

**English Language Teachers' Beliefs and Practices regarding the  
Teaching of Speaking**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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## **Abstract**

This thesis presents the findings of a qualitative multiple-case study research exploring five Saudi English language teachers' beliefs and practices regarding their teaching of speaking. The teachers were teaching general English to preparatory year students in a Saudi University. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews and classroom observation. The interviews focused on teachers' beliefs while the observation focused on how teachers approached the teaching of speaking. Analysis of the findings indicated that teaching speaking was course-book based, teacher-centred and accuracy-oriented. There was no or little focus on fluency in the observed classes; teaching speaking was focused on developing students' speaking accuracy: i.e., grammar and vocabulary. Teachers' beliefs and practices did not reflect contemporary views on teaching speaking and they lacked theoretical bases. Some beliefs were reflected in teachers' teaching of speaking while other beliefs were not observed in the speaking classrooms. The study indicated a number of factors which influenced the relationship between beliefs and practices: e.g., nature of beliefs, course books and students' level.



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# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Introduction**

This study is about the teaching of speaking in EFL classrooms. It explores how teachers teach speaking and the underlying beliefs for their practices. In this chapter, I focus on two points: explaining the significance of this study and presenting the thesis outline.

## **1.2 Significance of the study**

The two main elements in this study are teachers' beliefs and the teaching of speaking in EFL classrooms. Teachers' beliefs are an established area of inquiry in the field of language teacher education and teacher education in general. Also, it is now widely accepted that to understand what teachers do in their classrooms we need to gain insight into the beliefs that shape their work. Therefore, I did not only observe teachers in their classrooms but I also interviewed them to elicit the beliefs which would have informed their teaching of speaking.

The focus on speaking is motivated by a number of factors. Firstly, speaking has not been the focus of much research into teachers' practices and beliefs except some few recent studies. This study aims to address this gap in the literature. Secondly, as a natural consequence of the previous point, there has been no research into how Saudi English language teachers approach the teaching of speaking and their underlying reasons for doing so in particular ways. Thirdly and perhaps most importantly, the teaching of speaking is a valuable focus for research in the light of

the importance given to the development of learners' oral skills in contemporary communicative curriculums. In many parts of the world, including in the Saudi Arabian context, English language teachers are encouraged to focus on the teaching of speaking nowadays. Exploring how teachers are responding to such changes and gaining insight into the beliefs, which inform their responses is an important part of assessing the extent to which the ideals of the communicative approach are being implemented in practice. It has been reported in a number of research studies that teaching ideals and teacher beliefs may not be reflected in classroom practices due to both the nature of these beliefs and to contextual factors. Therefore, exploring the relationship between beliefs and practices is another goal of this study. This study is also driven by a number of contextual reasons, which will be presented in the next chapter.

### **1.3 Thesis outline**

This thesis is divided into 12 chapters. Following this chapter, chapter 2 presents the context of this study. It provides information about English language education and teacher education in Saudi Arabia. In chapter 3, I present a theoretical framework for the study. The chapter is divided into two main parts. The first part is a review of the literature on beliefs and the second part is focused on the nature of spoken language and teaching speaking. In chapter 4, I provide a detailed account of the study design. Information on the research methods, the participants, data collection and data analysis is presented. In chapters 5-9, I present the study results. Each of these chapters provides descriptions of teachers' stated beliefs and their practices in

teaching speaking. In chapter 10, I analyse the findings across the five case studies. In chapter 11, I discuss the study findings in relation to the literature on beliefs and on teaching speaking. In chapter 12, I present the study implications, recommendations, reflections and suggestions for further research.

## **2 Context of the study**

### **2.1 Introduction**

‘English enjoys a high status in Saudi Arabia as the only foreign language taught in state schools and many private schools, universities and industrial and government institutions’ (Al-Seghayer 2005:126). Schooling educational system is divided into three main stages: primary (six years), intermediate (three years) and secondary (three years). State schools are single-sex and free for all. Education in Saudi Arabia is semi-compulsory; according to the Document of Educational Policies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (1995), learning is mandatory for all because of Islam. Nowhere does the document states explicitly that education is compulsory. However, some state services will not be provided to people without providing a letter which proves that they are students if they are at school age. There are no official punishments for parents or guardians who do not send their children to school. English was a compulsory subject in intermediate and secondary state schools only. In 2014, English became compulsory starting at year four (9-10 years old students). In private schools, English is a compulsory subject for all school years.

In this section, I will present an overview of the geographical and social background of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Then, I will discuss the general attitudes towards English in Saudi Arabia. After that, a brief description of the context of learning and teaching English at schools and universities in Saudi Arabia will be presented. Finally, I will discuss the nature of teacher education in Saudi universities.

## **2.1 Geographical and social background**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is located in Southeast Asia in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula. It is divided into 13 regions; different regions have different cultures and traditions. All regions were unified as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932. My study was conducted in Jeddah. Jeddah is a coastal city in the Western region. Jeddah's strategic location near the two holy cities 'Makkah and Al-Madinah' makes it a multicultural community. Thousands of people from different cultures, origins and nationalities live or visit Jeddah every year. Arabic is the official language; some people, including non-Arabs, speak Arabic. However, English is used for communication among people from different nationalities. English is used for interaction in some academic contexts, restaurants and shops. There are more opportunities to practise speaking English in big cities like Jeddah than other cities in the Kingdom.

## **2.2 General attitudes towards English in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia**

Saudis' attitudes towards English are generally positive. Most people believe that the English language increases access to different sources of knowledge and increases students' opportunities to pursue their higher studies in Saudi Arabia and abroad. English is the main medium of instruction in most private universities and some departments in state universities. In addition, the Saudi scholarship programme gives the opportunity to thousands of Saudi students to continue their higher education in different universities around the world. Most of these universities are based in English-speaking countries, or they use English as the main medium of

instruction. Moreover, proficiency in English provides better job opportunities. It has been reported by Al-Jarf (2008) and Moskovsky and Alrabai (2009) that the majority of Saudi students view English proficiency as an important factor to get well-paid jobs. Today, English is a main requirement for many jobs in Saudi Arabia.

Al-Abed Al Haq and Smadi (2009:313) found that Saudi university students view 'the use of English as a sign of social prestige and as a means for enriching one's personality and cultural experience.' According to the study, students do not view the experience of learning English as a threat to their identities but as an experience which can contribute positively to their personalities and national existence. In addition, English has been and is still strongly connected to social prestige; the costs of learning English are usually high. Most Saudi fluent English speakers are private school graduates (who have had extra English lessons), those who travel abroad or could afford to pay for private English lessons.

Faruk (2014) in his review of Saudis' attitudes towards English found that positive attitudes towards English in Saudi Arabia are increasing. English is viewed as a medium to communicate with people from different cultures which helps Saudis to represent their national and religious culture to the world. However, reservations towards using English are still there. These reservations might be a reaction to some people's preference to teach their children in schools that use English, rather than Arabic, as a medium of instruction. Al-Jarf (2004:2) found that college 'students are keener on teaching their children English than Arabic'. Also, the reservations could be a reaction to the use of English or the use of Roman alphabet in writing Arabic by



youth in online and text messaging. People, who have negative attitudes towards English, do not consider English itself a threat but a source of threats such as ‘westernisation’ depending on how it is used.

### **2.3 English teaching in Saudi schools**

This section focuses on learning and teaching English at all-female schools in Saudi Arabia because of its relevance to the context of my study (The female Section in a state Saudi university). All female university students, with few exceptions, are graduates of state or private female schools. In the following, I discuss the debate of the starting age for introducing English in state schools and a brief description of the situation of teaching English at state and private schools is presented.

A big debate has taken place in Saudi Arabia about introducing English to students at an earlier age in state schools. This debate started in the 1980’s (Abdan 1991). The supporters of the decision gave different reasons, from Chomsky’s critical period hypothesis to the low proficiency level of most graduates from state schools. The opponents of this decision argue that introducing English at this early age might have bad consequences on Classical Arabic proficiency. Classical Arabic is important on the religious level (to facilitate reading the Quran) and the national level (to foster a sense of Arabic identity). In Arabic, there are many spoken dialects and a countless number of accents. Saudi dialects, like other Arabic dialects, differ in structure and grammar from Classical Arabic. In addition, Classical Arabic is not used in everyday, practical communication. Finally, after years of debating and arguing, the supporters of the decision won over their opponents in 2003 when the

Ministry of Education decided to start teaching English at year six (11-12 years old students). In 2014, English became compulsory at year four (9-10 years old students). The debate is still running as some supporters are aiming for an earlier starting age.

Female students in Saudi state schools receive nine years of formal English teaching (three years in primary school, three years in intermediate school and another three years in secondary school). They receive 45 minutes of English language teaching four times a week. On the other hand, students in private schools receive 12 to 14 years of formal English language teaching. They start studying English at the age of 4-5 if they attended kindergarten classes, which is optional, or at the age of 6-7 if they started attending school at year one. They take the same basic state schools compulsory classes in addition to other extra English classes in which they receive intensive English lessons. While Arabic is the main medium of instruction in most schools, in private international schools the main medium of instruction is English.. Abdan (1991) in his study of two groups of intermediate school students found that there was a significant difference in the achievement of elementary private school graduates than state school students. Nevertheless, not all private schools provide high-quality English language teaching and thus, graduates have varying levels of English language proficiency. Generally, private school graduates are more competent users of English than state school graduates. Al-Mohanna (2010:69) argues that most students ‘graduate from [state] secondary schools unable to use the language for communicative purposes’. The prevalent teaching approaches may be one of the reasons for the students being unable to use English communicatively.

According to Al-Mohanna (2010), traditional methods of teaching such as Grammar-translation method and some aspects of the Audio-lingual method are the predominant approaches in teaching English in Saudi Arabia as teachers face difficulty implementing CLT.

#### **2.4 Teaching English at the language institute**

This section focuses on teaching general English in the context of my study, the female section of a state University. The main medium of instruction in this University is Arabic except some departments: e.g., Medicine and European Languages. English is used in some courses; most departments teach at least one course in English. The institute is responsible for teaching four general English courses for the preparatory year students: beginner, elementary, pre-intermediate and intermediate. Oxford Online Placement Test (OOPT) is held at the beginning of each academic year. ‘Students are placed in the relevant level, according to placement test scores ranging on a scale from 0-120’ (ELI Faculty Handbook 2012:16).

The number of students in each class varies between 25 and 30. Students aged between 17 and 19 years old. Students taking English courses are required to study other university courses depending on their academic programme (Science, Administration or Arts). All these courses, including English, are prerequisite for their main programme of study. This University has three campuses in different areas in the city. When this study was conducted, preparatory year students were placed in different campuses according to their grades in high school and the

aptitude and attainment tests. Students have to take these tests in order for them to get accepted at most Saudi higher education institutes. Students with high grades (both Science and Arts tracks) were placed in the main campus, Science students and Arts students with lower grades were placed in two separate campuses.

Teachers in the institute come from different backgrounds. They are divided into four main groups: Saudi MA holders, Ph.D. holders, expatriate teachers (hold different qualifications) and Saudi demonstrators (teacher assistants). The biggest group at the time of the study is the group of Saudi teacher assistants (the study participants). Most teacher assistants are English language or English literature graduates. Most of the TAs did not receive any formal teacher education or training. Unlike other faculties at the university, at the institute TAs have to teach. Two teachers are responsible for teaching each class. Each teacher has about 9 hours of teaching per week. In addition to their teaching loads, teachers are asked to be members of different committees (exam, students' support or special needs).

There are two comprehensive exams in each module, a mid-module exam and a final module exam. These exams are set by the exam committee in the institute. These exams include all the skills except writing and speaking. Students have a portfolio assessment which focuses on writing and reading. They also have two writing exams and two speaking exams in each module. The speaking exam comprises only 10% of the whole course grade. According to the ELI Faculty Handbook (2012), teachers are expected to give students short progress quizzes which can be generated by the teacher or based on Headway Progress tests from the teacher's book.

## **2.5 Teaching materials**

New Headway Plus, Special Edition series, were the main course books used in the institute. This edition was designed to suit the cultural and religious needs of Saudi Arabia. All teachers received a package which includes student's book, teacher's book, student's workbook and CD at the beginning of each module. Also, teachers can access online materials which were provided by Oxford University Press: Oxford Teachers' Club and Online Practice 'for students'.

New Headway Plus authors claim that their course book 'combines the best of traditional methods with more recent approaches, to help students use English both accurately and fluently' (Soars and Soars 2000). New Headway seems to encourage a combination of traditional and modern approaches with explicit focus on grammar which is neglected in many communicatively designed course books. The course books were chosen by a special committee in the institute, which involves a number of experienced English language teachers. Teachers were provided with a pacing guide and syllabus to follow in their teaching.

## **2.6 EFL teacher education in Saudi Universities**

In this section, I present a description of the EFL teacher preparation programmes provided by Colleges of Education and Colleges of Arts in Saudi Arabia. Then, I describe in-service training courses at the language institute in the context of my study.

