the study abroad program. They kindly signed the consent letter that they were willing to participate in my study.

I have used qualitative tools to collect data: interviews, observations, and documents. I used semi-structured interviews as the main tool for my study data collection. Semi-structured interviews involve more open-ended questions with a clear purpose (Cohen et al, 2007). The focus of interviews here is more on participants' lived experiences and how they make sense of them

within different contexts. Interviews align with narrative inquiry as they take the form of narrating and sharing stories and reflections of the participants' lived experience in various contexts. Therefore, interviews help me understand their identity construction and negotiation through narratives in relation to how they make sense of their learning and teaching experiences.

Other tools I used, as supportive to interviews, are classroom observations and documents. Classroom observation is usually used besides interviews as a supportive instrument (Duff, 2008) as authentic information can be obtained that are not reported by participants (Merriam, 2009). In terms of using documents, they are valuable sources of information (Weiss, 1994). For this study, more specifically, written projects are obtained. Their projects are their own reflection of what they have learned from the abroad experience in the sense of development to their teaching back at their own schools in Saudi Arabia. These projects will reflect their positionings and identity in relation to the expectation of Ministry of Education regarding teachers to be agents of change. Therefore, these projects contribute to their positionings and identity construction and negotiation.

I did one classroom observation for one participant as a starting observation for their classroom lessons but unfortunately, I could not continue conducting more classroom observation due to the breakout of COVID-19 as it resulted in schools being suspended all over Saudi Arabia. During my data collection, I used my phone to audio-record their interviews after I took their permission before hand.

As summarized in the table below, I interviewed 3 participants, 4 interviews for each participant of about 1 hour for each interview. I also did initial observations, I planned to observe each participant at least 2 times during their lessons which were about 45 minutes for each lesson. However, I only did one initial observation for one participant before the breakout of COVID19.

For documents, I collected their final projects that presented at the end of their study abroad program. For interviews, I interviewed them in Arabic, the researchers' and participants' native language, as it was much easier for them share their narratives without being concerned with language use. That is because I was not concerned about their linguistic use of language but more focused on the ideas, thoughts, stories, and narrative accounts of their lived experiences. Interviewing them in Arabic brought comfort for them speak freely as the engaged in their storying.

Table 3 Summary of the (initial planned before the breakout of COVID19) data collection tools

Participants (Pseudonyms)	Initial contact	Document (the BLCSI policy documents)	Interview 1 (50-90 minutes)	Observation 1 (45 minutes)	Interview 2 (50-90 minutes)	Interview 3 (50-90 minutes) + Document (research project)	Observation 2 (45 minutes)	Interview 4 (50-90 minutes)
Ali	October 2019	February 2020	February 2020	February 2020	March 2020	March 2020	April 2020	April 2020
Sami	October 2019	February 2020	April 2020	February 2020	March 2020	March 2020	April 2020	April 2020
Omer	October 2019	February 2020	February 2020	February 2020	March 2020	March 2020	April 2020	April 2020
Ahmed	October 2019 (did an initial interview but then withdrew)	\	\	\	\	\	\	\
Ayman	October 2019 (For initial agreement then withdrawal)	\	\	\	\	\	\	\
Mohmmed	October 2019 (For initial agreement then no respond)	\	\	\	\	\	\	\
Nasser and Salem	Beginning of December 2020 (initial agreement	\	\	\	\	\	\	\

Participants (Pseudonyms)	Initial contact	Document (the BLCSI policy documents)	Interview 1 (50-90 minutes)	Observation 1 (45 minutes)	Interview 2 (50-90 minutes)	Interview 3 (50-90 minutes) + Document (research project)	Observation 2 (45 minutes)	Interview 4 (50-90 minutes)
	then withdrawal)							
Tareq	Beginning of December 2020 (an initial agreement then no respond)	\	\	\	\	\	\	\
Yasser, Abdullah, and Anas	Beginning of December 2020 (not responding)	\	\	\	\	\	\	\

4.7.1 My reflection on the process of collecting my data

I started my data collection at the end of January 2020 and it was supposed to be for three months till the end of April 2020. I planned to have around 12 participants. However, I ended up having 6 participants in mind, so I contacted them beforehand. I have planned to recruit more participants, as possible. I have planned to do interviews and observations with each participant, at least 4 interviews and 2-3 observations of their classes. However, I ended up with only three participants (see section 4.5.2).

I started contacting Ali, Sami, and Omer nearly at the end of February to remind them of our upcoming meetings. After I got their response, I tried to conduct the interviews as soon as possible. At the end of February, I conducted two interviews for two participants, one inside the school (Ali) and the other one is in a public place (Omer). For the observation, they have agreed to be done after few weeks, by the end of March. I was nervous in the first interviews; however, they went smoothly.

For **Ali**, the first interview, at the end of February 2020, that I did with him at the school was not comfortable for both of us. That is because the school building was just rented at the beginning of this year and the number of students was huge, so there were no available rooms, except the rector's room, to do the interviews. Therefore, we agreed to continue our interviews in a public place. For the observations, he agreed to be done after few weeks as the result of students' number compared to small classrooms. I went in there and I saw that he barely could walk in the classroom. I could say that he could only stand by the door. The class was full of around 45 students in which some students have no tables because of the limited space. So, we agreed the observation could be delayed till things could be organized better. We met for the second meeting in mid-March in a public place, the public library. I booked a room for free. He was still nervous about the interview, but it went smoothly after about a half an hour of the interview time. We agreed on a visit for observation the next week, at the end of March 2020. Unfortunately, the government launched a lockdown because of the breakout of COVID-19 on March 23, 2020. That moment of realizing that observations were not possible. I tried to focus on the interviews at that time. By that time, I only did two interviews with him. He told me to wait for the interviews until he is available and ready for the interviews. We then started our last two interviews before and during Ramadan, between last two weeks of April 2020 and first weeks of May 2020. After I conducted four interviews with him, he told me that he would be happy if I needed to conduct more interviews. I felt he was very interesting to talk to and he seemed to have a rich experience.

For **Omer**, I conducted the interview in a public place, in a quite coffee shop, at the end of February. I brought with me an (2in1 mini portable clip-on label) external microphone for my iphone recording so talk would be clearly recorded. For the observations, we agreed to be delayed after few weeks. I felt nervous at first. He was also nervous for the first meeting. For the rest of the meetings we were comfortable as we built a trust and a good relationship. The second interview took place in mid-March. It went very smoothly. After two weeks of the breakout of COVID-19 and the lockdown in Saudi Arabia, we agreed to do the interviews remotely using skype, facetime, snapchat, or any means necessary for the interviews. We conducted two interviews in mid-April. We used facetime as it was available and easy for him. It was my first time doing real interviews remotely. It was a pleasant and comfortable experience for both of us. One of the reasons that the time of the interview can be done any time of the day, and of course depending on his availability. After finishing two interviews with him over two weeks, he offered cooperation with any further interviews, if needed.

Sami responded to me at the end of February. He was so polite and very excited to participate in my study as he was eager learn and he welcomed the idea of classroom observation. We agreed

on doing one interview for each other week. The first interview was scheduled the first week of March 2020. He apologized for not being able to do the interview due to sudden death of one of his close relatives and he travelled by airplane for the gathering with the rest of the family. We delayed it to the following week, second week of March 2020. He then texted me for not being able to make it for the interview due to his serious illness in his chest and he hospitalized for four days. I told him to let me know whenever he is ready for the interview. We, then, had the chance to start the interview in the second week of April 2020 due to the breakout of COVID-19. We were able to do the interviews, using facetime, over a period of three weeks in May 2020. I enjoyed doing the interviews with him. The last interview, I felt he was not fine due to the lockdown as it was for a 24-hour lockdown. Fortunately, few weeks later, the 24-hour lockdown was suspended and reduced to 18-hour lockdown.

Now, I will briefly talk about my feeling about data collection process. Before the data collection process, I thought it would be easy to complete my data collection within at most 6 weeks-8 weeks and would have no issues. I did not think I would come through some difficulties and that it is their time they make available and I would have to be very flexible with it. The first issue that I faced was two participants dropped out. The second was the difficulty to get a hold on them and to get a response quickly. I understand that they have had their own reasons and that they were busy at school time teaching and busy with their families in the evening and over the weekend. So, it was understandable. The other issue was the breakout of COVID-19. To be honest, I stopped working on my data collection and literature review because of the stress that I have had thinking about it. I have read that we should have a strong immune system to be able to fight it and that stress and depression would weaken the immune system, so I stopped working and tried to cope with it. That was during the last week of March and the first week of April. My big fear that I was running out of time, and I have not finished at least four interviews for four participants (four interviews for each participant), which I still think I have got enough information about each participant. With the help of my participants recommending other participants for me, I was able to have more participants. During COVID-19 lockdown, I thought participants would be free all the time and have some time for the interviews. However, I did not think that the lockdown would impact them, me included, for not having the desire to continue. I realized that such activities we do during our normal life including going outside, hanging out with friends, playing some games, getting some fresh air, running, playing sports, and so on were refreshing for the mind. It was so difficult to work on data collection and reading for the literature review. I could not imagine how hard it has been so far. More specifically, the transcription process was time consuming, especially when I am not fast at typing Arabic. Another issue with time management, which has been recurring so far, is the Month of Ramadan. I have been trying to do my interviews at night

between 10:30pm and 12am as we cannot sleep at night. We fast all day and break our fast during the nighttime which is the only time we could drink and eat. During Ramadan daytime which was lockdown, people sleep as the weather was very hot, so they do not get thirsty. For me, I tried to organize my time as one to two hours before sunset were for my reading and at night was sometimes for the interviews and other times for data transcription. The last ten days of Ramadan becomes more difficult for study and conducting interviews. Ramadan is generally a spiritual month but more specifically the last ten days as we pray twice at night, so I would have no time, so do the participants. I am more optimistic for the days after Ramadan, after Eid time, in the second week of June. Hopefully, the lockdown might be suspended, and the COVID-19 would weaken.

Overall, I have learned that there is nothing fixed, and I have to cope with difficulties and be flexible. I have also learned that back-up plans are necessary, for instance: in more participants are needed. I have learned that doing some home workouts are very necessary during the lockdown which help ease the stress. I have learned to be optimistic about everything and there is nothing impossible.

Table 4 Summary of data collection tools

Participant (Pseudonyms)	Document (the BLCSI policy documents)	Interview 1 (50-90 minutes)	Observation 1 (45 minutes)	Interview 2 (50-90 minutes)	Interview 3 (50-90 minutes) + Document (research project)	Observation 2 (45 minutes)	Interview 4 (50-90 minutes)
Ali	February 2020	February 2020	February 2020	March 2020	April 2020	Disrupted (COVID19)	May 2020
Sami	February 2020	April 2020	Disrupted (COVID19)	May 2020	May 2020	Disrupted (COVID19)	May 2020
Omer	February 2020	February 2020	Disrupted (COVID19)	March 2020	April 2020	Disrupted (COVID19)	April 2020

4.7.2 Translation and transcription of data

During the process of data collection, I revised each interview to edit and refine my questions for the next interviews. Then, after I conducted all interviews needed, I started to transcribe the data (Duff, 2008). Then, I translated the data because it was conducted in Arabic language, the participants' mother tongue. Regarding the data collected, I only focused on the content of what was said by the participants (Elliot, 2005) and neglected other unnecessary sounds for the purpose of my study such as coughs, sneezes, and so on. It was argued that transcribing interviews can take a long time (Duff, 2008) depending on the circumstances. In fact, it took me around four months to finish transcription, due to the covid19 pandemic. However, as long as the transcription is achieved, that what matters depending on the researcher's own method (Richards, 2003).

I then sent the translated and transcribed data to the three participants of my study for them double check the accuracy of data transcribed and translated which was an important step to be taken (Creswell, 2009) for quality and credibility purposes. This gave them the chance to read over their narratives and for me to obtain a revised version of their interviews. I also informed them to highlight any information that they provided that were sensitive, or they might have a change of mind in sharing. I believe this process has increased the quality and credibility of data collected.

The following table prevails as an example of the transcription and translation of narratives in the participants' interviews during the data collection process.

Table 5 Translation and transcription

Literally transcribed and translated narrative (by the researcher) in Arabic and English	**Final revised and organized translation and transcription of a narrative in Arabic and English languages (by the researcher and the participant)**
*ما كنت **منفتح** زي ما أنا الآن للأساليب التربوية الحديثة والاستراتيجيات* I was not **open to** learning about new teaching strategies.	مقارنة بوضعي الحالي، لم أكن **مطلع بما فيه الكفاية** على الأساليب والاستراتيجيات التدريسية الحديثة. Compared to myself now, after I participated into the BLCSI program, I was not **up-to-date with** contemporary teaching and learning strategies.

4.7.3 Usage of technology tools

I used two types of technology tools. One was during my data collection including wahtsapp for communication, and phone and microphone accessories for recording; in addition, I used online applications such as skype, facetime, zoom, etc. for remote face-to-face interviews during the covid19 pandemic. The second tool I used concerns with my data coding which was MAXQDA software (Saldana, 2013). I purchased a two-year student subscription. It was convenient for me as it supports Arabic language (see A.3 for an example). It helped my code, transcribe, organize, and comment on my data.

4.8 Data Analysis

The data obtained in this study is analyzed based on *narrative thematic analysis*. Block (2010) emphasized on three different ways of dealing with narratives that were suggested by Riessman (2008) especially when doing narrative identity research, among them is *thematic analysis*. Braun and Clarke (2006) viewed thematic analysis "as a foundational method for qualitative analysis" (p. 78) which can investigate "the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society" (p. 81).

Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008) and Bamberg (2020) have proposed *narrative practice approach* working with storytelling based on the *interactional/performance approach* suggested by Riessman (2008). Some data that are obtained in this study are oral narratives of participants' personal experiences (Riessman, 2005). The emphasis of thematic analysis, in this sense, is on both explicitly expressed information and data that carry implicit meanings. Thematic analysis is essential in this study in analyzing narratives, storytelling, and other themes and aspects.

Burner (2001) asserted that narrative accounts "organize and give meaning to experience" (p. 267); therefore, this study investigates stories shared by participants to communicate the meaning of their lived experiences. Block (2010) defined thematic analysis "primarily a focus on the content of what is said, leaving to the side other aspects of narrative, such as how it is produced" (p. 340). It is an investigation of narratives to "identify particulars as instances of general notions or concepts" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 13). Creswell (2013) asserted that thematic analysis involves "preparing and organizing the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion" (p. 180). Barkhuizen and Mandieta (2020) maintain that "Constructing and analysing narrative-based data have the potential to make a valuable addition to the reflective and inquiry options available to teachers" (p. 12).

Through the lens of positioning theory by Harré and Davis (1990) I investigate the participants' stories and narratives to understand how participants construct their language teacher identity through positioning of themselves and others, and by others in discourse considering their lived experiences during their learning and teaching journey including the study abroad experience. That is, through the provided narratives, their stories are analyzed in relation to how they make sense of their lived experiences in relation to positioning of themselves to themselves and others within their local context and during the abroad experience.

4.8.1 Coding process

In this study, I adopted an abductive approach to coding the narratives which includes both deductive and inductive ways. A deductive approach to coding is related to prior themes and aspects in the literature (Riessman, 2008). While the inductive way to coding concerns involves emerging themes and aspects from the data. Codes are understood as representation of information and conceptual meanings related to the phenomena investigated and the objectives of my study (Creswell, 2013) in which a code is "most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" in which data can be for example interviews and documents (Saldaña, 2013, p. 3) like the case of my study. In the process of coding, a big number of codes are identified and then reduced to themes (Creswell, 2012). A theme is identified as "an outcome of coding, categorization, or analytic reflection" (Saldana, 2013, p. 14). Therefore, by using an abductive approach, I look for themes concerning conflicts, accomplishments, tensions, challenges, decisions, social conditions, turning points, possibilities and other emerging themes.

In my study, I use labels as themes to identify the story related to my research that I analyze and interpret. The themes are labeled in a narrative coding way. Narrative coding "is appropriate for exploring intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences and actions to understand the human condition through story" (Saldana, 2013, p. 132). Bamberg (2004) emphasizes that "it simply is not enough to analyze narratives as units of analysis for their structure and content, though it is a good starting point" (p. 153). Therefore, narrative coding, in this study, involves storylines in terms of a chronological way, turning points, challenges, and so on (Saldana, 2013, p. 135). The narrative coding is conducted thematically through the use of extended phrases and sentences presented in the participants' stories (Smith and Osborn, 2008).

After finishing the coding process, the narratives and stories found in the research data are configured as coherent stories (Polkinghorne, 1995; Barkhuizen, 2011). The analysis of the findings of the coherent stories is structured and presented as context, excerpt, and

interpretation. Context involves giving the reader the context of the story. Then, presenting the excerpt of the configured story. After that, the excerpt is interpreted and analyzed in light of positioning theory (3.1.3.1). This way, I believe, makes it easy for the audience to understand and chronologically follow the storylines of the participants' lived experiences through their learning and teaching journey.

4.9 Ethical considerations

Before discussing trustworthiness issues of this study, it is worth mentioning the ethics considered in this study in which fully understanding of ethics in conducting research studies must be promoted in any research study. Therefore, my study is committed to attain to such important research ethics in consideration of safeguarding the participants and data of this study. I have obtained the approval from both: the Ethics Committee at University of Southampton (see A.4) and MoE to conduct my study in public schools at the city of Nally. A consent form, in both languages: English and Arabic, was distributed to the participants and agreed on by them in relation to their volunteering to be part of my study in sharing their stories with me during the data collection process. Thus, they returned the consent forms dated and signed (see A.4 as an example). Another considered ethics is confidentiality. I used pseudonyms for their names and other locations including schools, cities, universities, institutes, host teachers, and so on to safeguard any information that may specifically expose their real selves. Lastly, the stories and data collected from my participants including details about their final research products are stored safely and securely in my computer and protected with a password.

4.9.1 Trustworthiness issues

Trustworthiness in qualitative research falls within ethical conducts (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016) which involves various terms such as credibility, applicability, and confirmability (Guba and Lincoln, 1982). Strengthening **credibility** (Merriam, 2009) is attained through data collection methods and resources of data to achieve a deeper understanding of the study investigated. The current study provides rich and deep information about the participants lived experiences in relation to how they constructed their language teacher identity over time and space including their abroad experience. Credibility is also achieved through a member-checking step which is important to validate the narratives collected (Creswell and Miller, 2000) in which I provided the participants with a copy of their narrative account for double checking process.

For **confirmability**, I provided an anonymized copy of narrative accounts of a participant to my supervisor so to confirm the narrative accounts collected and the way they are analyzed. That is

to say that my research findings can be interpreted in many ways. It is to display the subjectivity I may have had in presenting my interpretation of the findings. It is, thus, clear tracing the findings in accordance with the source of the narrative accounts presented. **Applicability** of my research findings is very much related to the generalizability of the findings in which my interpretation of the findings is subjective. It is not my aim to generalize my research findings; however, the findings might be applicable to some extent into similar situations, participants, and contexts.

4.9.2 Researcher role

In qualitative research, participants are essential parts in in the process of data construction. The process of data collection is not only collecting data but also engaging and building close bonds with participants. Therefore, my role as a qualitative researcher "necessitates the identification of personal values, assumptions, and biases at the outset of the study" (Creswell, 2009, p. 196).

I positioned myself as an insider in this research as I come from the same context and have gone through similar experiences abroad. My participants were recruited with the help of my friends; besides, some others were friends of my participants. The participants teach in public schools, and I teach at a university level; however, we are considered as colleagues as we are all under the umbrella of the MoE. This mutual thought of being colleagues made it easy for me to get close to them in order to earn their trust in sharing their experiences with me. Besides, I have experienced something similar to what they have experienced. I was a teacher; then, I continued my higher education abroad, and still, so sharing with them my abroad experiences stimulated their enthusiasm to share their abroad experiences and at the same time I was able to make a strong rapport of trust and friendliness with them. In addition, this made it easier for me to interview them and record their stories. Overall, positioning myself close to them helped me earn their trust so they will share their stories and insights about their abroad experiences with no obstacles.

4.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, methodological accounts which guide my research study are present in details in terms of theory, procedure, and ethics. This study adopts a narrative inquiry approach considering qualitative tools for data collection such as semi-structured individual interviews and documents in which three experienced in-service English language teachers, who participated in a one-year study abroad experience, are involved as participants of this study. Data analysis adopted a thematic analysis approach to investigate the participants' lived experiences thought their learning and teaching journey. Lastly, ethical accounts and my reflexive role as a researcher are presented.

The next four chapters involve analysis of the BLCSI program policy documents and the participants' stories (Ali, Sami, and Omer). Chapter nine includes a discussion of the findings of this study. Lastly, chapter ten provides concluding remarks of this study.

Chapter 5 The BLCSI Program Policy Documents' Analysis

5.1 Introducing the four analysis chapters

Including this chapter (5) of the analysis of the BLCSI program policy documents, the next three analysis chapters (6, 7, and 8) involve analyses of the three participants' (Ali, Sami, and Omer) stories. In this chapter (5) I analyze the BLCSI program policy documents as a narrative to understand the structure of the BLCSI study abroad program and how the participants construct their language teacher identity dealing with challenges encountered during the abroad program. Analysis of this chapter unfolds the persona expected and ascribed by the BLCSI program policymakers and how the participants challenge such persona. To put it simply, it helps us understand how the BLCSI policy documents construct the participants' LTI and how the participants align their persona with the policy.

In the other analysis chapters (6, 7, and 8), Stories of the participants (Ali, Sami, and Omer) are analyzed thematically. A brief description of each participants is presented at the beginning sections of these chapters. In a hierarchal way, their stories include phases of before, during, and after the BLCSI program. Within these phases, themes are presented as labelled extracted phrases from their stories which they indicate episodic events, turning moments, events, and so on of their learning and teaching journey and xperiences. The analysis of each theme include a context of the story, an excerpt of a configured story, and an analysis of the presented excerpt via the lens of positioning theory (Harré and Davies, 1990) and the three dimentions of narratives inquiry: temporality, sociality, and space (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). At the end of each of these chapters, conclusions are provided in relation the key findings of each participant's story.

5.2 Introduction of this chapter

The chapter of the BLCSI program document analysis aims to analyze how teachers' persona is constructed hypothetically on abroad immersion experience for an imaginary future considering the global political and economic changes. It severs as a basis to understand the structures that my research participants need to navigate and how their identity transforms on the abroad experience across time and space. This chapter addresses two main dimensions: **constructing recipients** and **constructing imagined identity**. The BLCSI program is mainly aimed at teacher development through immersion. Therefore, it is very important to identify the parties included in

the policy and how the policy constructs teachers' imagined identity. Constructing receipts involves the targeted recipients (participating teachers and host institutions) and the preceding process before the implementation of the BLCSI program. Constructing imagined identity encompasses teachers' imagined persona portrayed in the BLCSI program documents.

In this chapter, I draw on positioning theory as a lens to analyze the documents of the BLCSI program. Positioning theory helps in understanding how the participating teachers in the program are positioned by its policy in terms of rights, duties, and obligations ascribed to them. It also helps in understanding the conditions and possibilities of identity construction which is influenced by positioning between the involved parties. I believe that positioning theory will assist me in understanding policy of the program in seeing how the policy positions its participants as this will help me connect it the participants' narratives to understand the big story. That is to say, the policy narrative is a crucial part of the whole narrative of each participant.

To remind us of narrative inquiry, the story of the BLCSI program documents is represented though three dimensions: sociality, temporality, and place. The personal and **social** conditions represent sociality in the story. Sociality, in this sense, is a representation of **subjectivity**. Subjectivity is defined by Weedon (1997) as the "the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation in the world" (p. 32). Kramsch (2009) indicated that "subjectivity focuses on the ways in which the self is formed through the use of language and other symbolic systems, both intrapersonally and interpersonally" (p. 20). Block (2021) draws on Hall's, Weedon's, and Kramsch's understanding of subjectivity as "emergent in activity and the ongoing discursive processes constituting activity" in which it involves "the making of identity in interaction" (p. 4).

Temporality of the story is concerned with the main characters', teachers, time from the past to the future including events and things in which they engage. **Place** in the story involves the place where the main characters' experiences happen. In this sense, I explore the BLCSI program documents as a big narrative. Narrative accounts of these documents are reconstructed. As I investigated these documents, I kept asking myself two questions: "who are the characters in this program?" and "What are the subjectivities that are constructed as desirable in the program?" as well as "What positions and responsibilities for the characters are portrayed in the documents?" These sorts of questions help in identifying how the characters in the story are constructed discursively and imagined to be having a particular persona. In defining narrative persona, Davies and Harré (1990) refers to "the discursive practices and story lines as if they were our own and make sense of them in terms of our own particular experiences" in which "the sense of continuity that we have in relation to being a particular person is compounded out of continued

embodiment and so of spatio-temporal continuity and shared interpretations of the subject positions and story lines available within them" (p. 60). This indicates that people tempt to have temporal positions with embodied specific characteristics in which they present themselves with a character during their interactive discourse. Harré (2021) illustrates the idea of persona as "the public way people present themselves to one another" in the sense when an individual "studies a person passing through the social world, through a great many situations and scenes, through many settings, playing many distinctive parts" (p. 299). Persona, in this sense, affirmingly relates to sociality, temporality and place. When we present ourselves to others, we position ourselves temporarily based on our character that we present to or perceived by others within a particular setting. For example, from what I experienced in January 2022 at my daughter's school, I met with the school principal regarding my daughter being treated aggressively by her teacher, I presented myself as a caring parent with concerns over his daughter's treatment in school. The principal treated me as a parent assuring me that it has been solved. I, then, presented myself as an ex-teacher with mutual understanding of classroom teaching and how my concerns were only to understand what has happened with no personal judgement. The principal, then, switched to treating me as a colleague and appreciated my stance over the incident as it comes from an ex-teacher. Thus, the tension has been resolved.

Before going to the analysis, I would like to present the rationale of the BLCSI program *(BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. 3) which frames the identity constructed throughout the policy.*

> "It reflects the Ministry of Education's commitment to transform the education system into a first-rate student-centered system capable of producing graduates with capabilities that strengthen the competitiveness of the country; support its economic diversification strategies; and provides it with the human capital required for the success of Vision 2030 and the National Transformation Plan."

In this quote, the Ministry of Education (MoE) is presented as a character which aims to achieve an important goal: Saudi educational system transformation. This transformation is presented as an ambitious plan to the extent that the education system will be able to assist the country development in various dimensions such as education, economy, diversity, and human capital. The Saudi vision 2030 is presented as the target for the educational system. Therefore, the MoE acts as a key stone that supports the transformation of the country by producing new types of students who will construct a country that can compete globally in relation to economy, politics, science, and many different aspects.

The mentioned quote is an answer to the Saudi vision 2030 introduced in 2016 as the Saudi vision 2030 has evoked all governmental sectors including Ministry of Education to strive for

development and change towards an imagined bright future, which is related to the Saudi vision 2030 (more details on this are mentioned in the context chapter). The BLCSI program has aims, objectives, implementation design, and outcomes in order to be successfully implemented even though the timely BLCSI program features a top-down and cascade tradition (see context chapter). The top-down tradition, in this sense, is when the design of the program is conducted by policymakers of MoE and is not based on teachers' needs. The cascade approach involves the transition of knowledge, learning, and skills from a small number of teachers to a larger number of teachers, groups, and communities.

It is implied as a project with a particular agenda that targets teachers to be sent abroad on a learning journey. The targeted teachers are from all around Saudi Arabia including cities and urban places where teachers are selected by branches of MoE with the help of school supervisors and school leaders based on specific criteria, which are explained in (cross-reference). The BLCSI program falls within this tradition of study abroad which is not new to Saudi students, which students receive scholarship from the Saudi government to study abroad. However, its nature is more focused on only schoolteachers in which its design is suitable to development of teachers' English language, learning, and teaching through immersion during their study abroad experience.

It is stated that the program "an ambitious long- term endeavor to transform the knowledge, skills and attitudes of Saudi education professionals through university-guided immersion in successful K-12 schools in host countries" (BLCSI cohort 2, 2017, p. ii) which overlaps with the MoE ambitious goal of "transforming the education system" (p.3). This asserts the facts that teachers are manifested as one of the most influencing factors in education reform and development.

Teachers are treated respectfully in the Saudi context (Alshahrani, 2016) in terms of social and financial positions in which the development of teachers helps in the country's growth (Al-Shehri, 2020). They receive good salaries in comparison with other jobs in the society, which shows the importance of this career (Alagbari, 2003). Their contribution to the society is not only limited to classroom content teaching, but also to educating students generally in terms of morality and values, in which schools, in Saudi Arabia, are considered as students' second homes.

On the abroad experience, teachers are supported financially and medically. They are treated as learning teachers on the abroad experience even though they engage in English language classes established specifically for them within English language institutes. They have the mission to develop their English language, learning and teaching skills including collaborative and research skills.

In the next sections, analysis of the BLCSI program documents is presented in two dimensions: constructing recipients and constructing imagined identity.

5.3 Constructing Recipients

The BLCSI program documents are two types of electronic documents that address two recipients: **the participating teachers** of the BLCSI program and **the international host institutions** (which include host teachers, mentors, administrative staff of the targeted institutions, and so on). Due to the nature of contexts of both recipients, they are addressed differently. Thus, two different kinds of documents are produced to contact them as we can appreciate the differences in language and content are observed including the name of the program, which is transcribed differently.

In the written documents sent to **international host institutions**, the language used is English which is the official language of contact for the targeted international host institutions. The content used represents a "request for proposals" (BLCSI cohort 2, 2017, p. i) in which the MoE constructs itself as an investor by offering international host institutions investing opportunities for education and business, as stated: "the universities bidding on this business opportunity" (BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. 14). Such an emphasis on investment, involves investing teachers' learning who will give back greatly to education in Saudi Arabia and investing in building business relations with international institutes. Fees (roughly speculated $20000-$30000 per participant) of the BLCSI program are paid quarterly in advance as a package for a group of students in each international institution. The participating teachers in the program are paid monthly salary (around $1600) equal to students on the government scholarship as they are responsible for their own accommodation.

In these documents, the use of English language is seen as a professional strategy of marketing when dealing with international host institutions to initiate business relationships; in addition, it details to international host institutions the objectives, desired design, and the expected outcomes of the program. This strategy is seen in throughout the whole BLCSI document in which it covers "scope of work, introduction, project description, project activities, high level responsibility matrix, proposal requirements, and bidding process" (BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. iv). In addition, the use of vocabulary in those documents seems appealing to the westernized education, for example, the title of the program is *Building Leadership for Change through School Immersion*. The concept of **Leadership** is commonly used in Western education. It targets English-speaking institutions as stated in the rationale of the BLCSI program: "Anglophone K-12 school systems" (BLCSI cohort 2, 2017, p. 3).

Three words describe the program agenda: "**leadership**, **change**, **school immersion**." They emphasize on the need to improving teachers' leadership skills in dealing with and embracing changes in ideologies and reforms through immersion experience in study abroad schools. The MoE invests in teachers "through immersion in successful schools abroad to strengthen their technical, interpersonal, and leadership capacity" (BLCSI Proposal, pp. 2-3). The "successful schools" are schools that the host institutions partner with to host the BLCSI program and these schools are selected based on the imposed conditions proposed by MoE (Table 7, BLCSI Proposal, p. 15). By following the expected conditions, it is the host universities' responsibility to partner with host schools in which the partnering process is measured by those conditions (p. 16 this chapter crossreference) as the host schools present their descriptive proposals showing evidence, such as up-to-date statistics of state scores of best schools on a national level, about meeting those conditions. The reason behind imposing such conditions is related to idea of having the best providers of knowledge, skills, and experience to the BLCSI program participants. Someone might ask: "how change can happen to all teachers since only few teachers are selected?" The answer can be achieved through the cascade feature of the BLCSI program. The BLCSI program agenda assumes that "a change in any one part will affect every other part" (Papp, 1994, p. 4).

The word "**Leadership**" among other terms "resonate[s] readily with the promise of corporate success" (Orciuoli, 2003, p. 385). Leadership is "clearly related to advancement" (p. 394) and change. In the BLCSI cohort 2 (2017, p. i) the words "**leadership**" and "**change**" represent political and financial positions in which relations are built. MoE is positioned as the investor and offeror while international host institutions are positioned as providers of competitive high-quality learning programs. In this sense, leadership and change are embodied in the international host institutions in which they can train the participating teachers to acquire such skills through immersion. The word "**immersion**" is a key element of the BLCSI program. Immersion was initiated in the 1960s in Canada which interest in immersion education was spread around the world (Byram and Morgan, 1994). Fortune and Tedick (2008) argued that immersion has three types of immersion programs; Among them is one-way (foreign language) immersion programs. The BLCSI program involves this type of immersion which is designed to help the participating teachers to sharpen their English language skills in an authentic environment of the target language (Lee, 2009) and gain "exposure to the teaching strategies adopted … through formal university classes, school visits and classroom teaching" (p. 1100).

The focus on leadership and change is through "school immersion" indicates the attention paid by MoE to the practical element needed to enhance the participating teachers' learning and teaching experiences. In this sense, MoE positions the international host institutions including universities,

English language institutes, and public schools as an integral education system which "school immersion" is easily organized.

The documents directed to **participating teachers** and school in the Saudi context are written in Arabic, their L1 and the official language used in the Saudi context. Recipients of these Arabic documents are not only English language teachers, but also content teachers, teachers' supervisors, and school principals in elementary, intermediate, and secondary levels of public schools. The content used in these documents is to give details of the participation process including conditions and rules of participation. In these Arabic documents, the name of the BLCSI program is "برنامج التدريب المهني النوعي (خبرات)" which literary means "the qualitative professional training program (experiences)" (Doc. 1). It explicitly articulates that the program is solely designed for teacher professional development. However, it implicitly intends for "participants to become effective change agents when they return back to Saudi Arabia" (BLCSI cohort 2, 2017, p. 3).

Looking at the word "qualitative" in the program title in Arabic, it signals various issues. It indicates the nature of the program in which various aspects of learning and teaching are developed including English language skills, peer work, mentorship, research, and immersion in schools, which these aspects are stated throughout the documents, in which the focus is not on how much learning and knowledge are acquired but on how they are learned. After exploring diverse sources, it became clear for me that the emphasis on "qualitative" involves paying attention to knowledge, multiple skills, interactions, and learning experiences in international leading educational institutions, which are "as measured by State tests or any other tests" (BLCSI cohort 2, 2017, p. 19). It also presents participants as being in need for development of their learning and teaching by living the experience through school immersion. Alrabai (2019) asserted that Saudi EFL teachers should be provided with better training which involves "partnerships with local, regional, and international training centres" in order to "reinforce and extend the qualifications and skills of Saudi EFL teachers" including "most up-to-date teaching methodologies and modern technology" in EFL teaching (p. 114). As international partnerships grew in number, a rise of overseas training for professionals were expected (Alqahtani, 2015) with an anticipation of additional training to enhance English teachers' skills (Al-Madani and Allafiajiy, 2014). Therefore, the literature of studies of teacher development called for more development more specifically in international contexts.

On the other hand, stressing the word "qualitative" came as a result of the failure of practicality of the Tatweer program (Elyas, 2017). Tatweer was a retraining initiative that took place between 2007-2013 which involved developing public education funded by King Abdullah (former King of

Saudi Arabia) in which around $293,000,000 was allocated for the project (Elyas and Al-Ghamdi, 2018). In preparation for launching and delivering the Tatweer project, “some 1,700 male and female teachers and school administrators, representing 50 secondary schools Kingdom-wide ended their 15-day training course” in cities of Jeddah, Abha, and Taif; in addition, “teachers, students’ advisors, and school principals take different courses that can enable them to deal with their students from different angles to help them succeed at all levels” (p. 252). Tatweer focused on four aspects: “developing teachers’ skills, developing curricula, enhancing school activities, and improving school environment” (Al-Mikaimzi, 2008, p. 33).