### **2.6.1 EFL pre-service teacher preparation programmes in Saudi Arabia**

Main EFL teacher preparation programmes (BA degrees and diplomas) are provided by state Colleges of Education. Al-Hazmi (2003) argues that the EFL teacher preparation programmes can be described as inadequate and unsystematic. On the other hand, Al-Saadat (2004) claims that these programmes are well-structured but they only lack focus on testing. These programmes might be described as well-structured but they are inadequate in providing enough theoretical and pedagogical background for English language teachers. These programmes provide a number of educational courses in Arabic and only one course on EFL teaching methodology. The programmes offer a three-month practicum programme at a state intermediate or secondary schools (Al-Hazmi 2003). Student-teachers have to observe a number of English classes before they start teaching. Then, some of the student-teachers' teaching classes will be observed and their performance will be evaluated by their supervisors and one of the English language teachers in the school. Graduates of state colleges of Education and state universities follow 'a 4-year programme of courses in English language skills, English literature, linguistics, applied linguistics and translation' (Al-Hazmi 2003:341). The programmes in private universities are focused on either literature, linguistics or translation.

### **2.6.2 EFL in-service teacher training programmes**

While the institute at this university requires non-Saudi English language teachers to have an accredited English teaching qualification in order to be able to work as

teachers in the institute, they only require Saudi teacher assistants to have any relevant degree in English language: e.g., linguistics, translation or English literature. A big number of new Saudi teachers, including myself, were appointed in 2008. Hence most of the newly appointed teachers were inexperienced; the institute provided them with an induction (mentoring) programme. The programme included: observing classes for the mentor experienced teacher and teaching two classes, which were evaluated. The programme was short and inadequate to cater for the newly appointed teachers' needs. However, it helped in familiarising new teachers with their new teaching environment. Recently, the induction programme was developed into a longer in-service mentoring programme that aims to provide support and guidance for novice teachers.

The Professional Development Unit at the institute was created in 2010. It is responsible for supporting teachers' development and providing training. According to Shukri (2014), the institute works in collaboration with Oxford University Press to provide training for teachers. Also, continuous in-house training is provided. In the academic year 2013-2014, the Professional Development Unit organised a series of professional workshops for teachers and they held the first ELT symposium.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

The previous discussion showed a number of issues regarding the teaching of English language speaking in Saudi Arabia. In such a context where many English language teachers enter the profession with limited or no teaching experience and no teacher training, teachers' beliefs might play an important role in teaching English.

The significance of developing oral skills to Saudi students and the lack of research on English language teachers' beliefs in relation to teaching speaking and on teaching speaking more generally in the Saudi context reinforce the need to conduct this study.



### **3 Literature Review**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims to highlight the importance of understanding beliefs in the context of teaching speaking and it provides a theoretical framework for my research study. It is divided into three main sections. The first section focuses on teacher beliefs. The definitional confusion and different understandings of beliefs have been a challenge in teacher cognition research (Borg 2006; Pajares 1992; Richardson 1996). For this reasons, in this section, I focus on discussing what beliefs are and the nature of beliefs. Other beliefs-related issues are also discussed. The second and third sections of the literature focuses on the nature of spoken language and the nature of teaching of speaking.

#### **3.2 Beliefs**

Pajares (1992:307) says ‘the difficulty in studying teachers’ beliefs has been caused by definitional problems, poor conceptualizations and differing understandings of beliefs and belief structures’. This section examines four issues: defining beliefs, nature of beliefs, influences on beliefs and the relationship between beliefs and classroom practice.

### **3.2.1 Towards an understanding of beliefs**

#### **3.2.1.1 Knowledge and beliefs**

In order to define beliefs, the relationship between beliefs and other similar concepts need to be clarified. Knowledge is a concept which has a complex, debatable relationship with beliefs. The difference between knowledge and beliefs has been widely debated (Hoy and Weinstein 2006; Pajares 1992). While some researchers try to distinguish the two concepts (Abelson 1979; Nespor 1987), other researchers tend to see the two concepts as similar, overlapping, synonymous or difficult to distinguish (Calderhead 1996; Kagan 1992; Pajares 1992).

Fenstermacher (1994:29) argues that knowledge and beliefs are undoubtedly distinguishable in an epistemic sense. He notes that ‘a claim to know is a special type of claim, different from a claim to believe and requiring justification in ways that beliefs do not’ (Fenstermacher 1994:31). In other words, knowing something is to assert that it is true or real usually by providing evidence. On the other hand, believing something would suggest that it might be real, or it may only be an ‘assumption about the reality’ (Nespor 1987:318). However, the boundaries this philosophical point of view tries to create between ‘knowledge’ and ‘beliefs’ do not seem to be always clear particularly in the case of teaching, as the two concepts seem to be overlapping.

One of the main reasons for the blurred boundaries between ‘knowledge’ and ‘beliefs’ in teacher cognition research is that ‘teachers often treat their beliefs as knowledge’ (Grossman et al. 1989:31). Most teachers tend to see ‘knowledge’ and

'beliefs' as overlapping constructs (Hoy and Weinstein 2006:182). The main reason for this overlap resides in teachers' minds. Verloop et al. (2001:446) argue that 'in the mind of the teacher, components of knowledge, beliefs, conceptions and intuitions are inextricably intertwined'. Thus, while beliefs shape the way teachers think and process new information (Richardson 1996:102), knowledge can be a source of beliefs. For example, while the beliefs student teachers bring to their teacher education programmes influence their perception of knowledge, the information they are learning from their teacher education can contribute to developing, changing, modifying their beliefs or creating new beliefs. Calderhead and Robson (1991:7) note that the beliefs student teachers bring to their teacher education programmes 'can influence what they find relevant and useful in the course and how they analyse their own and others' practice'. Pajares (1992:325) states that while knowledge and beliefs are 'inextricably intertwined, the potent affective evaluative and episodic nature of beliefs makes them a filter through which new phenomena are interpreted'.

The overlap between the two concepts is evident in teacher cognition research. Grossman et al. (1989:31) found themselves researching teachers' beliefs in their study about teacher knowledge and they concluded that 'while we are trying to separate teachers' knowledge and belief about subject matter for the purposes of clarity, we recognise that the distinction is blurry at best'. Other researchers have used inclusive terms to refer to teacher's mental processes 'to embrace the complexity of teachers' mental lives' (Borg 2003:86). For example, Borg (2003) uses the term 'teacher cognition' to refer to what teachers think, know or believe and

Woods (1996) uses the term 'BAK' which refers to beliefs, attitudes and knowledge. In brief, distinguishing beliefs from knowledge might seem possible but it is difficult because of the dynamic overlap between both constructs. Deciding to use an inclusive term (teacher cognition), or one of the sub-terms (e.g., knowledge or beliefs) depends on the researcher's conceptual orientations and research purposes. This study adopts a constructivist approach aiming to understand beliefs and practices from the participants' perspectives. Munby (1982) says that beliefs are powerful constructs as they frame our interpretation of reality and might outweigh knowledge. However, while my study focuses on beliefs, inevitably some elements of teacher knowledge would be included under the term beliefs. Kagan (1992) says that most teachers' professional knowledge can be regarded as beliefs.

### **3.2.1.2 Defining beliefs**

There are several terms used in the teacher cognition research to refer to 'beliefs', which include:

Attitudes, values, judgments, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptions, conceptual systems, preconceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, explicit theories, personal theories, internal mental processes, action strategies, rules of practice, practical principles, perspectives, repertoires of understanding and social strategy (Pajares, 1992:309).

Moreover, there are various definitions of the term 'beliefs' (Borg 2006; Furinghetti and Pehkonen 2002; Leder and Forgasz 2002; Pajares 1992; Rokeach 1968). This diversity of terms and definitions makes 'beliefs' a 'messy construct' that is difficult to research (Pajares 1992). Pajares (1992:329) suggests that beliefs need to be

‘clearly conceptualized’ in order to make them less messy and more researchable.

For the purposes of this study, I used Borg’s (2001:186) definition of beliefs:

A belief is a proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously held, is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual and is therefore imbued with emotive commitment; further, it serves as a guide to thought and behaviour.

I chose this definition because it summarises the main characteristics of beliefs which I believe to be important for my study. Based on this definition, beliefs can be conscious or unconscious (Rokeach 1968; Ackermann 1972). These beliefs affect the teachers’ way of perceiving and interpreting knowledge (Calderhead and Robson 1991; Kagan 1992; Munby 1982; Richardson 1996). Moreover, they are thought to be influential on teachers’ thinking and classroom practice (Andrews 2003; Breen et al. 2001; Pajares 1992; Smith 1996).

### **3.2.2 The nature of beliefs**

Understanding the complex nature of beliefs helps in explaining the relationship between beliefs and practice as some beliefs seem to be more influential on practices than others. A number of characteristics of beliefs are mentioned in the literature on belief. Beliefs can be core or peripheral (Pajares 1992; Green 1971), conscious or unconscious (Ackermann 1972; Rokeach 1968), ideal or reality-oriented (Abelson 1979; Nespor 1987) and can be contradictory (Green 1971). Most of these characteristics have not been widely researched possibly because it is difficult to get empirical evidence that supports these abstract ideas. Here I discuss what is available in the literature on these issues.

### 3.2.2.1 Core and peripheral beliefs

Beliefs are thought to form in different clusters within the human mind (Green 1971; Rokeach 1968). In teachers' belief system, core beliefs are central beliefs which tend to be more stable and influential than peripheral beliefs. Rokeach (1968) defines centrality of beliefs in terms of connectedness; core beliefs have more connections with other beliefs, which make them central and more powerful. Cooney et al. (1998) in their case study of 'Greg' a pre-service mathematics teacher found that Greg believed that the aim of teaching is to prepare students for life. Greg explained that he wanted his students to develop their life reasoning and adjustments abilities and problem-solving skills (Ibid). This belief seemed to be at the core of Greg's beliefs and his other beliefs seemed to be derived from this belief (Ibid). Breen et al. (2001:498) in their study on language teachers' teaching principles and practices concluded that teachers in their study gave 'priority to certain principles'. Phipps and Borg (2009:387) in their study of three EFL teachers in the preparatory school of a private English-medium university in Turkey found that,

While teachers' practices did often not reflect their stated beliefs about language learning, these practices were consistent with deeper, more general beliefs about learning.

Teachers' core beliefs are prioritised over other beliefs in practice and they are held with more strength or 'emotive commitment' (Borg 2001). Also, core beliefs seem to be more stable and more resistant to change (Pajares 1992; Rokeach 1968). Core beliefs are more likely to be implemented in the teaching practice as they are more powerful. Borg (2006:272) says that:

Further research is thus required for us to understand not just what language teachers have cognitions about but how the different elements in teachers' cognitive systems interact and which of these elements, for example, are core and which are peripheral.

Attention to core and peripheral beliefs would contribute to better understanding of the relationship between beliefs and practices (Phipps and Borg 2009).

### **3.2.2.2 Conscious and unconscious beliefs**

Rokeach (1968) divides beliefs into two types: conscious and unconscious. Ackermann (1972) defines conscious beliefs as beliefs that a person has explicitly formulated and is aware of. Pajares (1992) states that 'conscious beliefs can be an unreliable guide to the nature of reality' as deeper unconscious beliefs might be influencing the reality. As a result, unconscious beliefs can be interpreted through behaviour, though not directly. Kagan (1992:66) argues that 'beliefs cannot be inferred directly from teacher behaviour, because teachers can follow similar practices for very different reasons' and the opposite is true. Breen et al. (2001) found that teachers who are working in the same context with similar groups of students can implement a shared principle in a different wide range of practice. Basturkmen (2012:283) states that:

Breen et al. (2001) can be seen as an investigation of implicit [unconscious] beliefs as the teachers may not have been aware of the principles behind their practices prior to the discussions of examples of their practices.

While giving teachers the opportunity to reflect on their practices is useful to gain insight into their unconscious beliefs, teachers might provide post-hoc explanations as some unconscious beliefs are difficult to articulate. Combining pre- and post-

observation interviews and classroom observation can help in gaining deeper insights into teachers' beliefs. Considering the issue of consciousness is not only important to understand the relationship between beliefs and practices, it is also important to understand the limitations and to appreciate the complexity of researching teachers' beliefs.

### **3.2.2.3 Ideal and reality-oriented beliefs**

Teachers might hold ideal beliefs of how they want their teaching to be. Abelson (1979) points out that beliefs might represent alternative realities. Nespor (1987) explains that teachers might draw images of teaching which are neither based on knowledge nor experience.

For example, a teacher 'drew her ideal of teaching from a model of what she had wanted classes to be like when she was young, a child-friendly and fun. Although she worked to shape her class to that ideal, she had never achieved it; nor had she experienced it as a child' (Nespor 1987:318).

Ideal beliefs could be a source of tension between beliefs and practice (Farrell 2008; Sakui and Gaies 2003). For example, in a self-study, Keiko, a Japanese English language teacher, said that she writes every year in her journal about how she could improve her writing classes but when the teaching starts, she discovers that there are some things of which her students are not capable of (Sakui and Gaies 2003). Keiko's several years of teaching experience, reflection and probably her knowledge as a researcher helped her to be aware of her ideal beliefs which is not the case for other teachers. Keiko's students' level was a constraint that made her feel how ideal her beliefs are. Ideal beliefs can be individual and context-based; what is ideal for a



particular person or in a particular context might be real for another person or another context. Real or reality-oriented beliefs are beliefs that proved to work in reality. They are practical beliefs; teachers usually gain from their teaching experience. Phipps and Borg (2009:388) found that ‘beliefs which exerted most influence on teachers’ work were ones firmly grounded in experience’. Congruence and incongruence between beliefs and practice can be better understood by considering how real or ideal they are.