Tatweer program has focused on teacher development to all teachers (content and English language teachers) in a short amount of time through delivering theoretical teacher development workshops while the BLCSI has focused more on *less number and more quality* in which a small number of participants including content and English language teachers, principals, advisors, supervisors of all public-school levels engage in a year-long intensive learning by living the experience through immersion.

The **process of choosing participating teachers** is undergone through achieving several conditions, described in detail in the BLCSI program section in the context chapter, which implies a specific agenda. This agenda is represented as an understanding and beliefs that investing in teachers results in having better future teachers. Elite teachers are fairly selected from all state public schools, regardless of social class but in recognition of performance in school, for the participation in the BLCSI program. **Elite** is an emerging concept. Erikson (1968) explained that “*crisis”* is considered as “a necessary turning point” in which “development must move on one way or the other” in situations like “a crisis individual development or in the emergence of a new elite” in historical changes (p. 16). The emergence of elite in this sense can be referred to the crucial moment of Saudi education system development in accordance with the Saudi vision 2030 in which teacher development is necessary; however, the BLCSI program cannot afford fiving the opportunity to every teacher so that elite teachers are selected. *Elite* in this sense refers to teachers being positioned as superior in terms of ability and quality as it was seen in the process of candidature selection. It is assessed based on content knowledge, performance, and so on which shows “good practice” (Hawkins & Norton, 2009) through achieving “good and effective teaching” (De Costa and Norton, 2017, p. 11). Barkhuizen and Mendieta (2020) view “being a good teacher” as “knowing who we are so that we can do what we do better – for ourselves and our learners” (p. 11). They add that “a willingness to consider new ways of doing things that may benefit their learners is surely an essential characteristic of a good teacher” (p. 13).

> "The Ministry of Education plans to tap into its large pool of education professionals, select a cohort of "the best of the best", and invest in them through immersion in successful schools abroad to strengthen their technical, interpersonal and leadership capacity" BLCSI Proposal, 2017, pp. 2-3

In the MoE plan, it is asserted on the selection of **the best** teachers who are willing to change and improve themselves through participation in the program in order to obtain international experiences, improve English language skills, and develop teaching practices through school immersion. "The best" is constructed in the policy as teachers selected through a long selection process based on meeting specific criteria, explained in the next paragraph. For the MoE to benefit from investing in teachers, their *assumingly* available option is to select among what they consider the "best" teachers to enhance their capabilities on technical, interpersonal, and leadership levels. through immersion in international host schools. These three aspects of capacity are important to being a professional teacher, according to the BLCSI program. The MoE is clearly betting on that strengthening professionals' capacities can mostly be achieved through immersion in *successful schools*. The features of a school to be successful are presented as a required criteria for host institutions when partnering with host schools (Table 8, BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. 19).

In the BLCSI program documents of conditions for participation, the word "candidature" is used in indication to competitiveness between participants as they are positioned as prospect learners and "competitors for resources" (Block, 2017, p. 41). The nature of candidature is represented in two aspects: **qualities and commitment**. Urciuoli (2003) refers to qualities as "excellence and rigor" as excellence and rigor are interrelated in which "rigor" is a quality that contribute to achieving "excellence" as a valued quality in the overall outcomes. (p. 398) **Qualities** involve what participants have in terms of good performance in school along with good assessment, passing language tests, punctuality, and attitude. Good performance refers to scoring accumulative high grades, for example in the case of English language teachers, during the assessment of school principal and English language supervisor of the teachers' classroom teaching, which is conducted once or twice each semester. This assessment is not septically conducted for the BLCSI program; however, this process of assessment is already part of the evaluation system of Education in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the BLCSI program considers this assessment as part of the candidature process.

- "Have at least (assessment score: very good) of job performance in the last two years."
- "at least (B2) in IELTS UKVI exam (academic) in all skills"

- "Never engaged in any work penalties in the past two years or involved in any ongoing court penalty."

(Excerpts are from the translated document of condition and rules of the program, see more in A.2).

Attitude refers to teachers' good collaboration and relationship with their colleagues and administrative staff and not being involved in work penalties, according to the policy. Attitude and punctuality are assessed by the school principal. Penalties in this sense are, such as, being always late or recurrently absent to attend school or not following the curriculum designed for the taught course in which teachers are assessed by completing the whole syllabus following a particular textbook within its designed timeframe during the semester. Being involved in an ongoing penalty is referred to undesirable attitudes towards other people inside and outside school in reference to violating their rights which makes attending courts is mandatory such as neglecting paying back a borrowed money from someone or failing to pay monthly instalments.

Commitment is related to the conditionals and obligations that participants engage themselves in. For example, contract is established through signing papers to be committed to the program and not withdrawing from it, as stated in the excerpts below.

- "Sign a warrant to attend the program and not withdrawing from it."

- "Sign a warrant involving transferring knowledge and abroad learning experiences after finishing the BLCSI."

- "Sign a warrant of accepting the occupational tasks assigned to him/her and the school where he/she is directed to after finishing the BLCSI program."

- "Sign a warrant to accept being directed to any country and host universities and institutes that has partnered with the BLCSI program as preference will be based on points obtained by the candidates."

(Excerpts are from the translated document of condition and rules of the program, see more in A.2).

Three key elements were clearly displayed in the proposed description documents of the program: **improving English language skills,** in which it helps all participating teachers to, according to the policy, "participate successfully in the subsequent guided immersion experience" (BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. 17) by understanding the learning materials during their immersion and interaction with English language speaking teacher in the host institutions, **school immersion**, and

end-of-program research initiatives or projects. Participants are prospectively positioned to show commitment in studying hard to achieve these three key elements of the program. The commitments of supervising the participating teachers during the program are conveyed to the international host institutions in terms of being authoritative in which the participating teachers are positioned less agentive. For the international host institutions, it is mentioned in the proposal documents, for example, that "the bidder must demonstrate their approach to professional learning, and more specifically to guided immersion and how it will lead to changes in the knowledge, skills and behaviors of the participants" (BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. 26). It is mentioned that the MoE provided deadlines for accepting host institutions' proposals, which they should be fully detailed and descriptive including bidding costs. The MoE also provided an easy-to-follow template for host institutions when making their proposals (pp. 25-29). The deadline submission for hosting cohort 2 of the BLCSI program was 21/07/2017 (BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. 30).

In terms of test control, for example, the host universities in the beginning of the study abroad program "will be responsible for administering an English language test to place the participants at the appropriate level of learning" (BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. 13). Supervision over participants' immersion learning is guided and controlled by mentors, assigned by the host institutions. The MoE expects "80% of the participants' time" is spent through immersion in schools, while "20% of time will be spent with their mentors and engaging in other guided professional development activities" BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. 15).

Thus, the MoE will have the opportunity to choose the suitable institution based on meeting the description of the proposed program stated in the BLCSI program proposal documents, the capacity of the program, and the total cost for the whole year paying attention to "not more than 25 participants will be assigned to the same university" (BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. 14). The MoE contact the right host institutions through its representatives in the host countries, such as Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, based on existing database of suitable universities where scholarship students study in.

Among the responsibilities of the international host institutions must provide mentors to participants in which mentors, who, according to the BLCSI policy, should be existing working educators who works for the university specialized in K-12 education and teaching strategies, "assign specific readings to their mentees to deepen their understanding of the theoretical frameworks underlying the practice they observe, engage them in evaluating and critiquing specific theoretical models, or oversee progress of their individual projects" in addition to providing "formal professional development events, including seminars, conferences and workshops that participants, individually or collectively, may attend to improve their knowledge

and capabilities" (BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. 11). This clarifies the need for assessment of the participants' learning. More specifically, it shows an imposed commitment on the host institutions in controlling the learning activities and assessing the participants' learning progress. This indicates the roles of host institutions in having participants fulfil their commitments to learning and development. After the formal delivery of participants' research projects, "a sign-off on the final version of the initiative by the mentor is a requirement" (BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. 12). This emphasizes the commitments given to participants and their mentors, especially the phrase "by the mentor is a requirement." The word "requirement" has a clear meaning of seriousness in which failing to do so results in failure of the host site in accomplishing obligations and duties which gives the right for the BLCSI program policymakers to reconsider continuing partnership with the international host institutions. An example of this situation as I heard from an informant in the previous cohort of the program before I started to collect my research data that the MoE requested a change of a partnered host school midway towards the end of the program as it did not provide the assigned participants of the BLCSI program with the expected immersion experience.

5.4 Constructing Imagined Identity

In designing the BLCSI program, policymakers envision future teachers with alternate persona through such expected outcomes to be achieved at the end of the BLCSI program (2.2.4.5). Persona is referred by Freeman (2013) as "the kind of mask or image one presents to the world and is thereby expected by other to maintain" (p. 51). Freeman also refers to the concept of persona as being involved in two axes: "temporality and otherness." In terms of temporality, persona "entails the persistence of the past into the present and future" and in the sense of otherness, it "entails the images others hold of us and that we may (or may not) wish to maintain, the objects that signify us (or are thought to signify us), and, not least, the various ideas and ideals we stand for (or are thought to stand for)" (pp. 51-52).

The imagined persona portrayed in the BLCSI program documents implies a neoliberal-self. This neoliberal-self is referred as a neoliberal persona. Neoliberal persona denotes the desire of self-improvement.

Ong (2007) refers to Neoliberalism as "a fixed set of attributes with predetermined outcome" (p. 3). The neoliberal persona is sought out through immersion into the international context where accounts of neoliberalism are embodied. In this sense, the BLCSI documents, on the one hand, positions international host institutions as influencers with neoliberal characteristics and, on the

other hand, positions the participating teachers to be influenced by the influencers' characteristics.

Some Characteristics of the Host Schools (Table 8, BLCSI proposals, 2017, p. 19)
The MoE expects its University partners to have a network of partner K-12 schools to have the following characteristics, among others:
• They are **leading** educational institutions as measured by State tests or any other tests.
• They have a strong tradition and focus on student learning.
• They are led by **creative** school principals and administrative and support staff.
• They have **high-performing** teachers, teacher leaders, and counsellors.
• They **boast a strong culture** of teacher retention.
• They are on the cutting edge of educational **innovation** in the areas of interest to the participants.
• They boast strong student **discipline**, low drop-out, and high graduation rates.
• They have instituted **mechanisms for bridging the gap** between the school and the world of work.
• They have a **positive culture** for sharing **experience** and **expertise** with other countries and educational jurisdictions.
• They enjoy **strong community** involvement and **private sector partnerships**.
• They have a **strong history** of **successful change**.

In this previous table, these expected "characteristics of the host school" are representations of neoliberal persona and can be seen in words such as "**leading, creative, strong community, tradition and culture, high-performing, innovation, discipline, positive, expertise, and successful change.**" The BLCSI program builds on the assumption of constructing neoliberal persona in teachers through international host institutions from the influencers-influencees positioning. This is clearly represented throughout the BLCSI program documents. The influence of schools on teachers is portrayed through the immersion experience in which schools are required to host "not more than 3 Saudi participants at any one time" as displayed below:

"Each K-12 school will host not more than 3 Saudi participant at any one time to maximize the benefits of the immersion experience" (Table 7, BLCSI proposal, 2017, p. 15).

This presented presumption states that **a smaller number** of participants immersed in a school in any one time may "maximize" the chance of obtaining **benefits** from the immersion experience. Among these assumed "benefits" is that participants can easily interact and make relationships with host schools' staff and teachers which enhance participating teachers' capacities in embodying and acquiring the characteristics of the host schools, stated earlier in page 7. The **neoliberal persona** represented in the BLCSI program documents includes several dimensions such as linguistic skills, knowledge, flexibility, and digitality (2.2.4.5).

5.4.1 Linguistic dimension

Linguistic skills involve improving competency and proficiency of English language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). The development of "English language skills is a key focus" (BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. 8) for participants to engage and immerse effectively into the abroad context and for the international host institutions to fulfil their responsibility of participants' learning skills advancement. English language teachers are positioned as "participants" who already have "prior experience though teaching interacting in English language" (p. 12); therefore, international host institutions are expected to "provide intensive training in the English language" (p. 12) which Urciuoli (2003) refers to as "specialization in educational marketing" (p. 386) by drawing on Bourdieu's (1991) concept of linguistic markets. It is also referred to the adopted linguistic and cultural practices in textbooks are aimed at the global market (Gray, 2010b) and the global economy (Holborow, 1999, p. 58).

As explained above, international host institutions are "responsible for administering an English language test to place the participants at the appropriate level of learning" as participants are required by the end of English language learning phase to achieve at least "a score of C1 on the Common European Framework of Reference" which is 7 or more in IELTS. This is part of the commitment for participants to succeed. Language tests are exemplified as a "mechanism of control" which greatly influence "the lives of individuals" in addition to the sense that those tests "lead to high-stakes decisions for individuals (or for a society as a whole)" in the sense of, for example, "successes and failures" (Shohamy, 2006, pp. 102-103). This is to say that, for example, if a participant meets all the criteria required for participating in the study abroad program but failed to score the minimum score for the required English language test, then he or she can be rejected. Otherwise, it might up to the policymakers whether to the participant can be accepted or rejected if they see so as they are in control of the final decision. Participants' role in this sense is not only to comply with the language tests and carry them out but also to achieve at least the satisfactory score in English language skills as stated earlier.

> "The university will be responsible for administering an English language test to place the participants at the appropriate level of learning."
>
> "All the English language teachers must achieve at least a score of C1 on the Common European Framework of Reference or its TOEFL or IELTS equivalent" (BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. 13).

5.4.2 Knowledge dimension

Knowledge is one of the key elements constructed in the BLCSI program document. In this sense, it refers to ideas and learning experiences obtained by participants during the BLCSI program. Participants are positioned as knowledge receivers and seekers while international host institutions are seen as knowledge givers and sources. For example, in this statement, the institution's role is to "strengthen" the participants' "understanding" of knowledge.

> "Strengthen participants' understanding of modern language acquisition theories, approaches and instructional, assessment and classroom management strategies necessary to translate those theories into practice"
>
> **BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. 13**

It positions participants as patient **receivers** and the "high-ranking academic institutions" (p. 14) as **givers** of knowledge. It does not give **agency** to participants. The policy only focuses on what participants receive and how they should receive. It neglects their inevitable contributions to the abroad society, not only economically but also linguistically and culturally as diversity is valued in the western societies. For example, regarding the linguistic gain the host institutions may gain, the host institutions could benefit from the participants in research on multilingualism, English language learning and teaching, mentorship, and so on in terms of aspects of research in second language acquisition and teacher education. The participants and the host institutions clearly form reciprocal a relationship of giving and receiving.

Immersion in context, more specifically in schools, according to the policy, is essential as it "represent[s] the core of the participants professional learning experience" (p. 8). During the immersion in schools, participants are expected to be able to construct their own research projects or "initiatives" which are bridging the gap between theory and practice. By the help of their mentors, they are expected to return home "<u>with a well-planned and well-documented initiative to improve a specific area of their practice</u>" (underlined in the original document, p. 10). This positions participants with a commitment to be taken seriously in addressing issues in learning and teaching in their home context. This commitment is facilitated by the guidance of mentors who are expected to have rich experience on both theory and practice, as stressed: "all the university mentors will be permanent staff of the university" (BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. 14).

5.4.3 Leading dimension

The BLCSI program envisions participating teachers as future teachers with leadership skills as leadership relates to "advancement" (p.394). York-Barrand and Duke (2004) define teacher

leadership as "the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals and other members of school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement" (pp, 287-288).

Leadership includes several roles as Sergiovanni (2009) clarified that such roles are: technical, human, educational, symbolic, and cultural. Th technical role relates to effective management of the school. The human role involves the social dimension of school. The educational role involves professional development of knowledge and practice. The symbolic role indicates school values. The cultural role deals with building school's identity. This is presented as an empowering of teachers in being involved in decision-making processes in school. Teachers in Saudi schools must follow specific curriculum and textbooks which must be covered by the end of the semester. The question here, does empowering, for example, include their choice of the learning materials and activities outside the provided textbooks? If so, will that enhance their empowerment of decision-making? Empowering teachers' decision-making seems an ideal plan in this program. However, it may help in presenting their voices in constructing their schools and in contributing to reforming the school curriculum.

"The project participants will serve as **leaders of change** when they return to their schools in Saudi Arabia" (BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. 4).
"**Lead cultural transformations** in their schools with particular focus on transforming professional collaborations among their peers through professional learning communities. **Lead transformation of practice** school-wide" (Table 4, BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. 7).
"At their end of their immersion experience, each participant will submit an action plan to their mentor in their area of expertise for sharing what they learnt with their peers, and developing strategies for **leading change** in their schools, districts or at the system-level when they return to Saudi Arabia. Such a project may include, for example, training other teachers, **leading** the school in some **areas of professional practice, or developing specific resources for sharing lessons learnt**" (BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. 8).

In the BLCSI documents, the emphasis on positioning participating teachers as leaders is represented in the introduction, implementation of the program, and the expected outcomes sections, as shown in the table above. These align with what Hairon et al. (2014) identified as teacher leadership has three dimensions: establishing collaborative relationships, fostering teacher development and learning, and empowering change in teaching practices of teachers.

5.4.4 Flexibility dimension

Flexibility skills are implicitly represented in the BLCSI documents. For example, the BLCSI documents envision learning "through immersion in successful schools abroad" can strengthen

participants' "**interpersonal**" skills (BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. 3). The word "interpersonal" indicates various skills that participants can develop and accommodate which includes flexibility. The word "flexible" entails capability of dealing with and absorbing expected and unexpected conditions during the learning experience. For example, the interpersonal concept includes developing research, technical, and interactive skills through doing presentations and leading workshops in which the participants learn how to be flexible dealing with such events.

The BLCSI program expects participating teachers to nurture their flexibility skills (2.2.4.5). These include dealing with international institutions' staff, mentors, and host schoolteachers as well as peers during the program in addition to dealing with learning and teaching materials and resources along with commitments of the abroad learning period. Enhancing flexibility skills is managed by the international host institutions during a teamwork process in which tasks and activities are produced (Urciuoli, 2003). The conditions of learning during the BLCSI program are believed to create powerful flexibility skills. For example, in the expected outcomes such as:

> -**Use effective** English language teaching strategies.
>
> -**Use assessment strategies** that are **aligned** with the instructional strategies and the outcomes of the curriculum.
>
> -**Create equitable learning environments** that promote learning for all, including for students with special needs.
>
> -**Manage** the classroom **effectively**.
>
> -**Build strong affective relationship** with the students to promote learning.
>
> (Table 4, BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. 7).

The policy positions participants less flexible. The use of the word "**align with**" in the expected outcomes presents participants as in need to be flexible when using assessment strategies. In addition, the emphasis of the word "**effective**" indicates that participants' use of strategies in teaching, managing classrooms, and their relationship with students before engaging in the study program is not effective. These expected outcomes are mostly related to curriculum, learning, and classroom.

During the past 20 years, Education in Saudi Arabia has undergone through several curriculum reforms including English language textbooks (Elyas and Picard, 2013). The policy positions "the value of learning through immersion in experience" in "accommodating changes in knowledge and skills" (BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. 8). This indicates that flexibility also falls into **accommodating changes** in which participants need to be able to embrace changes in the Saudi education system.

5.4.5 Digitality dimension

This dimension is concerned with the development of being a digital teacher. By digital teacher, it means improving the use of technology and employing it into practice. In the BLCSI program, the use of technology is considered as a skill to be improved which at the end refers to the teacher to be digital-oriented. Focusing on enhancing the use of technology, the BLCSI program expects participants to "appropriate technology effectively" to boost three main aspects: "teaching and learning, professional development, and communication with parents" (Table4, BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. 7) which are very important aspects of teachers' career. This expectation positions teachers as in need of enhancing their effective use of technology. This involves, for example, dealing with teaching a lesson in class using blackboard or online platform in addition to doing a presentation or carrying out a research study using technology. In appropriating the use of technology, international host institutions are responsible for promoting the use of technology in participating teachers' tasks, presentations, research, and other professional development events through mentors, as displayed below.

> "The mentor may also propose formal professional development events, including seminars, conferences and workshops that participants, individually or collectively, may attend to improve their knowledge and capabilities" (BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. 11).
>
> "To enable the participants to share their reform initiatives, receive feedback from their mentor and peers, and refine their projects accordingly" (BLCSI Proposal, 2017, p. 12).

Teachers' involvement with and exposure to such professional tasks reinforce their relationship with technology in which technology becomes part of their daily routine during the abroad experience. For example, seminars and conferences use technology effectively which can clearly have influence on teachers' positioning as digital users and enhance their usage capabilities.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter analyzed the policy of the BLCSI program as a narrative in order to understand how it constructs the participating teachers' identity over time and space on the abroad experience. The analysis identified two main dimensions: constructing recipients and constructing imagined identity, which represented a construction of participants with neoliberal persona. The policy positioned participants as less agentive, passive receivers, and in need for development which can be achieved through school immersion. On the other hand, the host institutes were positioned as producers of knowledge and authoritative; however, conditions were imposed on them. To sum

up, this narrative analysis of the policy serves as a lens which helps to understand and investigate the participants' narratives.

Chapter 6 Ali's Story Analysis

6.1 Introduction

To remind us that this chapter involves Ali, an in-service English language teacher who participated in the BL CSI program. Ali's story represents very interesting narratives of his ambitious journey as an English language learner and teacher and study abroad participant. Ali portrays how his agency evolved over time, associated with working in a group, considering struggles and different contexts that he has experienced. This story of Ali is inspirational and interesting to see how he patiently dealt with his struggles and how he held on to hope for his future by taking the encountered chances and reflecting on his experiences for sense making. Therefore, it is interesting to see how he constructed his identity through his journey including the study abroad experience.

Ali has valued group work and learning from others, at the same time, he was sensitive to the neglection of his needs but was not able to express his concerns to his school principal as being afraid of his colleagues' irony. It was not that he was doubtful of his actions, but he was concerned about the relationships with his schoolteachers and principals. He would have rather compromise his rights and duties being affected over having healthy relationship with his colleagues at school. He positioned himself on the minority side as not to oppose other teachers as the majority side who had similar thoughts about teaching. It was maybe because they were more teaching experience than him and that he respected them in accordance with their age. He positioned himself according to his cultural values which was not professional of him.

In the following sections, findings of Ali's story are chronologically presented involving pre-, during, and post- the BLCSI program experience.

6.2 Analysis of Ali's story

Briefly presenting background information about Ali (see 4.5.3.1), he is an in-service English language teacher with an eight-year English language teaching experience in public schools who participated in the BLCSI program. His journey with English started in his intermediate school study in his village. He started to like learning English even though his teacher was tough on them in his teaching. He got encouraged and set his mind on learning this course despite the obstacles he would face.

After finishing his high school, he got accepted to study English language major in college. He was excited as he thought he learned English very well and he is read for the next step. He struggled in his first semesters in college while there was a lack of guidance provided to students. However, he tried to independently develop himself in relation college modules and English language skills using technology and learning applications available at that time. Because he did not get a teaching job after graduating, he took the advantage of studying a one-year diploma in Education, which include a practicum for a length of one semester (8 hours of teaching per week). Then, he got a job and became an English language teacher.

During his teaching experience, he has taught elementary, intermediate, and high levels public schools. As a novice teacher, he struggled in the first school he was assigned to in terms of distance and community. Then, he started his cycle of transferring from school to another seeping a comfortable and collaborative environment so he can flourish and focus on developing his English language teaching. Then, He had the chance to participate in the BLCSI program for one year. He had learned lots of new things that could help him improve his teaching and self. He improved his English language skills and communication. He had experienced school immersion where he has felt that he had learned a lot from being involved in such an experience. He tried to make the most of the year abroad by learning and obtaining certificates in teaching and learning such as CELTA. After his return, he had planned to develop himself and make an influence on his colleagues in a indirect way. He also had been thinking of continuing his higher education but was encountered with the obstacle of Covid19 pandemic; however, he waits for such an opportunity of studying a master's degree to take on.

6.3 Pre-BLCSI program experience

In this phase of Ali's story, it is portrayed that his journey to be an English language teacher started from his first interaction with his English language teacher at a young age. With encouragement of his English language teacher, his attachment to learning English language had increased as he progressed to secondary school level. Deciding to be an English language teacher, he encountered several obstacles but tried to turn them into opportunities and learn from them. Therefore, throughout his narratives, he presents some incidents and turning points which back up his choice or motivate him to approach the path of becoming an English language teacher.

6.3.1 "My teacher Atef implanted my affection towards English language learning"

Ali grew up in a remote village, far away from his current city, where he had struggled and lost his desire to learn at school due to a trauma of being treated with aggressiveness inside school during his elementary school level. At the age of 13 years old around the 2000s, Ali started to get attached to English language learning when he was taught English language by a foreign teacher from Sudan, his name was Atef. Ali mainly considered his English language teacher's teaching style, strict but caring, as an inspiring window to Ali's aspiration towards English language learning, compared to his unpleasant previous learning experience during his childhood.

Excerpt (1.1.):
"My teacher Atef implanted my affection towards English language learning. His teaching style was not banal, but it was the opposite. He was strict with us but respectful which increased my desire towards liking the English language learning and surpassing my inner self's desire to run away from learning. His respectful strictness increased my keenness and desire to improve and engage more in my English language learning path" (Interview 1, Pos. 22).

In this excerpt (1.1.) Ali valued his teacher's way of teaching as he presented it as **not banal**. Ali referred to *banal* as a value that Ali used as measurement towards his teacher's teaching style in influencing his attachment to English language teaching. Ali seemed to define it as a balanced way of teaching , neither carelessness nor aggressiveness. Ali also tried to link his current achievements (such as being an ambitious English language teacher who participated in the BLCSI program) with his mentor that he respected from an early age as he saw himself in a crossroad stage which could shape his future. Reconnecting with school was facilitated by his teacher Atef after going through a learning trauma in his early age (referring to his early years' experience as a trauma was because of the uncomfortable way that Ali felt when reporting it as he did not want to remember it nor comment more about it). Ali saw hope in and showed acceptance toward his teacher's treatment and style of teaching. Ali attributed his attachment to English language learning to his teacher in the sense of his teacher's respectful manner where Ali was recognized as a student who needed help. Despite of his teacher's strictness, Ali seemed to value being mentored as he represented respectfulness and care as the missing elements that he needed to be treated by his teachers. Ali gave credit to his teacher Atef as he respected Ali which was one of Ali's rights as a student. Other reasons of acceptance towards his teacher might be that his teacher was a foreign national teacher in addition to Ali's first exposure to English language learning. So, Ali seemed to have wanted to present himself as a good student in which Ali might have treated English language learning irrelevant to other courses due to his early age trauma towards learning in general. Therefore, recognizing his teacher as a **foreign** teacher and English language as a **new** subject alongside his teacher's respectful treatment had helped Ali in

overcoming his early age trauma and in engaging in his English language learning. Ali portrayed that his teacher Atef a key factor in shaping his future. Teacher Atef's treatment towards Ali has continuously increased Ali's liking for English language learning in secondary school level, the actual stage before getting into college, in which he was at the stage to confirm his future path to be an English language teacher. By developing his sense of thinking about his future, he decided to continue this path to be an English language teacher because of some other rising emerging factors, at that time, including the labor market need for Saudi English language teachers, which was a secondary motivating objective for Ali, in addition to that teaching English language was considered prestigious during that time.

6.3.2 Investing in turning struggles into learning opportunities

Struggles at the beginning continued to encounter Ali's path to be an English language teacher. During his first years in college 2007-2008 as a university student, Ali struggled in managing the new different life of college learning compared to his previous learning experience in secondary school level. Due to the lack of mentoring advice in college, Ali barely passed the first two years of college. This has led him to seeking advice from his classmates which resulted in reorganizing and updating his modules' schedule to be suitable for him. In addition, he developed his self-learning way of English language leaning which helped him graduate on time, as he reported in the following excerpt.

Excerpt (1.1.):
"I reflected on my learning process and realized that I need to find my own way to develop my English language learning skills in which I found difficulty in digesting the college modules, so I bought an iPhone and downloaded apps like Duolingo, English language chats, and so on to help learn" (Interview 1, Pos.).

Not getting a job after graduation was disappointing for Ali but he turned it into an opportunity by looking at his situation differently as he tried to look for what would increase his chance to get a job and his learning to teach to put into practice. The nature of his university program did not include the practicum for training to teach which was mainly critical for Ali. He decided to study and pay for a one-year diploma in education which included a semester for practicum.

Excerpt (1.2.):
"I was lucky that I did not get a job right away after I graduate from college because I did not practice how to teach so I took this chance alongside my other classmates and studied a one year of education diploma which we fully paid for its fees. I did not have a prat-time job but I borrowed the money from my family" (Interview 1, Pos. 48).

In this excerpt (1.2.), Ali positioned himself as an investor in his learning because he felt that he was incompetent English language teacher who lacked teacher training as he considered his four years of study in college as lacking due to not containing teaching training. So, he considered himself lucky to have had the opportunity to study for the diploma year after college. Even though the program was not for free, Ali invested in his learning to teach which was also an opportunity for him to get a teaching job. Ali did not take this chance by himself but together with a group of his classmates in college.

6.3.3 "I do not know how I survived it"

On his first day at school as an official new teacher, Ali and his friend, Abdul, attended their new school. They had an unpleasant beginning of their career. The first impression of being a teacher was not pleasant to them. The first moment was very important in their life as a teacher was not as they expected it to be. In that moment, Ali and Abdul felt that they were ignored. Ali saw the school principal as arrogant but because of Ali's position as a new appointed teacher, Ali felt speechless and hid his bitter feelings and his desire of wanting to prove himself to his school principal. Being neglected by the principal would have been more severe if Ali was alone but having his friend with him might have made it a bit easy on him as well as motived him to do his best during his journey.

Excerpt (1.3.):
"On our first day of being official teachers, we came into the principal's office, he told us to sit down, so we did. He did not even talk or paid any attention to us as two newly appointed teachers. Instead, we felt that we were ignored and not treated as teachers but merely as statues. That was shocking. We had no idea what we did to be treated that way. We felt disappointed as we expected a warm welcome!" (Interview 2, Pos. 39).

In this excerpt (1.3.), Ali portrayed himself and Abdul as statues as he was treated like a student and the principal as irresponsible and impolite. Ali had higher expectations on his first day at school as an actual teacher recalling his experience when he received a warm welcome during the first day of his practicum experience as a student teacher. Ali's surprise was associated with a moral order that Ali and Abdul should have been treated as teachers or colleagues as they expected it from the school principal. Ali portrayed that the principal acted as a moral authority who did not value collaborative work as the principal treated them with only commands "sit down" as they only acted in response to those commands "so we did." Ali referred the moral order to the behavioral relationship and values between schoolteachers and the school principal. In Ali's eyes, Ali believed that the principal was already informed of any new or transferring teachers as it was part of their jobs. However, the shocking treatment evoked their sense of belonging as they felt that they were not recognized. Their first impression of the principal

treatment entailed a conflicted belonging to the teaching job, so it made them think of working hard to be recognized and proved worthy.

6.3.4 Transferring from school to another… looking for a place to bloom

Transferring from school to another one, Ali had been looking for a comfortable educational environment as he seemed to value collaborative work. Ali preferred to transfer to another school not only seeking collaborative work and comfortable environment but also that he could improve his English language teaching. Starting with his first school he taught at, he reported to have had an unpleasant experience where he was not treated as a colleague by the principal which gave Ali the impression of not being recognized as an actual teacher. That moment which Ali did not want to remember encouraged him to work hard to earn his principal's recognition. At the end of the second year, Ali worked hard by being punctual to his work, being collaborative with his colleagues especially helping the principal in managing school in terms of students' tensions and trying his best in delivering his lessons and he was recognized as one of the best teachers in school; however, Ali needed to improve his English language teaching as a novice teacher over dealing with administrative work.

Ali had realized that he spent almost two years in the first school where he was busy dealing with students' tensions (even though the students' number was normal) and neglecting his teaching development, Ali decided to transfer to another school where he was warmly welcomed by its principal and found it a bit comfortable and stable in terms of students' tensions but had an oversize number of students in addition to its collaborative environment. Ali positioned himself as a professional dynamic teacher in terms of dealing with circumstances. Having less students' tensions made Ali treat having an oversized classroom as a challenge that needed development of his English language teaching so he switched his focus to how he could deal with delivering his lessons by reading strategies and methods of teaching. What helped Ali in focusing on developing his English language teaching was his collaborative colleagues especially the school principal. The school principal was caring and supportive which Ali felt he was recognized. That encouraged Ali to collaboratively work harder and develop his teaching.

Excerpt (1.4.):
"The second secondary school I transferred to for my third year of teaching; its principal was very nice to me when I transferred to his school. He was the kind of principal who cares for his colleagues unlike the principal of the first school ... I was surprised by the reciprocal supportive and collaborative relationship between the principal and all other teachers … which it helped me focus on developing my teaching strategies and methods even though classes were overcrowded with 50-65" (Interview 2. Pos. 40-46).

As Ali (in excerpt 1.4.) seemed to have encountered a new dilemma such as overcrowded classrooms, his transferring journey (including all levels of schools: elementary, intermediate, and secondary) had mainly been for the purpose of improving his English language teaching; therefore, he mostly cared about working in collaborative environments as the big number of students in school seemed manageable to Ali.

Excerpt (1.):
"I have taught in many school levels. I had different teaching experiences and encountered several dilemmas. My objective from transferring was to improve my teaching. " (Interview 2. Pos.).

Ali showed his surprise as he encountered a supportive leadership and colleagueship which he struggled to find in his previous terminals. He highly positioned his school principal and colleagues as motivators for him to focus on improving his teaching skills and strategies. In this sense of a comfortable environment, Ali portrayed himself as a capable teacher dealing with oversized classrooms considering supportive environment.

After few school transfers, Ali then transferred for another year to an elementary and intermediate school. Ali could not imagine the shock of teaching transition between secondary level (students aged 15-18) to elementary level (students aged 9-11) in terms of interaction and treatment as well as curriculum and content materials. However, the number of students was very low (around 5-6 students in each class) which was a huge difference to the previous crowded schools.

Excerpt (1.5.):
"At my first lesson in the new elementary school I transferred to, it was a talk-shock experience of how I was used to dealing with secondary school level students and then all the sudden I got deal with very young students. I thought it was easy to deal with alongside an easy curriculum, but it turned out to difficult in which I was unable to think of how deliver my lesson. I then went back home and read the teacher book and online lesson plans to familiarize myself with teaching that level in addition to obtaining such teaching strategies convenient for elementary level. It was very difficult, to be honest" (Interview 2. Pos. 84-90).

Ali, at first, in this excerpt (1.5.), underestimated English language teaching at elementary school level. However, he found himself an inexperienced teacher in dealing with young students in addition to the different content material of the English language books. Taking the elementary level teaching seriously, Ali reflexively saw himself facing a challenge of a difficult level of teaching in terms of students' age and content materials in which he was immodest about. This realization is a character of being reflective and humble. Ali also portrayed his lacking in teaching elementary level students and curriculum but seemed open-minded about recognizing himself, in this sense, as lacking and in need of development. In other words, a transformational development from

being a secondary level teacher to an elementary level teacher which required intensive learning at home entailing improving his familiarization with the lessons and students he was about to teach.

6.3.5 Picked on: "showing off as Mustafa" … participating in the BLCSI program as an escape route

During his transferring journey, Ali had learned from lots of challenges and dilemmas that he encountered in relation to his way of teaching, treating students of all different levels, dealing with crowded classrooms, managing and dealing with tensions of students in school, being reflective about his actions, and developing his collaborative attitudes towards colleagues and students in school. However, among the schools (secondary level) in Ali's transfer journey was a nearby school that was unexpectedly overcrowded with a huge number of students in addition to the unsupportive school environment. Feeling extremely uncomfortable in this school in terms of its discouraging environment had made Ali look for any reason to transfer away from this school.

Excerpt (1.6.):
"when I talked about having my lesson delivered when sometimes it was the last lesson of the day, the school principal would cancel all last lessons of the day at school including mine and I tried to joke with him saying: '*what about my lesson*!' and then he just say joking '*just go home*!' Because I was known as an active hard-working teacher, I sometimes got picked on by my colleagues '*showing off as Mustafa'* as an ironic word for a hard-working learner in a friendly way. I always felt uncomfortable but kept silent about it and tried to go with it" (Interview 3, Pos. 34).

In this excerpt (1.6.) Ali described his feeling of being uncomfortable in this uncollaborative school which made him decide on leaving it even though it was a close distance from his stay. Because of his experience of being not able to do his last lesson in school on many occasions and being continuously picked on, Ali portrayed himself as an unwanted person within a community of bullies or at least directed by dominant people like the school principal and some of his close colleagues. Ali felt that he could not merge in their circle as he was seen by his colleagues that he had been overdoing things by being going beyond his limit in teaching. Being viewed this way, Ali presented them as some of them only did their effort in school. Being called "Mustafa" was hard on him. The word "Mustafa" has its roots from years ago which is linked to a person who is a warm-book student at school. It is linked to a treatment between an excellent student and lazy students as an indication of bullying. "Mustafa" is referred to a common Egyptian name. In the past, foreign teachers from Egypt used to teach various subjects, especially Math, science, and English, in Saudi Arabia. Their children used to be known for being warm-book students by achieving high results in schools. So, "Mustafa" as a common name among them. During that

time, lazy students would pick on excellent students by calling them “Mustafa” in an ironic way. So, it became well known around schools. “Mustafa” might not be well known among nowadays students as it was only attached to a specific era in the 80s and 90s.

Ali also felt that his rights were neglected such as when he among other teachers was, on several occasions, told by the school principal to cancel the last lesson of the day to go home early which Ali was bothered by such irresponsible actions but being overpowered made Ali go smoothly with imposed decisions. Ali reported that only him being bothered about the principal decisions while other teachers were fine with whatever the principal said. Ali then felt being alone for his voice to be heard. In Ali’s eyes, his right to teach his last lessons of the schooldays was invaded because of the principal and other colleagues neglection of their deities in school. Ali, therefore, saw the school principal as irresponsible of his job and disrespectful of others’ duties along with his colleagues’ support to the school principal’s “whatever” decisions. That was why Ali’s voice was not heard by the school principal and was treated with “friendly” bullying by his friends. By this, Ali described it as it was not an extreme bullying, but it tended to be joke or humor; however, it was at the expense of him as Ali’s uncomfortable feeling towards hearing such words had become accumulated. It also seemed that Ali did not want to worsen his relationship with his school principal by reporting his situation to the regional ministry of education. Ali was rather left with no other option but to seek a transfer to another school.

Not being to be able to merge in an uncomfortable school environment, Ali looked at participation in the program as an opportunity with three main gains: to be improved in his English language teaching and learning, to be relocated to another school after his return from the BLCSI program, and to be promoted financially an extra bonus in his career status. Being uncomfortable at school has made Ali eager to take any moral opportunity encountered, including applying and waiting for a transfer, as to escape from his school, as he taught for 8 years before joining the program including teaching one year at this school. In this sense of waiting moral opportunity, Ali portrayed himself was disciplined in following the law and as considerate of not showing his uncomfortable feeling towards his colleagues and the principal.

In Ali’s eyes, group work and collaboration between schoolteachers and staff were considered key factors despite of the students’ number dilemma. Being uncomfortable in such discouraging environments, Ali started to think about joining the BLCSI program (cohort 2) even though the process of registration took around a whole year for each cohort.

Excerpt (1.7.):
“among the schools I was transferred to it was a school I was not comfortable teaching at even though it is so close to my house, it was a big secondary school which had almost 750

> students, which was the biggest number of them all, so I did not like its teaching and learning environment as I had a bit of tension with the principal office, so we were not always on agreement with each other all day long during the school day" (Interview 3, Pos. 34).

This excerpt (1.7.) presented Ali as a controlled teacher as he was the only teacher who was new to this crowded uncomfortable school who was expected to do his job like any other teacher as a voiceless teacher who should not argue with the dominated school principal. Ali's resistance to accepting to live in this school environment was caused by his tense relationship with his school principal. Ali seemed to value collaborative relationships with his colleagues in which the huge number of students was not a real concern for him. Ali positioned himself as a suffering teacher caught between a conflict resulting from his unsupportive school principal and the crowded school dilemma.

6.3.6 "I found what I am looking for: collaborative environment and an inspiring colleague"

Five months after Ali had applied for participation into the BLCSI program, he was transferred to a secondary-level school. It was acceptable to Ali in terms of the relationship between teachers regardless of teaching for 24 hour per week (which was considered reaching the full capacity of teaching but slightly unusual).

Ali tried to make good relationships with each member of the school. Spending the first four months without being nominated yet to join the BLCSI program, Ali found one of his colleagues Salem as an inspiring English language teacher. Salem had around 25 years of English language teaching experience and was in this school for about 8 years. Ali saw Salem as an inspiring colleague and a role model due to his invaluable experience, humbleness, and eagerness to learn. Ali believed he was blessed with finding such an inspiring colleague. By the time Ali built up a very strong work relationship with Salem, he was accepted to join the BLCSI program. Having built up a strong relationship with Salem had made Ali be hesitant to join the BLCSI program for several reasons. He did not want to break away from Salem. He also had no guarantee that he would return to the same school after the program because he was aware the process of distributing teachers was determined by the MoE. Making a difficult decision, Ali was encouraged by his colleague to take the chance offered to join the BLCSI program. Ali had also developed an interest of what the BLCSI program experience would unfold for Ali's future.

Excerpt (1.8.):
"Few colleagues had encouraged me to join the BLCSI program and were excited to hear about my abroad experience when I return. Among them was Salem, an English language teacher. He was differently very excited in the way he was not only interested to hear about my impression and experience abroad after my return, but also more interested to learn from my learning and teaching experience. He was a motivating drive for me. Not only Salem had his fingerprint in improving me, Ali, as a teacher but also as a person. He was an expert English language teacher and was an example of persistence and activeness. He was passionately and continuously excited for teaching just like the way a new teacher would feel" (Interview 4, Pos. 2-4).

In this excerpt (1.8.) Ali positioned Salem differently from his other colleagues; not only he was teaching the same subject as Ali, English language, but was also an expert teacher. In Ali's eyes, Salem was a role model for Ali as he was in a very close relationship with Salem because of some influential characteristics that Salem has had, for example, being humble towards other colleagues, especially Ali, regardless of the difference in years of teaching experience. There was a mutuality between Ali and Salem. Positioning each other as inspiring peers, they encouraged each other to improve their knowledge and teaching and learn from each other.

6.3.7 "I felt tired of it as we agreed to participate together in the program"

Being in contact with his friends who graduated with him, other English language teachers in various schools, Ali was also encouraged by his friend Ahmed. They applied for the IELTS test together which was part of the requirements for participation in the BLCSI program. Unlucky for Ahmed, only Ali passed the IELTS test. Ali felt dispirited as he wanted to go through the abroad adventure with Ahmed, but his hesitancy to participate in the BLCSI program has increased. However, Ahmed kept encouraging Ali to go for the opportunity offered and continue the remaining process of registration.

Excerpt (1.9.):
"Ahmed and I agreed to participate in the BLCSI program together. An important stage in the process of registration was passing the IELTS exam. I passed it but Ahmed did not. I felt tired of it as we agreed to participate together in the program and had been working on it for nearly a year and at the end, he was unlucky to pass the IELTS exam even though he could try it again and again if he wanted but he lost interest in it. I was encouraged by him to go alone and take that opportunity" (Interview 3, Pos. 18-20).

This excerpt (1.9.) depicts that Ali view his friend Ahmed as an encourager in terms of supporting Ali to apply for the BLCSI program and an influencer in relation to his influencing action towards

Ali when Ali was relucted to proceed with his application of the BLCSI program after passing the IELTS test. Ali imagined himself going together with Ahmed and how fun would be the study abroad. In this sense, Ali seemed to be motivated going on an adventure together with anyone as he did not prefer participating alone. As Ali was influenced by his own cultural norms in the sense of brotherhood over his own interest, he viewed proceeding with registration for the BLCSI program as not possible without his friend Ahmed as they already agreed to do the adventure together.

6.4 The BLCSI program related experience

After Ali was encouraged by Ahmed, he continued with the process of his BLCSI program application. Under random distribution, Ali was sent to the United States, to host institute of Z. After attending a informing workshop provided by the MoE regarding preparation for the trip, Ali prepared himself for it financially such borrowing some money for his settling expenses. Ali initially expected that his learning would only be focused on the development of his English language fluency and competency by interacting with English language native speakers. Arriving to the USA after a long tiring trip, Ali firstly attended a workshop designed by the MoE through the SACM (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission). The workshop was preliminary to all the participating teachers which provided information regarding the objectives, design, and implementation of the BLCSI program in addition to advice on finding and so on. Ali, after that, flew to his host institute and started to look for a stay, which he found a stay with the help of Saudi students and SACM representatives in his host institute's city. During his time to find a stay, he attended an introductory workshop provided by his host institute which generally presented information related to the whole design of the program. However, Ali started his English language learning later than he expected due to the unplanned design of the program, which will be presented and analyzed in the next sections.

6.4.1 "vague and unplanned beginning"

Ali described the initial phase of the BLCSI program as he experienced that there was no clear plan at its beginning. Although the program was primarily focused on two main phases: English language learning and school immersion, Ali described the English language learning as well planned but the school immersion phase was not presented clearly to the participating teachers.

Excerpts (1.10.):
"To be honest, the program was not clear in the beginning. It was only normal English language classroom lessons and there was no presented clear plan for school immersion … there was, however, a clear plan for workshops to attend at the university or other private

institutes, all of these were already organized … In the beginning our host institute's objectives were not clear at all … it was its first time organizing the BLCSI program so the main supervisor flew to Saudi Arabia and attended an international conference for international universities and institutes and she gathered information of how to organize the BLCSI program from the host international sites who hosted the first cohort of the BLCSI program, so after her return, I felt that the plan of the program has changed as we were still studying English language and the host institute suddenly told us that it was enough of the English language learning and ready to go to the next phase … I think we were **l**ucky because the main supervisor took that step otherwise, I do not know what the program would look like and whether we would have wasted our time for nothing" (Interview 3, Pos. 86-100).

In this long excerpt (1.10.) Ali referred to the initial planning of the BLCSI program by his host institute as he described administers of the host institute as novice in hosting a specific program related to international schoolteachers by meeting the BLCSI program policies, for example in terms of organizing school immersion. However, Ali described the main supervisor of the host institute, who was responsible of organizing the program following the policies of BLCSI program, as a brave person taking the steps needed as travelled overseas during the English language learning phase to Saudi Arabia to attend the international universities' conference to learn and collect necessary information from other experienced institutes about how they have organized the first cohort of the BLCSI program. Ali presented himself as not pleased as he felt that the participating teacher were about to be victims of such unplanned program by the host institute if it was not for the main supervisor. However, Ali mentioned that this happened at the beginning of the program as he felt that his peers and him have wasted some time waiting the school immersion phase to be sorted out.

Excerpt (1.11.):
"To be honest, when we joined the ELT institute, it was during half semester, and it was difficult for them to let us just join in. Instead, they presented lectures and presentations about history of education in USA, leadership in education generally which were unplanned and improvisational for about two months … the language assessment was not as strict as we expected but at least strict enough for us to take it seriously" (interview 3, Pos. 88).

In this excerpt (1.11.) Ali reports that as a participating teacher had expectations that the program was already well organized. He portrayed that his rights were not fully obtained as he believed that the unplanned two months of lectures and presentations were a replacement of the English language learning phase as the institute was unable to establish a class for the participating teachers at the beginning of the program. From his experience as an English language teacher, Ali positioned himself as an observant and realizer of the rights and duties of an educational school. In Ali's eyes, he expected to be treated as a recipient of knowledge but what happened, even though was not well planned from the beginning, was that the participating teachers were already immersed in the program. He also felt that they were treated like teacher-learners. He viewed the

host institute as transparent in sharing every step they were about to implement regarding the design of the program and in being determined to cope with its obligations. Regarding the English language learning phase, Ali presented his views about how his level of English language was evaluated by the host institute. Ali positioned the host institute as strict but flexible as he believed that the host institute treated the participating teachers as international teachers learning English language and not international students.

6.4.2 "Engagement with my mentor"

Ali reported that he, within a group, had a mentor assigned by the host institute from the start till the end of the BLCSI program.

Excerpt (1.12.):
"the mentor's role was not only of guidance and supervisory but also academic … we were required to submit weekly reflection papers to our mentor" (Interview 3, Pos. 81-84).

In this excerpt (1.12.), Ali described his engagement with his mentor as a requirement which he was expected to be committed to doing tasks required such as weekly reflection papers. Ali as a participating teacher of the program seemed to have been represented as a student being evaluated giving the thought that his mentor was authoritative for learning progress tracking. Ali also used the word **required** as it was obligatory which entailed penalties when tasks were not fulfilled. However, Ali described the role of the mentor as being inclusive, in terms of guiding, supervising, and academic. Ali seemed to have found his mentor as a big help to his learning progress as he seemed motived to work with a group under a mentor's guidance especially academically as stressed it out in his story.

6.4.3 "host teachers: not all of them were welcoming"

Ali described his school immersion experience as an interactive and engaging opportunity learn within a different context. The school immersion experience was guided by a mentor in each school for introducing and organizational purposes between the host teachers and the participating teachers (observers).

Excerpt (1.13.):
"we found some host teachers welcoming and excited for us to learn and we encountered some other host teachers who did not give us the impression of welcoming as they switch from teaching to doing nothing but self-learning activities in classroom, so I felt maybe they were shy or uncomfortable to teach in our presence or maybe they thought that their teaching might not be of help to our learning, that was my impression during our classroom visits" (Interview 4, Pos. 88-90).

In this excerpt (1.13.), Ali portrayed being welcomed as an observant international teacher was differently experienced. He positioned some teachers as welcoming and excited to have visitors in their classrooms, and some others were the opposite. Ali viewed himself as immersing in schools as part of the host school, but he was seen by the host teachers as a visiting observer.

Ali assumed that having visitors was possibly imposed on the host teachers by the school mentors and leaders as he believed that the host teachers had the right to allow or reject any visitors in their classrooms. Ali also assumed that if the host teachers rejected the host school's matter of welcoming observing teachers in their classrooms, that would cost them their jobs. That because receiving the participating teachers into their classrooms was part of the partnership with the host institute that organized the BLCSI program entailing financial and collaborative long-term relationship.

Ali described their attitudes towards him and his peers as not encouraging. Ali represented his depiction of not being welcomed by observing the host teacher's switch of their way of teaching to a self-learning mode. Maybe the host teachers were asked to show Ali a different type of teaching and learning, but Ali initially viewed the situation from his own perspective influenced by his home context. At the end of his narrative in the excerpt ( ) Ali rectified his view by describing their action was influenced by the possibility that their thinking of their teaching would be not useful to Ali and his peers or that they were not used to hosting observing international teachers. Ali seemed to have represented his view form the point of view that he would not mind having visiting individuals observing his own class.

Excerpt (1.14.):
"if I were in the host teacher's place, I would have dealt with him by kicking him out of class, I was very upset not being able to deal with that student who was not respectful towards the host teacher" (Interview 4, Pos. 94).

In this excerpt (1.14.) Ali described his discontent over an incident that he observed during his school immersion experience. He portrayed the incident from his own contextual view by positioning the student as spoiled and disrespectful of his teacher while positioning the teacher as ignorant of his disrespectful action. At the same time, Ali positioned himself as a powerless observing teacher who was not required to take any action toward both the student and the teacher. However, Ali represented his discontent by expressing his feeling of discontent regarding the incident from an imaginary positioning of himself as the actual teacher of that class and how he would deal with the incident from his perspective. Ali expected the students to be only respectful recipients, but the teacher positioned the students as responsible of their learning and that she was only a facilitator.

6.4.4 "local school workshops were priceless opportunities"

Beside the workshops and activities organized by the host institute, Ali has invested in attending workshops, which were not required by the host institute once a semester organized by local public schools in the city of the host institute.

Excerpt (1.15.):
"There were also some local workshops intended for local schoolteachers and school staff once every semester, so we attended such workshops … local school workshops were priceless opportunities to attend … All local teachers gathered in three or four schools, it depends on their number, and then they present workshops for each other, it is more of a collaborative work … These workshops were for local and sometimes regional teachers (who teach different subjects) to gather in one place, and we get to know then and interact with them, at the end we all were schoolteachers, a teacher is from that secondary school and another one is from that secondary school and so on from different schools and districts" (Interview 3, Pos. 72-78).

Ali, in this excerpt (1.15.), was respectfully represented as international teacher by the local teachers. He was welcomed into their workshops. Ali described that attending workshops was a dream opportunity. Ali present local teachers as collaborative workers and knowledge sharers. He portrayed his initiating action to immerse in a different context as agentive and investing because attending local workshops was neither required by the BLCSI program policy nor offered by the host school. Through Ali's interaction with local schoolteachers in those local workshops, Ali had the opportunity to study for a CELTA certificate.

6.4.5 Unlucky to study a master's degree but obtained CELTA

At the beginning of the BLCSI program experience, Ali's objective and expectation was to engage with native speakers of English language and improve his English language skills; however, along the way he believed it was an opportunity to study for a master's degree, but unfortunately it was longer than the program period. Besides, he had a willingness to obtain it even though it would not be accepted by the MoE in Saudi Arabia when he returned because he might have needed a permission in advance from the MoE to be accredited afterword. This issue did not prevent him from trying to study a master's degree.

Excerpt (1.16.):
"Unlike some of my peers during the BLCSI program, I had this chance to study the CELTA course which I fully paid it myself in order to develop my way of English language teaching". (Interview 4, Pos. 146).

In this excerpt (1.16.), Ali presented himself as different from his other peers, the participating teacher as he had the chance to study for CELTA certificate for two intensive weeks. He portrayed

himself as an enthusiast in terms of utilizing any encountered opportunity motivated by factors such as his marital status, financial ability, commitment, ambition, and imagining a bright future considering the development of his teaching. Ali positioned himself as appreciative of his peers' circumstances as he would have preferred studying the CELTA together with his peers.

6.4.6 "my role model teacher: that is me after 10 years"

During his school immersion phase, Ali voluntarily attended Spanish classes, once a week for one semester, arranged by his host institute. He admired his Spanish class teacher, from Mexico, so he saw her as a more developed mirror of himself.

Excerpt (1.17.):
I was seeing myself in her as mirroring my teaching back home following a traditional teaching style but more developed in teaching strategies she used and the way she treated her students as I felt that students were free to move around and be active while the teacher being more facilitator, so I impatiently wait for this class every week to learn from it. She used to present a box at the beginning of the class and collect students' phones and electronics so they would be distracted from the lesson. I remember one of her students, she told me about, was weak in learning Spanish in the first level but at the end of the second level she was the best and outstanding student in her class. I saw that student in person and saw the result. I attended two other Spanish classes with two different teachers as well as French classes, but I saw they differed from the Spanish teacher who I admired. She was the best and my inspiring teacher and my model language teacher, and I told myself: that is me in 2025" (Interview 3, Pos. 130-140)

In this excerpt (1.17.), Ali portrayed himself as an observer of his peer's class rather than a student and described his teacher as a copy of an imaginary more-developed Ali in few years to come. Ali saw her as a mirror of him in treating students but more developed in teaching methods and strategies. Ali seemed to have always impatient to attend her class as he believed that they had mutual characteristics. He positioned her as a very competent teacher in terms of treating her students and delivering her lessons. Ali described her as a traditional teacher in terms of principals and strictness, but he presented himself as novice when he compared himself to her advanced teaching strategies. Ali's admiration of his teacher's way of teaching was proven as he confirmed the positive output and transformation of one of her students. As he found his dream teacher to observe, Ali considered her as a role model that he wanted to be just like her in the future. Nevertheless, he humbly recognized his yet-learn long journey. Finding an inspiring teacher seemed to have reminded Ali of his inspiring teacher in his childhood.

6.4.7 "I could not get the idea of *agent for change* of my shoulders"

Because Ali had experienced two different contexts, he had been continuously thinking about the relationship in schools. He believed that he as a participating teacher had a responsibility on his

shoulder to carry out a duty of transferring his learning experience to his home country as a leader of change.

Excerpt (1.18.):
After the semester ended, they told us that it was time for educational lectures, more specifically related to leadership and more specifically to the idea of agent for change, and they would also provide more related lectures in the next semester. To be honest, I could not get the idea of leaders of change of my shoulders" (Interview 3, Pos. 86-90).

In this excerpt (1.18.), Ali described this responsibility as he had to be committed to develop himself personally and professionally regarding English language learning and up-to-date teaching.

He believed that the phrase *agent for change* was ascribed to them by the BLCSI program policymakers and host institute staff as the participating teachers had been positioned as *agent for change*. He had felt as a participating teacher that this big responsibility was stressing. At the same time, it was motivational for him to improve his skills and acquire new skills as he viewed himself committed to achieve his and the program objectives.

Excerpt (1.19.):
"The program had a cascade objective which was basically one of the conditions to join the program is to transfer what you learn from the program to other teachers back home" (Interview 4, Pos. 22).

Ali represented this objective of the BLCSI program in excerpt ( ) as part of the idea of *agent for change* as the program expected Ali and his peers to be influencing agents on teachers back in Saudi Arabia. Ali felt it was a huge responsibility to meet the cascade objective even though Ali as a participating teacher in the program was already informed of this objective. Ali portrayed his commitment to learn and improve himself was not only for the cascade objective but also for personal development.

Doing research, a research project, was a required part of Ali's journey during the program.

The idea of agent for change came in handy in motivating him to do his topic on what had been concerning him over the years of his teaching experience.

Ali viewed that the idea of change might be difficult to implement but at least to be change on a personal level and that might positively influence his colleagues. Ali imagined himself as a change agent in terms of relationships between him and his colleagues and students. Being confident about this recurring and annoying issue that he had been struggling with, he chose his research topic on the issue of *student-student, student-teacher, teachers-teacher relationships*. Ali seemed he was not confident enough to implement change and the cascade approach on his teachers and

students; however, conducting research on the origin of the issue mattered to Ali as it would help him in at least dealing with his relationship with others in school.

Excerpt (1.20.):
"I always had this idea related to school learning and interactive environment so when I first was informed by the mentor that I will have to do research on a specific topic, I said to myself that I have one in mind already; however, when I started doing research, it was not as easy as I expected to be … It was very difficult to the extent in which I almost lost interest in doing research" (Interview 2, Pos. 192-194).

In this excerpt (1.20.), Ali described himself being inexperienced in doing research. He expected research to be an easy task but was the opposite. Ali believed that because he already had had a topic or issue to do research on and portrayed himself as capable of researching the issue. However, Ali realized being novice due to his weak research skills and that he needed doing more efforts in doing research since he was considered being a teacher researcher. Ali reported that doing research was required as part of the BLCSI program, it seemed that conducting research for Ali was difficult. Ali felt he was positioned as a learner by the BLCSI program but was treated as a teacher researcher by the host institute. Being mentored and treated as a researcher, Ali was motivated to be committed to do research. In this sense, Ali assumed the host institute was professional in treating its students according to their status, as teachers. He felt it during the relationship he had had with his mentor.

6.5 Post-BLCSI program experience

For nearly 12 months on the abroad experience of the BLCSI program, Ali had improved his English language skills, learned strategies and employment of English language teaching through school immersion, doing research, attending workshops and seminars, and observation of his language teachers in his host institute. He had also learned from his exposure to his mentors, peers, teachers, and local teachers. He regretted not being able to obtain his master's degree abroad but was grateful for the opportunities in which he got his CELTA certificate. He viewed his abroad experience as informing and insightful to his English language learning and teaching. He believed it changed his way of reassessing his English language teaching and relationships with individuals within his school. He believed that education abroad was more advanced to his own country education in terms of ways of teaching. Therefore, he hoped that he would transfer his learning to and employ what he had experienced into his own context.

6.5.1 "I want to go back to my latest school"

After finishing the BLCSI program and returning home to teach, it was expected for Ali to be assigned to teach to any available school other than his last school before joining the BLCSI program. He was already aware of it as he was informed by the BLCSI program policymakers which Ali agreed to comply with it and he was expected to be flexible about any decision.

Excerpt (1.21.):
"After my return form the program, I went to the regional MoE in my city to receive the letter to go to school. I was surprised that I was directed to my old school that I did not like. I refused and insisted on any other school but the one they chose for me. I told them that it is okay for me to go to an elementary school as I just wanted to be directed to any other school other than that school I dislike going to. I saw hope as they were lenient with me considering my preference, even though it took some time. Finally, I was directed to the last school I was teaching at before joining the program, which I liked the most. I was very thankful" (Interview 4, Pos. 4-8).

In this excerpt (1.21.) Ali described himself as an inflexible teacher to teach at any school assigned by the regional MoE in his city through the Jadarah system, which is a platform that is electronically managed by the MoE including the distribution of teachers to schools in terms of the seniority of a teacher within the system (OECD, 2020). That was due to being directed to teach in the school that he disliked which had many conflicts with its staff (see excerpt 1.7.). He described his shock as the school he disliked was the choice the regional MoE had made. It seemed Ali had no intention to refuse any proposed school and was flexible about it but reading the name of the school in the letter was shockingly disappointing to Ali as that brought his memories of his unpleasant past in that school. At that moment, Ali seemed he was not confident to work in a discouraging environment and had not thought about whether the school staff. Ali described that the employees of the regional MoE were lenient and understanding of his situation in addition to highly regarding him as a graduate of the BLCSI program. Another reason for Ali to request being assigned to his latest school was because he impatiently waited for the moment when he met his inspiring colleague Salem.

6.5.2 "my inspiring colleague's encouragement to do initiatives"

After being relocated to his latest school, Ali met his inspiring friend Salem, his other collaborative colleagues, and the school principal where had been warmly welcomed back.

Excerpt (1.22.):

> "there was a competition for English language learners in school for talented speakers and talented listeners of English language, so my colleague who is always doing this initiative suggested for me to lead this competition and I refused out of courtesy in respect of him having more experience than me in English language teaching and leading initiatives and being the leader in this school, beside his age, in which I was very happy and waiting for this chance, so he insisted on me; then, I agreed to do it if I can lead it in his name out of respect for him, but he refused and insisted that I lead the competition myself in my name and he offered his full support if needed … if the teacher does not initiate ideas and start looking for collaboration from others then others may not initiate or start up ideas" (Interview 4, Pos. 38-39).

In the incident in this excerpt (1.22.) Ali presented himself as a creative thinker in terms of the initiation of activities in school. He also described himself as being influenced by his inspiring colleague "Salem" for being an encourager, for example, when Salem had encouraged Ali to be the next leading initiating leader in school. Ali viewed Salem as an experienced, older, courteous, initiating, and leading person. Ali added that Salem as an example not only to him but also to the whole school because Salem was a committed and collaborative teacher and respectful of his rights and duties in school.

Ali positioned himself as hesitant to take on initiatives within a domain of cultural factors in which colleagues respect each other in terms of age, status, and teaching experience. He believed that Salem would be not pleased if Ali shined but it was the opposite of Ali's expectations. Ali portrayed Salem's continuous requests for Ali to take on initiatives which represented Salem's collaborative and friendly characteristic. Through the excerpt (1.22.) there was presented the insistence and support Salem showed to Ali to take on the initiative. Ali portrayed Salem as a unique and humble person. Ali portrayed Salem as a humble knowledge seeker regardless of his years of experience in teaching English.

6.5.3 "engaging in my English language supervisor in a workshop"

Few months after Ali's return, Ali participated in a workshop organized by the regional MoE in his city for English language teachers and supervisors. Surprisingly, Ali was on the same table with his previous English language supervisor. Ali reported that he had an argument over a topic for discussion during the workshop.

Excerpt (1.23.):
"Last semester, I attended a workshop for English language teachers and supervisors. I met my supervisor who attended my three months ago and we had an argument about a topic of the discussion. We had different perspectives and I did want to deeply dive in my perspective as I felt the argument would develop into a conflict. Few months later, he attended my lesson, and he was so excited to observe my lesson. I honestly did not expect that. Then, he went to the principal office and complemented my lesson and gave a positive

impression about me and my way of teaching. That was a surprise for me, and it motivated me a lot to do even better" (Interview 4, Pos. 76).

Ali in the excerpt (1.23.) represented himself as a teacher who had the right to attend workshops even if supervisors were among the participants. In Ali's eyes, he portrayed that they, Ali and his supervisor, were the same in terms of qualifications despite the nature of their jobs but at the same time he believed there was a difference in terms of authority which gave the supervisor more credit. Ali had argued with his supervisor but had not insisted on his perspective about his argument even though Ali believed he was right about it.

Ali positioned himself during the workshop discussion as respectful of his supervisor considering the possibility that his supervisor might give him a low score when attending Ali's lesson in school. At the same time, Ali assumed that his supervisor represented Ali as a graduate of the BLCSI program and viewed Ali as showing off his abroad learning development. Holding back on his argument, Ali positioned himself as inferior to his supervisor. Few months later, Ali was visited by his supervisor and that the supervisor was impressed with Ali's lesson. Ali felt that his supervisor was supportive and humble as Ali expected him to be the opposite. Ali then felt more confirming of his competency, than before joining the BLCSI program, in doing his lesson. A month later, his supervisor proposed Ali's name to participate in an initiative regarding the assessment of students' productivity organized by the regional MoE as an evaluator of students. Ali represented his supervisor's action as was not being expected due the incident of the workshop. Ali then described his supervisor as humble and professional in his work and did not take their argument personal or from a perspective of superiority. Ali described his judgment based on his engagement with unprofessional teachers and supervisors within his local context.

6.5.4 "It is true … I have changed … I became a lenient teacher with my students"

Ali reported his confirmation of change in his relationship with his colleagues and students through an incidental talk with his colleagues occurred in school which made Ali viewed himself as a change teacher.

Excerpt (1.24.):
"before joining the BLCSI program, my relationship towards my students was a bit rough and dry … I became very interested in gaining the student's trust and liking and try to overlook lots of things that students do in order to strengthen my relationship with the student … my colleagues, school principal and I were once sitting together with the principal and other teachers in a break time. The principal praises me saying: Ali, you were once a very tough and rough teacher on students unlike now you are different. I laughed and said: no, I believe I am more lenient than before with me students. Other colleagues supported what the principal said. They said: no, Ali, we agree with what the principal said; you have

changed a lot in your relationship with your students. When you first came to this school, students barely breath because of your strictness and roughness. After you joined the program, you became very caring about and lenient with your students … It is true, I have changed, I became a lenient teacher with my students. I feel I now treat them as my brothers comparing to the past as I used to treat then as receiving objects" (Interview 4, pos. 98-103).

Ali, throughout this excerpt (1.24.), had reflexively described himself as a change teacher. He felt he was seen as a change teacher by his colleagues in which after many occasions he had a confirmed feeling a change about himself. He described that his treatment towards his students was because he considered them as receiving objects and that their actions in the classroom were a distraction to Ali's focus on his lessons. He positioned himself as a sensitive and strict teacher which he used to prefer seeing students as statues because he was influenced by his childhood trauma and his old teachers' treatment towards him. He portrayed his colleagues as observers of his behaviors as they had noticed his change towards his students which reinforced his realization of his own change. So, the positioning ascribed on him by his colleagues made Ali's feeling and treatment towards his students by viewing them as **brothers** in which described himself as a **lenient** teacher rather than a strict teacher.

The change for Ali was not only related to his relationship with others but also extended to his way of teaching.

Excerpt (1.25.):
"After my return from the program, I tried to use applications like PowerPoint to present some activities in my own way so students can understand it better" (interview 4, Pos. 111).

In this excerpt (1.25.), Ali described himself as digital teacher and more authoritative over his own lesson. Ali presented the use of technology during his lessons as emphasis on agentively creating or presenting some activities related to his lesson which were not assigned in the taught textbook. Using his own way following the objective of learning in the textbook, Ali positioned himself as a creative and agentive teacher teaching his own way within the domain of his rights and duties in which he committed himself to his students' rights to understand the lesson in a better way.

Excerpt (1.26.):
"as I saw myself becoming a 180-degree different English language teacher … I used to give my lessons as one whole lesson, but I learned to give the lesson to students piece by piece and in a gradual way either using, for example, a bottom-up approach, and other many things I learned" (Interview 4, Pos. 162).

Ali positioned himself as a totally changed teacher *"180-degree different"* viewing the way of his teaching as different from what he used to before joining the program. He described himself as he learned from the abroad experience. He might not be exaggerating in terms of being changed because he linked his change to his abroad learning. He also emphasized that he was influenced by his abroad learning portraying himself as a dynamic teacher in terms of planning for his lessons using specific approaches of teaching new to his teaching set.

6.5.5 "I started to attend conferences and think to study for a master's degree"

As part of Ali's professional journey, he wanted to continuously improve himself professionally. So, he attended conferences in preparation to applying for a master's degree.

Excerpt (1.27.):
"Th idea of getting a master's degree is still present after returning from abroad. It was difficult before as for the requirement of passing both IELTS and University Students Assessment which are required for entry in higher education studies. My desire to get a master's degree in English teaching has still been in my mind and now I am going to get into the process as I have now IELTS, CELTA, and BLCSI. I believe I would have a better chance now to get in one of the master programs provided here in Saudi Arabia. This idea of getting a master's degree is going to be a priority in my plans" (Interview 4, Pos. 115-125).

Ali, in this excerpt (1.27.), portrayed himself as capable teacher who were qualified to apply for a master's degree program from the perspective of obtaining the necessary requirement for being admitted to a master's program including being a graduate of the BLCSI program, IELTS test, and CELTA certificate as well as attendance to conferences. So, Ali seemed he did not give up on studying the master's degree, but he viewed himself as unable and unqualified to do it before joining the program. He seemed confident by saying "*I have a better chance*" that any university offering a master's degree would be very pleased with his achievements and he would be accepted. However, he did not apply to a master program (by the time of the interview) but he only prioritized accomplishing this idea. It seemed that it might be related to financial issues because most of the master programs had already become privatized.

6.6 Conclusion

Ali has reported his English language learning and teaching journey before, during, and after the BLCSI program. He presented how the challenges he went through as a learner and a teacher and how they are related in his construction of his identity. Navigating the program, Ali presented his abroad learning experience as he was under pressure at the beginning of the program due to the unclear start of the program alongside being informed of the expected outcomes of the program including the cascade objective and the idea of agent of change; nevertheless, he felt he had

experienced supporting and engaging learning environments. After his return from the program, Ali reported his change as a professional teacher being influenced by the abroad experience.

Chapter 7 Sami's Story Analysis

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter addressed Ali's story analysis on how he constructed his identity through positioning as an English language teacher before, during and after the BLCSI program. This chapter analyzes Sami's story. Represented in his story informing narratives considering positioning which unfold his identity construction in relation to his journey of learning and teaching English language in addition to being a participant of the BLCSI program. Opposite to Ali's persona of valuing group work, Sami seemed to have performed a curious and autonomous persona. He depicted his story on how his agency had developed over time by investing in and being autonomous when dealing with school and social activities and how he had dealt with challenges and struggles and how imagined himself in the future.

Sami valued volunteering and doing societal initiatives that were beneficial for students in school; however, his initiation of activities was contested by his surroundings, for example his colleagues in school, more specifically when failure occurred (explained in 7.3.5). Nonetheless, he continued doing his initiatives and constructing a leading persona through continuous volunteering work in his local and study abroad contexts. Although Sami had encountered various challenges, he continued to chase after his imagined self considering investing into the opportunity of his participation into the BLCSI program in addition to his imagined plans to be implemented after his return from the abroad experience.

In the following sections, the analysis of Sami's story is presented in a chronological way considering his journey pre-, during, and post- the BLCSI program. The pre-BLCSI program phase involves his journey of learning English language, majoring in English language teaching, working as a teacher and principal in a private school, and then his journey as an official teacher in public schools including the challenges he encountered. After that, his story continues to address his BLCSI program related experience in terms of his expectations of the program, its implementation and design in accordance with the BLCSI program policy documents. The post-BLCSI program experience includes what had changed for him in terms of teaching and learning English language and his imagined self and how he dealt with the MoE expectations from him and the encountered challenges.