#### **3.2.2.4 Contradictory beliefs**

Teachers might also hold some contradictory beliefs. According to Green (1971), a belief system includes different clusters of beliefs that might be isolated from each other. Therefore, teachers might not be aware of their contradictory beliefs until they set side by side and compared (Green 1971:47). Contradictions of beliefs could be the result of the institutional or political pressure on teachers (Turner et al. 2009). When teachers work in conditions that oppose their beliefs, they might have some contradictory beliefs. A researcher needs to be aware of the different characteristics of the context of investigation when researching teachers’ beliefs as it has a big influence on the nature of these beliefs. The influence of the educational context on beliefs will be further discussed in (section 3.2.3.4).

#### **3.2.3 Influences on beliefs**

Teachers’ general beliefs are influenced by different complex contextual factors and experiences. In the following section, these different factors will be discussed;

teachers' learning experience 'the apprenticeship of observation', teacher education programmes, classroom practice and the educational context.

### **3.2.3.1 Schooling 'the apprenticeship of observation'**

Teachers' learning experiences seem to play a central role in creating and developing teachers' beliefs. Lortie (1975:62), who referred to this phenomenon as 'the apprenticeship of observation', argues that students' experiences of observing classes for 16 years in schools and universities are crucial in creating their beliefs as teachers. Students form images of their favourite teachers and teaching styles and with these images in their minds, they develop beliefs about the best ways of teaching and learning (Erkmen 2010:23). These images seem to be influential in shaping teachers' beliefs and consequently practice; teachers use these images as 'models of action' (Calderhead and Robson 1991:3). Moreover, teachers might hold negative images of some teaching methods and learning styles which they wish to avoid. For example, avoiding error correction was reported among a number of novice teachers in several studies such as those by (Golombek 1998; Johnson 1994; Numrich 1996) because it used to inhibit them from speaking when they were language learners.

The images or beliefs teachers hold could be misleading in practice, especially at the beginning of their career; these images might encourage teachers to use methods which are inappropriate if they are ideal or based on the teacher's individual learning preferences. Kagan (1992:145) argues that novice teachers' images of teaching and learning might be inaccurate because they often assume that their

students have similar learning styles, interests and even learning problems. Moreover, novice teachers might hold oversimplified beliefs about teaching before they start teaching or at the beginning of their profession (Feiman-Nemser et al. 1989; Urmston 2003). Teachers often have such simple beliefs of teaching and of the role of teachers because they were observing their teachers' performance (their teaching) but not their backstage plans (their lesson planning). Thus, students are not aware of how teaching happens. The apprenticeship of observation might help students to know what good teaching is but not how it happens.

### **3.2.3.2 Teacher education**

There has been much debate on how effective teacher education programmes are in developing teachers' beliefs. In the late 1980's and the mid-1990's, some research studies questioned the influence of teacher education on beliefs and some writers described it as a 'weak intervention' on teachers' beliefs and practice (Richardson 1996:113). However, in the late 1990's, there were more optimistic views of the impact of teacher education on teachers' beliefs (Borg 2006). Crandall (2000) states three reasons, which contributed to this change of views. Firstly, the focus of language teacher education programmes have changed; the primary focus of these programmes shifted from focusing on applied linguistics to involving students in practical experiences such as observation and micro-teaching (Crandall 2000). Secondly, influential issues such as the teaching context, action research, teacher beliefs and teacher cognition have been considered in designing language teacher education programmes (Ibid). Thirdly, many teacher education programmes today

adopt a constructivist view of teaching and learning, which encourages reflection to prepare student teachers to be reflective practitioners (Crandall 2000; Richardson 1996).

There are a number of studies which attempt to trace the impact of teacher education on teacher beliefs. Teachers start their teacher education course with many beliefs most of which they developed as learners (Borg 2003). The influence of teacher education is usually measured by how these programmes develop or change students' teachers' initial beliefs. Ali and Ammar (2005) in their study of 114 Saudi pre-service teachers claim that teacher education can be a 'weak intervention' on teachers' beliefs and practices. They argue that 'although constructivist methodologies and communicative language teaching are increasingly being highlighted in teacher education', pre-service teachers' epistemological beliefs seem to be influenced by traditional views of teaching: i.e., teacher-centred classrooms and audio-lingual methods (Ali and Ammar 2005:31). This may be due to the strong impact of teachers' previous learning experiences. Some researchers believe that encouraging students' to reflect can help them to identify and develop the previous beliefs which they brought to their teacher education programmes. Sendan and Roberts (1998), in their study of the personal theories of a student teacher concluded that 'while the content of the student teacher's personal theories showed only limited change, there was notable change in their structure' (Sendan and Roberts 1998:229). Bramald et al. (1995:30) explored belief development of 162 student teachers in a PGCE programme in England. They were in 8 different subject groups (English, Geography, History, Mathematics, Modern Foreign Languages, Religious Education

and Science). While the study results were not optimistic about teacher education, it was found that some degree of beliefs development occurred in two groups (Geography and English). These two groups were led by ‘tutors with the strongest leaning towards experiential learning and reflective practice’ (Bramald at al. 1995:30). Developments and changes in student teachers’ beliefs were reported in Cabaroglu and Roberts’ (2000) study. They conducted three in-depth interviews and used a questionnaire at the end of a 36-week PGCE course in the UK and they found that the beliefs of only one student teacher out of 20 others remained unchanged at the end of the course. Borg (2011) examined the impact of an intensive eight-week in-service teacher education programme on six English language teachers’ beliefs. They have found that the impact on teachers’ beliefs was considerable though variable (Ibid). Half of the participants felt that they were more aware of their beliefs and more able to articulate them after the course while the impact of the other half of the teachers’ beliefs was less strong.

Confrontation of pre-existing beliefs and self-regulated learning opportunities contribute to the development of beliefs (Cabaroglu and Roberts 2000). However, cognitive change does not always imply a behavioural change (Borg 2006). Changes in beliefs do not always imply changes in practice. Student teachers might face difficulties when implementing what they learnt in their teacher education programmes. Teachers need to be made aware of what type of difficulties they might face and how are they going to deal with these issues as this would help them to implement beliefs in their classrooms.

### **3.2.3.3 Classroom practice**

Several researchers have drawn attention to the important role which classroom experience plays in shaping beliefs such as (Andrews 2003; Golombek 1998; Mok 1994; Phipps and Borg 2007). Mok (1994), in his study of 12 experienced and inexperienced ESL teachers in Hawaii, concluded that most teachers are guided by their experience as learners and as teachers. Similar results were reported by Brousseau et al. (1988:38) in their study of experienced and inexperienced teachers in the United States, as they concluded that classroom experience ‘has a measurable impact on the individual beliefs of teachers’.

Teachers’ experience of what works best in their classrooms is a primary source of teachers’ beliefs (Kindsvatter et al. 1988 cited in Richards and Lockhart 1994). This depends on how teachers’ evaluate success in practice, whether it is according to students’ responses or to exam results. According to Crookes and Arakaki (1999:16) ‘Accumulated teaching experience was the most often cited source of teaching ideas; teachers talk about their teaching experiences as being personally unique and self-contained entity’. Teachers’ believe their experiences are unique and thus learning from their experiences is important.

### **3.2.3.4 The educational context**

Teachers hold beliefs about different aspects of their context: students, policies, colleagues or curriculum. Teachers who are working in the same context tend to have some shared beliefs about different aspects of this context (Breen et al. 2001).

These beliefs might be positive; as they might help teachers to be more familiar with their context or they might be harmful to both teachers and students. For example, in the context of the institute under study, a belief that Science students' level of language proficiency is higher than the level of Arts and Humanities students' level is common among English language teachers. Such beliefs are harmful as they may affect teachers' and students' attitudes towards each other and students' attitudes towards the English language.

Different elements of the educational context help in creating context-based beliefs. 'Informal consultations' and socialisation with colleagues and advice from mentors could all be sources of beliefs (Crookes and Arakaki 1999:16). Zeichner and Tabachnick (1985), in their study of four non-native language teachers in the United States, found that socialisation with colleagues gave teachers the opportunity to express their unique beliefs. In addition, socialisation gives teachers opportunities to discuss different aspects of their work with their colleagues, reflect on their practices and discuss and identify their beliefs. According to Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007), the verbal persuasion teachers receive from administrators, colleagues, student parents, or the community seems to influence teachers' beliefs about their teaching performance. The more support teachers received; the higher the teachers tended to rate their satisfaction with their professional performance (Ibid). 'Informal consultations' and socialisation with colleagues and advice from mentors could all be sources of beliefs (Crookes and Arakaki 1999:16). Zeichner and Tabachnick (1985), in their study of four non-native language teachers in the United States, found that socialisation with colleagues gave teachers the opportunity to express

their unique beliefs. In addition, socialisation gives teachers opportunities to discuss different aspects of their work with their colleagues, reflect on their practices and discuss and identify their beliefs. According to Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007), the verbal persuasion teachers receive from administrators, colleagues, student parents, or the community seems to influence teachers' beliefs about their teaching performance. The more support teachers received; the higher the teachers tended to rate their satisfaction with their professional performance (Ibid).

#### **3.2.4 The relationship between beliefs and practice**

'Understanding teachers and teaching is not possible without an understanding of the beliefs about language teaching and learning which teachers have' (Phipps and Borg 2007:17). The significance of beliefs resides in their relationship to practice. Many studies have been conducted to investigate the relationship between beliefs and different aspects of classroom practice, such as teaching approaches, decision making and problem-solving. Findings of several studies show the interactive, dialectic and complex relationship between beliefs and classroom practice (e.g., Breen et al. 2001; Foss and Kleinsasser 1996; Phipps 2009). Congruence between beliefs and practice has been evident in teacher cognition research. Various studies such as those by (Andrews 2003; Breen et al. 2001; Smith 1996) have found consistent patterns between teachers' thinking, their decisions and their actions.

Beliefs are expected to be reflected in teachers' practices. However, the reality is different. Incongruence between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practice has been reported in a number of research studies (e.g., Chen 2008; Farrell and Lim



2005; Karavas-Doukas 1996; Theriot and Tice 2009). Different reasons were found to contribute to these tensions. These findings are not surprising, as there are many factors which seem to affect the relationship between beliefs and practice: e.g., contextual issues, teachers' limited understanding or lack of knowledge, the nature of beliefs and methodological issues.

In the following, I will discuss two possible types of factors that contribute to the found tensions between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices: contextual factors and methodological issues.

#### **3.2.4.1 Contextual factors**

Contextual factors can be the main obstacles in the way of transferring beliefs into practice. Examination concerns have been widely reported as a source of the tensions between beliefs and practice in studies such as, (Chen 2008; Farrell 2008; Farrell and Lim 2005; Lee 2009; Phipps and Borg 2007). Policies of the educational institutions, time constraints and students' or mentors' expectations could all form obstacles which might affect the relationship between beliefs and practice. Unexpected incidents teachers face in their classrooms can be sources of tensions between their beliefs and practice (Theriot and Tice 2009). Richards and Pennington (1998) reported that novice teachers who show enthusiasm to implement new teaching approaches found themselves implementing traditional teaching approaches when faced by the reality of classrooms: large classes and unmotivated students. Teachers might (intentionally or unintentionally) sacrifice practising certain beliefs because of some contextual factors. J. Richards (1996:292) reported a case of a

teacher who said he had a general principle ‘to make things student-centred and communicative’, which he tried to apply in all his classrooms. However, he reported it was difficult for him to make some classes student-centred because the students were reluctant to speak.

#### **3.2.4.2 Methodological issues**

The complex nature of beliefs, which makes beliefs difficult to elicit could be one reason for the tensions found between beliefs and practice. Munby (1982:216) suggests that when incongruence is found between beliefs and practice, ‘it might be the case that quite different and weightier beliefs are responsible for the ways in which these teachers act in their classrooms’. Teachers’ stated beliefs can be ‘peripheral’ beliefs which are contradicting other ‘core’ unconscious beliefs. This issue relates to the methods researchers use to elicit beliefs. Interviews, observations and narratives were used in many research studies which show congruence between teachers’ beliefs and their teaching practice (e.g. Andrews 2003; Breen et al. 2001; J. Richards 1996; Smith 1996). On the other hand, questionnaires or scales were used in some of the research studies which show incongruence between teachers’ beliefs and their practice (e.g. Andrews 2003; Karavas-Doukas 1996). Andrews (2003), who used questionnaires and interviews in his study of 170 secondary school teachers in Hong Kong, concluded that no association between teachers’ beliefs and classroom practice was found in the questionnaires’ data, while the qualitative data from interviews showed congruence between teachers’ beliefs and classroom practice. Phipps and Borg (2007:382) note that,

Beliefs elicited through questionnaires may reflect teachers' theoretical or idealistic beliefs — beliefs about what should be—and may be informed by technical or propositional knowledge. In contrast, beliefs elicited through the discussion of actual classroom practices may be more rooted in reality—beliefs about what is—and reflect teachers' practical or experiential knowledge.

The manner of elicitation is very important, as beliefs might be unconscious and thus need to be inferred. Different research instruments are used to identify different types of beliefs. Questionnaires can be used to investigate teachers' idealistic beliefs, while in-depth interviews or narratives seem to better identify teachers' practical beliefs (beliefs which affect practice).

There might be other reasons for the tensions found between teachers' beliefs and classroom practice which merit more research, such as, teachers' unawareness of some of their beliefs or their hesitance to articulate some beliefs (i.e., negative or unpopular beliefs).

### **3.2.5 Summary**

I aimed to present relevant literature on teacher beliefs. The following is a summary of the main issues of the previous section:

- 1- Understanding the complex nature of beliefs is essential for conducting research on beliefs.
- 2- Teachers' beliefs are influenced by their learning and teaching experiences and their context.
- 3- The relationship between beliefs and practices is a complex dialectal one.

In the next section, I discuss the nature of spoken language and the nature of teaching speaking.

### **3.3 The nature of spoken language**

In this section I discuss the nature of spoken language in relation to teaching speaking. I start with a discussion of speech production concerning the psycholinguistic aspects of speech and their implications on teaching speaking. Then, I briefly discuss the concepts of complexity, accuracy and fluency. After that, I discuss the features of spoken discourse, spoken grammar, phonology and spoken lexis.

#### **3.3.1 Speech production**

There are a number of models which try to explain speech production processes: e.g., Fromkin (1971), Garret (1989) and Levelt (1989). Levelt's (1989) model of speech production has been widely cited in the literature and it is one of the most influential models (Gee 2014; Goh 2003; Hughes 2011; Robinson 2001). It is based on the assumption that speech is planned (Martínez-Flor et al. 2006). The model suggests that speech planning involves four main processes: conceptualisation, formulation, articulation and monitoring (Levelt 1989). In the first stage, speakers plan for the content of their speech, which is based on the speakers' communicative intention. This might include selecting a topic or choosing relevant ideas if the topic has already been established (Goh 2003). Secondly, speakers formulate their message. Formulation involves retrieving words from the mental lexicon - 'the store

of information about words in one's language' - and it also involves grammatical and phonological encoding (Levelt 1989:6). 'Grammatical encoding comprises both the selection of appropriate lexical concepts and the assembly of a syntactic framework' (Bock and Levelt 1994:945). Phonological encoding includes the assembly of sound forms and the generation of intonation (Ibid). 'The formulated utterances are then conveyed through the activation and control of specific muscle groups of the articulatory system' (Goh 2003:33). The whole process involves self-monitoring. Goh (2003) states that in spontaneous interactive talk such as conversations, the three processes of conceptualisation, formulation and articulation might take place at the same time and this can cause 'dysfluencies' due to the limited time available for planning for speaking. To overcome the challenge created by the limited time available to plan for speaking, some teachers try to allocate time for planning in the speaking classroom. Yuan and Ellis' (2003) study of pre-task and online planning showed that pre-task planning has a positive influence on students' grammatical complexity in speaking while on-line planning has a positive influence on both students' grammatical complexity and their language accuracy. It seems useful to allow students time to plan for speaking tasks. However, in real life speakers usually have no time for planning, as Bygate (2001:16) states: 'speakers have to decide on their message and communicate it without taking time to check it over and correct it'. Therefore, while giving students time for planning has positive impact when they practise speaking in their classrooms, they also need to be prepared to be able to speak spontaneously in real life.

Goh and Burns (2012:45) note that the complex cognitive speech production processes 'are often overlooked in the classroom, where teachers' attention is focused mainly on the product'. Teachers' awareness of the complexity of and the importance of speech processes would lead to putting more emphasis on developing speaking as a skill and helping students to use their speaking knowledge to operate in real-life interaction. On the other hand, focusing on speaking as a product would lead to developing students' speaking knowledge but not their speaking skills. As Bygate (1987:3) puts it, 'there is a difference between knowledge about a language and skill in using it'. Even those learners with advanced knowledge about speaking 'might find it difficult to activate this knowledge in real-time, face to face encounters' (Thornbury 2012:198).

### **3.3.2 Fluency, accuracy and complexity**

Fluency, accuracy and complexity are three dimensions of L2 proficiency, which are used to evaluate the quality of spoken language. Fluency is defined as 'the ability of an individual to speak or write without undue hesitation' (Nunan 1999:207). According to Ellis (2005:15),

Fluency requires learners to draw on their memory-based system, accessing and deploying ready-made chunks of language and, when problems arise, using communication strategies to get by.

Developing fluency is challenging, Lennon (1990:391) says fluency is an impression on the listener that 'the psycholinguistic processes of speech planning and speech production [seem to be] functioning easily and efficiently'. It 'concerns the learner's capacity to mobilize an interlanguage system to communicate meanings in real time'

(Skehan 1996:46). Fluency has three dimensions: speed, breakdown and repair (Tavakoli and Skehan 2005). Speed refers to the rate of articulation and the density of delivery, breakdown refers to the number, length, nature (silent or filled) and distribution of pauses. Repair refers to the numbers of speech reformulations, repetitions and false starts (Ellis 2005; Skehan 2009). Accuracy is the ability to produce error-free speech (Housen and Kuiken 2009). It is ‘concerned with the learner’s capacity to handle whatever level of interlanguage complexity [they have] currently attained’ (Skehan 1996:46). Complexity is ‘the extent to which the language produced in performing a task is elaborate’ (Ellis 2003: 340). It ‘relates to the stage and elaboration of the underlying interlanguage system’ (Skehan 1996:46). ‘Complexity is the most complex, ambiguous and least understood dimension of the CAF [complexity, accuracy and fluency] triad’ (Housen and Kuiken 2009:463). Accuracy and complexity require learners to draw ‘on their rule-based system and thus require syntactic processing’ (Ellis 2005:15).

Skehan (1996) says that these three concepts require attention and working memory involvement, which are limited resources, thus, ‘committing these resources to one of these concepts may have a negative impact on the others. For example, overemphasising accuracy development in traditional teaching methods such as the Audio-lingual is at the expense of fluency development and might hinder students’ speaking development, especially, at very early stages of learning the foreign language. On the other hand, overemphasising fluency with giving no consideration to accuracy might cause some fossilised language errors that would be very difficult to change (Richards 2002).

Brumfit (1984) distinguishes between fluency-based activities and accuracy-based activities where fluency-based activities aim to promote spontaneous and natural oral production while accuracy-based activities focus on the linguistic and grammatical correctness of the production. Skehan (2009) states that recent research within CAF framework shows that tasks based on concrete or familiar information and tasks containing clear structure advantage accuracy and fluency. In addition, tasks requiring information manipulation lead to a higher complexity and interactive tasks advantage complexity and accuracy (Ibid). Foster (1996) explored the effects of planning time on the fluency, accuracy and complexity of 32 intermediate ESL learners in the UK. He found that planning time has a positive influence on students' fluency and complexity and limited influence on accuracy (specifically in personal information tasks) (Ibid). Wigglesworth (1997) reported that planning positive results on all three constructs in his study of 107 adult ESL learners in Australia. On the other hand, Rutherford (2001 cited in Ellis 2009) in his study of 31 ESL adult learners' accuracy and complexity, found that planning had no significant effect on students' complexity or accuracy. Rutherford's (2001 cited in Ellis 2009) study was conducted in a laboratory while the other studies were conducted in classrooms and this can be one reason for its different reported findings. Also, different CAF research studies use different variables to measure CAF. Housen and Kuiken (2009:464) say:

CAF have been evaluated across various language domains by means of a wide variety of tools, ranging from holistic and subjective ratings by lay or expert judges, to quantifiable measures (frequencies, ratios, formulas) of general or specific linguistic properties of L2 production



Also, most CAF studies were focused on measuring these three constructs only. Pallotti (2009:596) says ‘it is surprising how few CAF studies report data about the communicative success and adequacy of the tasks and the learners investigated’. He explains that a fluent, accurate and complex sentence may not be communicative and can be meaningless. However, a sentence such as, ‘no put green thing near bottle. Put under table’, which is inaccurate, not complex and could be influential, fulfils a communicative purpose (Ibid).

In my study, I aim to exploring teachers’ beliefs and practices regarding fluency and accuracy, particularly, as they are more familiar with these two terms based on their background.

### **3.3.3 Spoken discourse**

While written language has traditionally provided the standard model for teaching, it is widely acknowledged today that spoken language has several distinguishing features and much work has been carried out in recent years to identify these features. In this section, I focus on the interactional features of spoken discourse; grammatical, lexical and phonological features will be discussed in separate sections. Then, I discuss the differences between written and spoken discourse.

### 3.3.4 Features of spoken discourse

Most of the research on spoken discourse features has largely focused on the genre of interactive talk or conversation. According to Leech (2000:719) conversation is ‘by far the most typical and frequently encountered variety both of spontaneous speech and of spoken discourse in general’. The features I discuss below are more prominent in everyday spoken English than some more formal spoken genres such as presentations and lectures. I chose to discuss these features as my research is focused on general English classes which aim to prepare students to take part in everyday spoken interactions.

**1. Openings and closings** in spoken discourse equate with introductions and conclusions in written discourse. Greetings, asking questions or talking about the weather are common examples of conversation openings in English. There are specific norms for openings in each language. Schmidt and Richards (1980) say that the question, ‘How are you?’ is ritualistic in many languages including English and it does not need to be answered sincerely.

[However] in Arabic ... the question must be answered and in almost all contexts the only appropriate answer is the ritual response formula ‘ilhamdulillah’ (‘praise to God’) (Schmidt and Richards 1980:147).

Openings have an important role in speech; a factual exchange like buying something from the shop can be turned into an informal conversation by using a conversation opening (Dörnyei and Thurrell 1994). Closings seem to be more challenging than openings as they need to be handled carefully and indirectly. Some

pre-closing phrases, such as ‘I don’t want to keep you from your work’ can be used to end a conversation politely (Dörnyei and Thurrell 1994). Dörnyei and Thurrell (1994:43) say that students might misunderstand the closing signals ‘and they often lack a sufficient repertoire of such closing routines to be able to conclude and leave without sounding abrupt’. While opening and closing expressions are formulaic, they are culturally specific and therefore, students face challenges using them (Goh and Burns 2012).

**2. Turn-taking** ‘is concerned with when and how speakers take turns and how new speakers are determined’ (Burns 2001:133). Bygate (1987:39) suggests that efficient turn-taking requires five abilities:

[First, it involves knowing] how to signal that one wants to speak by using appropriate phrases, sounds, or even gestures. [Secondly,] it means recognising the right moment to get a turn. [Thirdly,] it is important to know how to use appropriate turn structure in order not lose it before finishing what one has to say. [Fourthly,] one has to be able to recognize other speakers’ signals of their desire to speak. And [finally], one needs to know how to let someone else have a turn.

The language of the classroom does not provide enough opportunities for students to develop their awareness of turn-taking (Dörnyei and Thurrell 1994). Therefore, teachers need to help their students by raising their awareness and providing authentic examples of interaction (Ibid). Gojian and Habibi (2015) investigated the effect of turn taking instruction on students’ performance. They divided the participants into two groups and they found that the group which was provided with explicit turn-taking instructions outperformed the other group who was engaged in interaction without being provided with explicit instruction (Ibid).

**3. Back-channelling** ‘refers to verbal, vocal, or nonverbal responses by the listener to show his or her attention and to encourage the speaker to continue’ such as: uh, really, I see and yeah (Donahue 1998:147). Back-channelling is important to keep the flow of the conversation as it helps to avoid communication breakdowns (Goh and Burns 2012). However, back-channelling can be interruptive if it is used before an utterance is complete (Cathcart et al. 2003:52). Also, it is a strategy that is implemented differently in different cultures. White (1989) explores the use of back-channelling among Americans and Japanese. She found that ‘Japanese gave significantly more backchannels of several types than Americans do’, however; this did not have a negative influence on the conversation (White 1989:73). This can be due to the influence of the Japanese culture and language where more back-channelling is used.

Most spoken discourse features are universal; they apply to all languages but they might be implemented differently in different languages (Flowerdew and Miller 2005). To second language learners, most of these can be transferrable from their first language; however, most of these features are used automatically in L1. Therefore, ‘teachers can help raise [their students’] awareness of what they already know from their own experience and help them consider the strategies that would be useful in English’ (Goh and Burns 2012:110).

### **3.3.5 Written and spoken discourse**

Spoken language tends to be less planned and more spontaneous than written language (Flowerdew and Miller 2005). Also, spoken language has prosodic

features, 'i.e. sentence stress, intonation, tempo and articulation rate and rhythm and voice quality' (Thornbury and Slade 2006:9).

In speaking, unlike writing, the perceived meaning can be negotiated. This meaning can be clarified, confirmed or corrected (Bower and Kawaguchi 2011). Moreover, spoken language tends to be less syntactically complex (Brown and Yule 1983) than most written genres. Miller et al. (1998:22) describe the nature of spoken grammar as 'fragmented and unintegrated [where the] phrases are less complex than phrases of written language and the casual constructions are less complex'. These views on the differences between written and spoken discourse need to find their way into speaking classes where teachers' expectations about students' oral performance are similar to the expectations about students' writing performance. Teachers need to provide their students with authentic examples of spoken discourse to raise their students' awareness of the differences between spoken and written discourse and they need to accept their students' spoken sentences, which would be different from what is expected from students in writing in terms of accuracy. Also, the teaching materials need to reflect spoken discourse features. Burns et al. (1996) say that scripted course book materials usually do not reflect these features. Thus, they do not prepare students for real life communication (Burns 2001). Gilmore (2015) analysed a number of texts from three course books which include 'New Headway Intermediate' and his analysis seems to indicate that there are improvements in the representation of spoken discourse features in course books. Gilmore (2015) stated that the efforts to incorporate more discourse features are modest and the gap

between the findings of discourse studies and teaching materials needs to be bridged.