7.2 Analysis of Sami's story

Going briefly back to Sami's background, as described in chapter 4 (4.5.3.2) he is an in-service English language teacher with a 10-year English language teaching experience who participated in the BLCSI program. His attachment to learning English language started when he studied in Aramco for one year. At the end of his Aramco study, he was advised by someone who worked for Aramco to continue his English language learning for better future and better jobs. Sami then studied his bachelor's degree in English language teaching. After that, he graduated and taught in a private international school, teaching an elementary level, since he did not get an official job by the MoE. After teaching for one year in the private school, he was appointed as an English language teacher teaching in a state secondary level school for one year. During this period, he got married. He then transferred to two different schools: one was a secondary level school where he taught for about five years and the second one was an intermediate level school which he had taught at for three years. The latter was his latest school before joining the program. During his teaching journey, he always volunteered and initiated social activities and initiatives for students. He was ambition to continue his higher education. The BLCSI was a chance for him to participate and experience studying abroad. He joined the BLCSI program where his curiosity to learn and explore various things was fulfilled. The abroad experience positively influenced his ways of teaching and increased his passion to help his students and others in his society.

7.3 Pre-BLCSI program experience

Starting with this section of the pre-BLCSI program experience, I will analyze important moments of Sami's experience as a learner and a teacher of English language which influenced his decision making through positioning in dealing with situations in relation to his surroundings inside and outside school. In addition, the analysis will include how he agentively dealt with challenges encountered whether he overcame or hindered by such circumstances. Therefore, this section of the analysis will contribute to our understanding of how Sami constructed his identity through positioning as an English language teacher during the time before joining the abroad program.

7.3.1 "My attachment to English language started in ARAMCO"

Sami started his journey to be attached to English language learning after he studied English language for one year in Aramco. He described it as it had a very tough English language program for one year followed by a job offered by Aramco. However, he did not continue his study to get the Aramco's job as he felt it was not the place where he wanted to be far away from his family. Because of his family circumstances, Sami was lost in choosing whether to continue with getting

the Aramco job or leaving it. Fortunately for Sami, his decision on leaving Aramco was influenced by someone who worked in the Aramco program who advised Sami to continue his English language learning for better future and opportunities as he recognized Sami's high ambitions. His advice made Sami rethink of his future, so he decided to leave Aramco and continue studying English language.

Sami stayed for a while looking for options of study and then he applied for an English language major in a college of A (a pseudonym) in his city where his family lived. Then, his journey to be an English language teacher started.

Excerpt (2.1.):
"I studied for one year in Aramco and then left it even though the job was guaranteed. I started to look for other options and I found myself attached to English. My attachment to English language started in Aramco. I had many options, but I felt a sense of belonging to English language, so I applied to specialized in English language in college of A even though it was competitive to be accepted … going back to the main reason that influenced my decision to leave Aramco was someone in the Aramco program who advised me saying, *it would be a waste of your ambition to only study for one year and then get a job.* He said, *it would be better for you to continue my bachelor's degree in English language to have a better chance in getting a better job.* That made me think that I will get a better chance if I study a bachelor degree because I realized it was a degree matter. The more level of degree the better chances of getting better jobs. Another reason that I reflexively felt that I would have more freedom if I studied in college unlike Aramco which I would be under pressure work there even far away from my family" (Interview 1, Pos. 4 & 73-75).

In this excerpt, Sami presented himself as both an advice taker and an agentive person in changing his decision from almost being an engineer to wanting to continuing to be an English language learner. Sami reported that there was a senior person who triggered his thinking about his future and portrayed him as an influencer in which made him think again about his decision of continuing his study and not getting the Aramco job. That person[3] viewed Sami as an ambitious person and that Aramco might not be the best place for his ambition growth. Sami seemed to have reflexively given his situation more thought he felt that he had a sense of belonging to English language in addition to his family circumstances if he stayed in Aramco far away from family. Sami's reflexive thoughts influenced his decision in terms of the freedom of choice he would have if he continued his English language learning in addition to getting better jobs. Sami did not seem reluctant as he measured the better chances in the two separate routes and took the longest which was continuing his English language learning.

[3] Sami did not disclose any further information about this person other than a person who was working in Aramco at that time who seemed that Sami thought highly of.

Sami seemed to have learned from the one-year study in Aramco in terms of English language skills. After that he applied to College of A for teachers, in his city where his family resided, majoring in English language. Even though being admitted to the English language major in college of A was competitive, Sami described himself confident about being accepted because of his past one-year English learning experience in Aramco.

Excerpt (2.2.):
"The four-year English language program had been a bit challenging. If it were not for the Aramco one-year program, it would have been very difficult as the Aramco program was a very intensive English language learning … Throughout my study at college of A, I did not go through any training for teaching because the English language major was associated with college of arts. However, I liked the program as it was very inspiring being more specialized on how to teach each English language skill … three years after I graduated for college, I heard that there is a one-year program for teacher training provided by the MoE for graduate students. It is a good one year study for graduates. If I knew about it at that time, it would have contributed very much to my learning-to-teach process" (Interview 1, Pos. 10 & 90).

In this excerpt, Sami depicted himself as an English language learner with previous knowledge about the English language skills from his one-year study in Aramco. He gave the advantage of his level of English language to his Aramco learning experience. Sami described his English language at College of A as a bit challenged as challenging because it concerned with specializing in English language teaching. He realized that learning to communicate in English language was different from teaching it. Therefore, because he liked anything challenging, he portrayed his college study as motivating. Sami seemed to have confirmed his decision, after taking the advice from someone in Aramco, of wanting to be a specialized English language teacher.

Sami also represented his study in college of A to be an English language teacher as an incomplete experience because he did not practice teaching at the end of his college study. He described himself as a graduate student who did not know about the one-year diploma for graduate students. He seemed that he wished he had known about it. However, he seemed to have gained better experience in teaching in the private sector school, explained in the next section.

7.3.2 "School principal in the private sector … tough experience"

After graduating from college of A studying for four years, Sami applied to the MoE to be an English language teacher. However, he did not get a teaching job. Sami did not want to sit around waiting for the MoE teaching job, so he applied to teach in a private international school. Because he was a graduate English language teacher, he wanted to experience teaching as a teacher in any school available. He applied to teach in the private sector even though private school teaching was not sought out by graduate teachers unless in the sense of developing teaching experience

for several reasons. In this sense, Sami seemed to have only favored obtaining an experience in English language teaching over working permanently in the private sector for teaching. That was because he received a very low monthly pay in the private sector in comparison with a good monthly payment in the state sector in addition to securing his job and convenient pension salary.

Excerpt (2.3.):
"I got a job at a private international school. I taught and then worked as a school principal for one year in Riyadh, far away from home. It was a very tiring job as I felt under pressure all time … For one semester, I taught for 30 lessons a week which was over the specified limit of 24 lessons per week. Sometimes when finish all my work and duties at 12pm I cannot go home but I had to stay until 4pm the end of their workday otherwise my monthly pay will be deducted. The school was only concerned with money. My monthly pay was very low comparing to my teaching overload. Then, I worked for another semester as a principal, it was a very tiring job. It was deadly. However, teaching and working there benefited me in developing my English language teaching experience" (Interview 2, Pos. 15-16 & 63-69).

Sami in this excerpt, portrayed himself as a pressured teacher in relation to his challenging experience as both a teacher and a principal in a private international school. As an English language teacher, Sami felt he was "treated as a robot", teaching an overload of 30 lessons a week, with low payment. Even though Sami learned from this experience, he felt that he was a victim being exploited in terms of workload and payment. He felt that his rights as a teacher were invaded since it was a private school. If he would argue about it as "it would cost me my job as the private school would look for a replacement." He depicted that the international private school had mattered finance over humans as a private school. Even though it was challenging for Sami to teach, he portrayed himself as a striving and committed person in his job. The school seemed to have recognized Sami's commitment and promoted Sami to be its school principal. Working as a teacher for one semester, Sami described it as a very tiring experience which might have led him to burnout. By this description, Sami positioned himself as a patient and committed teacher with leadership skills which was recognized by the stakeholders of his international private school which viewed Sami through the first semester as teacher with leadership skills. This had led the school to appoint Sami as a leader for the next second semester. Their action was in pursuit in keeping Sami in their school, but Sami preferred not to stay for longer due to the nature of his exhausting work with low payment. However, his experience had taught Sami patience and commitment and developed his teaching and leading skills. By the time Sami finished his one-year experience in his international private school, he was appointed by the MoE as an official English language teacher in public secondary school in Riyadh, which was far away from his family.

7.3.3 "students' number was unexpectedly disastrous"

Sami gained teaching and leading experience including patience and commitment from his one-year teaching in the international private school. After that, he became an official English language teacher teaching in a state secondary level school. During that time, he encountered several challenges as a new teacher. Among them was the dilemma of overcrowded classrooms. Sami reflexively compared between his experience in the private sector to the state sector in terms of the organization and distribution of classroom size, which he liked in the private sector[4]. However, he tried to deal with the oversized classrooms during his delivery of his lessons.

Excerpt (2.4.):
"On my first day at a secondary school as an official newly appointed teacher, I was surprised by very overcrowded classrooms for over 50 students in a class. Students' number was unexpectedly disastrous. It was a real problem. However, comparing the private international school experience, I felt more comfortable even though students' number was an issue" (Interview 2, Pos. 11-14).

Sami initially portrayed himself as a shocked novice teacher in terms of teaching and dealing with an unexpectedly big number of students, in this excerpt. He expected the state sector to be as organized as the private sector in terms of students' number. He represented the disastrous situation of teaching about 50 students in one class as negatively influencing his duty to teach as expected from him by the school and curriculum. His expectation of the number of students in one class would be a maximum of 30 students. However, Sami had to adopt to the challenge of oversized classrooms as he obtained a permanent job when became an official English language teacher in which solving the students' number issue was not his job but the MoE's. That was because he as a school principal in the private sector would have an authority in managing and organizing students' number in accordance with private schools' policies but in the state sector, he was only a teacher. Though he could raise his voice to the MoE but the solution would always be implemented by the MoE. Sami's teaching experience between the private and state sector seemed to have make him compare between the two contexts. Sami seemed that he had reflexively looked at his own comparison by favoring the state sector over the private sector in terms of heavy-load teaching and non-secured job in addition to low payment in the private sector. As a new official teacher, Sami felt that he was required to teach the assigned number of lessons by the school principal regardless of the big student number which was beyond his limits.

[4] Unlike state sector schools, private sector schools are always well-equipped with learning and teaching tools and learning resources and well-designed in terms of attracting classrooms because they care about their customers' satisfaction and comfort in providing a suitable school environment for students and teachers.

By describing the situation of crowded classrooms as disastrous, Sami recognized the difficulty to implement such useful teaching strategies beside the lack of learning resources. Sami had only a better chance to find normal sized school in terms of students' number by applying to a transfer to another school. So, he applied to transfer to a school in his family's city.

7.3.4 "Some supervisors acted with an inspective mentality"

During Sami's teaching journey and transferring to two other schools (see section 7.2), he had encountered challenging moments with his English language supervisors[5]. Sami's encountered moments with his supervisors were related to his expectations of his supervisors' feedback on his teaching of lessons and that their role was to contribute the learning and teaching process of teachers with informing and critical comments. Because some of his English language supervisors did not focus on teaching related issues to be improved, Sami viewed them as not doing their jobs properly as they acted as inspectors.

Excerpt (2.5.):
"It was a shame that some supervisors acted with inspective mentality. They did not work as there were a learning or teaching objective to be achieved or implemented collaboratively … some supervisors did not take their jobs seriously as they visited schools only for the purpose of visiting and not for educational outcomes or objectives. Their visits were not informing as they only visit schools so no upper ranking employees would check on their work if they did it or not" (Interview 1, Pos. 90-92).

In this excerpt, Sami portrayed himself as a suffering teacher who had been unhappy with the ways of supervision of his English language supervisors during their visits to his lessons as he described them as inspectors. Sami expected them to be professional in doing their work in the sense of only acting like supervisors but like mentors. That was because a supervisor is viewed as to be a reference for the teacher in terms of knowledge and experience. Sami's portrayal was related to the way some supervisor treated their jobs in relation to not sharing their critical comments but only inspecting and looking for flaws as they expected the teacher to be perfect. Sami seemed to have valued learning from his supervisors but he they seemed lacking in sharing and exchanging their knowledge and experience with Sami. Sami seemed to have valued learning from his supervisors as he expected a supervisor to be an example for the teacher who would at least share with the teacher a teaching related discussion or comments drawn from their

[5] An English language supervisor is a supervisor, who is a former English language teacher appointed by the MoE. His job is to visit teachers of his major, for example English language teachers, in all school levels. Every supervisor is assigned to certain number of teachers. During his visits to classes, he observes the teachers' teaching including strategies, dealing with students, activities, and so on. Then, he assessed the teacher's teaching and discuss with them if there are any improvements to be considered. His assessment is then recorded in the teacher's file as part of the overall assessment of the teacher's teaching.

experiences or the experiences of teachers they visited. Being upset of this issue, Sami seemed to have no objection of being presented with comments or discussion to be improved, but he was not pleased with their treatment towards him and their jobs. He portrayed them as only job doers with no planned objectives. At the same time, they were required to submit a report of their visits. Sami viewed the issue was that some supervisors, who only visited his lessons with no plan of what they should observe and discuss with the teacher, would only look for any flaw related or unrelated to teaching so they could complete their reports. So, that was why they act as inspectors.

7.3.5 "my failing social initiative was seen as annoying"

Apart from his view on some of his English language supervisors, he recalled some challenging moments that he encountered during his volunteering in social activities related to school. He was annoyed by his colleagues' treatment of him after a failure of a social initiative that he voluntarily worked on. It was a social initiative for students that he did during a whole semester, but it failed at the end of the semester. It was partnership with a dental clinic for students at his school to have discounts if they went to that dental clinic. It would benefit students, the school, and the clinic itself. However, he was not as much disappointed in its failure but in how its failure was perceived as annoying by his colleagues.

Excerpt (2.6.):
"I remember I did a social initiative with a dental clinic. It was a societal partnership that was to benefit students. As we continued with all students being registered and initially consulted by dentists of the clinic and we informed their parents to further continue with the clinic if they wanted to, the clinic withdrew for no justified reason after we worked on it for a whole semester. I was disappointed. After the failure of that initiative, some colleagues in my school said to me: '*what you have been doing all this time was annoying for us and it was for nothing'*. So, my social initiative was seen as annoying. However, the issue was that some of them were only caring for what benefited them personally … even the school principal and his vice president did not attend the meeting with the dental company even though I already informed them that their attendance would be important for the partnership. I was very embarrassed when they did not show up"(Interview 1, Pos. 64).

Sami, in this excerpt, depicted himself as an annoyed initiator in relation to some of his colleagues' perceived view of him as an annoying teacher. In the embedded story in the excerpt, Sami seemed to have been bothered by what their commentary on the failure of his initiative and how they pictured his initiative as annoying after its failure. It seemed that Sami took the initiative seriously while his colleagues and school principal did not. Sami had expected supporting voices, but it was the opposite. Sami, because of their discouraging comments, portrayed them as not caring about what he did as neither of them had helped him during his initiative nor stood with

him after his failure. Instead, they only complained on something which they did not take part in. Sami portrayed himself different from them as an active agent doing initiatives in relation to their complaining manner. In addition, Sami expected the principal and his vice-president to attend the partnership meeting, but they did not show up. He felt that they did not think highly of Sami, in which he was ignored. Sami felt embarrassed as the company expected to see the principal of the school. His absence to the meeting was a meaning of withdrawal by the school principal. Being embarrassed did not prevent Sami from proceeding with the meeting and taking the lead to try.

It seemed that Sami was aware that doing social initiatives outside school (partnership) was not his responsibility in which it was the school principal's. However, he acted from the perspective of the teacher role to students and the school role towards the society including sharing responsibility with parents. This also comes from his previous experience (see excerpt 2.3.) working as a private international school principal influenced by business partnerships which would benefit organisations and individuals. Sami seemed to have learned from this incident that volunteering to do initiatives or activities was rewarding so to continue to do initiatives that were beneficial for school students.

7.3.6 "I could not do it … poor design of the teachers' room"

Another challenge which Sami had encountered in his latest school, the intermediate level school, was in relation to the school environment, more specifically the teachers' office room. Sami seemed to care considerably about the educational environment of school as an encouraging site for learning and accomplishing tasks.

Excerpt (2.7.):
"The problem we had was that the school environment was **zero**. What I specifically mean is that there was no care towards the teachers' office room. Sometimes I wanted to accomplish something related to my lessons, I could not do it because of the poor design of the teacher's room in which I did not even have a proper table. I would have to do my work at home in which I waste a valuable school time. It was very discouraging, and I believe it poor design of the teacher's room would affect their performances. So, when I used to work on my lessons at school out of my teaching hours, I used to get distracted a lot by some colleagues' talk and I would feel I achieved nothing, so that was why I preferred doing my work at home. Even the teachers did not care about it. They should have at least be collaborative about it even it was personally financed like some other schools" (Interview 2, Pos. 93).

Sami, in this excerpt, presented himself as a distressed teacher recalling his concern over the design of the teachers' room which affected his performance. Sami portrayed himself as a schoolteacher as being neglected of having a proper office room which he considered as one of his rights to have a comfortable environment to work at. Sami described how careless his

colleagues and the school principal about this issue as they did not keep requesting from the MoE that the teacher' room to be reconstructed. Sami did not seem to be sensitive about such an issue but seemed uncomfortable. Sami represented his colleagues as being adopted to and fine with such not-organized teachers' office room as not wanting to collaborate in reconstructing their office room on their expense, himself included. They seemed to believe it was the school and the MoE responsibility for providing a suitable office room for teachers. Sami portrayed his readiness towards having an encouraging environment to work confronted with his colleague being relaxed about improving nothing. Therefore, Sami described his school's environment as zero which was metaphorically referred to having a poorly designed teachers' room in addition to some his colleagues being distractors when he spent his school time doing school learning related work.

7.3.7 "I wished every teacher had their own classroom"

During his school teaching experience, Sami was a type of teacher who would much care for a good school environment in terms of school design and well-equipped classrooms where he worked. Because of Sami's previous struggle with having a poor teachers' office room in his intermediate level school, he had encountered other challenges related to his classroom environment, precisely technology-related issues. Sami struggled with the in-classroom technology tools for teaching and learning purposes as a lack of learning resources, so he could easily focus on teaching and learning.

Excerpts (2.8.):
"Honestly speaking, I had a problem with technology. Sometimes the teacher had to work on his own solving the lack of technology tools issue. For example, for me I hoped we had learning resources available to promote students' learning. Years ago, I brought my own wireless projector which I could link to my phone, which costed me about SAR2800. After that, it turned out that the curriculum CD of interactive learning did fit the projector, so I used my oy own laptop. So, it very tiring for me carrying my laptop and projector with me every time I go in or out of classroom and home. It was very tiring and worrisome for me. So, I reached a conclusion that the fixed-to-wall projector is irreplaceable. I wished every teacher had their own classroom. I would gladly rebuild my classroom and equip it with tables, projectors, painting, decorations, learning posters and everything I would need, and I would be ready to do it without any hesitation. Unfortunately, I could not since I taught moving from a classroom to another" (Interview 3, Pos. 97-100).

In this excerpt, Sami portrayed himself as a dreaming teacher of a comfortable well-equipped and well-designed school environment. He described himself as a dynamic and digital teacher using technology in classroom; however, he was challenged by the lack of technology provided in his school. He viewed himself as complying with requirements of using learning CD's provided by the MoE but challenged by his classroom was not equipped with technology tools which the MoE had to provide taking into account teachers' rights. Because of this issue, Sami presented himself as

victim in which he could not use learning resources without the availability of technical tools. Presenting himself as a caring teacher for his students' better learning, Sami bought technical tools for his classroom on his own expense. In an imaginative optimistic positioning, Sami wished for assigned classroom for each teacher as he viewed himself to be creative about designing his own classroom form his expense. Sami believed that he, as a teacher, among schoolteachers were viewed as financially capable. So, he described himself as a ready-to-invest teacher who would pay from his own money to facilitate the learning and teaching process, but he represented himself as a moving teacher from school to another. Because he was a state schoolteacher, he might transfer to another school in the future, so he did not want to pay expensively to rebuild his classroom and then he might leave it and move to another school.

7.4 The BLCSI program related experience

Sami started his journey to participate into the BLCSI program to the USA which took around 12 months as an application process prior to the start of cohort 2 of the program. According to his story, he wanted to join the program to improve his English language teaching skills and learn from other international contexts the way learning and teaching were employed in addition to expanding his skills and hobbies. He was very excited for the adventure of studying abroad. Sami did not report a struggle while applying for the BLCSI program including passing the IELTS test; however, he recalled borrowing money in preparation for his stay along with his family in the USA. He also mentioned his struggle in finding a primary school for his 7-year-old daughter upon his arrival there. It was a bothersome for him, but he considered it as part of the abroad experience. Sami recalled his views about the BLCSI program including its design and implementation.

Excerpts (2.9.):
"The BLCSI program for me was one of the most beautiful experiences I have ever had. I am talking about myself because some teacher it was for tourism. It is true it was a tourism, but it was full of experiences and activities as you learn and get creative in lots of things. It depends on the person whoever he was. You know some participating teachers said it was a boring program. So, I think it depends on oneself circumstances. I honestly believe it was the best program" (Interview 2, Pos. 115).

In this excerpt, Sami positioned himself as an excited participant of the BLCSI program in relation to some non-participating teachers viewing it as tourism and some participating teachers viewing it as boring. Sami described the program as a unique experience that he had ever experienced. Sami did not reject the idea of tourism, but he believed it to be an opportunity for a learning, touring, and immersing experience. Sami seemed to attribute others' change of view towards the program as boring, as an example, to possible conditions they had gone through maybe in relation

to the length of the program, the challenge of achieving better results in English language, or possibly some social struggles. In the next section, Sami takes us through an overview of the BLCSI program design.

7.4.1 "My personal view of the program"

After Sami attended a preliminary lecture organized by the MoE through SACM in the USA, and the introducing presentation of his host institute, University of Z, in which he was scheduled for an English language placement test to be taken place two weeks after arrival through the English language institute which was partnered with University of Z. During those two weeks, Sami had the chance to look for a stay in addition to applying for a school for his daughter, which took nearly a month for his daughter to be admitted. Sami viewed the program as it was well organized by University of Z in which it involved three main phases: English language learning and school immersion including training workshops in addition to working on a research project as described by the BLCSI program proposal documents.

Excerpts (2.10.):
"My personal view of the program is that the program was usually between 9-12 months but the one I participated in was for 12 months at University of Z in the USA which had hosted cohort 1 of the program. It was well organized by University of Z and its English language institute. It was studying English language firstly for about 5 months in which they were very strict with us. After that, we attended training courses about education designed for teachers and school immersion. School immersion took almost 2 months. Finally, we worked on our final research projects for 5 months and then presented them. It was obligatory for every teacher to do which we had been working on with our mentors after we finished the English language phase" (Interview 1, Pos. 25-34).

In this excerpt, Sami described himself as a recipient of knowledge. He viewed himself as a learner during the English language learning phase, a teacher observer during the school immersion phase, and a teacher researcher during the research project. He portrayed the host organizers at University of Z during his abroad experience as professional experts in hosting the BLCSI program for the second time in which they were in good terms with the BLCSI program policy documents. However, he seemed to recognize them as strict on him and his peers (the participating teachers) specially in the first five months treating them as English language learners which was the during English language phase. He portrayed himself and was perceived as a learner during the English language phase. It seemed that his host institute viewed and seriously treated Sami as learner for the purpose of achieving the best results in their English language learning in which Sami felt that he was learning something new. It also seemed that the length of the English language learning phase of 5 months, different from Ali's case which was only 2 months, involved not only advancing English language skills but also learning academic research. On the other hand, he

viewed himself as a teacher observer, as he was already an experienced English language teacher, during the second phase immersing in schools because he was aware that he was expected to observe and learn from host teachers' teaching experiences. His observational phase led to portraying himself as a teacher researcher which was drawn from the idea of integrating his before-the-program teaching experience and his learning and observational experience during the program. However, he was obligated to work and complete the research project in the sense of being mentored and assessed in accordance with the BLCSI program policy documents.

7.4.2 "they are passionate about their work"

During his English language learning phase, Sami seemed to have invested in his journey abroad beyond what was expected from him in accordance with the BLCSI document to be only as receiver of knowledge. His curiosity to learn more and engage with others in the American context made him engage in their community by offering ideas and initiatives. He recalled an initiative that offered to the public library in the city of University of Z in relation to participating in recording a short video of a welcoming introduction the library in different languages as the university had various national students. His idea was welcomed, and he made the video alongside two students from two different countries, who he made friendship with.

Excerpts (2.11.):
"I have a high level of curiosity. I had an amazing experience with the public library in the city of University of Z. I emailed them and offered that I would be happy to participate in a volunteering work and offered the idea of introducing the library to others in different languages. After a while, I was contacted by the library and was offered this opportunity. They were responsive to my emails and open-minded about my ideas. I tried to transfer this experience but no received response. What makes them different from us is compassion. Honestly, you feel like they are passionate about their work. You feel that they like to be creative" (Interview 1, Pos. 62-64).

In this excerpt, Sami portrayed himself as a curious volunteer immerser through societal interaction and communication in relation to perceiving the employees of University of Z as passionate about their work. He described their compassion through the way he was treated when he contacted them as they were responsive, and open-minded about his idea. Sami seemed to be amazed of how they were humble in responding and welcoming his idea. He described this experience while recalling his experiences at his home context and how it was easy to contact them and offer ideas and initiatives, for example his societal initiative that he did before joining the program (see section (2.1.5.). In recognizing their compassion about their work, Sami seemed to have switched his discourse presenting his feeling in a way of confirming with the interviewer as he already experienced it and in agreement with his view.

Similarly, Sami recalled an incident during his school immersion phase in relation to how the university of Z dealt with their suggestion regarding their host school that they visited. Sami presented this experience in seeing who university of Z took Sami and his peers' idea seriously.

Excerpts (2.12.):
"I remember during the school immersion phase, we emailed one of our mentors and we suggested that we should look for other schools in addition to the one we visited. She took our suggestion to the main supervisor at University of Z and they agreed to do so. So, we started to visit other schools. They also learn from our suggestion" (Interview 2, Pos. 118-119).

In this excerpt, Sami described himself and his abroad experience peers as agents in relation to experiencing a different international education context where the host institute teachers were kind. Sami portrayal of their kindness was in terms of considering the participating teachers' desires and voices as the university was required to provide opportunities for learning in accordance with the BLCSI program policy documents. The university of Z also viewed Sami and the other participating teacher as their beneficiaries, so it tried diversifying the context experience as possible especially the school immersion experience. Sami's and his peers' voices as a group was listened to in respect of the western context.

7.4.3 "She was caring and inspirational"

During his school immersion experience, Sami recalled his experience with his host teacher Kate (a pseudonym) who was a primary schoolteacher, a university professor, a PhD holder. Sami reported her way of treating her students and her way of teaching them using various interactive activities which made students more interactive and excited for learning. Sami's reporting was related his observation of her way of teaching and treating her students during her lessons in addition to her occasional spontaneous meetings with Sami telling him about various incidents of her students and how she dealt with them. He reported that she implanted passion in him towards his work in the sense of the influence of her treatment and teaching to her students.

Excerpts (2.13.):
"The way they treated their students was inspirational. I remember my host teacher Kate. She was a primary teacher teaching first grade students who had a PhD and at the same time she was teaching at the university. She was like a mother to the children. I saw many times crying when she talked to me about some students' stories. Her feelings towards her students were like a mother's feeling. Kate was considerate of diversifying her own way of teaching. She always distributed students into groups (using random distribution after being numbered). Every time she applied a new way of strategy so students would not be bored of her way of teaching. Her way of teaching made me focus on these little details to apply them in my teaching. Every lesson was different from the previous one. They taught me to be creative. The student was very attentive and waiting that there is something new or a

surprising way of teaching during class. She was caring and inspirational" (Interview 4, Pos. 31-37).

Sami in this excerpt positioned his host teacher, Kate, as a caring teacher to her students and inspirational host teacher to his understanding of teaching in terms of treating her students and using various exciting techniques during her lessons. His portrayal of her was related to her treatment towards her students, who were almost 6 years old, in which she employed a "mothering" characteristic. He viewed her actions as not only as a teacher but also as a mother to them. Sami portrayed himself as an influenced observer of her teaching and an inspired learner talking to her about her experiences in respect of how a PhD holder would teach a first-grade students. Sami seemed amazed of her as he did not encounter a similar situation back home because he was familiar with the idea that PhD holders only teach at university level. That made Sami utilized every lesson he attended to learn from her techniques during her lessons to implement them in his own classes after he returned. Besides being inspired by her mothering care to her students, Sami was influenced by how she was passionate about her work by implementing various activities and techniques to her teaching. She might not be required to do so but her passion for her job made her go beyond just being a primary teacher. Sami seemed to have recognized her way of teaching and treatment towards her students as a lesson that taught him creativity in delivering lessons as he observed her lessons imagining himself how to be creative in teaching after his return from the program.

7.4.4 "teaching Arabic language… they were very happy"

During his school immersion phase, Sami wanted to invest in learning and engaging with other people at University of Z. As an English language learner, he thought of the idea of helping non-speakers of Arabic language to learn Arabic. Because the University of Z was a reputable and leading university in the USA, it had a department for teaching foreign languages which Arabic language was included. Sami, as an Arabic speaker and a bilingual teacher, did not hesitate to contact them offering his help and cooperation in teaching Arabic. The department welcomed him and offered him to be assisting Arabic language teaching classes which he enjoyed and learned from this experience.

Excerpts (2.14.):
"Things were easy there. I contacted the foreign languages department at University of Z and I offered that I would like to voluntarily cooperate with them in teaching Arabic language. They were very happy and welcomed my offer. They told me they have lots of students who want to learn Arabic. I then participated as an assistant teacher in class. I believe that they have reached a very high level of compassion as they were not formal but welcoming" (Interview 2, Pos. 59).

Sami portrayed himself as an academic assistant teacher of Arabic language as he was perceived as both a volunteering teacher and a native speaker of Arabic language by the staff of the Arabic language department at University of Z. Sami was surprized that the staff welcomed his cooperation offer which he did not expect because it was a university level teaching. From his previous experiences with the public library (see section 2.2.2.), he felt that a volunteering work was highly appreciated and would not be neglected. He seemed to have valued how they valued and respected volunteering work. He also described the way they dealt with him as it was not as formal as he expected. He seemed to compare the formality in applying for volunteering work between his own context and the abroad context in which volunteering abroad was easy and informal.

7.4.5 "I attended three conferences … participated with two posters"

As Sami engaged in school immersion and working on his final research project in the second phase of the BLCSI program, which was almost seven months, he started to personally look for other opportunities for learning. He became interested in attending conferences, so he started to work on challenging topics related to his English language teaching and then applied to three conferences, in which his attendance for the first conference was observational so he could learn how to present posters in the second and third conferences that he attended. Attending conferences was not obligated by the BLCSI program policy documents and the host institute. In addition, not everyone had attended conferences as Sami did not mention any of his peers attending conferences because it was a personal effort he did.

Excerpts (2.15.):
"I learned a lot from the BLCSI program. I attended three conferences. It was not obligatory by University of Z but it was personal. I participated with two posters. The topics were different from my research project, so one was about teaching through learners' hubbies and the second one was about classroom internal design and its effect psychologically on learners, but they were all my personal effort. I travelled within the USA to attend those conferences" (Interview 2, Pos. 62-68).

Sami here presented himself as an autonomous teacher educator in relation to the plenty of conferences offered in the USA. His topic of research was related to what he had been experience in his home context by offering solutions to effectively enhance the learning process for students. The organizers of the conferences seemed to have represented Sami as a teacher researcher by accepting his topic to be presented as a poster. Sami's autonomy nature can be seen working on two different research topics to be presented as posters in conferences. This personal act represented his autonomous self in which the organizers of the conferences had perceived. It is

clearly that Sami recognized his autonomous self being developed when said that he "learned" as he seriously looked at the BLCSI program as a learning field full of experiences.

7.4.6 "I studied other things outside my specialization"

Beside attending conferences during the abroad experience, Sami had the belief that "whatever was the experience and how difficult it was, you are learning something. So, I was enjoying the abroad journey by trying to learn things related and unrelated to the BLCSI program. One day, this experience is going to be from the past" (Interview 3, Pos. 14). Therefore, his curiosity led him to learn and study several things unrelated to English language teaching. For example, he studied flying and obtained a medical certificate before the end of the program.

Excerpts (2.15.):
"There in the USA, everything was available. I studied other things outside my specialization. For example, I used to send emails to a flying company that worked for Boing, the airplane company, and I told myself that nothing was impossible in the USA. So, after that, I studied a flying course for one whole month and then flew times" (Interview 2, Pos. 59).

In this excerpt, Sami described himself as a curious adventurer in relation to the USA context where business mattered in which hobbies of individuals could be achieved (in which academic certificate and hobbies certificates were limited in his own context in comparing to the USA) Sami described the airplane company as they were communicative business providers in which they perceived Sami as a customer who practiced his favorite hobby. It seemed learning to fly to Sami was related to his curious persona to try new adventures.

Sami's curiosity and desires to learn anything related or unrelated to English language teaching extended to studying courses that might be related to his major of English language teaching when he returned home.

Excerpts (2.16.):
"In the last days of my abroad experience, I studied a medical course. I intended to take additional courses to be a specialized coach in this course in which I could teach others, but I had no time because the abroad program period was about to end" (Interview 2, Pos. 62-68).

In this excerpt, Sami imagined himself as an English for specific purposes (ESP) teacher and a specialized coach in terms of his imaginary position of teaching medical students related to the medical course he studied in addition to his specialization in this course. He described this course provider in the USA as a business provider in the sense that anyone could obtain a certificate in that course because of the different context between the USA and Saudi Arabia. Even though

Sami's study of this course was personal, but he had no time left to study its advance course to be a coach. He decided to do it in Saudi Arabia when he returned. He was planning to be a coach in teaching this medical course and he tried studying this course when he returned but was rejected to do it (more details in section 7.5.5).

7.4.7 "conducting a research project was a difficult experience"

Moving to another dimension of his abroad experience was conducting a research proposal in an academic way as part of the BLCSI program implementation. However, writing an academic research project was a new experience to Sami. He found it challenging but required to pass it as an obligatory key element of the BLCSI program. Not only Sami did his best to learn doing a required research project but also gave extra time for working on other projects and presented them in conferences (see section 2.2.4.).

Excerpts (2.17.):
"Doing research was honestly a headache for me as it was a final research project which was about 3000 words. It was a requirement for us to submit and present at the end of the BLCSI program. It was challenging as I also worked on other projects to present in the conferences. Working on and writing research was very challenging academically including revising and referencing. It was my first experience writing academic research. Beside the research project was for one hour a week, there were certain 700-800 hours that you had to complete by the end of the program as a participating teacher in the program. (Interview 2, Pos. 62-68).

In this excerpt, Sami represented himself as hardworking novice researcher in relation to the challenging nature of academic research in addition to the sense of that research was required and under an assessment criterion by University of Z and the BLCSI program documents. Sami seemed to have been treated and assessed as a student doing research in relation to the authoritative power the University of Z staff had had in support of the BLCSI program policy documents.

Because Sami was curious about engaging in new experiences such as attending conferences, doing academic research, even though it was challenging, motivated him to conduct research on other topics to present at the conferences.

7.5 Post-BLCSI program experience

After completing the BLCSI program, Sami returned to his same intermediate level school in which he taught for nearly one year before joining the program. Influenced by the abroad experience, Sami had kept doing volunteering work, started to build up his autonomous self (such as

attending conferences and presenting posters, developing his skills, engaged in cultural events, providing suggestions for organizations, and teaching Arabic language to university students) and dreamed of being engaged in research and other courses outside school. In his school, he had improved in his teaching by trying the possible tools to deliver his lessons in ways that contributed to his students' learning. His change was not only a feeling he had experienced but also was evident in his actions towards challenges, teachers, and others inside and outside school. He dreamed of change to be influencing agent in school and in his community. He was also still holding onto his dream of continuing his higher education degrees.