### **3.3.6 Spoken grammar**

Spoken language has specific grammatical features, which makes it distinctive from written language. McCarthy and Carter (1995) used extracts from the Nottingham corpus of spoken language and mentioned a number of features of spoken grammar such as: use of ellipses, tails and tags (McCarthy and Carter 1995). Phrases such as: *you know*, *well* and *oh* (Aijmer 2002) and words such as: *and* and *because* are used frequently in speaking and serve specific purposes which are different from their uses in writing (McCarthy and Carter 2015). Leech (2000) says that the frequent use of pronouns and stand-alone expressions such as adverbials (*anyway*) and exclamations (*Good boy!*) shows that spoken grammar reflects a shared context and it avoids elaborations.

McCarthy and Carter (1995) argue that many of the features of spoken grammar are neglected in ELT materials. McCarthy in contribution with other authors included spoken grammar in their ELT materials (McCarthy et al. 2011; 2013 cited in McCarthy and Carter 2015). They argue that the global success of these materials shows that users of English are welcoming spoken grammar (McCarthy and Carter 2015). Goh (2009) explored the beliefs of 75 Chinese and Singaporean teachers about spoken grammar. 83% of the teachers agreed that spoken grammar can increase their students' confidence and help them to speak naturally. However, some teachers showed preference to introduce spoken grammar after their students show

mastery of written grammar. Spoken grammar seems to be of secondary importance to those teachers compared to the written one. A grammar that is based on written English may not be enough for students to use the language effectively. McCarthy and Carter (1995:207) argue that ‘learners need to be given more grammatical choices if they are to operate flexibly in a range of spoken and written contexts’.

Most of what we know about spoken grammar is based on native speaker norms, an orientation that is contested by proponents of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) (Mumford 2009). ELF supporters consider imitating a native speaker model a kind of linguistic imperialism (Modiano 2001). Timmis (2005:123) commented on using the native speaker model in teaching spoken grammar,

Native speakers are habitual users of English for all communicative purposes. This does not mean that they are more articulate, impressive, or persuasive users of English than non-native speakers. But it does mean that they are more likely than non-native speakers to use English habitually for certain purposes: telling jokes, telling stories, office banter, phatic exchanges, endearments and insults, for example.

Native speakers are more used to using specific spoken genres than non-native speakers. Therefore, using the native speaker as model for teaching and learning can be useful in teaching these genres of speaking. Also, in an EFL context such as Saudi Arabia, students aspire to imitate the native speakers. Using the native speaker model will be discussed further in section 3.4.8.1.

### **3.3.7 Phonology**

Phonology ‘consists of theory and knowledge about how the sound system of the target language works, including both segmental and suprasegmental features’

(Burgess and Spencer 2000:191). Segmentals include individual sounds (vowels and consonants) (Loewen and Reinders 2011). Suprasegmentals refer to the prosodic features of speech. Knowledge of segmental features of speech might be viewed as the basic type of knowledge needed for second language acquisition and it is the first type of knowledge most students encounter in the classroom. However, whether segmental or suprasegmental errors have more influence on the intelligibility of communication and thus should be taught first is a matter of debate (e.g., Celce-Murcia et al. 1996; Jenkins 2000; Riney et al. 2000). McNerney and Mendelson (2013) argue that suprasegmentals should be given priority in teaching as they have a greater impact on comprehensibility than segmentals. Other researchers also argue for more focus on suprasegmentals. For example, Hahn (2004) found that primary stress ‘contributes significantly to the intelligibility of non-native discourse’, thus suprasegmentals need to be taught first in the English language classroom. On the other hand, it was found that segmental errors contribute to lower levels of comprehensibility (Riney et al. 2000). Although Riney et al’s (2000) study was focused on segmentals, the authors supported a more balanced view of teaching pronunciation which gives segmentals and suprasegmentals equal importance. Jenkins (2000) said that most research that supports suprasegmentals’ superiority was based on NS-NNS communication where NS are the judges of NNS spoken comprehensibility. Research on NNS-NNS communication shows that most intelligibility issues occur at the segmental level rather than the suprasegmental one (Jenkins 2004). Jenkins (2000) supports an approach in teaching pronunciation



which gives both types of features equal importance. Other researchers such as Celce-Murcia et al. (1996:10) described a balanced view which,

... recognizes that both an inability to distinguish suprasegmental features (such as stress and intonation differences between yes/no and alternative questions) and inability to distinguish sounds that carry a high functional load (such as /l/ in *list* and /iy/ in *least*) can have a negative impact on the oral communication.

Brazil (1994:3) states that segmentals and suprasegmentals are interdependent as 'the work students do in one area supports and reinforces the work they do in the other'. In my research, I will look at whether pronunciation is taught in the speaking classroom, how it taught is.

### **3.3.8 Spoken lexis**

Leech (2000) mentions a number of features of the lexis of spoken language such as: the use of 'hedges' (sort of, kind of and like), use of discourse markers (well, now and you know) and use of modals (will, would and could). 'Spoken English has lower lexical density than written English, using more grammar words and more verb phrases than noun phrases' (Cornbleet and Carter 2001:63). Most of these verb phrases are based on high frequency verbs (delexical verbs) such as: *go*, *have*, *put* and *do* (Ibid). Nation (2008) says that 90% of the running words in most colloquial spoken text are frequent words (Nation 2008). McCarten (2007:4) says 'frequency lists are useful to help us make choices about what to teach and in what order'. McCarthy (1999) notes that high frequency word lists needs to take account of collocations and phrasal items. He gives an example of delexical verbs which are

frequent in spoken language mainly because of their collocates. Sinclair and Renouf (1988:153) say,

In general, the more frequent the word is, the less independent meaning it has, because it is likely to be acting in conjunction with other words, making useful structures or contributing to familiar idiomatic phrases.

Many frequent words are dependent on their collocates in their meanings and they have a great influence on students' speaking. Spoken language is generated or recalled as whole chunks not as individual words (Sinclair 1991). Hsu and Chui (2008) found that there is a significant correlation between Taiwanese EFL learners' knowledge of lexical collocations and their speaking proficiency. Learners of speaking need to be made of the difference between spoken and written lexis as this will help them to develop their speaking skills. Most of the frequency lists are based on native speakers' spoken English. McCarthy and Carter (1997) argues that using frequency list which are based on native speakers' spoken context might pose a danger of language imperialism and they may not be appropriate for the students in some contexts. Cultural appropriateness, course objectives and students' learning preferences need to be taken into consideration when teaching spoken lexis (McCarten 2007, Timmis 2015). In my research study, I will look at if teachers are teaching or raising their students' awareness of spoken lexis.

### **3.4 The nature of teaching speaking**

This section aims to lay a theoretical foundation for my study by considering the principles of good practice in teaching speaking. First, I discuss how teaching speaking is viewed according to some of the main English language teaching

methods. This will be followed by a discussion of the approaches of teaching speaking. Then, I discuss speaking materials. After that, I present a section on oral interaction and oral feedback. Finally, I present two sections where I discuss some of the current critical issues in teaching speaking.

### **3.4.1 Methods, approaches and teaching speaking**

In this section, I discuss some of the main methods and approaches in teaching a second language: the Grammar-Translation and Oral-based approaches: i.e., the Direct Method and the Audio-lingual method. I also discuss the Communicative approaches. I focus on these approaches as they are more widely used and they have more influence on the Saudi context of teaching English. My focus here is on how teaching speaking is viewed according to each approach. It is worth mentioning that the two terms (approach and method) will be used interchangeably to refer to ‘a theoretically consistent set of teaching procedures that define good practice in language teaching’ (Richards and Rogers 2014:14).

The Grammar-Translation method was developed to suit the needs of secondary school learners in the late eighteenth century (Howatt and Widdowson 2004). At that time, the aim of learning foreign languages was to gain reading knowledge for interpretation and this had a great influence on the development of this method (Ibid). This method gives little consideration to speaking. It has a strong focus on sentence level grammar and on translating sentences from and to mother tongue (Hughes 2011:25). ‘A high priority [is] given to accuracy and the ability to construct correct sentences’ (Griffith and Parr 2001:247). Richards (2015:60) says that

students from Grammar-Translation based classes often ‘developed a good understanding of grammar but little fluency in speaking’.

Oral-based Methods, i.e., the Direct Method and the Audio-lingual method give more importance to speaking than the Grammar Translation method. The Direct Method appeared towards the end of the nineteenth century partly as a reaction to the Grammar-Translation Method (Hughes 2011; Richards 2015). ‘Speaking [is placed] at the forefront of [the Direct Method] pedagogy’ and it insists on using the target language only and bans translation in teaching and interaction inside the classroom (Hughes 2011:25). While the Direct Method was quite successful in private language schools such as Berlitz where students were usually highly motivated, it was difficult to implement in secondary schools (Richards and Rogers 2014). Richards and Rogers (2014) suggests that it has many drawbacks such as requiring teachers who are native or have native-like fluency in the foreign language as it is highly dependent on teachers’ skills rather than the textbook.

The Audio-lingual method is another oral-based approach, which was developed in the twentieth century and speaking was at the heart of this method, however, speaking was used to teach rather than taught and speaking activities were mostly controlled (Hughes 2011). This method depends heavily on drills, repetition and substitution exercises (Griffths and Parr 2001). Unlike the Direct Method, the Audio-lingual method has a strong theoretical basis in structural linguistics (a theory of language) and behaviourism (a theory of learning) (Larsen-Freeman 2000; Richards and Rogers 2014). ‘Language is viewed as a system of habits, which can

be taught and learnt on a stimulus/ response/ reinforcement basis' (Griffith and Parr 2001:248). The criticism of the Audio-lingual method came from the undermining of its theoretical basis (Structuralism and behaviourism) which, some researchers claim, were both distorted when applied in language teaching and learning (Jin and Cortazzi 2011). The method was seen to be inadequate for language learning and teaching as its predicted results did not seem to meet teachers' and students' expectations (Richards and Rogers 2014). According to Bygate (2001:15) the Audio-lingual method 'neglected the relationship between language and meaning' and it 'failed to provide a social context within which the formal features of language could be associated with functional aspects, such as politeness.' Also, similar to the Direct Method, the Audio-lingual method was criticised for banning the use of the first language in the language classroom. Currently, there is a growing body of research about the advantages of the purposeful moderate use of L1 in the language classroom, which I will discuss further in section 9.

The perceived inadequacy of the traditional methods led to many developments in language teaching. 'Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) marked the beginning for a major paradigm shift within language teaching in the twentieth century' (Richards and Rogers 2014:151). Speaking is central to CLT, which supports more student-centred learning and more free speaking activities (Murphy 1991). Although CLT encourages more focus on speaking, it does not neglect grammar. Thompson's (1996) notes that neglecting grammar teaching is one of the common misconceptions about CLT. He argues that CLT discourages the heavy explicit emphasis on grammar in traditional methods but it does not discourage

teaching grammar completely (Ibid). Also, CLT aims to engage students in authentic meaningful communication which involves the integration of all the skills (Richards and Rogers 2014).

Task-Based Language Teaching is considered by many researchers as an extension of CLT (Richards and Rodgers 2014). This approach was initiated by Prabhu (1987) in the context of the Bangalore Project. Similar to CLT, speaking is central to TBLT; Richards and Rodgers (2014) explain that considering spoken interaction as a central focus of language teaching and learning is one of the main underlying assumptions of TBLT. Also, TBLT has a strong lexical focus as vocabulary will be needed to complete the communicative tasks (Ibid).

The communicative approaches were criticised of its feasibility to be implemented in different cultures. Teachers' attitudes, knowledge and beliefs influence the implementation of communicative approaches in language classrooms. The communicative approaches put more demands on teachers and less demands on textbooks; teachers might have to adopt new roles in their classrooms and this might need special training (Richards and Rogers 2014). Also, untrained teachers might face difficulties implementing these approaches. Bataineh et al. (2011) in their study of Yemeni teachers' Beliefs and practices regarding CLT found that some teachers' positive beliefs about CLT were not reflected in their classroom practice as they were using traditional approaches. It seems that traditional approaches are still prevalent in some contexts as the apprenticeship of observation is still influential.

According to Al-Mohanna (2010) many aspects of the grammar translation and the Audio-lingual methods were evident in Saudi secondary school classes he observed and little time was spent on communicative activities. Ammar and Ali (2005) conducted a study of 114 pre-service Saudi teachers which showed that those teachers' epistemological beliefs were influenced by traditional teaching approaches and methods. Also, teachers' learning experience and lack of theoretical knowledge were reported as possible reasons for adapting these methods in teaching. Jin and Cortazzi (2011) say that the slower development of educational systems and language teacher training can be reasons for the persistence of these traditional methods. In my study, I explore which methods or which aspects are prevalent in teachers' beliefs and their practices.

### **3.4.2 Approaches in teaching speaking**

Richards (1990) divides approaches in teaching speaking into two categories: direct and indirect. Direct approaches aim to develop students' specific conversational micro-skills and speaking strategies. Specific elements of communicative ability are isolated and practiced using techniques such as drills, pattern practice, structure manipulation, language awareness and consciousness-raising (Burns 1998). Celce-Murcia et al. (1997:141) say:

Language classes following this (direct) approach adapt various features of direct grammar instruction to the teaching of conversational skills; that is, they attempt to provide focused instruction on the main rules of conversational or discourse-level grammar (e.g., pragmatic regularities and politeness strategies, communication strategies and various elements of conversational structure such as opening, closing and the turn-taking system.

Direct approaches focus on providing students with required speaking knowledge: e.g., grammar, vocabulary and learning strategies to learn how to speak explicitly. Thornbury (2012:199) explains that ‘a direct approach is based on the view that speaking needs to be analysed into its individual components which are then explicitly taught, practiced and recombined’.

Indirect approaches focus on engaging students in speaking interaction assuming that students would be able to learn how to speak implicitly. From an indirect approach perspective, ‘conversational competence is seen as the product of engaging learners in conversational interaction’ (Richards 1990:77). Indirect approaches focus on developing students’ fluency through a variety of activities such as discussions, role plays, simulations, project work and information-gap activities (Burns 1998; Celce-Murcia et al. 1997). The assumption that underlies the indirect approaches is ‘that learners somehow transfer speaking skills developed through such communicative activities to real life situations’ (Goh and Burns 2012:135).

The relationship between direct and indirect approaches is complex (Burns 1998). Each approach has its own limitations. The indirect approaches represent the typical communicative approach in the 1980s (Dörnyei and Thurrell 1994). In the 1990s, several aspects of the communicative approach have been criticised and there have been many doubts about how the sole focus on meaning is valuable for students (Celce-Murcia et al. 1997; Williams 1995). On the other hand, direct approaches do not give enough importance to using language in interaction; therefore, students might find it difficult to use the language in real-life communication. Williams



(1995) claims that students who are in structure-focused classes are less successful in communication than students who are in CLT classrooms where the focus is on using the language in interaction. Spada and Lightbown (2008:198) says,

Outside the classroom, in environments where [learners] are completely immersed in the target language, very young learners often acquire L2 proficiency with little or no [form-focused instruction].

Widdowson (1990:162) argues that ‘natural language acquisition is a long and rather inefficient business’ and that ‘the whole point of language pedagogy is that it is a way of short-circuiting the slow process of natural discovery and can make arrangements for learning to happen more easily and more efficiently than it does in ‘natural surroundings’. According to Hinkel (2006) research shows that it is very difficult for second language learners to reach high levels of proficiency and develop ‘syntactic and lexical’ accuracy in speaking without explicit and form-focused instruction in the second language classrooms. Spada and Lightbown (2008:184) says that meaning-focused instruction might help students to develop certain skills such as: communication and oral fluency but they might ‘have difficulties with pronunciation as well as with morphological, syntactic and pragmatic features of the L2’. Direct and indirect approaches seem to complement each other rather than be in opposition; the direct approaches focus on developing students’ communicative ability and indirect approaches focus on putting this ability into practice.

Some researchers propose combining direct and indirect approaches in teaching speaking in the second language classroom (Celce-Murcia et al. 1997; Dörnyei and Thurrell 1994; Goh and Burns 2012; Thornbury 2012). Goh and Burns (2012) give

an example of Littlewood's (1992) methodological framework where direct and indirect approaches can be implemented in CLT based classes. Littlewood (1992:62) refers to direct approach-based activities as 'part-skill practice, in which individual components of communicative ability are isolated and practiced separately'. Also, Littlewood (1992:62) refers to indirect approach based activities as 'whole-task practice, in which individual components of communicative ability are integrated in communication'. Part-skill practice is implemented in his pre-communicative stage to prepare learners for the whole-task practice in the communicative stage (Ibid). Combining aspects of both approaches is more effective than focusing on using one approach. Thornbury (2012) says that the direct and indirect approaches represent the shifts in thinking about the nature of second language acquisition (SLA). The direct approaches are based on views that language can be learnt consciously going through cycles of practice and feedback while indirect approaches are based on views that SLA is similar to first language acquisition in which the language is acquired by exposure and use. A number of factors play a role in the decisions teachers make about the approach they want to adopt in teaching speaking. One of the important factors is the teaching materials especially if these materials are compulsory to use.

### **3.4.3 Materials for teaching speaking**

Teaching materials are important in shaping teachers' teaching practices including the teaching of speaking. Richards (2009:65) states that:

Teaching materials are a key component in most language programs. Whether the teacher uses textbook, institutionally prepared materials, or makes use of his or her own materials, instructional materials generally serve as the basis for much of the language input learners receive and the language practice that occurs in the classroom.

In my study, teaching materials have a contextual significance. Course books are the main type of teaching materials that teachers are required to use for teaching the English language, including speaking. Considering how teachers view, use or adapt their course books is important to understand their teaching of speaking.

Studies that have been conducted on how teachers view or evaluate course books show that teachers hold different beliefs and use different ways to evaluate the same materials. Johnson et al. (2008) conducted a case study on three teachers with different qualifications and different years of experience. The findings of the study show that each of the three teachers used a different approach in evaluating the materials; they looked at different aspects. T1's evaluation was focused on teachers' needs and T2 was more focused on students' needs. T3 was more holistic in her approach considering both teachers' and students' needs and expectations. T3, who was more qualified and more experienced (both in teaching and in materials evaluation), had more depth and reflected more systematicity in evaluation (Ibid). Based on the findings of this study, teachers' teaching experience can influence how they view materials and thus, consequently it would influence how they use materials.

McGrath (2006) in his study of a secondary school teachers' and learners' attitudes towards course books found that teachers and learners hold diverse but mostly

positive beliefs about course books which starts from describing the course book as a 'lighthouse' to a 'road block'. Eren and Tekinarslan (2013) Eren and Tekinarslan (2013) Eren and Tekinarslan (2013) investigated Turkish student-teachers' metaphors' about different aspects of their teaching including instructional materials. Student-teachers' metaphors varied (e.g., toy, vehicle, map, movie, treasure, accessory and light). The most popular metaphor was 'road' and 'walking stick' came in second place. Teachers' beliefs about the role of course books or teaching materials (whether negative or positive) are likely to have an impact on how they use them and how do they teach English generally and speaking in particular.

Zacharias (2005) investigated the relationship between tertiary Indonesian teachers' beliefs about internationally published materials and their classroom practices. Most teachers had positive beliefs towards internationally published materials. They preferred internationally published materials to those published locally. Zacharias (2005) found that the majority of the teachers used internationally published materials. He also found that those teachers faced difficulties in using the materials and made modifications to these materials, which he considered to be contradictory. However, this may not be completely contradictory; teachers' preference for internationally published materials does not contradict modifying these materials because course books are not perfect. Brophy (1982:2) stated that teachers who are confident in their subject matter might treat textbooks 'merely as collections of topics to pick and choose but less experienced or knowledgeable teachers may

depend heavily on the textbook for guidance'. Therefore, teachers who have positive views about their course books may not teach strictly by these course books.

Kayapinar (2009) explored teachers' views on the quality of two course book packages used in ELT classes in Mersin, Turkey. The study results shows, in the view of teachers, course books meet neither their expectations nor their students' needs. Kayapinar's (2009) study's results were different in comparison to Zacharias' (2005). Both studies are on internationally published materials. However, Zacharias' (2005) study was focused on the teachers' general beliefs about using internationally published materials while Kayapinar (2009) focused on teachers' beliefs about specific course books.

Tomlinson (2003) says that teachers' dissatisfaction with the course books they are using might be because these course books were designed for particular groups of learners. For example, some course books are designed for a specific level (e.g., intermediate); therefore, teachers might face problems using course books in multi-level classrooms. Teachers can either use course books that provide support for mixed-level teaching or try to adapt these materials to make them appropriate for their learners (Bowler and Parminter 2002). Also, while some course books are designed for international use, it is difficult to be able to cater teachers' and students' different needs in different contexts. Therefore, adopting course books activities help in meeting their users' needs.

Adapting materials is vital and is an integral part of successful classes (Islam and Mares 2003; Sareceni 2003). When teachers feel that the materials they are using are

unsatisfactory, they try to adapt the materials to make them more appropriate for their teaching needs and objectives. There are a number of techniques to adapt materials: adding, deleting, modifying, simplifying or re-ordering (McDonough, et al. 2013). Teachers adapt materials according to their teaching needs, students' needs or expectations or the intuitional requirements or expectations. Teachers' knowledge and experience play an important role in how they approach view, adapt and use their teaching materials (Lee and Bathmaker 2007).

#### **3.4.4 Oral interaction in the language classroom**

Interaction is a central aspect in teaching speaking. In order for students to develop their speaking skills, they need opportunities to use English interactively in the classroom. It provides students with opportunities to 'receive input, produce output and receive feedback' (Ellis 2008:205). In this section, I will discuss oral classroom interaction in relation to four issues: whole class talk, teachers' questions and group work. In my study, I look at the prominent types of interaction in speaking classes (whole class or group work), how interactive they are and what beliefs underlie teachers' practices.

##### **3.4.4.1 Whole class interaction**

In language teaching, whole class activities are referred to as lock-step activities. Long and Porter (1985) criticised the lock-step mode of interaction in comparison to group work that provides more opportunities for students to speak. However, Ellis

(1999:226) argues that lock-step activities can be beneficial in providing students with well-informed input from their teacher.

Burns and Myhill (2004) found that primary school teachers in their study believed that whole class talk is important in creating participation and involving students in the interaction. However, they reported that the quality of the input provided by the teachers did not promote interactivity. Teachers used more statements than questions in their whole class teaching, implying that their whole class interaction was characterized by more telling than asking (Burns and Myhill 2004: 41). English et al. (2002: 22) argue that ‘interactivity depends on the ratio of questions to statements’. Therefore, deciding if whole class or group work is more interactive depends on how the activities are implemented and what questions are used. Tsui (1995:23) says ‘a major part of classroom interaction [whole class interaction in particular] is generated by asking questions’. In the following, I will discuss teacher questioning in the language classroom.

#### **3.4.4.2 Questions**

The quality of questions can be measured by the quality of the answers these questions trigger. Thompson (1997) suggests three dimensions for categorizing questions: form (the grammatical form of the questions, whether the question is a wh-question or a yes/no question), content (facts or opinions) and purpose of the questions.

Wh- questions usually require longer answers than yes/no questions (Farr 2002). Wh- questions are usually open-ended and expected to produce more productive answers while Yes/No are close-ended questions, which require short answers. While the role of yes/no questions seems to be less important than wh-questions in the speaking classroom; Thompson (1997:101) suggests that using yes/no questions are useful to encourage ‘learners to accept a part in the interaction, even if they are shy or hesitant’. Farr (2002) in her observational case study of five trainee teachers about the productivity of classroom questions found out that declarative questions (a type of Yes/No questions) produce longer answers than wh- questions. Farr (2002) mentions that:

Declarative (questions) place more demand on paralinguistic features such as gestures, eye contact and intonation, thus trainees are forced to make a distinct effort when using declarative questions and learners seem to reward such efforts with equally enthusiastic responses (Farr 2002:20).

Declarative questions could also be considered as an indication of engagement in the discussion. For example when a teacher asks a student about her trip to London, the teacher might ask a declarative question to show excitement about her student’s first visit to London: ‘It was your first visit to London?’ As a result of this declarative question, the student would feel more interested to continue and to tell more details about her trip. Farr (2002) says that declarative questions on an interpersonal level seem to reduce the influence of the student-teacher power relationship.

All types of questions including (wh- questions, yes/no questions) fall in two general categories depending on the type of answers the teacher trying to elicit (Tsui 1995). The first category is display questions in which the teacher knows the answer of the



question and she wants the learners to display their knowledge of it. Interaction based on display questions usually lacks communicative authenticity; a student would rarely face such questions outside the classroom (Long and Porter 1985). The second type is 'referential' questions in which the teacher does not know the answer of the question and she is genuinely interested to know it (Ur 2012; Boyd and Rubin 2006). Tsui (1995) believes that referential questions are more significant for communication as they are more reflective of real life communication. On the other hand, Wu (1993) explored the questions asked by four ESL teachers in Hong Kong and their students' responses. Wu (1993: 49) found that 'referential and open questions [were found to be] less effective than display and closed questions in eliciting responses from students'. Students were reluctant to give lengthy answers as they were afraid to be evaluated (Ibid). Wu (1993:66) concluded that 'student attitudes play a very significant role in shaping classroom interaction' and he suggested that implementing group or pair work might encourage students to speak. In the following, I will discuss group work.

#### **3.4.4.3 Group work**

Using group work is believed to help in increasing the quantity and improving the quality of student talk (Long and Porter 1985; Storch and Aldosari 2012). Hamzah's and Ting's (2010) study of group work in Malaysia showed that implementing group work was effective as it reduced students' anxiety and motivated students to participate in the speaking activities. Von Wörde (2003:11) notes that group work helps in reducing anxiety in the language classroom because students would have

‘additional time to practise before they are expected to participate with the entire class’. Group work, unlike whole class interaction, provides more supportive and motivating environment for students (Long and Porter 1985). Students might be faced with less pressure in group work than in whole class discussion; therefore, they might prefer the first. In Harrabi’s (2010) study of cooperative learning in Tunisia, 48% of the students (the sample size was not specified) viewed group work as ‘relaxing’ and ‘enjoyable’. However, 15% of the students expressed negative views about group work and the rest of the students were in between. Feeling bored because the activities were easy and not getting along with the other group members were two of the most cited reasons for disliking group work (Harrabi 2010). Students’ attitudes towards group work depend on how it is implemented. Hamzah and Ting (2010:4) said that:

Students who contribute to the groups found the activity rewarding when their suggestions are valued and their contribution is linked to the success of the whole group.