7.5.1 "I feel I have changed after the program"

After his return and back to the same routine, Sami felt that he returned as a change teacher since he participated in the BLCSI program. It was a happy ending for him. Recalling his experience abroad, Sami reflexively compared the two experiences, local and abroad, in relation to his interaction with colleagues, peers, mentors, and others. This reflexivity inspired him to do his best in using the knowledge and resources he observed and learned from the abroad experience.

Excerpts (2.18.):
"After the BLCSI program, I felt my teaching was better than before the BLCSI program, honestly. Another thing I felt has change was that I had a high degree of negativity which totally turned the opposite. That was because during the program I interacted with teachers who already obtained higher education degrees but still they were eager to improve themselves and learn. An individual always learns form people surrounding him. I mean sometimes you get surprised of finding some teachers who held PhDs and still taught as public schoolteachers … Honestly, the BLCSI program has moved 'my stable water' … The BLCSI program taught me how to be more digital like using Blackboard. Now, I am using an electronic platform called Modo with my students as well as an international platform called worksheets and some others. So, I became more involved with using such digital platforms which help me in my lessons" (Interview 2, Pos. 76-80).

In this excerpt, Sami described himself a returnee positive change teacher in relation to individuals such as mentors and teachers during the abroad experience. He positioned them as positive influencers viewing them as agents who still wanted to improve even though they obtained high education degrees. His portrayal of himself indicated that he imagined himself as an influencing agent as he was exposed to the abroad experience which would have influence on his colleagues and peers in terms of appropriating and transferring the abroad knowledge and learning into his own local school. He also believed that the BLCSI program changed his view of himself in terms of teacher development related to continuing high education degree and other degrees and being creative and more digital in delivering his lessons.

7.5.2 "A sudden visit by my supervisor left him very impressed"

During his normal routine his teaching, he had occasionally had classroom visits to his class by his English language supervisors. Supervisors were not the same in terms of assessment of Sami's teaching. He would sometimes encounter such moments with his supervisors that either motivate or discourage him related to his teaching. He recalled an incident which left his supervisor impressed about his teaching in relation to his organizing and recording of his lessons and strategies used in his teaching in specific folders for his own to go back to when needed.

Excerpts (2.19.):
"I got lots of visits from my English language supervisor. I remember once I was blessed as I noted and recorded all my work in a separate folder for my lessons for me to revise and go back to if needed, whatever I do for my lessons, I recorded it in the folder. So, once I got a sudden visit by my supervisor without any notice in advance in which I usually get notice in advance from him about his visits. He was very happy about the folder I used for my lesson strategies because I also used speakers for my listening lesson and recorded everything videos, pictures, strategies, activities, and everything I did in class in addition to the electronic platform of MoE I used for teaching my students, which was not obligatory for me to use … He also saw that I used dating for each strategy I use and put it in a separate folder. He did not believe it as he was surprised. He asked me three times: *do you really have an organized folder for each strategy you use in you lesson?* I said: *yes*, and I showed him. He looked at the folders and said: *to be honest, this is the first time I see a teacher record and organize what he used and teach in his lessons in a folder*. *Do not expect all teachers do the same as you*. His sudden visit left him very impressed" (Interview 4, Pos. 22-29).

Sami, in this excerpt, portrayed himself as a dedicated, digital, and organized teacher in relation to his use of digital tools and folders in delivering his lessons and recording the strategies and activities he utilized. He described his supervisor as an impressed supervisor based on his assessment and feedback after Sami finished his lesson. His supervisor recognition of Sami's work was evident in his supervisor's surprise asking "three time" if Sami organized specific folders for his lessons strategies and tools. His supervisor's recognition seemed to have been related to that the supervisor did not encounter similar work, during his supervision experience, as Sami did. Sami was not required, as a schoolteacher, to do such folder organization recording his lesson strategies and tools but he did for his own development. Sami depicted himself as a dedicated teacher in terms of using contemporary strategies in his teaching and making efforts in recording those strategies and activities in files.

7.5.3 "I did not want to embarrass my colleagues"

Sami's encountering moments with the same English language supervisor did not end. Sami was also visited by him few weeks after the last incident during the same semester, section 7.5.2,

when he was complemented by his same supervisor about his creative use of folders to record the teaching strategies and activities he used during his lessons. However, this time was different as his supervisor gathered Sami and his other two colleagues, including Sami they were three English language teachers teaching in the same school, for a group discussion and feedback. It seemed that intentional by the supervisor to show what Sami did and how he was doing beyond what was required of his as a teacher. During their discussion, among his supervisor's critiques was that he was insistent on the use of *speakers* during listening lessons and activities. His critiques and feedback were directed to Sami and his colleagues. During his supervisor's talk, Sami did not want to show that he already used *speakers* for his lessons as he did not want to embarrass his colleagues. However, his supervisor was aware of Sami's actions, and he insisted more on using *speakers* which made Sami tell his supervisor that he already had speakers for his lessons. So, Sami was able to not hold back and talk to his supervisor about what he always did.

Excerpts (2.20.):
"After a while, the same supervisor visited me and my other two colleagues, English language teachers. After his observation to our lessons, we sat together with him to receive any feedback or suggestions. He said to me: *why did not you use your speakers today?* In fact, I had my speakers with me, but I did not want to use them because I did not want to embarrass my colleagues as they did not use a speaker during their lessons. The supervisor then emphasized on us the use of speakers saying: *you should use speakers for listening lessons*. I then said: *I have mine with me already*. Then, he said: *why did not you speak about it*. And I said: *I did not want to, because my colleagues did not have speakers with them*. I did not like to show off by using the speakers, but I always have the speaker with me every day" (Interview 2, Pos. 83-85).

In this excerpt, Sami described himself as a considerate colleague when he was gathered in a group feedback discussion along with his colleagues in school. He considered if he told his supervisor that he already had speakers with him in that moment, that would embarrass his colleagues. He assumed that would negatively affect their colleagueship. He portrayed his supervisor as a fair attentive supervisor in terms of recognizing Sami's use of *speakers* in his lessons. His supervisor asked Sami first of not using his speakers "today" and then insisted on "you should use them" which made Sami be realistic to speak up and not hold back that he "have mine with me already". His supervisor wanted to show Sami's colleagues of Sami's actions as an example for them to learn from him and to promote collaborative work and learning. In fact, Sami knew that if he did not speak up and present evidence that he used *speakers* in his lessons, it would have affected his supervisor's assessment of his lessons.

7.5.4 "I was mad that I was not nominated by my English language supervisor"

After many visits by his supervisors and engagement with his colleagues, Sami felt that he was not rewarded regarding his efforts in school and his own classrooms even before participating in the BLCSI program, so after returning from the program, he came to understand that himself should come before others in terms of what would benefit him in accordance with what efforts he had made. Therefore, Sami had changed in dealing with such situations in the sense of being ignored by others such as his English language supervisors. He recalled another incident with the same English language supervisor, mentioned in sections 2.3.3. and 2.3.4., in relation to attending a conference in his city. His supervisor nominated one of his colleagues, an English language teacher in his school, to attend a local English-language-related conference organized by the MoE in the city of his school. Sami contested his supervisor's way of nomination as he did not accept it and saw it unfair to him because he felt that he was better than his colleagues. Then, he discussed it with his school principal. His school principal gave him a permission to attend the conference, as the school principal had the authority to do so, without the need to ask for his supervisor's permission.

Excerpts (2.21.):
"I remember an incident happened to me with my supervisor. There was a conference in my city related to English language teaching organized by the MoE which I applied to present a poster. I was surprized that one of my colleagues, an English language teacher, was nominated to attend the conference. I was mad that I was not nominated by my English language supervisor because I was supposed to be first to be nominated. That was unfair to me. I talked to him over the phone, and he gave excuses that it was unintentional as he forgot about my outstanding teaching since he had a lot of supervision and administrative work and he promised me for any next conference to be nominated. However, I talked to my school principal, and he gave permission to attend the conference. So, I attended the conference for two days and obtained an attendance certificate" (Interview 2, Pos. 88-91).

Sami viewed himself a marginalized teacher in terms of being neglected of being nominated to attend the conference. His portrayal was related to that his teaching performance and dedication to his job was not possibly recognized by his English language supervisor. He expected that the two previous incidents with his supervisor, in which he was impressed about Sami's work, would have his name, Sami, unforgotten for such events as rewarding for outstanding teachers. He initially seemed mad and surprized that his supervisor did not nominate him and chose someone else. Sami's decision to not judge his supervisor's decision until he heard from him in person by contacting him and expressing his concern regarding the nomination. Sami seemed to have a very good reputation as his supervisor apologized to Sami about his unintentional nomination because of the pressure of administrative work he had beside supervising teachers. Sami them described himself as a considerate teacher about his supervisors' excuses and took a further step to express

his voice to his school principal as he was aware of the principal authority in nominating or giving permission for teachers to attend conferences, as an example. His school principal seemed to have seen Sami's outstanding efforts in school and rewarded him with a two-day conference attendance leave.

7.5.5 "not your speciality, it cannot be accepted"

Added to Sami's curiosity persona, he attended a medical course in the USA and wanted attended an advance course related to it (as mentioned in section 7.4.6) but he had no time as it was at the end of the BLCSI program. When he returned to Saudi Arabia, he applied to the health department to attend the coaching course related to the medical course he obtained from the USA. However, he was refused as he was not specialized or employed in medical related jobs but was an English language teacher.

Excerpts (2.22.):
"The medical course certificate I obtained from the American Heart Association was not accepted when I present it the health department in Saudi Arabia. They told me that I was not a medical practitioner or employed in any related medical work. They said, *it was not my specialty*. I told them, *if I had time abroad, I would have obtained the coach certificate easily in the USA in which you refer to in everything*. *How come you refuse me to study for this course!* I should them my course certificate that I obtained abroad but they still refused me" (Interview 2, Pos. 55-57).

Sami portrayed himself as an English language investor seeking to teach outside of school courses as he felt he desired to expand his English language teaching to outside school classrooms. His transformation was from being only an English language teacher to being an English language investor. However, he was refused by the health department in Saudi Arabia as it was not open to nonmedical applicants. The health department in Saudi Arabia positioned Sami as not specialized in health majors in which the coaching course was only given to medical-related practitioners. Sami was excluded as he was viewed as English language teacher. However, Sami viewed the coaching course as not practical in terms of medical related application but more of English language related, so he could employ his English language major into coaching this course. Sami was surprized as the coaching course is easily obtainable in the USA by any applicant, but only possible in Saudi Arabia for medical related applicants.

7.5.6 "I volunteered at the airport; it was inspiring"

During his school holiday at the end of the academic year which was at the same time as Al-Hajj season, which is the season where Muslim go to Makkah for pilgrimage which longs for nearly eight days, Sami voluntarily participated in the airport as to translate English language while

receiving international pilgrimage Muslims, which the English language would be needed the most. Sami observed lots of volunteering people in various majors such as doctors. Sami was fascinated by their passion to do their volunteering job.

Excerpts (2.23.):
"I volunteered to be an English translator in the airport during the holiday of Al-Hajj while to translate and guide pilgrimage people. I met lots of volunteers from different departments like doctors. I observed how passionate they were in doing their jobs and their productivity was high. I learned to give as much as I could" (Interview 2, Pos. 49-51).

In this excerpt, Sami portrayed himself as a participating English language teacher volunteering in an important season where he could use English language to help pilgrimage people. Sami seemed to have been viewed as a volunteering English language translator. Sami being observant of volunteering agents, he seemed to have been influenced by their passion about their work, especially doctors. Sami's volunteering work was not a requirement to do since it was during a school holiday. However, he liked helping people and interacting with other volunteers from different departments. As a result, he seemed to have increased his passion about teaching English language and helping others in need by using this language.

7.5.7 "I became more attached to English language and ESP related to flying"

Sami's experience abroad, especially his experience of his hobbies like flying, made him become more attached to English language for specific purposes. Besides his English language teaching in intermediate school, he wanted to teach English language to students interested in being a pilot or interested in flying as a hobby, whether to teach in a university or become a private tutor after obtaining an accredited certificate which would allow him to teach privately.

Excerpts (2.24.):
"Because I liked flying and took a course for flying in the USA during my experience abroad, I started to be interested in something I think it is called IEP or Education for verbs just like English for specific purposes or English for Business. So, this one is English for pilots or individuals who are interested in flying. So, I like to invest in learning such an area. It might be difficult but hopefully I can achieve it here" (Interview 4, Pos. 82).

In this excerpt, Sami portrayed himself as an investor in English for specific purposes in relation his hobby of flying. He seemed to have wanted to teach English language for pilot students in college. Because English for specific purposes programs related to flying might not be available in Saudi Arabia which would be difficult for him, but he was still hopeful to obtain a certificate at it. It seemed that Sami did not neglect his hobbies, so he wanted to make it possible to integrate his English language teaching to his hobbies such as flying.

7.5.8 "I inspired one of my BLCSI peers in an online group"

One of the things that Sami did after my abroad learning experience, he came up with the idea of creating a group a whatsup online group which was related to their learning and teaching. The online group included one his abroad experience peers, who was teaching in another school in another city. Influenced by the abroad experience and being comfortable for his peer, he wanted to keep his teaching and learning up to date and share and exchange their knowledge and teaching and learning experiences.

Excerpts (2.25.):
"I inspired one of my BLCSI peers in an online group to post anything new related to teaching and learning in terms of teaching methods, strategies, activities, and so on in addition to any ideas we could use in our school and classrooms. He was inspired by my idea and liked it" (Interview 1, Pos. 86).

Sami, in this excerpt, portrayed himself as an inspiring colleague to his abroad program peer. He described his thoughtfulness of being up to date with things related to new knowledge, learning, and teaching. He portrayed his peer as a promoter of his idea of the online group. They both knew that they were not obliged to create the group and that they will not gain any materialistic benefits in return. However, they looked at how professionally to be developed by sharing and exchanging knowledge and experiences. Sami seemed to have viewed himself and his peer as participants of the abroad program who would be expected to continuously develop themselves.

7.5.9 "I got accepted into master's program in TESOL"

Beside Sami's online group with his peer, Sami shared with me a happy ending moment for his story. So, since my first interview with Sami, he reported that he would "love it if I get accepted for a master's program, I like to study and do research." Therefore, during the last interview, he was very excited to let me know about him being accepted into a master's program in TESOL in his university where he studied his bachelor's degree.

Excerpts (2.26.):
"Do you remember when I told you about my applications to many universities for my master's degree in our first meeting? I would like to let you know that I got accepted into a master's program in TESOL at my university. I was so happy when I got accepted to MA program. It was like my dream came true. What amazing about it as well is that my master's study will be financially fully covered. When I have a master's degree, it would be easier for me to apply for a scholarship to study PhD abroad" (Interview 4, Pos. 6).

In this excerpt, Sami described himself as a dream achiever to be a researcher in terms of not giving up on his dream to apply to many universities to study for a master's degree. He described

his interviewer as a witness and encourager to his achievements. Sami seemed proud and excited about being a master's student as it would be for free and accredited by the MoE in which it benefited him to apply for PhD in the future or positions such as an English language supervisor or a university teacher.

7.6 Conclusion

Sami has shown us through his story about his journey of English language learning and teaching including the BLCSI program experience how he constructed his English language teacher identity. He presented to us a series of key moments that influenced his decision in which agency was enacted before, during, and after the BLCSI program experience. He described how his decision of changing his path from being an engineer in Aramco to becoming an English language teacher. In addition, he represented his agential actions such as volunteering and how his colleagues' reactions were discouraging; however, he kept going doing what he liked to do to help students. He also faced challenges by his supervisors but was encouraged by one of them. He also struggled with having *zero* environment for learning and teaching. His experience abroad was described as an opportunity for him to expand his knowledge and agency and practice his hobbies. He was positively influenced by his host teachers and mentors on the abroad experience in terms of their passion about what they did and their relationship with their students in addition to their way of teaching. After Sami's return, he tried to appropriate what he had learned abroad and became passionate about his English language teaching, treatment toward his students, and volunteer work as he wanted to help others as much as he could.

Chapter 8 Omer's Story Analysis

8.1 Introduction

The previous chapter of Sami's story analzyed on how he constructed his identity through positioning as an English language teacher before, during and after the BLCSI program. This chapter addresses Omer's story analysis. In his story, he presented insightful narratives of his identity construction in relation to his journey of learning and teaching English language in addition to being a participant of the BLCSI program. Unlike to Ali's persona of valuing group work and Sami's curious persona and valuing volunteering work, Omer represented how his agential actions related to his delivery of his lessons was developed before the program and confirmed after returning from the program in which his confidence in taking decisions had increased even though he was challenged by his supervisors and the curriculum. In addition, unlike Sami's and Ali's imagined selves of continuing higher education, Omer desired to focus more on practical interventions and initiatives more specifically related to online educational platforms.

Throughout his story, Omer had experienced key moments which had influenced his learning and teaching journey in which his identity had been constructed through positioning. Starting from his engagement with electronic games in his teenager' life followed by his neighbor's encouragement to be an English language teacher. He then confirmed his liking to English language by his examiners during his college entry oral exam. In addition, his supervisors' encouraging words during his first lessons as a newly appointed teacher were decisive for his view of about teaching. After becoming a teacher, he did not give up on the desire to experience studying abroad in the sense of being influenced by people around him going to and coming back from studying abroad. He kept dreaming and looking for hope until the launch of the BLCSI program was the door for his hope that he kept knocking until he joined the program. His experience abroad, especially teaching refugees and closely observing his host teacher, influenced his way of teaching and treating his students. Finally, an incident with one supervisor who was impressed with Omer's way of teaching which had made Omer realized his agential acts and creativity in delivery his lessons considering his students' needs.

8.2 Analysis of Omer's story

To recall Omer's biographic history, *see methodology chapter on section no*., he is an in-service English language teacher, teaching for almost 12 years by the time of his sharing his story with us. From an early age around 10 years old, he started to get attached to English language because of

his engagement with electronic games in English language. The, he became a reference to his classmates teaching them English language vocabulary, which they studied in school, after school. Besides, he was constantly motivated and encouraged by his neighbor. These factors had triggered Omer's decision to be an English language teacher. He confirmed that his choice to be an English language teacher after the recognition of his English language examiners during the oral exam upon his entry to college. Getting a teaching job in the state sector right away after he graduated helped him realize his dream of being an official English language teacher. During his teaching, he taught in three different schools of different levels: elementary, intermediate, and secondary. He was always obsessed with the idea of going abroad to study or teach and live there. His obsession to study abroad faded away after he became a teacher and responsible for his family as it was difficult to go abroad. After the launching of the BLCSI program, his dream and obsession returned. He tried to join the first cohort of the BLCSI program but failed. He did not give up and applied to the second cohort in which he almost failed; nonetheless, he had no intention of giving up. In the last moment, he joined the second cohort of the BLCSI program in New Zealand. He learned from his abroad experience where he improved his English language skills, immersed in public and language schools, and taught English language there. After his return to his same school of secondary level, he tried to appropriate what he had learned and was exposed to into his own teaching but challenged by his supervisors' critiques and the curriculum. He also became a host teacher himself in which he hosted practicum students in his city. Therefore, in the following three phases, his story will be analyzed.

8.3 Pre-the BLCSI program experience

In this phase of Omer's story, it is described that his journey to be an English language teacher started with being an electronic gamer at an early age. His attachment to learning English language had increased as he used to teach English language to his classmates after school. With encouragement of his neighbor, he decided to apply to college majoring in English language teaching. Therefore, throughout his narratives, he unfolds some incidents and moments which confirm his choice or motivate him to seek the path of becoming an English language teacher.

8.3.1 "My attachment with English language was through electronic games"

From an early age around 10 years old in his fifth grade of elementary school level, Omer started to play electronic games in English language. He used his brother's English language dictionary to able to solve the games' puzzles and clues. He became addicted to playing electronic games; then, he gradually, at secondary school level, started watch movies in English language. His attachment to play games and watch movies increased his attachment to learn more of English language.

Excerpt (3.1.):
"When I was in the fifth grade in elementary school, I started to play electronic games and it was about clues and puzzles in English language which Arabic language was not supported. I borrowed my older brother's English language dictionary and started to learn from words' meaning to solve clues in the games. No one in my family knew that playing games in English would motivate me to like learning English language. After that, in secondary school level, I started to watch movies in English language. So, these games and movies made me get attached to the English language" (Interview 1, Pos. 4-6).

In this excerpt, Omer represented himself as a gamer at early age in relation to playing only-English-language supported games. He described his family as not noticing his attachment to English language in the sense of playing games was common among other children of his age. His attachment to games which required English language proficiency expanded Omer's desires to watch movies in English language. Being in an unsupported English language environment, Omer did not realize how attached he was to English language during his intermediate and secondary school level. Even his family did not notice his attachment to English language through games because no one of his family was concerned with learning English other than English language as an assigned school subject, in which his brother happened to have a dictionary he used for English language materials in school. Omer seemed to have come from a humble family educationally and financially.

8.3.2 "I was their reference for English language"

Because Omer had self-improved in his English language through playing electronic games in which he used his brother's English language dictionary to learn from it, he utilized his hobby to teach his classmates after school. He became a learner teacher to his classmates because English language as a subject was very difficult for most of students in intermediate school level at that time, around 1997. Therefore, his classmates considered him as a reference for their learning issues concerning their English language lessons and assignments.

Excerpt (3.2.):
"I started to teach my classmates after school under a tree nearby my house. You know, English language was very difficult for them. I was their reference for English language. I used to translate the English vocabulary of our lesson after school in addition to homework. I helped them in understanding the content of the textbooks and issues related to vocabulary and pronunciation. After a while I was known among other students. I became like a reference for then if they needed to understand something related to the English language module. Sometimes I used to be asked during our school lunch time and sometimes early in the morning before our lessons start. Actually, that was fun and motivational for me to expand my English language learning" (Interview 1, Pos. 9-10).

Omer in this excerpt described himself as a young English language teacher in relation to his teaching his classmates. His classmates referred him as their English language reference when needed. Omer represented his classmates as strugglers to learn English without his help in relation to the difficulty of the content of English language for them. He helped them with English language voluntarily as he was not obligated to do so but as something he liked to practice as a hobby. Motivated by his action towards his classmates, he was motivated to learn more of English language.

8.3.3 "On his annual holidays … I used to sit with him and talk in English language"

By the time Omer started his first year in secondary school level at age 15, one of his neighbors, named Abdul, studied in Aramco (see section 2 in chapter 7) and then graduated as an engineer. Abdul afterwards got a scholarship to the USA where he continued his study and then started working there in a company owned by Aramco in the USA. Omer used to meet Abdul once a year when he was on his annual vacation. Omer used his meeting with Abdul as a chance to practice speaking in English language. Over time, Abdul praised Omer's English language competency skills and encouraged him to continue studying English language. Omer was motivated by Abdul's suggestion as Omer used to teach his classmates after school. Omer started to dream to be an English language teacher.

Excerpt (3.3.):
"My neighbor Abdul was 3 years older than me. I was 15 years old at my first year of secondary school level when he got accepted in Aramco. Two year later, he went on Aramco scholarship to the USA to continue his bachelor's degree. Later, he started working there in the USA for Aramco. On his annual holidays when he used to come to visit his family, I used to sit with him and talk in English language. He was inspiring for me in which he motivated me to join Aramco or to be an English language teacher, as the English language major in college was newly opened. I took his advice, but I chose to apply to college majoring in English language because I was not able to study in Aramco as it was far away from my city besides my family was not financially able to support my travel and stay expenses" (Interview 1, 18-23).

Omer in this excerpt portrayed himself as an advice taker who was influenced by Abdul. Because Omer had no one in his family to inspire and guide him, he seemed to consider Abdul as an example of a successful person in terms of having a mutual thing with Abdul, which was English language. Omer's recalling of his times he used during Abdul's holidays to practice his English language confirmed Omer's obsession with English language. The financial circumstances of Omer's family appeared to be an obstacle to him to seek the same path as Abdul; however, another option for Omer was by **taking the advice** of Abdul to be an English language teacher. Omer seemed to be a person who would consider other people's advice in relation to his English

language learning in addition to his previous experience of helping in teaching his classmate. Omer was motivated in trying the path of being an English language teacher.

8.3.4 "It was the moment I knew I will be an English language teacher

After Omer graduated from his secondary school in 2003 at the age of 18 years old, he applied to Teachers' college[6] in his city to study for his bachelor's degree majoring in English language. During the process of his application to the college, he went through an oral examination. The oral examination was conducted by professors and staff of the English language department in his college as a process of evaluating applicants' level of English language.

Excerpt (3.4.):
"It was the moment I knew I will be an English language teacher when I applied to major in English in the college of education in my city and the interviewers of my oral exam for admission, English language professors, were very impressed with my English language. So that confirmed my motivation to be a teacher besides my family financial circumstances in which I can support them when I graduate and become a teacher" (Interview 1, Pos. 30-31)

In this excerpt, Omer portrayed himself as a competent applicant in relation to how amazed the evaluators of the English language department at his college were by his English language oral skills. Their impressiveness about Omer's English language oral competency was motivational to Omer. He depicted them as assessors in terms of the nature of the program which required a certain level of English for college entry. Nonetheless, the recognition of Omer's oral level of English had made him confirm his belief to be an English language teacher. Omer was relieved after being accepted to teachers' college as it seemed that he started to feel the responsibility upon his shoulders by thinking of his family and how to support them financially after becoming a teacher.

8.3.5 "I did not feel the responsibility of studying hard until I failed"

After Omer was admitted to the English language program, he encountered an unexpected struggle. Taking for granted his oral competency in English language had led him to not take the program as seriously as he was expected to do so. By the end of the first semester of his college study, he failed in 4 modules. He was late in realizing the struggle he encountered. However, he continued to study hard in the following semesters.

Excerpt (3.5.):

[6] More details are explained in the context chapter section …

> "I did not feel the responsibility of studying hard until I failed. Because I was confident of my English language skills, I did not take my study in the first term of college seriously and I failed in 4 modules. In addition, there was a lack of academic mentorship and advice for new students. I did my best afterwards and graduated third on my classmates"

Omer, in this excerpt, viewed himself as a careless student in relation to his irresponsibility of studying hard at the beginning of his college study. He expected English language in college level would be similar to his previous experience in intermediate and secondary school level (as seen in excerpt, 3.2.). However, it turned out to be difficult for him. He attributed his failure not only to his carelessness but also to the lack of guidance and support during his first semester in college being new to university as a different environment of learning. The lack of mentorship provided by his college in addition to his prior confidence of his own oral skills in English language seemed to be a surprise for him. By recalling this story, Omer reflexively blamed his college for not providing advice and mentoring to new students like him. It was one of his rights to receive support as a student. **His failure in 4 modules was a turning point** for Omer to study hard considering his family circumstances by graduating on time. He positioned himself as a striver for success in his college journey in which he achieved being a third-top students among his classmates.

8.3.6 "The school principal treated us as teachers during the practicum period"

In the last semester of his university study, Omer did his practicum along with studying the 4 modules which he failed in the first semester. His practicum teaching training was located to an intermediate school level nearby his college. He recalled how his intermediate school principal treated him in relation to the distribution and schedule that he assigned for practicum students in his school. Omer was assigned to one classroom teaching only four lessons for four days a week considering giving Omer the fifth day off as a day for Omer to study his modules at the university.

Excerpt (3.6.):
"The school principal treated us as teachers during the practicum period. He assigned each practicum student to one class in intermediate school level. I knew after we finished the practicum that he did it because he thought just in case our teaching was not good enough then the learning only a small number of students would be affected to minimize the risk of given wrong teaching to all students and also because I was studying in college for one day taking four courses at the same term of my practicum" (80-84).

In this excerpt, Omer was positioned himself as a learn-to-teach student as the school principal viewed him as a practicum student inexperienced of teaching in relation to the status of Omer studying four modules in addition to his practicum as an indication of seeing Omer's capability of teaching to be questioned. Omer described the school principal as both cautious in terms of not

showing his doubt of Omer's teaching capability, and considerate of his circumstance of still studying for the four modules. Omer portrayed his school principal cautiousness because he seemed to want to balance between his students' learning and trainee teachers' teaching practice as there was a collaboration between schools and his college in terms of practicum teaching. Omer seemed to understand that it was the school principal's right to act the way he saw fit for both parties: his school students and practicum students. Omer reflexively seemed to have noticed his school principal actions but preferred it that way as it would be an advantage for him to focus on his study alongside his practicum. Omer seemed to have later heard about his principal not trusting his ability to teach but did not complain due to the principal's considerate actions towards him.

8.3.7 "My practicum supervisor Mohammed was supportive and helpful"

Another part of Omer's practicum journey was related to his college English language supervisor, Mohammed (a pseudonym), of his practicum teaching and how he treated Omer's teaching during his visits to his classes. In this recalled incident that happened between Omer and Mohammed during one of Omer's lessons. As a practicum student, Omer was in contact with his other practicum classmates in his college discussing what happened to them during their lessons. Omer recalled this incident while comparing his supervisor's action to other supervisor's treatment towards his classmates' teaching that he heard about. Omer seemed to have liked the way he was treated by Mohammed when did a mistake during his lesson.

Excerpt (3.7.):
"My practicum supervisor Mohammed was supportive and helpful he was not the kind of person who would look for mistakes we do but was supportive "I remember once I explained something wrong for my students and then after class, he corrected me in a nice way. He did not correct me in front of students to embarrass me like some other supervisors I have heard about. His treatment gave me confidence. If he corrected me in front of my students, he would give them the impression that your teacher made a mistake and this would cause their trust in me to be shaken" (interview 1, pos. 58-64).

Omer positioned himself as a trainee teacher in relation to the context of practicum teaching, in this excerpt. He believed that he was still learning to teach in which making a mistake was inevitable. Nonetheless, Mohammed's treatment as a supervisor was an encouragement to him. He described Mohammed as an experienced professor in observing trainee students because he did not correct Omer in front of his students when he made a mistake. Instead, he waited until the lesson ended and informed Omer about his mistake outside of his classroom in a friendly way. Omer viewed this treatment as motivating which would not affect his confidence in teaching. The portrayal of his supervisor's action towards him showed that Omer was influenced by his

classmates' experiences with their own supervisors and how they were embarrassed by being corrected in front of their students in class. As a practicum student, Omer was aware that he was a practicum student and that his supervisor's duty was to correct Omer when making mistakes and give him constructive feedback. Omer seemed to be lucky to have Mohammed supervising his lessons.

8.3.8 "I only attended my lessons"

As a practicum student, it depends on the school principal whether to treat practicum students the same way he treats other actual teachers in his school or treat them differently. The treatment considers actual lesson schedule, waiting lesson schedule, observing students before and after school in addition to during lunch time break, and other activities within school during school time. For Omer, he only attended his lessons and did not engage in any of the mentioned activities. In Omer's case, studying four modules in college and doing practicum during the same semester was a bit challenging to him. Therefore, he managed to only attend his lessons.

Excerpt (3.8.):
"I only attended my lessons during the practicum because I have heard from other previous practicum students that if you are relaxed about your relationship with the school principal then you would be assigned to waiting lessons in addition to your lessons. So, I only attend the early morning preliminary session in addition to my lessons, that is it." (Interview 1, Pos. 117-124).

Omer in this excerpt described himself as agential in terms of being a trainee teacher who had four modules to study and was not required to do what the actual teacher in his school did including being assigned to the waiting lesson list. The waiting lesson list, as an example, was related to lessons of teachers who opt out if they have an emergency or appointments outside school. Practicum students were expected to engage fully with their schools including other activities outside their classrooms. The assessment of a trainee teacher includes his participation in other activities within school, as from my own experience as a trainee student, supervisor of practicum students, and an organizer of the practicum program. Omer portrayed himself as an outsider trainee teacher since he was only a practicum student attending only his lessons and neglecting any engagement in other activities. His portrayal of his agential action was related to his desire of not to make himself available to his school principal by only attending lessons and then leaving school. Omer seemed serious not to involve himself with doing things other than his own lessons. This seemed to have been facilitated by his school principal who did not insist on Omer to take upon other activities in consideration to his circumstances of his college study.

8.3.9 "My first experience of teaching was difficult"

After Omer graduated from college at the end of 2005, he was appointed as an official English language teacher by the MoE. The process of appointing graduates to be teachers were randomly done and administered by the MoE in which graduates would apply in person, at that time, for a teacher's job through branches of the MoE. Therefore, Omer was randomly appointed to an elementary school level in Riyadh city, which was far away from his own city and family. Teaching an elementary-level students, only the six-grade, was difficult for him as a new teacher even he only taught four classes a week, four hours for each class as "the sixth grade was divided into 4 divisions of Class A, Class B, Class C, and Class D", as he reported.

Excerpt (3.9.):
"My first experience of teaching was difficult. I remember I taught the sixth grade of elementary school. I used to teach four different classrooms in the same day. I learned from it as I used to deliver the same lesson to four different classrooms, but it was difficult for me because my way of teaching was different from the first and last classroom even though it was the same lesson. For example, I learned to focus on their weaknesses and give more time to it. I remember I had an issue of students learning number "eight," so I learned to give it more time to explain in many ways for other classrooms. Each time I teach this number, I try to explain it more thoroughly because I had this problem with the previous classroom. So, I learn from the previous lesson I did and try to expand on the same lesson for the next classroom" (Interview 1, Pos. 141-146).

Omer in this excerpt, portrayed himself as a novice teacher in terms of teaching the same lesson to four different divisions of the sixth-grade class in the same day. He described the difficulty in terms of repeating the same lesson to four classes in one day. Part of his duty to deliver the same content to the four classes in relation to students' rights to receive similar knowledge. However, Omer seemed to have learned from the repetition of delivering the same lesson in terms of focusing on students' weaknesses. He recognized his observing ability to how to manage the content of his lessons. He described his learning to teach as constructive by learning and noticing a specific issue that students struggled with and gave it more time to teach it.

8.3.10 "I would kiss him on his forehead"

During the first week of Omer's teaching as an official new teacher in his elementary school in Riyadh, he encountered an incident which motivated him in which his view of teaching had changed. It was one of his lessons which he forgot his teaching tools which made him think of a way to teach. Luckily, he decided to use his laptop since he was familiar with the use of technology in which he used PowerPoint to deliver his lesson via the projector. Without any heads up, a supervisor showed up to observe his lesson which put Omer in a difficult position. However, Omer tried his best to deliver his lesson with confidence in which he was surprised by his

students' active participation during the lesson and his supervisor's impressing and motivating words after his lesson ended.

Excerpt (3.10.):
"An incident on the first week of my first year of teaching changed my view of teaching. On that say at the beginning of my lesson, I had nothing with me. I had no tools for teaching including the textbook, board pens, nothing at all. I only had my laptop with me. So, I tried to think of what to do. I ended up with deciding to use my laptop to teach in which I connected it to the projector and delivered my lesson using the lesson provided by the MoE for teacher's use via PowerPoint. In that moment before I start delivering my lesson, a supervisor visited me to observe my lesson. I was not informed in advance of his visit, it was so sudden. That action I took, attracted not only the supervisor but also my students in which it was their first time having their lesson delivered to them via PowerPoint. The lesson was kind of enjoyable for me. After my lesson ended, I went out of class with my supervisor. At that moment when he talked to me, I cannot forget his encouraging words to me. He said: *you did very well. This is your first year of teaching and you did such a splendid job using technology. Keep it up and I am so impressed about how you delivered your lesson*. At that moment, I reflexively recalled the way my students were so attracted to my lesson which they seemed very excited about the way I delivered my lesson and I realized that if you change the environment for your students, they will be motivated and excited for learning … If I see my supervisor again, I would kiss him on his forehead and thank him for that incident … If he was the type of supervisor who would inspect everything and look only for flaws in my teaching, it would have been a shock for me, honestly. However, after that incident, everything changed for me in terms of teaching" (Interview 1, Pos. 164-177).