Dörnyei and Malderez (1997) argue that teachers’ awareness of the principles of group dynamics can contribute to the success or failure of group work. Forsyth (2010:2) defines group dynamics as ‘the actions, processes and changes that occur within group and between groups’. While Dörnyei’s and Malderez’s (1997) work focus on the whole classroom as a group, most of their ideas apply to small group work. Dörnyei and Malderez (1997) mentioned five basic factors that influence group dynamics:

1) Group formation. It is focused on setting group norms and enhancing positive relationships between group members.

- 2) Group development. It is focused on maintaining the cohesion among the group members.
- 3) Group characteristics. It is focused on the structure of the group and the roles of its members.
- 4) The influence of the physical environment including seating arrangements.
- 5) The role of the teacher.

One of the main challenges of group work relates to teachers' and students' roles in group work. Johnson and Johnson (1999) differentiated between cooperative groups and pseudo groups (traditional classroom learning groups). Group/pair work entails interaction where learners have the opportunity to work together in pairs/small groups to convey information, to negotiate meaning or to make decisions (Skehan and Foster 2001). On the other hand, in pseudo groups, students help each other in a task which they could work on individually as the task does not require interaction (Ur 2012). Therefore, in pseudo groups, the students might work on the activities individually as it does not encourage collaboration. Storch (2001:29) in her study on pair work found 'students working in pairs may not necessarily work in a collaborative manner but where they do collaborate this may have an effect on task performance'. In cooperative groups students interact among themselves while in pseudo groups these opportunities are reduced where students mainly interact with a given task. Also, teachers play different roles in these two types of groups. While teachers' role in cooperative groups is usually the role of a facilitator, teachers have more control in pseudo groups providing assistance and correcting students. It is important to distinguish between these two types of interaction because they have different aims and outcomes.

The teacher's role in group work is less authoritative than their role in whole class talk. It is often believed that teachers delegate authority to their students in group work (Cohen 1994). The teacher can take the role of a facilitator where students become more responsible for their own learning. Delegating authority is a questionable concept as it depends on the students' acceptance to take authority and this on its own might be influenced by different factors. Implementing group work is faced by challenges, which include students' language learning beliefs. If students are used to a specific model of teaching, changing this model might be difficult to change.

#### **3.4.5 Errors and feedback**

Oral errors are inevitable in the process of learning how to speak. Some traditional approaches in second language learning such as structuralism and audio-lingualism view errors negatively; errors need to be eradicated through practice and rehearsal (Howatt and Widdowson 2004; Mitchell et al. 2013). Developments in the approaches of second language learning led to more tolerance of errors in learners' speech as the focus of language teaching shifted from form-based to meaning-based teaching (Lightbown and Spada 1990).

Lyster and Ranta (1997) conducted a study on teachers' corrective feedback and students' uptake in immersion classrooms in Canada. They distinguished between six types of corrective feedback: explicit correction, recasts, elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, clarification request and repetition (Lyster and Ranta 1997). Later in another study on immersion students' oral abilities, Ranta and Lyster

(2007) divided feedback into two broad categories: reformulations (recasts and explicit feedback) and prompts (elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, clarification request and repetition).

Lyster et al. (2013:7) in their review of oral corrective feedback, found there are many research studies which show 'students' preference for receiving CF [corrective feedback] over having their errors ignored'. For example, Schulz (1996:346) explored the beliefs of 824 students and 92 teachers on corrective feedback; she found that 90% of the students wanted 'to have their spoken errors corrected'.

Truscott (1999) argues that oral error correction, particularly on grammar, should be abandoned because it was found to be ineffective in a number of research studies and it did not help students to speak grammatically. Wu (1993) found that some students were reluctant to answer their teachers' questions because they were afraid of negative feedback. The type of feedback provided influence its efficiency; some types of feedback are more effective than others. In Von Wörde's (2003:7) study on students' perspectives on anxiety, 'several students pointed out [that] gentle error correction or modelling the correct response 'helps to relieve anxiety' while direct corrective feedback has been reported as anxiety-provoking. According to Wanjryb (1992), gentle feedback is the type of feedback that has a great motivational value. Positive constructive feedback encourages learners to be more motivated and decrease their language anxiety. Negative or insensitive feedback of students' errors may inhibit students from speaking, especially at very early stages of learning a foreign language. On the other hand, focusing on fostering students' confidence and

ignoring the important role of error correction might cause some fossilised language errors which would be very difficult to change (Richards 2002). Lasagabaster and Sierra (2005) in their study on students' and teachers' perceptions of error correction, reported that while students wanted to be corrected, they felt that constant correction is inhibiting. They concluded that,

Teachers and students agreed that the most efficient corrections occurred when more time, longer explanations and use of different correction strategies were utilised (Lasagabaster and Sierra 2005:112).

Also, Lasagabaster and Sierra (2005) reported that 'a significant percentage of the teacher's error-correction moves went unnoticed'. Thus, feedback can be ineffective because students do not notice it and consequently, they do not react to it. A number of studies focused on the relationship between teachers' feedback and students' uptake (students' reaction to feedback). Some studies reported that recasts were found to lead to the lowest rate of students' uptake (Lyster and Ranta 1997; Tsang 2004). On the other hand, metalinguistic feedback and elicitations were found to generate more learner-repair than the other types of feedback (Panova and Lyster 2002). Lyster et al. (2013:12) say that,

The low rate of repair following recasts in some contexts was due to the fact that teachers often followed recasts with topic-continuation moves that prevented students from responding.

This shows that the way teachers' provide feedback influence students' uptake and feedback effectiveness more generally. My study focuses on how teachers view their students' errors and how they provide feedback.

### 3.4.6 Authenticity, the native speaker model and EIL

A number of research studies propose that the authentic spoken English needs to be considered in teaching materials and language classroom interaction (Carter 1997; McCarthy and Carter 1995). To define what is authentic, debates on the native speaker model and EIL need to be considered. EIL is based on the idea that English is an international language that is spoken by large number of users worldwide. The number of non-native English speakers outweighs the number of native English speakers (Crystal 2003). Some of those non-native speakers use different varieties of English. Therefore, advocates of EIL argue for accepting these different varieties in the language classroom instead of following the native speaker norms that can be irrelevant to students' communication needs (e.g. Jenkins 2003; Kachru 1992). The argument for accepting non-native speakers' norms might reflect ESL learners' but not the EFL learners' preferences. Timmis (2002) in his study of about 600 students and teachers from 45 countries around the world found that students from ESL countries were generally less interested in having a native-like accent than other students from EFL countries. However, more generally, he found that students were more interested to conform to native speaker norms than teachers (Ibid). Goh (2009:305) identifies interesting differences between the perspectives of the Singaporean (ESL) and Chinese (EFL) teachers about following native speaker norms in speaking:

[Chinese teachers] consider the ability to speak naturally and accurately like a NS from countries such as Britain to be a distinct advantage. Among Singaporean teachers, however, opinion is divided, revealing the

complexities in language choice in societies where the local English variety competes with Anglo models for allegiance and acceptance.

Attitudes towards EIL differ in ESL and EFL. In ESL contexts, there is a particular variety of English, which people use in everyday life and learners of the language in that ESL context may aim to imitate. On the other hand, in EFL contexts the native speakers' language (often British or American English) is the variety of English EFL speakers are trying to imitate, as they do not have a local variety. Based on this, authenticity is context based as Prodromou (1998:266) notes

What is real for the native speaker may also be real, say, for the learner studying in Britain but it may be unreal for the EFL learner in Greece and surreal for the ESL learner in Calcutta.

Saudi Arabia is an EFL context where there are limited opportunities for students to use English outside the classroom. Based on my experience as a learner and as a teacher, most students, especially females, aspire to adopt a native speaker accent (usually the American English they hear on TV). A phrase such as 'she/he speaks like an American' is commonly used to describe how good a person's English.

Based on this, authenticity seems to be context-based. Introducing authentic materials in the language classroom whether the materials are based on native or non-native speakers interactions is 'undoubtedly challenging' (Burns 2001:125). Most classroom course books are based on scripted texts. While scripted texts might be easier to understand, they do not prepare students for real life communication (Burns 2001). Students need to be exposed to authentic input as this would influence the type of spoken output they will or aspire to produce. Providing students with authentic spoken input is central for developing students' speaking skills.



### **3.4.7 Using L1 in the L2 classrooms**

Using L1 in the foreign language classroom is a concern when it comes to teaching speaking in classes where students share the same first language as they might be using their L1 instead of interacting in English. Ellis (1984) notes that using students' own language deprives them from opportunities of using the target language. The use of students' own language has a long history in English language teaching and learning. This history starts with the grammar translation method which 'had been rejected and criticized in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century because of 'its over emphasis on accuracy and writing at the expenses of fluency and speaking' (Hall and Cook 2013:8). Methods such as the Direct method and the Berlitz method appeared as a result of this opposition towards using students' own language in the new language classroom (Cook 2013). Despite this strong opposition, teachers continued using students' own language in many English classes around the world especially in contexts where learners share their L1 with their teacher (Hall and Cook 2012).

With the spread of monolingual approaches, students' first language had been viewed as a source of interference that affects learning the second language negatively especially if the two languages are distinct like Arabic and English (Ellis 1997). Richards (1970) in his study of error analysis found that contrastive analysis was valuable in locating areas of inter-language interference (Richards 1970:214). Studies of contrastive analysis showed that it is beneficial to put the students' first language into consideration when teaching a second language. Wilkins and Paton

(2009) suggest that using contrastive analysis in teaching could help in promoting students' grammatical awareness. A teacher can encourage her students to compare their first language and the target language grammatical forms (Ibid). Comparing the grammatical structures of the two languages helps in raising the students' awareness of the second language features, helps in minimizing mistakes and developing the students' speaking skills.

The issue of using L1 in the language classrooms is still a source of debate. Many writers support the moderate purposeful use of L1 in the language classroom. Planned deliberate use of students' own language can reduce anxiety, provide a safe environment for students and help in raising students' motivation and enhancing their performance (Arthur 1996; Atkinson 1993; Auerbach 1993; Cook 2001 and Schweers 1999). Laufer and Girsai (2008) found learners who were taught unfamiliar vocabulary items via translation fared better in subsequent retention test than those who were taught solely through meaning focused instructions. Hall and Cook (2012:297) state that:

Despite the overwhelming force of the arguments and evidence in favour of bilingual language teaching in a globalised multilingual world, many curricula, institutions, syllabus and materials designers, as well as teachers, parents – and, of course, students – remain committed to monolingual teaching.

Policies in the English language institute where I am doing my research ban using L1. This study provides insights into how Saudi teachers view the use of L1 in relation to teaching speaking.

### **3.4.8 Summary**

In this chapter, I reviewed a number of central issues relevant to teacher beliefs, the nature of spoken language and teaching speaking. This review will inform the analysis and the discussion of the case studies I present in this thesis. In particular, I will explore how far the theoretical and practical issues covered in this chapter have influenced the work (in teaching speaking) of the teachers I study.

## **4 Research Methodology**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents an account of the research design, process and the rationale of the methodology. Firstly, I present the aims of the research study and the research questions. Then, I explain the research paradigm, approach, research tradition and methods of the study. After that, I describe the processes of collecting and analysing data. Finally, I discuss quality and ethical issues.

### **4.2 Aims of the study and research questions**

As discussed in the first two chapters, very little is known about Saudi English language teachers' beliefs and how they approach speaking in Saudi Arabia. This study aims to contribute to a better understanding of Saudi English language teachers' beliefs and their teaching of speaking. The study addresses the following questions:

Q1: What are the beliefs that English language teachers hold about teaching speaking?

Q2: What are English language teachers' classroom practices in teaching speaking?

Q3: What is the relationship between English language teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices?

The first question includes teachers' beliefs of how they are teaching speaking and how speaking can be taught effectively. It also includes teachers' beliefs about other teaching-related issues such as: materials, students and feedback. Consequently, the second question includes approach the teaching of speaking. The third question aims

to investigate the relationship between teachers' stated beliefs and their teaching of speaking.

### **4.3 Research paradigm**

A research paradigm is a 'basic set of beliefs that guides action' (Guba 1990:17). Lincoln and Guba (2000:165) distinguished between four research paradigms: positivism, post-positivism, critical theory and constructivism. For the purposes of this study, I adopted a constructivist approach.

Any paradigmatic position can be represented in terms of ontology (beliefs about reality) and epistemology (beliefs about knowledge) (Richards 2003). A constructivist paradigm entails a relativist ontology in which the world is a human construct (Wellington 2000) that 'can only be understood from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the on-going action being investigated' (Cohen et al. 2013:15). In terms of epistemology, the constructivist paradigm views knowledge as a subjective construct, which implies that people construct different unique meanings of the world around them (Creswell 2012). People perceive knowledge in different ways as they filter it through their belief system and construct their individual meanings.

Adopting a constructivist paradigm in my study helped in exploring how teachers construct and perceive their realities and experiences. It also enabled me to explore the unique personal meanings teachers construct from their experiences and actions (Richards 2003).

#### 4.4 Research approach

Research approaches can be defined as ‘plans and procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation’ (Creswell 2013:3). Creswell (2013) divided research approach into three types: quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods (Creswell 2013). In my study, a qualitative approach was adopted.