In this excerpt, Omer portrayed himself as two positions: a newly appointed teacher who was new to and responsible of lesson planning and delivering his lessons, and an expert technology user in relation to his old experience as a gamer who was already familiar with digital devices and their usage. He also positioned his supervisor as an understanding experienced supervisor who knew how to deal with newly appointed teachers to motivate them in their teaching job. As part of his duty as a teacher, novice or experienced, it was expected from Omer to plan his lesson in advance and use the textbook provided. Omer's decision was brave and agentive to use technology and the online material provided by the MoE. He was put in a tight position (maybe unprepared teacher) when his supervisor showed up to observe his lesson in terms of assessment. However, he smartly managed to use technology in his lesson because he was confident about its use and to show his creativity to his supervisor. His agentive act impressed his supervisor even though his supervisor knew Omer did not prepare well for his lesson. As a result, Omer reflexively realized his students' unusual participation as they viewed Omer as creative teacher using a different way of teaching that they were not familiar with.

8.4 The BLCSI program related experience

After that incident, Omer started to integrate technology in his lesson. At that time, the use of technology was not required by the MoE but teachers were encouraged to use it. Omer then transferred to two schools: elementary and intermediate level, and secondary school level. The latter was his latest school which he taught at for almost six years before joining the program and was located to it after his return from the program.

During this phase of the BCLSI program experience, Omer presents to us his abroad experience including the implementation of the program and how he managed to engage with such an experience. In the following sections, he tells us about his motivation to participate in the program and the process in which he went through to be part of it. After that he takes us to his abroad experience in which he described as it was slightly a different program to the typical structure of the BLCSI program in accordance with policy documents and host international institutes.

8.4.1 "I always wanted to and dreamed to go abroad"

Omer had been always thinking of studying abroad. However, since he became a teacher, it had been difficult for him financially, and in relation to his family circumstances especially after getting married when he became a teacher in which he had two families to support. However, he never gave up on the study-abroad idea and waited for chances to arise. He travelled several times abroad for tourism but could not feel his desire of studying and living abroad was satisfied.

Excerpt (3.11.):
"After I graduated and became a teacher my chances became low to go abroad. It was also hearing that people went abroad to study and people came back from studying abroad made me want to know how they studied and experienced living abroad including my neighbor Abdul's experience. I always wanted to and dreamed to go abroad but could not. The BLCSI program gave me hope to go abroad. I wanted to live abroad and see how life is there abroad in addition to the life of learning and teaching. I travelled many times abroad for tourism, but it is different from experiencing the living and immersion into abroad culture and context" (Interview 1, Pos. 201-202).

Omer in this excerpt described himself as dream pursuer in relation to studying abroad and the influence of other people including Abdul going to and coming back from studying abroad. He described being a teacher alongside his family circumstances as hindrance to his dream to go abroad for a study and cultural immersion as he settled after getting his teaching job in addition to the lack of opportunities for employees such as teachers to go abroad for study. He represented himself within a job-related commitment in which becoming a teacher was a

committing job and that available abroad scholarships were mostly provided to students and unemployed individuals. Nonetheless, Omer seemed to have always thought about study abroad chances in which the launching of the BLCSI program gave him hope that he would be part of it. Omer positioned studying and living abroad as not similar to tourism because he seemed to be engaged in living the learning and teaching experiences abroad and experiencing the commitment to the teaching profession.

8.4.2 "I was very mad that I was refused to participate on the first cohort of the BLCSI program"

After the official launch of the BLCSI program, Omer impatiently could not wait and applied to join it. However, he was refused in the first cohort of the program. He did give up and applied to the second cohort and was refused but at the end was accepted. Participation in the BLCSI program had requirements to be fulfilled by the participating teachers. For example, in the first cohort, "a minimum of 50 hours" of training and attending workshops designed for local teachers was required for participating in the first cohort.

Excerpt (3.12.):
"I was very mad that I was refused to participate on the first cohort of the BLCSI program because I did not have enough training hours, even though it was optional for us attend, but became a requirement for the program" (Interview 1, Pos. 205-209).

In this excerpt, Omer described himself as a frustrated teacher in relation to being rejected to participate in the BLCSI program. His frustration was not because of his failure to be accepted into the program but was to the requirement of obtaining the minimum number of hours for the program participation. The program seemed to have looked for teachers who were already interested in developing their teaching and themselves through attending workshops. Omer's attendance of around "45 hours of training sessions" was not enough as the program stakeholders might have raised that the number of training hours to 75 because of the limited number of seats available for participating teachers in addition to the sense of it being a newly designed program.

8.4.3 "I did not pass the IELTS test … but did not give up"

Not fulfilling the requirement of having attended the minimum of 75 hours of training sessions to join the first cohort of the BLCSI program did not prevent Omer form attending more sessions to reach the required minimum hours so he could apply for the second cohort of the program. Surprisingly, another added requirement for the second cohort obstructed Omer was providing an IELTS test with a minimum score of 5.5, according to Omer and the policy documents of the BLCSI

program. However, the MoE gave time to the participants who were initially accepted to obtain an IELTS test during the process of applying for the second cohort of the program. However, Omer did not obtain the minimum required score for the IELTS test and applied again for another IELTS test, but it was almost at the end of the process of finalizing applications in preparation for departure to New Zealand. That was because of the IELTS test requirement was established few months before the beginning of the second cohort of the program. Therefore, the stakeholders of the BLCSI program seemed to be concerned about some English language teachers who wanted to participate in the program but did pass the IELTS test. So, in the last minute, they established another division of the second cohort of the BLCSI program for English language teachers to go to New Zealand which was different in structure to the typical BLCSI program. The process of filling additional papers required for the exceptional division had taken place in addition to exempting the participating teachers from providing the required score of the IELTS test. Finally, Omer' dream came true even though he and the other participating English language teacher joined the exceptional division of the program almost 8 months after the start of the typical second cohort of the program.

Excerpt (3.13.):
"When I failed to joining cohort 1 of the program, I applied for cohort 2 the coming year and then I was surprised that I was asked to present an IELTS test with a minimum score of 5.5 in which the IELTS test was not required in cohort 1. I took the IELTS exam, but I did not pass the IELTS test and only scored 5.0. So, they told us to try taking the test again. At that time, I applied for another test, but it was after around two months, so I did not have much time left as the program participants would leave to their host institutes abroad by the time of second IELTS test. I almost gave up on the second cohort but did not give up, so I was planning to use my second IELTS test score for the third cohort of the BLCSI program. After the participants of the program left the country, I received a call from the MoE telling us that we have the chance to go abroad because an English language teacher and there is a specific program for us and the IELTS score was lowered to 5.0 and we were given some forms to be completed. So, I was surprised and did not expect it. I cancelled my second IELTS test and joined the program to New Zealand. When we joined the program, other participants who went several months before us had almost three months left to finish the program. We realized that the second cohort had two divisions of participants, us the second division were only English language teachers. We stayed for one year there. (Interview 1, Pos.214-236).

In this excerpt, Omer described himself as a surprised participating teacher in terms of the updated requirements of the second cohort which was not clearly stated in advance. He also portrayed himself as a not-giving-up person who would keep applying to the third cohort, if not accepted into the second cohort. He positioned the program policy, process, and applications as dynamic. Even though the IELTS test requirement was clearly stated in the requirements document of the first cohort, but it seemed that Omer and his peers were informed of the IELTS test very late during the process of their applications. However, he described the stakeholder of

the program as considerate and flexible in taking such decisions which were within their authority and funding. Omer viewed himself as new to taking the IELTS test but was short in time to prepare for the IELTS test.

8.4.4 The design of the program was a bit different from the usual.

After Omer had joined the program, he described it as it was an exceptional division which was a little different form the typical structure of the BLCSI program. It involved only English language teachers who passed all the requirements of the BLCSI program but did not obtain a score of 5.5 in the IELTS test. This division that Omer reported involved the key elements of the program such as English language learning, school immersion, and a final research project. However, the host institute was solely supervised by an English language institute in addition to that the school immersion did not only involve public schools but also the English language institute itself because the participating teachers of this division were all English language teacher.

Excerpt (3.14.):
"I first studied English for about 20 weeks and then we started to attended lectures provided by mentors. During the English language phase, we had classmates from Korea and China, so we were treated as students but during the lectures we attended after we finished the language phase, our mentors and lecturers treated us like teachers as most of the discussion was classroom teaching oriented, more specifically informed by the Saudi education context. I noticed the way they talked to us changed during the lectures, for example of their discussion was like: *what do your students would do if … from your perspective?* It was like the lecturers talked to us like we were their colleagues. Even the school immersion was in few local schools and the language institute itself. The host language institute was very keen on having us immerse and observe English language classes in their school besides vising local schools" (Interview 2, Pos. 45-61).

In this excerpt, Omer portrayed himself as a participating English language teacher in relation to how the host institute designed the program in accordance with his and other participating English language teachers' needs in terms of being engaged more in English language classes and lectures. The stakeholders of the program positioned Omer and his peers as exceptional in terms of being teachers of the same subject, which was English language. Omer's mentors and lecturers positioned Omer and his peers as colleagues and teachers in terms of their discussion with them. His mentors and lecturers did not just lecture the participating teachers about knowledge, but their discussions were practically informed linking the participating teachers' teaching experiences with knowledge in order to provide suggestions and expertise to them. The lectures seemed to be from a colleague to another and they were not in the sense of being given to learners. Therefore, they tried appropriating the design of the program to their needs.

8.4.5 "I taught English language classes to refugee students speaking Arabic"

During his school immersion phase, according to Omer, he wanted to experience teaching in the abroad context. So, he volunteered to teach in one of the English language classes. His school immersion phase was different from what has been described in the BLCSI program policy documents since it seemed that the division that Omer was part of was exceptional since it involved only participating English language teachers. Therefore, school immersion was conducted not only in local host schools but also in English language institutes. On his volunteering-to-teach experience, Omer learned patience from his host teacher in dealing with annoying students.

Excerpt (3.15.):
"On the abroad experience, you cannot teach unless it is volunteering. I had an experience of teaching abroad where I taught English language classes to refugee students speaking Arabic, three 10-11 year-old Syrian refugees. That knew little about English and had zero experience in school abroad. I learned from this experience how to deal with them. I tried not to speak to them in Arabic unless it was a necessity. Their teachers were from New Zealand and over time those students started to understand them in English language. The students had to develop their English language skills then after few months when they reach certain level of English, they merge with an English class. The difficulty was that those students did not know how to use learning tools like how to hold a pencil for example. So, I learned patience from their teacher, Jenny, in the sense of how patiently treated them. She was very patient as well towards their very obnoxious behaviors. I was an impatient teacher, but this experience taught me to be very patient and I learned how to work under any extra pressure" (Interview 3, Pos.54-62).

In this excerpt, Omer positioned himself as a volunteering experienced English language teacher in terms of being working with students who shared similar background of the language spoken, his first language (Arabic), to him and his own students back home. Omer believed that he was positioned as an assistant teacher by the language institute as it needed him to work with his host teacher, Jenny (a pseudonym) because she had three Arabic speaking students, refugees, among other students in her class. During his time working with Jenny, he portrayed her as a patient teacher in relation to the three obnoxious refugee students. He described them as obnoxious as he observed and felt Jenny's patience in trying to deal with them. Omer's volunteering work seemed to be in the right time since he was needed to deal with Arabic speaking students. As an assistant teacher, Omer tried not to speak Arabic with the Syrian students as trying to practice teaching in English language only and complying with his duty as an assistant English language teacher in the host institute. However, he described that using Arabic was only for emergency. Reflexively, Omer recognized his weakness of being impatient with his back-home students and represented that his experience as being an assistant teacher taught him patience.

8.4.6 "I attended almost 98% of its classes of different taught subjects in that school"

As the BLCSI program was late in designing this exceptional division involving a number of the participating English language teachers, the host language institute in New Zealand seemed to have initially partnered with one newly designed school which included primary and secondary levels of students. After Omer, among his peers, finished his English language learning which took around five months, he was given access to visit the assigned host school for school immersion. Because only one host school had initially partnered with the host language institute, Omer had the chance to visit almost all its classes.

Excerpt (3.16.):
"One of the things I remember, there was a school for all levels which was designed like a big mall. So, I used to visit it with a notebook, and I asked questions in relation to its design, management, finance, students, instructions, and so on. It was amazing how it was designed. So, I attended almost 98% of its classes of different taught subjects in that school. Of course, I already have a schedule of classes and I only used to knock the door and enter the class as the teachers were already informed of the purpose of my visit to the school. I was excited to observe their ways of teaching which might benefit me in the future. After that, I got a bit lazy to attend classes because of my too many visits to their classes of that school, but I got more excited when I heard my mentor's rescheduling of visits to different schools. That was what I wished for to see different schools." (Interview 4, Pos.51-60).

In this excerpt, Omer positioned himself as an excited observing teacher who could not wait to visit the host local school classes. For Omer, he seemed to be keen on observing not only English language lessons but also other various taught subjects in which he attended almost all classes. Having access to observe classes, Omer took the chance to see how other subject teachers delivered their lessons and what to learn from the different context to his own. From the way he was welcomed to immerse in the host local school in terms of teaching related and unrelated aspects, he seemed to have been initially viewed as a visiting teacher educator who was given access to almost all classes. The partnership between host local school and the host language institute made the host local school in agreement to give access to Omer and his peers for leaning and observation purposes. However, any internal or private matters of the host local school seemed to have been excluded. Omer, then, seemed to have gotten bored of going to only one host local school which he expected diversity of host schools to be visited as mentioned in the BLCSI program document policy regarding the variety of host schools. Omer portrayed the organizers of the program as keen on diversifying host local schools even though partnering with other host schools took some time to take place because the late design of the program Omer participated in.

8.4.7 "I attended teachers' break time during my visits"

During Omer's visits to his host school, he recalled his interaction with his host teachers during break time. Break time was the best time for Omer to observe almost all teachers' socialization and interaction. It was a time which he could use it to interact with and present himself to them. Omer also recalled weekly meetings specified for staff of the school to discuss internal school matters to which had no access.

Excerpt (3.17.):
"I used to present myself to host teachers with only few sentences. I attended teachers' break time during my visits. My contact with host teachers was very low. Maybe only one or two as they were secondary school teachers who we talked to sometimes. Maybe because of their limited time of the break. They were punctual to not be late to their lessons. However, during their break most of them were socializing and talking to each other. There were also two days a week in which they would gather for around 20 minutes to discuss students' learning outcomes, but I was only able to attend their break time. (Interview 4, Pos.94-96).

In this excerpt, Omer positioned himself as an outsider in relation to attending only classes and break time but not private or administrative meetings about internal matters of the school in addition to the lack of communication between Omer and the school host teachers. The host teachers viewed Omer as an observing visitor to their teaching, school environment, and their social interactions in which they were not required to talk to him all the time because they had a teaching job which required more attention and energy. During the weekly meetings, Omer was not considered as a member of the school. The school staff considered the meeting to be private and related to only members of the school. Omer seemed to have confirmed his position as a visitor and that he should hold back his curiosity to observe every bit of the school. That might be the cause of his laziness to visit this specific school in which he was excited about visiting other schools, as mentioned in 8.4.6. It might be that he felt that he was seen as obstructive during his visits. However, the host school was not required to let Omer engage in everything they did.

8.4.8 "Christ Church incident of the Mosque"

After almost seven months of Omer's time in New Zealand, there was a violent incident in a mosque in Christ Church city where Muslim people died. Omer was living in another city around 6 hours away. However, the incident was traumatic to him and his family including other Muslims in his city. He expected the situation to worsen because of the incident as he was very cautious when going outside for an errand or going to school. However, people of his city and his school staff there supported and stood with him and other Muslims in which he received sympathy and

help by email, text messages, mails, letters, and even orally and physically. This had changed his view of the people of New Zealand and taught him how to treat his students if they needed to.

Excerpt (3.18.):
"During the Christ Church incident of the Mosque, I remember people generally were very sympathetic including our mentors and staff of the language institute in general. At the time of the incident, we received emails and text messages of support if we needed help. Even my neighbors we sympathetic to me. One day I found a letter in my mailbox. It was from my neighbors saying: *we saw a woman with hijab going from and to your house, so we thought maybe you are related to the people who died in the incident. We are sorry for what happened and what happened does not represent who we are as New Zealand people. We are with you if you need anything*. So, when we used to go outside our house, we tried to be cautious, but we found people there were supportive and tried to sympathize with us. Even we go to pray in the mosque, some local citizen would guard the mosque from the outside. SO, we felt their sympathy and help which reduced our trauma of the incident" (Interview 4, Pos.121-132).

Omer, in this excerpt, initially described himself as a traumatized student and then as a supported member of a community in relation to the way people of his city sympathize with him and offered support. He positioned them as friendly sympathizers as they wanted to show Omer who they were, and that the incident was not part of culture. Omer represented his sense of cautiousness regarding himself and his family, at first, as a normal reaction to the incident. After receiving support and sympathy, he continued to live the remaining of his time there as normal. Omer's portrayal of such incident was related to the sense that such incidents might have affected Omer's abroad experience and his desire to study abroad if it was not for the supportive community of his neighborhood and other areas. Omer seemed to have learned how to deal with such crises if they occur in his school, for example.

8.4.9 "My research project was like a proposal to the MoE"

During the five months remaining for Omer in New Zealand, he worked on his final research project. It was related learning tools which facilitate students' learning. The research project was a required part of the BLCSI program which needed to be presented at the end of the program. Omer's research project, among others, was supervised and mentored by a mentor from the host language institute. At the end of the program, Omer had conducted a poster to present to his peers and staff of the English language institute.

Excerpt (3.19.):
"My research project like a proposal to the MoE. It was academically related to *learning tools* divided into two sections: one to serve the MoE and schools because it could be expensive to achieve such as computers and projectors, and the second one was for teachers to use in their teaching as tools that would be cheap to obtain such as PowerPoint

> presentations and wall-posters. So, the way to do the project att the end of the BLCSI program was either a poster or a presentation related to what mostly attracted my attention during the school immersion experience and it could be applied in the Saudi context including the challenges and solutions of its application. Of course, I had to start my research academically on my idea few months prior to the time of presenting the topic. We were provided with a laptop, but I used mine. The library also supported us with references including books and articles that we needed" (Interview 4, Pos.133-134).

In this excerpt, Omer described himself as teacher researcher considering the requirement of the program to conduct a research project in an academic way in terms of research references and books. Omer was viewed by the host language institute, in line with the BLCSI program policy documents, as a teacher educator in terms of researching an issue in the Saudi education context and provide the challenges and solutions taking into account their teaching experience in the Saudi educational context. Omer, as a participating teacher in the BLCSI program, was expected to have gone through an issue to be solved during his teaching experience in Saudi Arabia before joining the program. Conducting the research project was not optional for Omer and his peers but was core and obligatory aspect of the program in which it was mentored, supervised, and evaluated, in accordance with the BLCSI program policy documents. Although there was no specific assessment of passing or not passing the research project, the aim of such project was to train and practice conducting academic research based on one's own teaching experience in the Saudi context and his aboard observational experience. Omer seemed that he did not only conduct the research project because it was a requirement, but also seemed to have been thoughtful to go beyond the program boundaries and intentionally proposed his research project to the MoE and teachers in Saudi Arabia.

8.5 Post-the BLCSI program experience

After Omer finished his abroad experience and returned home, he was located to the same secondary school he had been teaching at before joining the program. He returned to his normal routine of teaching with his aboard experience on mind being excited to implement what he had learned abroad into his own teaching in the Saudi context. He expected that he would have more freedom in appropriating his aboard learning in relation to ways of teaching into his own lessons in the sense of being a change teacher. However, he encountered several challenges considering his supervisors' understanding of teaching and his subject's curriculum and textbooks. He believed that he, as a returnee teacher, was expected and motivated to appropriate what he had learned abroad into his own lessons and influence his colleague within his school, in accordance with the objectives stated in the BLCSI program policy documents. However, he was encountered by critiques from his English language supervisors. Considering the voices of his supervisors, as a teacher who experienced two different educational contexts, he kept arguing with his supervisors'

critiques but in a way that did not affect their assessment of his lessons. Nonetheless, he continued to appropriate what he had learned abroad and improve himself and his teaching.

In the following sections, Omer presents the challenges he went through within his secondary school, after his return from the abroad program, and he dealt with them.

8.5.1 "I expected him to support my decision but was the opposite"

One of the incidents that Omer had experienced during his school teaching was related to a visit of one of his English language supervisors. Omer recalled how he argued with his supervisor regarding his way of teaching at the beginning of the semester. Omer expected his supervisor to be impressed with his way of teaching, ideas, and agential actions. However, his supervisor was not pleased as he expected Omer to follow the curriculum and textbook.

Excerpt (3.20.):
"Last year, I remember I decided to revise the English language basics for my secondary school level students at the beginning of semester one, these basics are taught in intermediate level, but I saw they needed some revision due their low level in English. My supervisor attended those lessons of revision. Unfortunately, he was against it. I expected him to support my decision but was the opposite. I expected he would be impressed about it and might only argue about how many days it should be less or more! However, he said: *what you are doing is wrong. Do not let students pull you to their square*. I replied to him: *it is not about their pulling me to their square. This is a revision and reminding them of what they have forgot from last year. It would be very easy to forget things you have learned.* Anyway, he was not convinced, and I did not agree with his argument and carried on with my decision" (Interview 1, Pos. 183).

In this excerpt, Omer positioned himself as agential teacher in terms of choosing the proper way of teaching that would fit the level of his students. He portrayed his supervisor as acting with the power of assessment. He seemed to have believed that his supervisor had seen Omer as a careless teacher because Omer chose to revise the basics of English language of the previous semester for his students. Omer felt he was right in his way of teaching because he was considerate of students' needs. Therefore, in this excerpt, it seemed that his supervisor wanted to be critical in any way and critiqued Omer's way of teaching in form of advice when he said, "what you are doing is wrong" and then said, "do not let students pull you to their square." It is as a metaphor in reference to that the students will control the teachers' lessons to their preference. His supervisor seemed to argue based on his experience observing other teachers. However, Omer felt that he knew what to do and did not bother with his supervisor's critique.

8.5.2 "only a special needs supervisor praised my initiative and supported me"

Omer seemed that he was bothered about his English language supervisors as they only took observation of his lessons in the sense of inspecting and finding mistakes and neglecting being positive and critical assessors. In his current secondary school, Omer recalled an incident with his supervisor specialized in special needs. Omer had had some blind students in his classroom. Considering their needs, he used a whatsup group for them to help them learn easily. His special needs supervisor praised Omer's sincerity and creativity in teaching them.

Excerpt (3.21.):
"Not all supervisors were supportive of initiatives, only a special needs supervisor praised my initiative and supported me. He once visited me because I had some blind students with special needs. At that time, I made a whatsup group for them to have like an audible book. So, I used it to give them audible lessons and videos. I also record my explanation, comments, and feedback for them. I also revise each lesson I deliver to them. So, the special needs advisor was very impressed and happy about the online group idea and its implementation. The way I did it was not because I was looking for his praise, but this is how we should do it as teachers and continue to do it without waiting for praises or reward. However, his praise motivated me and gave me a very positive feeling and happiness" (Interview 4, Pos. 158).

In this excerpt, Omer described himself as an innovative teacher. He also positioned his special needs supervisor as exceptional in relation to his other supervisors' way of observation and supervision. His supervisor had seen Omer as creative in his teaching. Omer portrayed himself as a sincere teacher considering his students' special needs and a digital teacher when he created a special WhatsApp group for them. Omer humbly believed that being thoughtful of his students' needs was part of his duties, and duties of any teacher. However, being recognized by his special needs supervisor was possibly what he needed as motivational and rewarding.

8.5.3 "I tried to appropriate what I learned from how teachers taught abroad into my own lessons"

During his lessons, Omer tried to consider appropriating what he had learned from and observed during the BLCSI program. Omer encountered several things while appropriating his own abroad experience even though the appropriation of the abroad learning experience was supported by the BLCSI program objectives, and the curriculum objectives also supported his stance to implement teaching approaches such as student-centered approach. Omer was challenged by some of his supervisors' understanding and critiques in relation to the taught lessons they observed.

Excerpt (3.22.):

> "I tried to appropriate what I learned from how teachers taught abroad into my own lessons. I tried to look at my lessons from the perspective of the overall outcomes and benefits. I tried to focus on student-centered approach and collaboration. For example, I did not give them loads of homework; instead, I gave them two words to translate while working in groups. So, the students would learn from each other in collaborative mode while I was only a facilitator which I would supervise their discussions and see how the learning process was proceeded. I noticed that they built trust in each other's' with interactive and collaborative relationship. I mainly tried such an approach in terms of dealing with the big number of students in my class. I also became patient in dealing with students' noises and talk. However, sometimes this approach was not preferred by my supervisors as they would require finishing the textbook's lesson assigned for that the time of my class as such collaborative approaches would require being creative bringing materials outside from outside the textbooks and would also take a period of time that would leave me with no time to finish the rest of the textbook's lesson" (Interview 4, Pos. 73-82).

Omer in this excerpt portrayed himself as an abroad-experience appropriator but challenged by the requirement of having to follow the textbook material and time assigned for each lesson in addition to the supervisor's critiques in favor of the priority of following what the textbook contained. He positioned his supervisors as not up to date to the newly approaches to teaching. Omer believed that the student-centered approach worked for him as students collaboratively and interactively helped each other in learning, which was one of the main curriculum objectives to be achieved at the end of the lesson and semester. He described how students built strong relationships and trust among each other. He also described his supervisors as not pleased if the teacher did apply such approaches that required the teacher to rely on content outside the textbook or approaches that they consider as a waste of time, in which finishing the lesson content assigned within the time limit of his lesson was a priority. The challenge that he encountered was contradictory to the objectives of the BLCSI program in which teachers were expected to appropriate what they had learned on the abroad experience.

8.5.4 "I wish we have more freedom in choosing our lessons"

As he observed and taught English language and other subjects' classes on the abroad experience, his ideas of appropriating what he had learned were obstructed as he was required to follow the provided textbooks. However, Omer encountered several challenging situations with his supervisors in relation to following the content and curriculum of the textbooks he taught. Therefore, He did not feel comfortable about it so he wished for teachers to have more freedom in designing their own activities that would fit the content of the textbook.

Excerpt (3.23.):
"I wish we have more freedom in choosing our lessons. I mean not exactly follow everything in the textbooks but to be able for example to add some activities of my choice. I tried it

many times to add my own choice of activities which help in students' learning and the students liked very much, but still I must follow the content of the textbooks otherwise my teaching would be underassessed" (Interview 4, Pos. 144-146).

In this excerpt, Omer portrayed himself as an expert teacher of two different contexts in relation to the content, material, strategies of the English language teaching textbooks that he taught. However, he positioned the MoE as not trusting teachers to be given the freedom of choosing and providing their own activities including the appropriation of what teachers learned during the aboard experience which was one of the objectives of the BLCSI program. Omer's portrayal was in relation to that the assessment of his teaching performance and delivery would be affected in terms of not fulfilling his duty as a teacher who should only what was provided in the textbook. He described the environment of his teaching as not supportive of creativity.

8.5.5 "I did not expect to become a host teacher one day"

Looking at the bright side of his position as a secondary school English language teacher, he experienced being a host teacher for practicum students after he returned from the BLCSI program in August 2019. English language supervisors accompanying their practicum students had arranged with Omer to attend his lesson to learn from and observe Omer's English language teaching. He had several practicum students who specialized in two different areas: English language and special needs. Omer welcomed them into his lessons and felt happy being a host teacher in which practicum students would learn from him.

Excerpt (3.24.):
"I did not expect to be a host teacher one day. However, that happened since last year. I had several practicum students who attended my lessons alongside their supervisors as they observed my teaching and took notes so the practicum students would familiarize themselves with teaching" (Interview 4, Pos. 68).

Omer in this excerpt portrayed himself as host teacher in relation to the visiting university supervisors as they positioned him as an expert English language teacher. His portrayal of himself and other's positioning of him was also he was a former participant of the BLCSI program and having special needs students in his class. His secondary school also was very popular in hosting practicum students of various majors, based on my own experience in organizing practicum sessions, because it is a public big secondary school which is well designed and equipped in addition to its good location nearby the practicum students' university. Even though Omer was not obliged to host practicum students in his classes, but he reflexively remembered how his past practicum experience was facilitated including his abroad experience. Influenced by his host teachers abroad and host teachers when he was a practicum student, he was open-minded about hosting others into his lessons. Therefore, he wanted to help anyone wanting to learn from his

lessons and pay back to others without waiting for any rewards. That made university supervisors feel comfortable to attend his lessons with their practicum students.

8.5.6 "At the moment, I am not excited to study for a master's degree"

After having an experience in hosting practicum students, Omer preferred to offer his insights and help in organizing workshop inside or outside his school. However, he reported that continuing his higher education was not present in his plans. Being engaged in an abroad experience made Omer wanted to share his experience practically rather than conducting research.

Excerpt (3.25.):
"At the moment, I am not excited to study for a master's degree but I would love to want to help in organizing initiatives or workshops or join the curriculum committee related to digital learning so I can help to improve the MoE online platform" (Interview 4, Pos. 91-92).

Omer in this excerpt portrayed himself as an initiative seeker in terms of sharing what he had learned abroad with his colleagues and students. He did not describe himself as research-oriented teacher but more of a digital contributor. As a teacher, he was not expected to be a teacher researcher but to improve his teaching skills including digitality. His digital skills seemed to be on a high level in which his desire was to engage in developing the MoE online platform designed for delivering remote lessons. He seemed confident that he could contribute to improving it in terms of his own experience in using technology in his lessons and his abroad observing experience as he could take a position as a member among the stakeholders related to the integration between English language curriculum and technology.

8.6 Conclusion

It was represented throughout the analysis of Omer's story some critical moments involving positioning that had influenced his decisions in constructing his English language teacher identity. They showed how he started his journey of learning and teaching from being a gamer in English language electronic games to a digital teacher teaching English language. Moreover, how he became an English language host teacher after being a practicum student in the past when he was a college student. More importantly, how he transformed from being teaching his classmates in his teenager's life to becoming an English language teacher teaching students including special needs students. Omer seemed as a practical teacher as he tried to learn from the abroad experience by appropriating what had learned into his own teaching.

More precisely, Omer's English language learning and teaching journey was influenced by being a gamer in early age, being engaged with his neighbor Abdul to practice English language. Abdul's

advice was critical in shaping Omer's future in addition to his college examiners' impressive reaction of Omer's English language oral skills. His supervisors' constructive treatments and feedback during practicum and early years of teaching were also crucial to his path as a new teacher. The BLCSI program as a hope for Omer to study abroad brought back his old years dream back to life. Experiences abroad, learning and teaching, were influential on Omer's rethinking of his teaching and treatment of his students in addition to developing his English language skills and academic research. After his return, he became more confident about his teaching regardless of the challenges he encountered including his supervisors' discouraging views about his teaching and the content of the curriculum he taught. Nonetheless, he tried to appropriate what he had learned abroad into his own teaching. Finally, he desired to be engaged in and contribute to initiatives in relation to the use of technology in teaching.

Chapter 9 Discussion Chapter

9.1 Introduction

Before engaging with this chapter, it is noteworthy reminding us about the main aims of this study. It aims to investigate and understand how its participants construct their language teacher identity through positioning over time and space during their journey of English language learning and teaching including their participation in the abroad experience. It also aims to understand how participants navigate the structure of the abroad program through positioning in relation the program's policy documents. In addition, it aims to understand the extent to which the engagement into two different contexts would influence their teacher development.

This chapter presents a detailed discussion of the findings analyzed in chapters (6, 7, and 8) in relation to the analysis chapter (5) of policy documents of the BLCSI program. The first section (9.2) presents an overview of the key findings of this study. The results of this study are discussed in section (9.3) considering emergent themes and related previous research. Finally, a conclusion, in section (9.4), is provided to sum up this chapter.

9.2 Overview of the findings

It is important to remind us of the key findings of my study considering the three participants' (Ali, Sami, and Omer) stories. The study findings included some main themes: LTI construction through challenges encountered including agentic actions and surrounding influencers, and LTI negotiation through positioning and envisioning the future. The participants shared nearly similar experiences in terms of studying English language, becoming teachers, participating in the BLCSI program, and returning to their own schools, and dreaming of becoming better teachers. However, they might have presented different moments of their lived experiences in terms of positioning themselves to themselves and others and positioning of others. Ali, for example, showed that he valued working in a group and being reflexive and a hunter for arising opportunities. Sami presented himself as he was an initiating and autonomous teacher and a person who would go beyond the school context for learning new skills and things. For Omer, he displayed himself as a good learner and that he became an independent teacher.

9.3 Discussion of the results

The results of this study are discussed considering new emerging themes in addition to existing themes from the literature. The results to be discussed in the following sections involve main categories with subcategories

9.3.1 LTI constructed through challenges encountered

The participants' identities were constructed through the challenges that they went through and the agentic actions that they sought. Not only these challenges were encountered during the BLCSI program but also through their teaching experience before and after the BLCSI program. Dealing with such challenges during their learning and teaching journey including the study abroad experience involves taking agentive actions which refer to their abilities to choose such an action among other various possibilities (Brown, 2005; Block and Gray, 2016).

9.3.1.1 Navigating the structure of the BLCSI program

The stories of the three participants of this study showed that they had encountered some challenges during their teaching journey including the abroad experience. Previous research on in-service language teachers engaging in a study abroad experience confirmed that the study abroad experience had impacted their pedagogy and cultural knowledge (Allen, 2010) and their teacher development (Jochum et al., 2015) identity development (Benson et al., 2013). Therefore, the discussion of the results related to the structure of study abroad involves seeking an understanding how challenges are encountered and dealt with by the participants of this study.

9.3.1.1.1 Expected persona by the policy documents of the BLCSI program

All the three participants in the abroad program had challenged the imposed persona by the policy documents of the program as English language learners and recipients of knowledge (see 2.2.4.5 and 5.3). Not only they learned and received knowledge but also engaged in the abroad community of host teachers and people and broadened their knowledge relative and unrelative to the teaching of English language. They also engaged in teaching abroad which significantly enhanced their way of English language teaching. However, the neoliberal persona (Codo and Patino-Santos, 2018) imposed by the policy documents of the BLCSI program (5.4) in terms of various personas including linguistic, flexible, knowledge, leadership, and so on, was evident in this study. Imposing certain persona and expectation creates tension in teachers' professional identity, such as what they experience as good and what is assigned by others which may lead to downplaying of teacher agency (Trent, 2013). It may also lead to friction in identity construction.

However, the participants nurtured such persona without knowing that they did even though they encountered various challenges because of their ambition to be better teachers. For example, the participants showed flexibility in dealing with the dynamicity of the implementation of the program (see 6.4.1 and 8.4.4) in addition to the variability of learning activities in which they engaged such as attending workshops organized by local schools abroad (see 6.4.4).

9.3.1.1.2 The struggles they suffered and how they overcame them:

9.3.1.1.2.1 Its requirements

One of the major requirements to participate in the BLCSI abroad program, not only for English language teachers but also for other subject teachers, was English language competency (see 5.3) as the study abroad contexts were English-speaking countries. Assessment of language ability and usage is critical, more specifically, prior to participation in study abroad programs. However, the assessment is differently undergone. In Chan's (2016) study, assessment of the participants' language ability was through reflective writing before going on their abroad experience in which "Most participants did not appear to be confident in their English proficiency level" (p. 48). Omer's narratives also showed that he struggled with the requirements of the program such as IELTS exam and teacher development training hours (8.4.3). His ambition to participate in the study abroad program motivated him even though he failed to participate in the first cohort of the program but then succeeded in the second cohort which he almost failed again due to the sudden changes of requirements specially the IELTS test and training hours. He challenged this requirement by being an ambitious self in which ambitions "become a matter of identity when they are incorporated into the self-concept" (Benson et al., 2013, p. 22).

9.3.1.1.2.2 The program design and implementation

The three participants showed different views about the program implementation and design (see 6.4.1, 7.4.1, and8.4.4). Ali and Sami reported similar design but different implementation. Ali reported its implementation and planning as vague and not clear at first for a few months and then progressed to a clear implementation. However, Unlike Sami viewed it as a well-planned and organized program because of the host institute's experience in hosting the program for the second time. Omer, on the other hand, reported slightly different program design in terms of the program only involved English language teachers, as the program usually involved all types of subject teachers, but this case was exceptional. However, all participants reported that no introductory workshops were given to them before their departure abroad and that such workshops were left as part of the responsibility of host institutes. The literature on study abroad programs emphasized the importance of clear and purposeful organization and implementation

of such programs in which insufficient organization of the program may lead the participants to take it less seriously (Benson et al., 2013). It was also pointed out that “study abroad trips will lack the academic and cultural impact” on participants’ learning outcomes if not well-organized (Bain and Yaklin, 2019, p. 2) which indicates the importance of well-planning of study abroad program (Strange and Gibson, 2017).

9.3.1.1.2.3 Assessment

Ali, for example, reported that the host institution incorporated assessment but was not very strict (6.4.1) which was opposite to Sami’s view of the program (7.4.1). Assessment, in relation to English language learning and the research projects alongside visiting schools for immersion, was reported as challenging to the participants as they were treated as ‘learners abroad’; however, taking into account the structure of the program as an opportunity for them to improve their learning and teaching eased their worries and struggles as they were already aware of the assessment aspect as part of the program to monitor their progress over time. Without assessment being implemented, the participants might not take it seriously, according to Ali (6.4.1). The participants as teachers were used to being assessed on a continuous basis by their supervisors and school principals. So, continuous assessment, as Uiseb (2009) maintained, “is utilized for diagnostic and remedial purposes as well as for classification and certification purposes'' (p. 61). Part of the assessment is that the participants were positioned as “receivers of knowledge” during their English language learning phase as Block (2007b) describes in relation to linguistic identity which involve several dimensions including expertise in language use. However, self-assessment along the way seemed one of the purposes of study abroad through reflective papers and meetings on an ongoing basis. Hopkins (1999) asserted that increasing of self-evaluation on study abroad highly develops self confidence in own abilities.

9.3.1.1.2.4 School immersion

The immersion phase in the BLCSI abroad program was problematic for participants in terms of its length differed from what stated by the policy documents of the program. All participants reported that they had only 2 months of school immersion (6.4.1, 7.4.1, and 8.4.4) while it was planned to be 9 months in the policy documents of the BLCSI program (A.1). It seemed that the concept of school immersion in the policy documents of the BLCSI program involved not only school immersion but also the research project and other workshops and activities. Nonetheless, school immersion manifested as a significant part of the BLCSI abroad program. In line with Lee’s (2009) study, school immersion, which was only for 10 days, had an impact on the participants in the sense of language enhancement, cultural understanding, pedagogical understanding, and personal development. Ali, for example, reported that he learned what opening activities that

host teachers used in initiating their lessons (6.4.3). Sami, for instance, learned a different cultural aspect of teaching as an honorable career in relation the degree obtained even if it was a phd degree, which was the case of his host teacher (7.4.3). Omer, on the other hand, enhanced the usage of only English language in teaching Arabic language speaking refugees (8.4.5). Therefore, school immersion helped the participants renegotiate their understanding of teaching personally, culturally, linguistically, and pedagogically.

As the two months of school immersion experience was not enough for the participants, they agentively sought other teaching opportunities (6.4.5, 7.4.4, 8.4.5). For Ali, he studied CELTA course to learn and practice English language teaching in an international setting. The same was for Sami and Omer in which Sami volunteered to be an assistant teacher of Arabic language in an academic setting abroad. For Omer, he volunteered to help in teaching English language to international students including refugees. Coombe (2020) maintained that "Active participation in English language teaching associations like TESOL International Association and IATEFL [can] keep teachers professionally engaged and updated in their profession" (p. 7). Their participation in teaching in an international setting increased their currency in relation to their teaching practices, which seemed to have been sought by the policymakers (A.2) during the process of choosing participants before joining the BLCSI program.

9.3.1.1.2.5 Engagement

Hadfield (2017) cites Wenger (1998) defining 'engagement' as "interaction with the immediate teaching community (e.g., colleagues and the institutional environment and its policies)" (p. 255). Engagement is highly facilitated by acceptance and participation. According to Benson et al. (2013), 'acceptance' is a crucial element of learning and growing for study abroad learners as they are welcomed local people on the abroad context. However, the participating teachers of this study had different experiences abroad, in relation to local teachers and host teachers, as they were key to the participants' learning experiences and views of abroad host teachers. Ali experienced welcoming and unwelcoming experiences by his host teachers (6.4.3); however, his experience in participating in local teachers' workshops was exceptional to him (6.4.4). Omer showed that he had an initial nice welcoming experience by the host teachers but evolved as boring overtime (8.4.6). Benson et al. (2013) understood that engagement of individuals during study abroad program is a key factor that enhance the abroad experience influence on their second language identities regardless of the type of the study abroad program in which the homestay was the engagement environment for them. Ali, for example, school immersion was considered an engagement environment for him; however, he looked for an alternative way which was the local teachers' workshop in which he found it more engaging than school

immersion or host teachers as traditional workshops and engagements “may fail to address the complex needs of foreign language teachers” (Jochum et al., 2015, p. 130). Ali’s positive engagement with local teachers’ workshop and frustrating engagement with host teachers during school immersion echo Benson et al.’s (2013) study finding that “one of the most positive and often frustrating experiences of students’ stay abroad was making contacts with locals” (p. 157). Therefore, this indicates that engaging and interacting with individuals abroad can be either challenging or positive or both. To put it simply, in Ali’s stories, when his engagement with host teachers was challenged, he agentively looked for an alternative which was engaging in local teachers’ workshops in which represented as positive experience for him.

9.3.1.1.2.6 Envisioning their future

The participants reported how the program helped them to be more reflexive in envisioning their future after they return from the program in terms of developing their individual differences for better outcomes (2.2.4.5). For example, Ali studied CELTA (6.4.5), Sami attended conferences (7.4.5) and teaching in a university level (7.4.4), and Omer participated in teaching English language to refugees (8.4.5). In line with what Allen (2010) found, in her study, that individual differences of the participants were influenced by their goals which motivated them to their linguistic and learning experiences during their study abroad. In addition, in Tarp’s (2006) study, it found that the participants’ objectives impacted learning conditions such as interactions with other people which, as a result, influenced the outcomes of their individual differences.

9.3.1.2 Power relations in their local (Saudi) educational contexts

Educational contexts include power relations which are challenging to teachers’ identity construction. Power has been explored in various fields including language teaching (Bailey, 2006). It was argued that Identities involving power are discursively constructed in such ways like giving instructions and advice, and making critical statements (Holmes, Stubbe, & Vine, 1999). An example of giving feedback, in the study of Donaghue (2020), it was evident that teachers index identities of power through interactional authoritative actions. However, school supervisors’ authority is sometimes a hinderance to teachers’ autonomy which create a level of tensions for teachers (Bailey, 2006). Therefore, Copeland et al. (2011), in this study, emphasized that the relationship between teachers and school supervisors should be collaborative and not hierarchical.

9.3.1.2.1 School environment

9.3.1.2.1.1 Classroom size

The participants reported that they had struggled with the overwhelming size of students in their classrooms (see 7.3.3) before and after the abroad experience due to large scale ministerial mandate of minimizing the number of public schools around the country (MoE, 20117). Farooq's (2015) study identified several challenges such as overcrowded classes that Saudi English language teachers encountered regarding the implementation of such teaching strategies. In line with Farooq's study finding, the participants of my study showed that the oversized number of students in their classes was a big challenge (for example in 7.3.3). However, after returning from the abroad experience, they seemed less bothered as they focused more improving their teaching approaches and strategies such as in Ali's case (see 6.5.3) including the use of technology and other resources such as speakers of listening activities like in Sami's case (see 7.5.2) and trying to appropriate what they had learned abroad like in the case of Omer (see 8.5.3).

9.3.1.2.1.2 The design of teachers' office room

Sami showed his frustration over the challenge he encountered over working in uncomfortable teachers' office room which needed reconstruction. Having no power in designing the teachers' office room, Sami agentively choose to continue his schoolwork from home (7.3.6). Sami showed his voice, but it seemed that he was challenged by being powerless in terms of reconstructing the teachers' room as the power to make it happen was at the hand of the school principal. Gibson et al. (2012) argued that "organizational structure is the pattern of jobs and group of jobs in an organization. An important cause of individual and group behavior" (p. 398) which "determines how employees use resources to achieve organizational goal" (George and Jones, 2012, p. 47). Hassanain et al. (2022) found that the design quality of school buildings is crucial to the success of a community's social life and educational process. Therefore, the school structure including unsuitable teachers' office room is challenging to teachers.

9.3.1.2.1.3 Uncollaborative colleagues

The participants' (Ali and Sami) stories showed that having the dilemma of having uncollaborative colleagues was challenging for them (see 6.3.4 and 7.3.5). It is argued that the bad school management by school principals may decrease communication and interaction between school staff including teachers and therefore it causes tension and anxiety (Zelle, 2009). Therefore, Ali encountered this challenge by trying to find an inspiring colleague to hold on to (6.3.4). Sami, on the other hand, received discouragement from some of his colleagues regarding his failed initiative (7.3.5). Different from the findings of Farrell's (2011) study in which novice teachers, on-

contract, seemed to be struggling with participation in volunteering work who volunteered because either it was their will, or they felt it was expected from them by the school, Sami kept doing initiatives and social activities by himself because he was willing to do so. In addition, the situation in my study is different in terms of long teaching experience and non-contract work even though they were aware that volunteering is preferable but not required.

9.3.1.2.1.4 Curriculum

The participants showed care as a value approached but were constrained by curriculum (for example, see 8.5.1). In line with findings of Reeve's (2018) study, the same case for participants in trying to follow their core values of care for their students but must follow the curriculum prescribed. So, having recognized that following the curriculum did not align with what they could appropriate into their teaching practices. However, they tried to balance how they teach trying to follow the curriculum at the same time they use or appropriate different methods of teaching or apply certain activities. For example, Omer tried to start the semester with a revision of English language basics considering some students' level of learning but was rejected by his supervisor as a waste of time and not following the curriculum (8.5.1). Therefore, his care value considering students' needs was hindered by curriculum and supervisors which resulted in his autonomy was challenged. It was also challenging to the participants' autonomous persona that they had developed on the abroad experience (Benson et al., 2013, p. 155). Autonomy is interrelated to and integrated into curriculum (Little, 2009). It is argued that English language teacher are expected to upgrade their skills in accordance with curriculum reforms (Jiang et al., 2020) and so is their autonomy; however, curriculum may hinder autonomy even if it is reformed when it constrains teachers from freedom of implementing what approaches of teaching they may desire.

9.3.1.2.1.5 Meeting the BLCSI program expectations

The aforementioned challenges contributed to the participants' failure to meet the BLCSI program expectations after the program in relation to doing workshops and cascading the abroad learning and experience; however, they started to focus on self-development and change (2.2.4.5). Ali, for example, as he tried to make better relationship with his colleagues over time, he came to conclusion that he cannot change them or their thinking and attitudes, but at least he would try to change himself as he believed that "changing others comes from starting to change the self itself first" by attending workshops and conferences (6.5.5). For Sami, he continued to develop himself socially through doing initiatives, social work, and volunteering, and personally and professionally by attending conferences and studying a master's degree (7.5.9). Omer, on the other hand, focused on himself as he became more practical in relation to his classroom teaching; however, his practicality and focus on his own teaching did not hinder his chances become a host

teacher in which he could cascade and transfer his knowledge and teaching and learning experiences to his classroom visitors, practicum students and their mentors (8.5.5).

Vaughn (2013) argued that if teachers are ignored and not supported in their adaptive and creative teaching, they may quit their professions. On the contrary, these challenges did not hinder the participating teacher' moral values about teaching and contributing to their communities, even if the focus was more on self-development including the development of qualities because it will influence their students' learning outcomes. Therefore, the participating teachers contested the unsupportive positioning received by school principals and supervisors but still had affiliation to their profession and continued to hold on to their professions and paid attention on self-development. This comes in line with the findings of the study of Tang and Choi (2004) in terms of personal development in which engaging in an abroad experience enabled initial teachers to enhance their qualities such as self-confidence and independence. Values are an essential part of identity and the inspiration for many of our behaviours; thus, they are the set of standards used to discern between the desirable and unpleasant which may create a conflict of values and therefore could lead to rejecting new cultures or professional venues (Samovar et al., 2015).

9.3.1.3 Cultural values:

9.3.1.3.1 Age- and experience- related cultural values

Ali's stories after his return from the program showed that he complied with cultural values in relation to age and teaching experience. His compliance to such values was not out of fear or a lack of confidence but it was out of respect even if it was over his own interest (6.5.2). It seemed his positioning was challenged as he acted according to his existing cultural values (Holliday, 2001) when he did not compete to take the initiative in his school for talented students in English language speaking and listening (6.5.2). Wedell (2013) stated that teachers' attitudes towards change are affected by the working context values and norms. It is revealed that in seeking change, Ali could not resist his cultural value. A 'cultural value' in this case is referred to norms and attitudes towards one another in terms of collegial interaction and relationship such as respect in terms of age. Ali could not resist cultural value in respect to his colleague's age and years of teaching experience. It aligns with the study of Barkhuizen (2016) on a different dimension. The case of Sela who was treated as a cleaner in the kitchen because of her appearance-related cultural values in which she did not explained her position to the other teachers who mistook her position. It proves that internal values hinder our path to challenging such values.

9.3.1.3.2 Work-related cultural values

Sami's narratives after his return from the program showed different positioning as he complied at first but then contested for personal gain (7.5.3). He, at first, complied out of collegial relationship. However, when it came to the possibility of being underassessed, he contested his core cultural values and spoke up in which he might have considered it fair in similar situation where his own interest might be affected. Sami, over time, seemed to have cared more about his own interest than others (7.5.4) when he resisted and contested the unfair nomination to attend a conference in which he believed he was the most hardworking teacher among his English language teaching colleagues. In Sami's initial resistance and contestation of cultural values such as caring for others' interests over his own (7.5.3).It seems that he started to embrace neoliberalism in light of accountability, which refers to responsibilities towards to teaching performance which trigger comparisons with others (Ball, 2013). Ball (2003) emphasized that neoliberalism not only change what teachers do but also who they are. It is possible to enact with neoliberal values during the abroad experience as overseas' environments as domain-free (Lee et al., 2012) such as in western countries. However, in the local context of my study, Saudi Arabia, cultural and social values remain important to the participants such as the case of Sami in which contestation of the neoliberal values prevailed at first but then encountered with a decision of forsaking such values in relation to the pressure of work assessment. It was reported that English language curriculum in Saudi Arabia is designed taken into account Islamic values (Elyas and Badawood, 2016) in which cultural and social values manifest in teachers' actions; thus, their negotiation of their identity is impacted.

9.3.2 LTI constructed by surrounding influencers

The three participants showed that they were significantly influenced by surrounding influencers during their teaching journey including the BLCSI study abroad experience whether they were host teachers, mentors, colleagues, or supervisors which contributed to constructing their language teacher identity. In her study, Kayi-Aydar (2018) found that her study participants "positioned themselves as caring, powerful teachers" (p. 127) within their context where they had known others around them.

9.3.2.1 School supervisors in their local schools

The participants' stories showed various experiences with their school supervisors, especially English language supervisors. Those experiences were encouraging for some participants and discouraging for others. For example, Omer narrated a positive interactive experience with his English language supervisor on his first week of teaching as an official teacher (8.3.7). He also

mentioned how encouraging was his special-needs supervisor during his visit to Omer's class after returning from the BLCSI program. On the other hand, Sami viewed, in his stories, his English language supervisors as 'inspectors', which entails discouraging moments for his teaching (7.3.4). The school supervisors' supervising ways towards teachers were not constructive even though the school supervisors were former teachers. Burns (2017) asserted that "collegial and institutional recognition are powerful mediators of teacher researchers' self-identity" (p. 134) and teachers' teaching experiences. Supervisors are seen as authoritative but expected to be collaborative figures who value knowledge and expertise of teachers and promote self- reflection and evaluation (Wallace, 1991). Hojeij et al. (2021) found that supervisors hold crucial role as an influence on teachers' development in their teaching. Acting as inspectors might influence teachers personally and professionally as "power differentials, if not attended and managed carefully, can turn supervision into a painful experience for teachers" (Agheshteh and Mehrpour, 2021, p. 88). This is evident in the participants' experiences with their supervisors pertaining the different use of power from a supervisor to another. The supervision relationship involves encouragement, respect, and comfort as well as a provision of constructive feedback (Martikainen 2014) in which teachers highly appreciate from their supervisors (Pihko et al. 2014). In line with their findings, the encouragement that Omer received was crucial to him in constructing his identity as a teacher who knows what to do. On the other hand, Sami continued to work alone, and Ali sought to work in a group.

9.3.2.2 Role model of host teachers abroad:

All participants reported that they were implicitly or explicitly influenced by their host teachers as their role models (Murphey, 1996). During their abroad experience, the participants demonstrated how their host teachers' ways of teaching influenced their thinking about their own teaching (see 6.4.6, 7.4.2, and 8.4.5). It was evident in the literature in terms of apprenticeship of observation. However, the participants of my study differed in terms of the type of observation they experienced which was not only for the purpose of observation but also for the purpose of appropriation of such observed teaching ways into their own as the participants were already experienced in English language teaching. Therefore, they considered their host teachers as models and examples to mirror their teaching when they return home. In relation to being influenced by other teachers, Meng (2014) found that influences of former teachers on students including their relationship with their students worked like mirrors for early career English language teachers in which promoted their identity construction. Ali explicitly, and Omer and Sami implicitly, presented that they were influenced by their host teachers in different ways in relation to dealing with students. For Ali, he learned how to deal with students' behaviors to help them focus during the lessons (6.4.6); for Sami, how to deal with year-one students' emotions to

help them overcome obstacles (7.4.3); for Omer, how to deal with students' obnoxious attitudes to help cultivate self's patience (8.4.5). Clarke elucidated the role of mirroring in identity construction considering Lucan's perspective "including imaginary identifications with the specular image of the (m)other and symbolic identifications" (Clarke, 2017, p. 266). The participants of this study experienced observations of a parenting role manifested in their female host teachers' ways of treating students. These observations of parenting experience can result in parenting being mirrored in their teaching practices (Li et al., 2019). As teachers have observed "mothering role" in the host teacher as a way of treating their students, it may have reinforced their ideology of "fathering role" in reference to care as teachers who "should treat students just like their own children" (Kang, 2019, p. 10).

9.3.2.3 Inspiring colleague

Ali's story showed that finding an inspiring colleague, an English language teacher, was important to him in terms of personal and professional development. It increased his confidence in teaching, knowledge exchange, interaction skills, affiliation to his job, experiencing a better environment. Of course, inspiring colleagues are important in facilitating and liking the teaching job, but it was not the case for Sami and Omer. So, I argue that it is related to the attributes of an individual. Some teachers are self-motivated. However, for Ali, it is a different case in which he experienced some sort of childhood trauma (6.3.1) which developed a sense of liking to work in groups rather than individually. Ali (6.5.1) showed his frustration when he was relocated to another school after his return in which he insisted to go to the same school where his inspiring colleague teaches. This confirms the argument that inspiring colleagues, precisely teaching the same subject, significantly contribute to the construction of other teachers' identity, especially who prefers to work in a group like Ali.

This lines with what Farrell (2001) refers to critical friends as "people who collaborate in a way that encourages discussion and reflection in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning" in which Ali purposely sought to find an inspiring colleague to improve his learning and teaching (6.3.6). It is also emphasized that peers have influence in terms of triggering individual motivation through informal encouragement (Boli and Schalpfer, 2015). Morgan (2004) asserts that "peer relations … potentially influence the interpersonal meanings given and received in class" (p. 117).

9.3.2.4 Host teachers

The participants showed their host teachers as big influencers during their abroad experience. Sami, for example, was influenced by his host teacher attributes and degree level as he was

amazed by her way of teaching year-one little students even though she had a PhD degree, which Sami perceived as unusual to see PhD degree obtainers teaching in public schools (7.4.3). This had influenced Sami and confirmed his desire to study for a master's degree.

For Ali, his host teacher influenced him in terms of the current teaching strategies she used in her lessons (6.4.6). He was implicitly encouraged to learn more about English language teaching methods and strategies to apply them to his teaching. Omer was influenced by his host teacher in terms of acquiring such skills to deal with students (8.4.5), as he had difficulties in the past dealing with students impatiently, but he changed after his return from the program (8.5.1).

These examples of my participants' experiences with their host teachers support Jassica's identity, in Trent's study (2011), as a teacher who was influenced during an abroad experience by considering the value of kindness would be through the relaxed teaching approach that she observed in Australia.

9.3.2.5 Mentors abroad

The participants showed how their discussions and interactions with their mentors influenced their communicative skills, in which their mentors positioned the participants as teachers or colleagues. The mentors' influence increased the participants' confidence and helped them in becoming open-minded about their perspectives and discussions. Ali, for example, in his argumentative discussion with his local supervisor during the workshop he attended positioned himself as more open-minded than his local supervisor; thus, Ali withdrew from continuing with the discussion even though he believed he was right about his argument (6.5.3). To put it simply, his exposure to his mentor relationship had developed his discussion and interactive skills and his open-minded views. Sami, on the other hand, learned how to openly send his voice related to learning suggestions to the host institute through his mentor (7.4.2). This had increased his confidence and openness to ideas and innovations. So, he started to contribute to helping his community through volunteering.

Mentoring is the way of providing assessment and guidance of others' works (Daresh, 2003) and seen as a form of coaching (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). It is argued that "mentoring is itself a form of professional capacity to which teachers bring all sorts of existing ideas, assumptions and capabilities, and then teacher-mentors too need to adapt a reflective approach to their own activities and learning" (Tomlinson, 2001). Mentoring plans, in which teachers are assigned to more experienced supervisors who they maintain contact with over a prolonged period of time (Haser and Star, 2009) may change teachers' way of thinking (Cross and Hong, 2011) which therefore influence their identity construction. The literature indicated that guided mentoring in

relation to process of writing does promote reflection (Hunter and Hatton, 1998) in which it influences their research skills, and so their identity. Studies (such as Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2011) showed that mentoring facilitated development during first years of teaching through providing necessary support to teachers to reposition themselves. (Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013, p. 128). Park's study (2012) showed that mentoring can have a positive influence on the construction and reconstruction of the student teachers' professional identity (Cheung et al., 2014, p. 276). Crain (2010) and Hamaidi et al. (2014) argued that positive social interaction with mentors is vital in promoting the performance of mentees.

9.3.3 LTI negotiated through positioning

9.3.3.1 Moral actions

The participants' stories showed that they were aware of the responsibility towards to their student's learning quality. They described themselves with the attributes of *caring* and *responsible* teachers. According to …, moral and personal positioning are interrelated. Their personal positioning led to and attributed to different moral positionings (Patino-Santos, 2017). Personal positioning as individual attitudes (Van Langenhove and Harré, 1999) promotes the dynamicity of moral positioning (Glazier, 2009). Omer, for example, as a caring teaching used WhatsApp as a means of communication and follow-up activities and learning for blind students in his class (8.5.2). Sami, used speakers during his lessons to facilitate listening activities (7.5.2) which attributed to being recognized and assessed remarkably. Sami, on the other hand, in order to gain teaching experience and more knowledge, he spent more time planning for his lessons to be more effectively learned by students (6.3.2).

9.3.3.2 Distancing from others

The participants showed their affiliation to their teaching jobs through being different by distancing themselves from others. According to Bamberg (2012) asserts that "category ascriptions or attributions to characters that … mark affiliations with these categories in terms of proximity or distance. Aligning with (or positioning in contrast to) these categories, speakers draw boundaries around themselves" (pp. 104-105) in which *distance* is referred to *difference* (p. 104).

Ali (6.3.4) viewed himself as a teacher who was willing to learn more about teaching and drew boundaries between himself and other teachers in his school. Similarly, Sami described himself as an initiative doer and a social volunteer in (7.3.5, 7.5.6). Farrell (2011) refers to the teacher as a volunteer as "a role identity where the teacher gives time outside the classroom to organized activities" (p. 13). Omer, on the other hand, viewed himself as an expert user of technology

(8.5.2). Their positionings echo the findings in the study of Sosa and Gomez (2012) in which the three teachers of their study portrayed themselves as effective teachers in taking responsibilities by showing that what they did was lacking or different in their colleagues. In this study it is not the same, but the participants showed that they felt that they were the only people who cared for teaching or taking their teaching seriously.

9.3.3.3 Self-knowledge awareness

Ali's stories showed that he viewed himself as a current teacher in trying to be up to date with contemporary teaching methods (Hacker, 2008; Barkhuizen, 2021) in which after returning from the abroad experience, he confirmed his self-knowledge awareness as a form of transformation which shape his identity as a **current teacher**, which is closely related to the expected learning outcomes of the BLCSI program (see 2.2.4.5). Currency is not precisely is related to teacher educators as studied by Barkhuizen (2020) but also revealed in the participants of my study as they participated in the BLCSI abroad experience. Ali's awareness of his positioning aligns with Barkhuizen's (2020) study findings as facets of identity in being current to contemporary teaching methods and strategies. Moreover, it is in line with Al-Juahaish et al.'s (2020) study, on identity construction of English language teachers in Saudi schools, where teachers had self-knowledge and awareness of their teaching role which shaped their identity. It was asserted that "active participation in English language teaching associations like TESOL International Association and IATEFL will keep teachers professionally engaged and updated in their profession" (Coombe, 2020, p. 7). Therefore, Ali positioned himself as a current teacher who needed to improve and develop in relation to the ways and methods of his English language teaching.

9.3.4 LTI negotiated through envisioning the future

Neoliberal persona as expected to be attained by the policy documents of the BLCSI program is negotiated by the participants as envisioning themselves as future neoliberal agents such as flexible, leading, influencing, and change agents (see 2.2.4.5 and 5.4). In Li and De Costa's (2017) study, considering a private education sector, it was explored the identity negotiation of an EFL teacher of a Chinese national considering neoliberal accounts. The findings of their study showed that regardless of her being agentive, her disappointment increased over time teaching in a private school where she did not receive the support that she needed to construct her imagined identity. However, my study involves teachers, in a governmental school sector, who are supported by the government to attend their needs educationally and financially.

9.3.4.1 Flexible agents

Ali, for example, became more flexible in his relationship with his colleagues and students. He showed that he was ascribed a more flexible persona towards his students after his return, and in his discussions with his peers and supervisors For example, when he withdrew from argumentative discussion with his supervisor in a formal workshop with the idea of not to win but to gain a sharing of perspectives (see 6.5.3). Study abroad experience is believed to develop international minded teachers (Cushner, 2007) through cultivating their abilities and skills such as flexibility, patience, and independence (Willard_holt, 2001). It supports the finding of Flores and Day's (2006) study that some the participants of their study improved over time during their teaching in different contexts and became "less strict in their relationship with students and more flexible in their classroom performance" (p. 228). Therefore, the diversity of contexts promote flexibility in teachers, thus, his flexible persona is promoted in which his neoliberal identity is constructed.

9.3.4.2 Leading agents

Omer, for example, being confident about what he does to the extent he became a host teacher (see 8.5.5). Glatthorn (1995) defines teacher development as "the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience" in such areas like leadership (p. 41). Mockler (2011) consider experiencing leadership as another identity for teachers. In a study of Viczko and Wright (2010) regarding their participant's transition from graduate student to a teacher educator, positioning oneself as a successful teacher and a leader, her idealization was challenged. Omer's becoming a host teacher due to his confidence in what he does and his commitment to be a good teacher (see 8.5.5) aligns with Barkhuizen and Mendieta's (2020) study in which it was found that Acablo as a good teacher was "often praised for his good teaching and leadership skills" (p. 8) acting as a leader for his colleagues in which he succeeded even though he was challenged by his multiple identities.

9.3.4.3 Influencing agents

Being influenced by others during the aboard experience highly promotes becoming an influencer towards the local community including students and colleagues. Sami, for example, kept working as a volunteer which might have influenced people around him including his colleagues and students (see 7.5.6) in addition to doing initiatives to promote the idea of doing initiatives (see 7.5.8). This may directly promote the idea of cascading and transferring the abroad learning experience into their local context. After his return, Sami seemed to have confirmed the benefits of doing volunteer work and initiatives in which he was passionate about. The abroad experience

confirms what the learner or teacher was hesitant about. Lee et al. (2012) emphasized that study abroad "supports cognitive processes involved in developing innovative solutions in response to demands that arise in culturally diverse environments" (pp. 775–776); therefore, creativity and thinking abilities are supported in a different environment. On the other hand, Kezar (2006) suggested in which developing personal and professional relationships among colleagues can influence quality of the social and professional activities. This influence was articulated during the abroad experience but at the local level influence was not promoted because of building relationships with colleagues but it was personal. That is because the abroad experience offers access to different various academic environments, learners and colleagues, ideas, and insights in addition to the available chances to develop one's teaching quality, networking, and research (Hirsch et al. ,2015). In line with the study findings of Patrício et al. (2017) in which participants who stayed abroad for a long period influenced change within their university when they returned while participants who stayed for a shorter period abroad showed no influence, even though their study involved a university level context, my study participants, for example Sami, showed influence through doing initiatives and social work, which also aligns very well with the period of the BLCSI program. However, the influence was "felt mostly at the individual level" (Patricio et al., 2017, p. 13) like the case of my participants.

9.3.4.4 Change agents

The participants' narrated stories showed their understanding of change highly involved the development of themselves personally and professionally including skills and qualities such autonomy. Autonomy was resulted from engaging with academic research during their abroad experience.

Sami, for example, narrated that he had a dream to continue his master's degree before joining the abroad experience in which during the abroad experience, he reimagined himself to be a teacher researcher. His dream came to realization after his return from the abroad experience (7.5.9). He showed his commitment to achieve his dream by taking encountered opportunities such as the abroad experience which opened a door to realizing his dream. Omer and Ali, on the other hand, had envisioned their future after their return from the program. Omer showed his interest to be a contributor to curriculum design in relation to the use of technology in English language learning and teaching (8.5.6) whereas Ali's future was related to his desire to do workshops for his colleagues and study for his master's degree (6.5.5). The study abroad context as engagement experience including school immersion and research work gave the participating teachers reasons to reimagine themselves in the future. The results of this study align with what Pavlenko (2003) called for an investigation into the "reasons for which some teachers engage in

the process of reimagination" (p. 266). In Hiver's (2013) study in relation to investigating the role of ideal or possible language teacher selves considering professional development choices, its findings showed that all the in-service Korean English language teachers realized possible selves meant to be very experienced in English language as a user and a teacher; besides, some participants' ideal selves were to improve themselves. Regarding the teacher as a change agent whom Barkhuizen and Mendieta (2020) consider as a good teacher, it was found that Acabolo as a language teacher who implemented "a new blended learning approach to English teaching at a university in Columbia" confronted dilemmas of his multiple identities "as he negotiate[d] the tensions between his work as a teacher and as a leader of other teachers" (p. 4). Therefore, Sami among the participants of my study showed his commitment to achieve his goal. Overall, Ali tried to comply with the policy documents while Sami pursued his dreams. Omer became more practical and intended to be engaged in collaboration in curriculum design.

9.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented discussion sections in relation to the main findings of the study. LTI negotiation and construction is encountered by challenges and struggles. Navigating structure of the BLCSI study abroad unfolds how the participants negotiated and agentively dealt with such challenges looking for alternatives for improving their individual differences for better outcomes. Their LTI construction was also challenged by power relations in education settings where cultural values are negotiated including school environment such as classroom size and school colleagues.

LTI construction was, in fact, influenced by the surrounding influencers locally and overseas. Having to observe role models on the abroad experience influenced the participants' envisioning themselves after their return to their local context. It was, then, evident, how their abroad observations were embodied and incorporated in their teaching and interactions with their students in classroom and others in school. Envisioning themselves influenced how they negotiated neoliberal persona to be flexible, leading, influencing, and change agents in their local schools and communities. However, through positioning, it was revealed that they distanced themselves due to moral actions and focused on self-knowledge awareness and self-development. To sum up, LTI construction is understood as a complex process negotiated throughout a journey which include various challenges contextually, pedagogically, morally, culturally, politically, and environmentally.

Chapter 10 Conclusion

10.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the study theoretically, conceptually, and methodologically. It also reminds us of the aims and research questions of the study. It, then, offers a summary of the main findings of the study. In the following sections, it provides contributions, implications, limitations, and recommendations of the study. In the last section, a personal reflection is presented.

10.2 Overview of the study

The present study presented insightful details and highlighted significant findings in relation to language identity construction through positioning including a one-year abroad experience. The primary objectives of this study were to investigate and understand how its participants construct their language teacher identity through positioning over time and space during their journey of English language learning and teaching including their participation in the abroad experience. It also sought to understand how participants navigate the structure of the abroad program in relation the program's policy documents. Lastly, it aimed to understand the extent to which the engagement into two different contexts would influence their teacher development.

Positioning theory (Harré and Davies, 1990) and the dimensions of narrative inquiry: temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) were adopted as a theoretical framework for this study and a lens for the analysis of its narratives in a thematic manner. The study adopted a narrative inquiry approach, which is part of the nature of qualitative research. Taking positioning theory and narrative inquiry dimensions as lens for the analysis, configured stories (Barkhuizen, 2010) are thematically analyzed. Interviews are the main tool for date collection besides documents including the BLCSI program policy documents and research projects conducted by the participants by the end of the abroad experience.

The study sought to answer the following (main and sub) questions:

The main question (Q.1) was *How did three Saudi in-service English language teachers construct and negotiate their language teacher identity through positioning of themselves and by others across time and space including their one-year study abroad experience?* This Q.1 sought to deeply capture how the participants constructed their language teacher identity through positioning themselves to themselves and others or positioned by others, by telling stories and

talking about their lived experiences and they made sense of those experiences during their learning and teaching journey including the one-year abroad experience. This Q.1 was a guidance for me to navigate the analysis of their stories. The findings of their stories represented how they negotiated and constructed their language teacher identity over time and space. Their language teacher identity was clearly manifested through their positioning considering their insights, views, agentic actions, investing, reflexivity, opinions, feelings, and ideologies in relation to their learning and teacher experiences towards to their profession including the one-year abroad experience. Their language teacher identity negotiation was spotted through their shared stories and narratives about their lived experiences presented detailed and thick information which facilitated our understanding of how they constructed their identity and emphasized the complex nature of identity.

The first sub-question (Q.1a) was *What conditions and possibilities might have influenced their language teacher identity construction and negotiation including the one-year study abroad experience?* This Q.1a indicated the influence of overtime conditions and possibilities on their language identity construction. Navigating throughout their stories, such influence involved challenges that the participants encountered throughout their learning and teaching journey including their one-year abroad experience, such as of the BLCSI program policy documents and criteria, the abroad program structure, relationships with others, educational contexts, and so on. Such challenges appeared influencing on their language identity construction through positioning as they complied or contested those challenges. Considering the influence of such conditions and possibilities, their encountering of the challenges through agentic actions hindered or facilitated their language teacher identity.

The second sub question (Q.1b) was *How do the three participants position themselves and positioned by others in relation to their fellow teachers, mentors, supervisors, and school leaders, and their students?* This Q.1b concerned the participants' positioning during their learning and teaching experiences including their one-year abroad experience. It intended to understand their language teacher identity construction through how they positioned themselves to themselves and others and how they were positioned by others including their students, colleagues, supervisors, school leaders, stakeholders, mentors, and host teachers. This question sought to emphasize how language teacher identity construction is indeed related to the participants' positionings during their lived experiences of teaching and learning which in turn helped us understand the participants' language identity construction.

The second main question (Q.2) was *What can we learn from the experiences of mature teachers abroad, in terms of language education in Saudi Arabia?* It intended to understand of how the

participants make sense of their experiences abroad in relation to their teacher development and language teacher education in their local context. This question helps us understand language teacher education including teacher development and study abroad programs and how the structure and implementation of study abroad programs remain significant to teacher development and hence language teacher identity

10.3 Summarizing the research key findings

The findings of this study showed that the participants experienced multiple challenges as they constructed their identity and persona through positioning. As they navigated the challenges they encountered, they drew on ideas and discourses related to good teaching and other various experiences, including the one-year abroad experience.

The findings of this study showed that the participants encountered some challenges as they negotiated their identity construction in respect of cultural values (for example, Ali) however, they worked on self- and skill- development through volunteering and social initiatives (for example, Sami) and appropriating what they have learned abroad into their own lessons despite of educational challenges (for example, Omer). In addition, their language teacher identity was negotiated and constructed through positioning themselves and others during their teaching experience and the abroad experience. Therefore, they not only tried to appropriate the abroad learning experience into their own classes but also confirmed themselves as English language teachers in terms of confidence and competence and reimagined themselves in terms self-knowledge and self-awareness and self-development. However, their appropriation of the abroad learning experience encountered educational challenges which hindered the participants' attempt to align their abroad persona with their local context.

It was also highlighted that the one-year study abroad experience triggered their teacher development through their immersion, enactment of agency, and practice of autonomy. They also challenged the BLCSI policy document in terms of its imagined identity as they were more immersed not only in host schools as planned by the program (6.4.2) but also in local workshops revealing their agency and initiated selves (7.4.4). It is because, as presented in the findings, the participants were experienced in English language teaching as they considered the abroad experience as one-in-a-life-time opportunity, so they learned and obtained knowledge in addition to living the experience and immersing into the abroad context. They also challenged the neoliberal persona imposed by the BLCSI program document. Challenging such persona was agentively enacted through dealing with cultural values by either complying (Ali, 6.5.3), contesting (Sami, 7.5.4), or ignoring (Omer, 8.5.1).

Finally, it was evident that the top-down nature of the BLCSI program was adequate for this study type of participants in respect of their teaching experience as they went beyond the program plan and were autonomous in living the abroad experience and learning knowledge in both theory and practice according to their own needs.

10.4 Contribution of the study

The main contribution of the study is to confirm the claims that support bottom-up teacher development programs over top-down program in relation to meeting the participants' needs in advance (e.g., Carpenter and Krutha, 2015; Kiely and Davis, 2010) despite the case-cade nature large-scale programs, such as the BLCSI program, which are cost- and time- effective (Hayes, 2000; Leu, 2004) and even though the participants were selected carefully (Suzuki, 2008). The participants, however, because of their teaching experience, tried to agentively look for other alternative ways to develop their learning and teaching experiences, such as attending local teachers' workshops, volunteering to teach, and attending conferences. Thus, their abroad experiences clearly underline the importance of bottom-up design of the teacher development programs.

The study, hence, contributes to practice which serves as a critical study that brought out the voices of participants and the actual experiences they had lived locally and overseas in claiming the importance of considering teachers' needs before implementing the study abroad program. It also helps the policymakers of the BLCSI program and curriculum in the MoE in terms of:

- The importance of school immersion so to increase its period, especially in regard to engaging them in various contexts for experienced teachers where they have the capacity to appropriate their abroad learning experiences into their own lessons because their self-awareness and confidence was raised in relation to their teaching quality and also in relation to seeking personal development through attending conferences and workshops.
- The importance of attending local teachers' workshops during the abroad experience.
- The importance of giving teachers their own space to adopt the best teaching practices into their own classes.

The study also contributes to Knowledge as the use of positioning theory and narrative inquiry in investigating language teacher identity construction is crucial which contributed to understanding how the participants negotiated and constructed their identity over time and space considering their learning and teaching journey in relation to pre-, during-, and post- the one-year study abroad experience which fills the empirical gap (Benson, 2017). It also contributes the literature by confirming the essential part of immersion in schools and within the community especially

teachers (for example, the local workshops) and the importance of not only observing but also teaching abroad. Therefore, it emphasizes on the promising aspect of school immersion during the study abroad experience (Reeves, 2018) which makes transformation in English language teachers' identities. In addition, it contributes to the literature of studying teacher development programs in Saudi Arabia as little research has been conducted on the BLCSI program so far in addition to teacher development study abroad program globally in terms of its nature, structure, participants, purpose, neoliberal agenda.

It also emphasizes on that the purpose and way of analyzing the BLCSI program policy documents was as a narrative and story told by the BLCSI program organizers and policymakers which helped understand how the participants align or challenge the persona and identity ascribed and expected from them. Analyzing the program policy document is not primarily intended to evaluate the program; it rather serves as a story told by the stakeholder and designers of the program which helps in understanding the struggles and challenges the participants had encountered.

10.5 Limitations of the study

The narrative approach adopted in this study through the stories drawn from interviews facilitated the obtaining of detailed and in-depth narratives of the participants' lived experiences during their learning and teaching experience in which their one-year study abroad was included; however, validity and trustworthiness would have been more if classroom observation were conducted. Being unable to conduct classroom observation as a tool for data collection was due to the breakout of covid19 in which schools were suspended for several months. It impacted exploring language teacher positionings and agency in multidimensional contexts through examining their real-time positionings and agentic actions regarding how they were able to manage their classrooms including their lessons, teaching strategies, interactions with others such as students, and so on. Hence, classroom observation would enrich information for this research which it would highly contribute to the robustness and triangulation of the narratives collected in this study.

Another limitation of this study was the small number of participants; however, as qualitative research, the focus of the study was not on breadth but on depth even though more participants would possibly have given more details and narratives of their various lived experiences. In addition, findings of the study cannot be generalizable as the knowledge obtained from the participants in a narrative study is highly incomplete (Clandinin and Huber, 2010). However, the participants' stories may hold a guiding view for similar empirical studies involving in-service

English language teachers who went on an abroad experience of similar conditions and circumstances. The findings of the study are also influenced by the researcher's subjectivity which remains a typical nature of qualitative research. The degree of subjectivity, as I tried to clarify, was explained in relation to my role as a researcher.

10.6 Implication and future research

Education in Saudi Arabia, and possibly many countries, is influenced by and centred on outsider agendas. Banegas and his colleagues (2021) proposed 'decentring ELT' at the context level in which "work needs to be put into empowering teachers to develop contextually appropriate thinking and action (on methodology, materials design, curriculum development, teacher education, etc.) in relation to the needs of their local contexts" (p. 2). The findings of this study showed that the participants found a different environment as they freely exercised their agency and tried to develop themselves pedagogically and professionally. It is needed for stakeholders and policymakers to reconstruct the local context as encouraging and professional as possible for teachers. Language teachers, as Kiely (2012) stated, "are most effective when the work context is supportive: when the context values teachers, provides support and guidance, and allows for innovation and creativity in work" (p.2). This supports the findings of this study as it suggests for stakeholders and policy makers to develop and reform educational contexts for teachers in the field of teacher education to be more innovative and creative. In addition, policy makers are indeed encouraged to pay attention to curriculum reforms as teachers should be empowered and given space to be innovative and creative in using their own activities. They are also encouraged to create a communication platform with teachers and listen to their voices and suggestions regarding their teacher development matters, the study abroad experience, and other concerns. In addition, they are urged to promote, and financially fund, academic research among teachers, supervisors, and school staff. Decentring ELT leads to involve teachers' voices and suggestions drawn from their work fields which are not idealized so that they can develop innovative initiatives "in ways the Ministry itself could not deliver" (Banegas et al., 2021, p. 5).

At the level of teacher development study abroad programs, the findings of this study have implications for designing such study abroad programs. Over the last two decades, there was a shift in designing teacher development abroad programs from top-down to bottom-up programs (e.g. Mansory, 2019). According to Kiely (2019), "the importance of a participant-led agenda: the focus of the training has to connect with a felt need on the part of teachers" (p. 88). Drawing on such arguments in which the findings of this study confirmed, it appears that there is an urgent need to encourage teachers to cascade their abroad experiences. Even though the cascading of abroad learning was a condition for participating in the BLCSI program, the findings showed that

the participating teachers were unable to cascade their abroad learning, for example through workshops, seminars, or presentations, due to a discouraging teaching environment; therefore, follow-up sessions are necessary for teachers to cascade their learned abroad experiences. For example, the participating teachers' positioning of becoming change agents is related to the cascading process expected from them. Ali's identity as a change agent, as addressed in the findings of this study, was resisted due uncollaborative colleagues and unsupported educational environment after returning from the abroad experience. This reveals that there is a need to take action into promoting follow-up sessions in order to employ the idea of change agent within their educational environment.

In addition, reconstructing the abroad teacher development programs considering the bottom-up approach as the main finding of this study confirms the calls for bottom-up teacher development programs. For example, policymakers need to use questionnaires to investigate teachers' needs for teaching development initiatives and can benefit from empirical studies involving bottom-up initiatives such as Shrestha's (2019) study mentioned in Banegas et al. (2022). Stakeholders are also encouraged to involve teachers in policy decisions related to teacher development in practice and theory. Engaging teachers in decision making and voice sharing opens path for teachers to be more productive and creative.

For English language teachers, the shared stories in this study illustrated that they are encouraged to do peer-classroom observation which may highly expand their knowledge and practice and exchange teaching experiences in addition to doing workshops and attending conferences. School supervisors, especially English language supervisors, as the date unfolded, are also urged to be constructive in terms of relationship and assessment and try to dispose of the tendency towards being an inspector. They are encouraged to be interactive and supportive towards teachers as they remain an advising agent to teachers. They are also encouraged to promote social and volunteering activities inside and outside school.

School principals play a key role in teachers' professional and personal lives; thus, they are encouraged to be supportive and collaborative in relation to listening to teachers' concerns and advising teachers. As the data shown, school principals should seriously consider developing a proper school environment, such as teacher' office room, to help teachers work comfortably and creatively. Concerning host teachers, they are a big influence on visiting teachers; therefore, they are encouraged to be collaborative with visiting teachers in a way that boundaries do not exist in relation to communicating, collaboration, and sharing knowledge and experience (7.5.3).

This study also recommends future research to consider the use of various tools and methods such as reflective journals and classroom observation. Considering classroom observation holds

valuable significance in triangulating data obtained for future research in language teacher development abroad programs. Triangulation helps in avoiding misconceptions during data interpretation process (Stake, 2005). It also helps in exploring the transformation and change in teachers' teaching practices after participating in abroad experiences. Hence, it informs researchers of how language teacher identity is constructed and negotiated through positioning in regard to being able to closely investigate patterns of their teaching practice and their positioning to others including their students in the interactive setting of their classrooms (Creswell, 1998). It also helps in investigating what constrain and facilitate their identity construction in their local context.

This study also recommends using a longitudinal mixed method study (Jackson, 2017) involving more participants, including other subject teachers. In addition, it may also involve English language supervisors, school principals, policymakers, host organizers, host teachers, and host mentors as participants (Trent, 2011). Action research in addition to an evaluation of the program after teachers' return as Kiely (2019) highlighted that "programme evaluation is a test of effectiveness (p. 91). An ethnographic consideration might highly be recommended, if possible, considering the three phases of the study abroad program.

Closely related to this study, there can be conducted an extended study of the current study to further investigate the participants' identity construction since 2020 because of several impacts, such as covid19 pandemic and education changes, to explore what happens in the past four years. Another consideration involves conducting a large-scale study on participants, from different regions, which may include surveys, reflective writing, interviews, focus groups, and observations of workshops and innovations.

To sum up, drawing on the findings and implication of this research, I plan to disseminate the findings and implications of my research in two main folds: publishing research and through communication. Through research, I plan to publish this research, which will also be available to the public through university of Southampton library and publish and develop more related work to this research. Researchers from different contexts and fields can benefit from this research. Language teachers and teacher educators can also benefit from this research findings and implications. Stakeholders and policymakers, specifically of the BLCSI program, can benefit from this research to do more evaluation and amendments to the BLCSI program, more precisely in terms of following a bottom-up approach rather than a top-down one when recommencing the BLCSI program or designing other future teacher development programs.

Through communication, I mean by that communicating the minds of policymakers and stakeholders. I plan to communicate with them through different channels of communication in

order to deliver the implications and findings of my research so that teacher development programs can be evaluated, amended, and redesigned. As a faculty member, it will be easier for me to contact the policymakers and stakeholders, for example through seminars and conferences, to show my research and how it remains as a significant aspect to teacher development programs, especially abroad programs. In addition, I plan to provide advice to policymakers and stakeholders about cooperating with key scholars in the field of teacher education, teacher development programs evaluation, English language teaching, and applied linguistics who can help in providing thoughts from their long experience in the field and design an effective design for teacher development programs. Cooperating with some international host universities also holds great significance in developing effective teacher development abroad programs.

10.7 Personal reflection

During my research process, I just realized how complex is language teacher identity construction and understood how language teaching identity can be constructed through positioning. I just learned how positioning was a significant key role in constructing their identity. I have also realized how significant the study abroad experience was on my own learning and teaching experience in relation to, for example, my abroad experience of studying master's degree when I observed of the teaching practices of my host teachers. After my return to my home context, I applied what I learned abroad into my teaching practices, but it was in academic setting where I had my own space in terms of choosing my own books and activities which it is different from public schools setting. I also did a volunteering initiative and was supported by employees to learn English, but it was not supported by stakeholders.

I also learned how the teachers dealt with immersion differently in relation to the prescribed school immersion in the policy documents of the BLCSI program. In addition, how their teaching experience promoted their autonomy and agency and raised their awareness towards their personal and professional development during the abroad experience.

Talking to the participants helped me listen to their struggles and insights and how made sense of their learning and teaching experiences. Transcribing and coding their stories reflected how deeply they dig into their experiences and thoughts. I kept reading again and again their stories in which I realized how open and excited they were when telling and sharing with me their journey. I realized how they needed someone who appreciate listening to their struggles and achievements. They felt valued and important in in relation to their profession as English language teachers and their abroad experience as its participants.

Eventually, even though the narratives of my participants have ended, their personal and professional lives continue to evolve and therefore their identity construction. For example, Sami has just graduated from a TESOL master's degree program in which he started after the last interview with him in 2020. I am sure that a lot has happened for him since 2020, especially during and after the covid19 pandemic including his journey of studying his master's degree. Therefore, a numerous number of narratives and stories are waiting to be told. Thus, it highly encourages me, as I feel excited, to conducted further studies on Sami's language identity construction.

Appendix A

A.1 Program Description- Five Phases (Building Leadership for Change through School Immersion, 2017, pp. 9-14)

Phases	Description
Phase I: Orientation	In this phase, the university will be responsible for providing a general orientation to the culture, laws, and regulations of the host country and the roles and responsibilities of the participants in their host university and partner K-12 schools. Phase
Phase II: English Language Skills Development	The university will be responsible for administering an English language test to place the participants at the appropriate level of learning. The key focus of this phase for this category of participants is to strengthen their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Given that the participants are English language teachers and supervisors, partner universities are required to place them in programs that push them to advance to higher levels of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. All the English language teachers must achieve at least a score of C1 on the Common European Framework of Reference or its TOEFL or IELTS equivalent.
Phase III Technical knowledge and skills development.	The goal of this phase is two-fold: (1) strengthen participants' understanding of modern language acquisition theories, approaches and instructional, assessment and classroom management strategies necessary to translate those theories into practice; and (2) continue to build the English language skills of the participants as they engage in (1). In this phase, the university mentors will work with each participant on their project or initiative that they wish to develop through their immersion experience, and which they would implement in their schools when they return to Saudi Arabia. Each participant will return to their home-country school with a well-planed and well-documented initiative to improve a specific area of their practice. Phase
Phase IV: Guided Immersion	This phase represents the core of the participants' professional learning experience. In this phase, the program participants are immersed in practice in their host schools. It is expected that 80 percent of the

participants' time will be spent in schools; while 20 percent will be spent at the university. Their immersion experience is structured around action research and culminates in the participants submitting a project outlining their plan to transfer their learning to their schools in Saudi Arabia. The experience is qualified as "guided" because it is jointly planned and consciously managed and directed by the participants and their university mentors at the partner universities. The guided immersion activity rests on two main pillars:

Pillar 1-Individalized Guidance: Each partner university will assign faculty members from among its staff to serve as a guide and mentor for the participants throughout their school immersion experience. Each mentor will have a group of 5 participants under their mentorship. The Individual Professional Learning Plans will create a shared understanding between the mentor and mentees, clarify expectations about roles and responsibilities, and guide all the other professional learning activities. Meeting face-to-face with each participant frequently, the mentor will guide the participants by providing them with the opportunity to reflect on specific practices, raise particular conceptual or practical questions, and propose particular lines of action to maximize their immersion experience, or address specific challenges to the professional learning experience. The mentor-mentee interactions are an invaluable opportunity for the mentor to assign specific readings to their mentees to deepen their understanding of the theoretical frameworks underlying the practice they observe, engage them in evaluating and critiquing specific theoretical models, or oversee progress of their individual projects. The mentor may also propose formal professional development events, including seminars, conferences and workshops that participants, individually or collectively, may attend to improve their knowledge and capabilities. The key outcomes for the participants is that they are able to consciously use theory and research evidence to justify practices, evaluate and critique their merits, and develop the foundational theory and practice to think and act as professionals in their areas of their expertise.

	Pillar 2-School Immersion: The project for Building Leadership for Change through School Immersion is a learning-by-doing experience. It differs significantly from the traditional study-abroad programs in that it makes guided immersion in actual practice the key strategy for changing the knowledge, skills and behaviors of the program participants. The participants will be immersed in authentic school environments in their host countries; an experience that will provide them with a rich array of opportunities to hone their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In their new environment, the participants will have ample opportunities to 11 interact with their peers in the host schools, observe and model practices, and share expertise about what works and what does not. Phase
Phase V: Presentation of the capstone initiatives	In this phase, partner universities will bring all the participants together to share their capstone initiatives, which they will implement when they return to Saudi Arabia. The key goal of this phase is to enable the participants to share their reform initiatives, receive feedback from their mentor and peers, and refine their projects accordingly. A sign-off on the final version of the initiative by the mentor is a requirement.
Phase VI: Transferring experience	After returning to Saudi Arabia, the program participants join networks of like-minded professionals and alumni, and are mobilized to lead change in their schools, directorates and nationally. The activities to be carried out under this phase are out of the scope of work for the partners selected to implement this project. They are provided here to illustrate the end goals of the previous phases. 5.2

Appendix A

A.1 Some Characteristics of the Host Schools

The MoE expects its University partners to have a network of partner K-12 schools to have the following characteristics, among others:

• They are leading educational institutions as measured by State tests or any other tests.

• They have a strong tradition and focus on student learning. • They are led by creative school principals and administrative and support staff.

• They have high-performing teachers, teacher leaders, and counsellors. • They boast a strong culture of teacher retention. • They are on the cutting edge of educational innovation in the areas of interest to the participants.

• They boast strong student discipline, low drop-out, and high graduation rates. • They have instituted mechanisms for bridging the gap between the school and the world of work.

• They have a positive culture for sharing experience and expertise with other countries and educational jurisdictions.

• They enjoy strong community involvement and private sector partnerships. • They have a strong history of successful change.

A.2 Candidates' required qualification to participate in BLCSI program

المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التعليم

الرقم : .....
التاريخ : .....
المشفوعات : .....

وزارة التعليم
Ministry of Education

الشروط والضوابط العامة للترشح على برنامج التطوير المهني النوعي "خبرات"

يشترط على المتقدم للترشح على برنامج التطوير المهني النوعي "خبرات" في نسخته الثانية الآتي:

١) ألا تقل الخدمة التعليمية للمتقدم عن سنتين.

٢) ألا تقل درجة التقدير في تقويم الأداء الوظيفي للمتقدم عن جيد جدا في آخر عامين دراسيين.

٣) أن يكون المتقدم من غير معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية قد حقق معيار (B1) كحد أدنى في اختبار Aptis في جميع المهارات، للتمكن من التسجيل والترشح على مستوى إدارة التعليم، ومعيار (B1) كحد أدنى في اختبار IELTS UKVI Academic في جميع المهارات، بعد اجتياز المقابلة الشخصية المركزية في مرحلة الترشح على مستوى الوزارة، ولا يقبل أي اختبار في تحديد مستوى اللغة سواهما وذلك لكافة التخصصات.

٤) أن يكون المتقدم من معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية قد حقق معيار(B2) كحد أدنى في اختبار Aptis في جميع المهارات، للتمكن من التسجيل والترشح على مستوى إدارة التعليم، ومعيار (B2) كحد أدنى في اختبار IELTS UKVI Academic في جميع المهارات، بعد اجتياز المقابلة الشخصية المركزية في مرحلة الترشح على مستوى الوزارة.

٥) أن يكون اختبار تحديد مستوى اللغة Aptis قد تم تحت إشراف وزارة التعليم، وفي الزمان والمكان المحددين، وأن يكون اختبار IELTS UKVI Academic قد تم خلال هذا العام 2017م.

٦) ألا يكون قد سبق للمرشح/ـة المشاركة في برنامج خارجي مماثل، خلال الثلاثة أعوام الماضية، أو شارك في هذا البرنامج في أحد مراحله.

٧) ألا يكون قد صدر بحق المرشح/ـة حكم تأديبي خلال آخر عامين، وألا يكون طرفا في أي قضية قائمة.

٨) أن يحصل المرشح على (50%)، من مجموع درجات الترشح، بحد أدنى، منها (50) نقطة من نقاط المقابلة المركزية.

٩) أن يتعهد المرشح/ـة بالالتزام بالحضور وعدم الانسحاب من البرنامج بعد ترشحه النهائي.

١٠) أن يتعهد بتنفيذ خطة نقل الأثر التي تضعها الوزارة بعد الانتهاء من البرنامج.

١١) أن يكون المرشح من الفئات المستهدفة بالبرنامج.

١٢) أن يتعهد المرشح/ـة خطيا بالعمل في المهام الوظيفية التي يكلف بها، والمكان الذي يوجه له بعد انقضاء البرنامج.

١٣) ألا يتجاوز عمر المرشح/ـة (40) عاما.

١٤) ألا يكون المرشح أحد الموفدين أو المبتعثين للحصول على مؤهل دراسي.

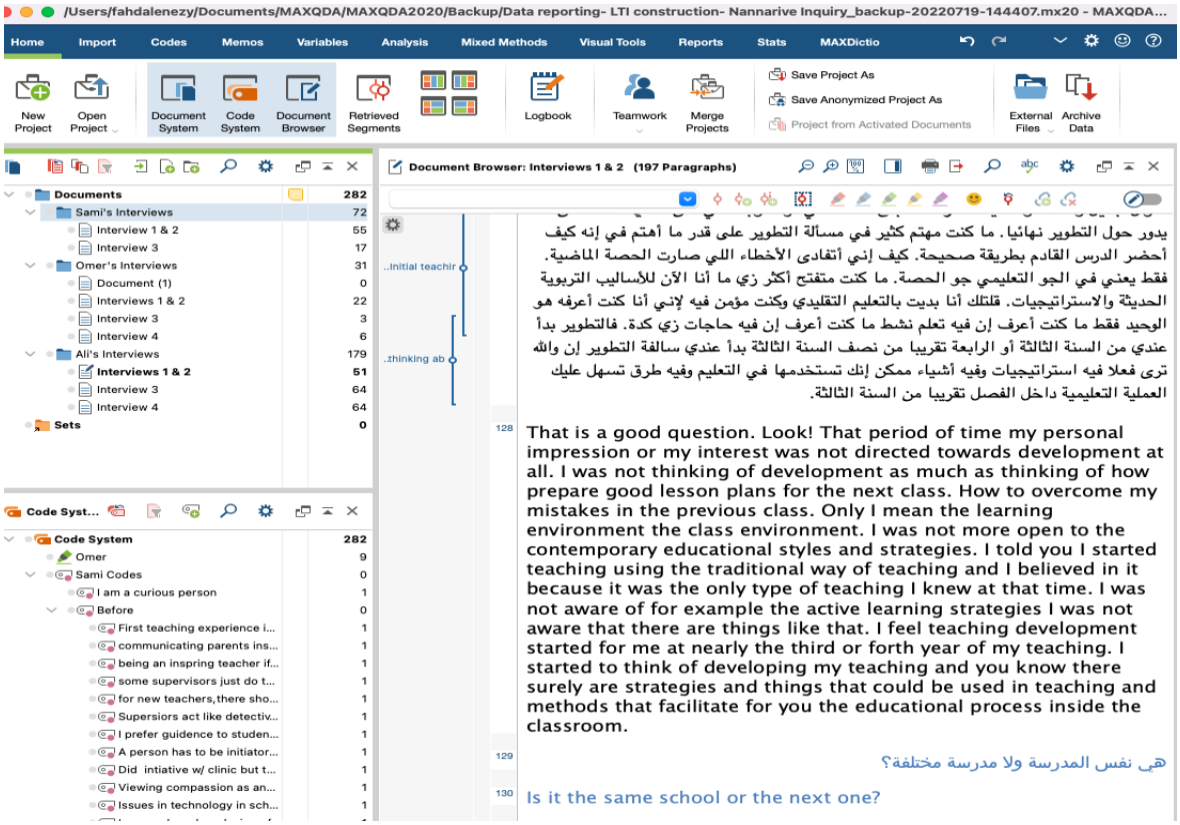
١٥) ألا يكون المرشح قد تقدم أو سيتقدم خلال هذا العام بالترشح إلى برامج الايفاد للتدريس في الخارج، أو الابتعاث للدراسة بالخارج، أو الإيفاد للدراسة بالداخل.

١٦) أن يتعهد المرشح بقبول التوجيه إلى أي من الدول والجامعات المشاركة، التي تتم بناء على مفاضلة النقاط التي اكتسبها المرشح.

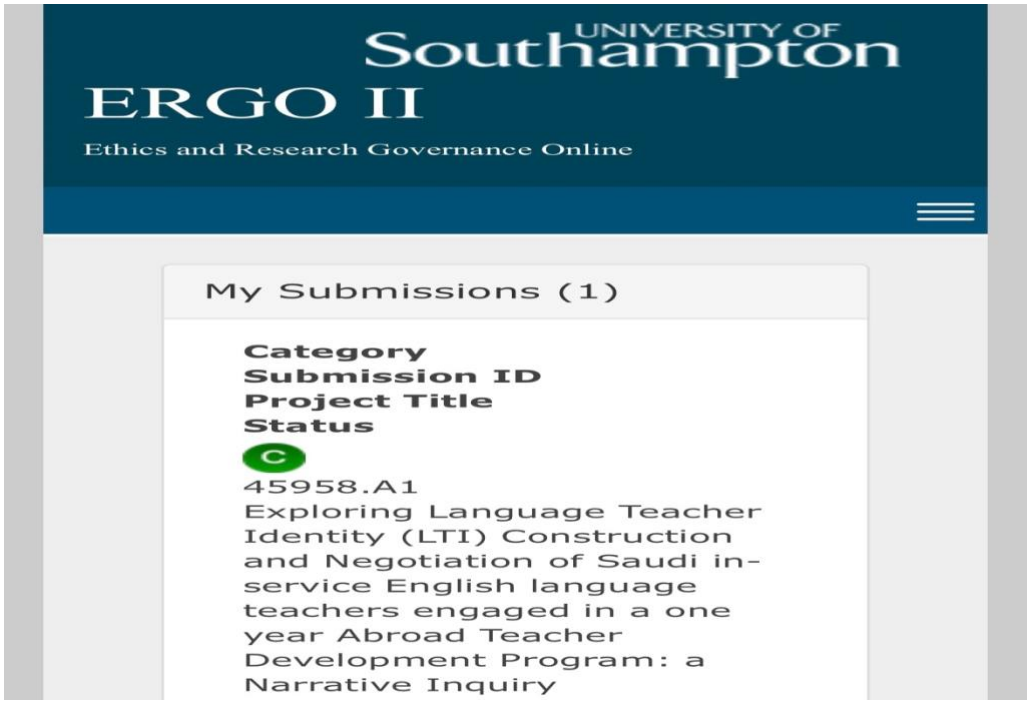
١٧) أن يحضر المرشح تقريرا طبيا يثبت لياقته الصحية قبيل سفره بثلاثة أسابيع.

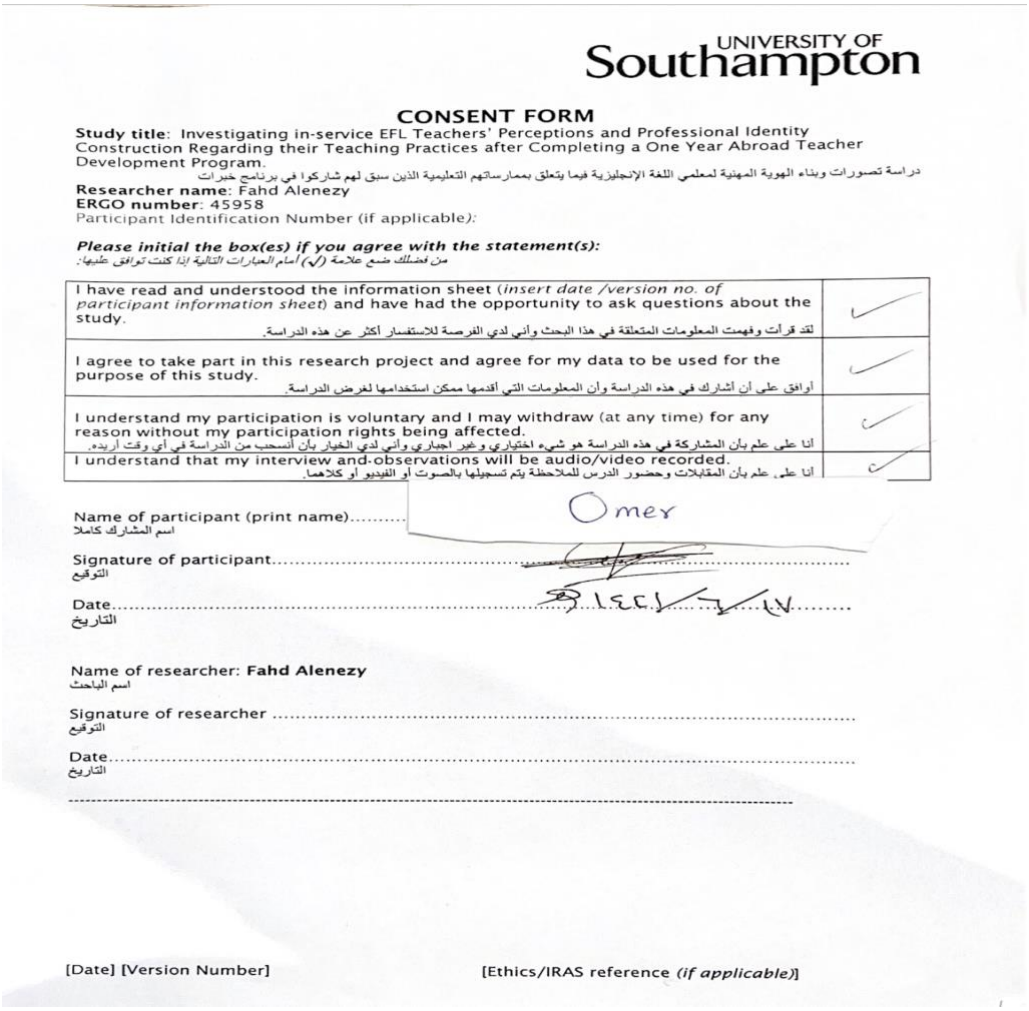
Conditions and Rules for participation in BLCSI program (translated by the researcher)
For participants applying for participation in BLCSI Cohort 2, he/she has to:
1- Have at least two years of teaching experience.
2- Have at least (assessment score: very good) of job performance in the last two years.
3- For non-English language teachers: only two English exams are accepted: Aptis and IELTS, at least (B1) in Aptis exam in all skills (to enter the candidature nomination stage at the level of Ministry of Education regional branches) and at least (B1) in IELTS UKVI exam (academic) in all skills after passing the main interview conducted by the Ministry of Education as a nominated candidate at the level of the Ministry of Education.
4- For English language teachers: only two English exams are accepted: Aptis and IELTS, at least B2 in Aptis exam in all skills (to enter the candidature nomination stage at the level of Ministry of Education regional branches) and at least (B2) in IELTS UKVI exam (academic) in all skills after passing the main interview conducted by the Ministry of Education as a nominated candidate at the level of the Ministry of Education.
5- For Aptis exam, it has be done and supervised by the Ministry of Education, and for the IELTS UKVI exam (academic) has to be undertaken during this year of 2017.
6- Never participated in a similar abroad program in the past three years or participated in any of the previous cohort of BLCSI.
7- Never engaged in any work penalties in the past two years or involved in any ongoing court penalty.
8- Obtain 50% of the candidature scores, at least 50 points in the main interview conducted by the Ministry of Education.
9- Sign a warrant to attend the program and not withdrawing from it.
10- Sign a warrant involving transferring knowledge and abroad learning experiences after finishing the BLCSI.
11- Be one of the targeted categories for the BLCSI program.
12- Sign a warrant of accepting the occupational tasks assigned to him/her and the school where he/she is directed to after finishing the BLCSI program.
13- Be at most 40 years old.
14- Be not one of the teachers teaching abroad or students on abroad scholarship to get a degree.
15- Be not one of the teachers who applied or will apply this year for teaching abroad, or for scholarship study abroad or within the country.
16- Sign a warrant to accept being directed to any country and host universities and institutes that has partnered with the BLCSI program as preference will be based on points obtained by the candidates.
17- Provide a medical-check report proving his/her medical fitness three weeks before travelling for the BLCSI program.

A.3 MAXQDA example



A.4 Ethics and participant's consent form





UNIVERSITY OF Southampton

CONSENT FORM

Study title: Investigating in-service EFL Teachers' Perceptions and Professional Identity Construction Regarding their Teaching Practices after Completing a One Year Abroad Teacher Development Program.

دراسة تصورات وبناء الهوية المهنية لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية فيما يتعلق بممارساتهم التعليمية الذين سبق لهم شاركوا في برنامج خبرات

Researcher name: Fahd Alenezy
ERGO number: 45958
Participant Identification Number (if applicable):

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):
من فضلك ضع علامة (√) أمام العبارات التالية إذا كنت توافق عليها:

I have read and understood the information sheet (*insert date /version no. of participant information sheet*) and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study. لقد قرأت وفهمت المعلومات المتعلقة في هذا البحث وأني لدي الفرصة للاستفسار أكثر عن هذه الدراسة.	√
I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study. أوافق على أن أشارك في هذه الدراسة وأن المعلومات التي أقدمها ممكن استخدامها لغرض الدراسة.	√
I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw (at any time) for any reason without my participation rights being affected. أنا على علم بأن المشاركة في هذه الدراسة هو شيء اختياري و غير اجباري وأني لدي الخيار بأن أنسحب من الدراسة في أي وقت أريده.	√
I understand that my interview and observations will be audio/video recorded. أنا على علم بأن المقابلات وحضور الدرس للملاحظة يتم تسجيلها بالصوت أو الفيديو أو كلاهما.	√

Name of participant (print name)..... Omer
اسم المشارك كاملا

Signature of participant.....
التوقيع

Date..... ٢٠٢١/٦/١٧
التاريخ

Name of researcher: **Fahd Alenezy**
اسم الباحث

Signature of researcher .....
التوقيع

Date.....
التاريخ

[Date] [Version Number] [Ethics/IRAS reference *(if applicable)*]

A.5 Guide to interview questions:

- Name and age
- Education background
- English language learning and teaching experiences
- Pre-service, novice, and in-service teaching experiences.
- Teacher development workshops and training
- Methods, strategies, and approaches of teaching
- Conditions to, including the process of, participating in the BLCSI program
- The structure of the BLCSI program, including implementation and design
- Study abroad experiences including school immersion, learning and teaching activities, and research
- Engagement in local and abroad context
- School environment in local and abroad context
- Challenges during learning and teaching journey including the BLCSI program experience
- Future plans

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