A qualitative approach is one in which the inquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives (i.e. the multiple meanings of individual experiences, meanings socially and historically constructed, with an intent of developing a theory or pattern) or advocacy/participatory perspectives (i.e. political, issue-oriented, collaborative or change-oriented) or both. (Creswell 2003:18)

A qualitative approach helps in understanding the meanings and significance of human actions from the participants’ perspective rather than attempting to describe human actions in terms of a limited set of pre-determined categories (Richards 2003). ‘Beliefs’ are complex psychological constructs that need to be explored deeply in order for researchers to be able to gain insights about them. Moreover, beliefs are ‘individual’ constructs; different people hold different beliefs based on contextual or personal factors. Using a qualitative approach in interviews in this study (asking teachers open questions and giving them the freedom to speak about their beliefs and practice) helped me to gain insights into those teachers’ beliefs. Also, using a qualitative approach helped in exploring the individual differences of teachers’ beliefs, which could be masked using a quantitative approach (Cabaroglu and Roberts 2000).

## 4.5 Research tradition

A research tradition identifies how the researcher conducts his qualitative research practically. Richards (2003:13-14) divides qualitative research into seven core traditions: ‘ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, case study, life history, action research and conversation analysis.’ For the purposes of this study, I adopted a case study tradition.

### 4.5.1 Case study

Gall et al. (2003:436) describe case study research as an ‘in-depth study of instances of phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon’. In this study the phenomenon is teachers’ beliefs and practices that was explored from the perspectives of five English language teachers. The value of case study ‘lies in its close attention to details as seen as through the eyes of the case study subject herself but prompted through the purposeful nature of the researcher’s questions’ (Moore 2008:33). A case study aims at presenting and representing reality to give the reader a sense of ‘being there’ (Cohen et al. 2013:386).

There are several types of case studies in the literature (Cohen et al. 2013; Duff 2008; Hartas 2010; Stake 1995). Case studies are divided into different categories according to their size, purpose and outcome:

- a. **Size.** My study was a multiple ‘collective’ case study as five cases were explored (Stake 1995).

- b. **Purpose.** My case studies were ‘intrinsic’ as there is an intrinsic interest in the cases of the ‘beliefs of Saudi English language teachers’. Paucity of research on beliefs in the Saudi context made the cases under study more intrinsically interesting.
- c. **Outcome.** The case studies were primarily descriptive. They aimed at providing a thick description of English language teachers’ classroom practices and to gain insights into their teaching beliefs. The notion of ‘thick description’ will be described in the section 4.8.

#### **4.5.2 Case study sampling and participants**

There are two main sampling strategies: probability (i.e., random) and non-probability (i.e., selective) (Cohen et al. 2013; Merriam 1988). In this study, the process of choosing the participants was selective, which is the most commonly used method of sampling in qualitative case studies (Merriam 1988). Participants were chosen on the basis of a number of factors: first, participants had to be all females, as I did not have access to the male campus due to local regulations. Third, participants had to be teachers at the beginning of their career who hold a bachelor degree as the study aimed to have implications for pre-service training programmes. The initial plan was to find teachers in their first year of teaching but I was only able to find one first-year teacher. Therefore, I changed the focus of the study from novice teachers to teachers at the beginning of their career (maximum of five years of experience). I firstly, contacted the supervisor who was responsible for Saudi teacher assistants in the English language institute. She showed and she told me that



interested teachers would contact me directly, however, none of them contacted me. After that, I contacted some of my old colleagues to ask them to participate in my study, three of them agreed to participate. Then, when I arrived in Jeddah, I went to the institute on the first day of the second term. One of my old colleagues introduced me to one of the new teacher assistants who agreed to participate in the study. Four participants were based in the main campus which where I used to work. I had to look for participants in other campuses because I could not find enough participants in the main campus. I contacted two teachers in the other two campuses through some of my colleagues and they agreed to participate. I clarified to the participants that participating in the study is voluntary and refusing to participate, or withdrawing is part of their rights and I gave each of them 1-2 weeks to confirm her participation.

All participated voluntary in this study. The original number of the participants was six but due to emerging constraints, the number was reduced to five. Table 4.1 below provides an overview of the participants and their educational backgrounds:

Name	Experience	Training	Education
(T1) Rana	First year	No training	Bachelor of Arts in English
(T3) Lara	4 years	Training workshops	Language, Saudi state university
(T4) Sally	4 years		
(T2) Nada	3 years		Bachelor of Arts in English Language, Girls' College of Education

(T5) Maha	4 years	ELT symposiums and conferences	English Language and Translation, private Saudi university
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Table 4.1: Participants' backgrounds

#### 4.6 Piloting stage

The data collection period of the study was preceded by two stages of the pilot study: the first was in the Language Centre, University of Leeds and the other was in the English language institute in a Saudi state University, the actual data collection context. The first was carried out on 25<sup>th</sup> of August 2011. The second was carried out in between 30<sup>th</sup> of January 2012 and 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2012. The following table give information about the piloting stage participants, interviews and class observation:

Location	Participant	Pre-observation interview	Class observation	Post- observation
Leeds	Jane	-----	25/08/2011	25/08/2011
Jeddah	Kadi	30/01/2012	1/02/2012	4/02/2012
Jeddah	Rania	05/02/2012 07/02/2012	-----	-----

Table 4.2: Piloting stage information

After the piloting stage, the interview questions were refined and the observation guide was developed to include more information: i.e., seating arrangements and other physical aspects of the classroom. In the following some of my reflections on the piloting stage:

- **Interview Questions.** After the pilot interviews, I asked the participants to give feedback on the questions, including if they are easily understandable. My reflections on the pilot study and the participants' feedback were used to edit and re-word some of the questions to be more suitable for the main study participants. Some of the terms: i.e., pragmatics were not clear to the teachers in the pilot study, so I tried to simplify them. Vague or unspecific questions were re-worded. For example, a questions such as: 'what do you think students need to learn?' was changed into 'what do your students need to know, learn to improve their speaking skills'. Also, I avoided using terms that teachers would usually be introduced to in teacher education or teacher training programmes. Most of these terms I was not familiar with before pursuing my master's degree.

- **Confidentiality.** I reviewed Jane's class field notes and I found her real name on the top of the observation sheet. I used pseudonyms on all research related papers to avoid any problems relating to keeping the confidentiality of the participants.

- **Engagement with the context.** When I attended Jane's class, I had many questions about her context in mind. Therefore, I found myself asking her many questions about her context. Before, conducting the second stage of the pilot study, it was much easier for me to relate to what the teachers were saying as I was more familiar with the context. I also tried to gather more information about the context before the interviews. Having enough knowledge about the context helped in creating good rapport with teachers.

- **Authenticity.** Authenticity is an important dimension of classroom observation. Borg (2006:235) reports that 'most studies in language teacher cognition research using observation having examined naturally occurring teaching'. After attending Kadi's class, she told me that she altered one of the activities to add more speaking activities in the class because I was attending. This affected the authenticity of her class; therefore, I told other teachers not to change anything in their classes because I want to see what is going on in their normal classes. Some of the teachers offered me to implement changes or to teach more speaking to help me in my study but I thanked them and told them that attending normal real classes would serve the aims of my study.

#### **4.7 Data collection**

The data was collected over a period of three months in the English language institute at a state University. Accessing the institute was relatively easily facilitated. However, facilitating access did not entail facilitating recruiting participants or providing a space for interviews. I was advantaged by being an 'insider' and all

these issues were sorted out with the help of previous colleagues who offered to share their offices for me to work and for conducting interviews. They also helped me to find potential participants.

Teachers' beliefs and practices were elicited through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. Calderhead (1996:712) notes that:

Detailed case studies of teaching using a variety of observational and interview procedures have frequently resulted in well-documented and insightful accounts of teachers' thoughts and practice.

The pre-observation interviews were conducted before observation to elicit teachers' beliefs and get background information about teachers. Then, observation was conducted to explore teachers' classroom practices. After that, post-observation interviews were conducted to discuss different issues of their teaching beliefs and practice.

Due to practical constraints, I was not able to conduct some of the post-observation interviews with some teachers immediately after their classes or the next day. Therefore, I had to delay some of the post-observation interviews with three participants, T3, T4 and T5. I asked those teachers to write reflective notes about their classes after they finished teaching. The notes aimed to help the teachers to reflect, comment on their classes and record important details. Also, they were used as a stimulus for the delayed post-observation interviews to help teachers to recall the details of their observed classes. At the end, I had four sources of data for this study: three main sources: interviews recordings, observation recordings and field notes and one secondary source: the reflective notes. In the following, I will provide

details of the two methods that were used to generate data: interviews and class observation.

#### **4.7.1 Interviews**

Fontana and Frey (2000:645) write that ‘interviewing is one of the most common and powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow human beings’. It is a widely-used research method in qualitative research. Moreover, it is appropriate for constructivist studies where the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee is critical to the study.

Interviews can be divided into different types according to their degree of structure, their formality and the type of questions (Cohen et al. 2013; Brinkmann and Kvale 2015; Wilson and Sapsford 1996). Most writers divide interviews into structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. For the purposes of this study, I used in-depth and semi-structured interviews. Open-ended questions were used to elicit views and opinions from the participants.

I conducted five interviews with each teacher: two before observing classes and three after classroom observation (one after each observed lesson). An additional class observation and post-class observation was conducted with T4. In the second observed class, T4 had to move with her students from the building she used to teach at to another building as the A/C system was down. Therefore, she invited me to attend another class as she felt she did not have enough time to give the whole speaking lesson.

Pre-observation interviews (Appendix 4) were conducted to gain general information about the teachers' educational background, teacher training, teaching experience and their beliefs about teaching speaking. The average length of each pre-observation interview was 30 minutes. Post-observation interviews were conducted to discuss the observed classes; teachers had the opportunity to comment on their teaching and explain their teaching rationale. The length of post-observation interviews varied according to the length of the speaking lesson and to the length of teachers' comments. The average length of post-observation interviews was 15 minutes. All interviews were conducted in English and were audio-recorded using a digital recorder.

Although there are many advantages of interviews, there are some limitations on the other hand. Some relate to cost and time and other limitations relate to the interviewers skill of asking questions and the interviewees' openness to speak. In-depth interviews are time consuming to administer, to transcribe and to analyse (Cohen et al. 2013). Face-to-face interviews, which were implemented in the study, were more expensive than some other types of interviews or research methods. For example, while questionnaires can be sent to the participants or conducted online, researchers may need to travel in order to meet interviewees to conduct face-to-face interviews. Fortunately, I had enough funding from my sponsor to cover my data collection trip expenses.

Researcher's bias might affect the quality of the collected data. Therefore, I tried to make myself aware of any potential biases such as beliefs, expectations or

stereotypical views about the graduates of certain Saudi universities. I also tried to design neutral and clear interview questions. The interviewees' unwillingness to share certain information was a possible threat to the reliability of the collected data. Keenan (2012) says that showing empathy and engaging into what the interviewees are saying, help in progressing the interviews as the interviewees would feel relaxed and would be more willing to speak. I tried to show empathy particularly when some of the teachers were complaining about the pressure they were going through or the problems they are facing in their context. Also, I avoided interrupting them even when they were talking about irrelevant issues.

After I had finished the data collection, teachers showed positive attitudes about their participation. T1 said that the interviews were an opportunity for her to express her opinions, teaching concerns and to reflect on her teaching practices.

#### **4.7.2 Observation**

Observation is one of the most powerful research methods. It helps researchers to watch the phenomenon under study. Adler and Adler (1994:378) note that:

Qualitative observation is fundamentally naturalistic in essence; it occurs in the natural context of occurrence, among the actors who would naturally be participating in the interaction and follows the natural stream of everyday life.

In this study, observation was conducted in real classrooms in order to give a real inside view of the phenomenon under study. 'Observation provides direct evidence of behaviour, is (in theory) non-interventionist and allows large amount of descriptive data to be collected' (Borg 2006:227). There are different types of



observation that can be categorized according to their degree of structure (Cohen et al. 2013; Punch 2009) and the role of the observer (Borg 2006; Silverman 2006).

I used semi-structured observations in my study. The observation guide was informed by the pre-observation interviews. However, this did not restrict me from conducting the observations with an open mind to try to explore the situation naturally. I asked teachers to choose three speaking lessons for me to attend. Some teachers (T1, T4 and T5) invited me to attend whole classes where they were teaching other skills. On the other hand, other teachers (T2 and T3) invited me to attend their speaking lesson slots. With each teacher, I observed classes of the same group of students three times. A detailed account of classroom events was obtained through audio recordings and field notes. A digital audio recorder was placed on the teachers' desk at the front of the classroom to record the whole lesson. Teachers' behaviours and activities in the classroom were recorded in the field notes. Field notes were taken to write full details about the classes focusing on events that cannot be audio recorded. These notes were useful for recording events such as, the teacher non-verbal communication with her students and when the teacher was going around helping students with specific activities. Some details about students' speaking performance were, also, recorded, when audible, in the field notes such as, how they provide answers to their teachers and where (i.e. at the front of the class) and how do they do group work. As mentioned earlier, speaking lessons are usually combined with listening, reading or vocabulary. All the speaking activities presented in chapters 5-9 are based on what teachers considered to be speaking activities.

I adopted a non-participant role in my observation. My role was limited to watching what was going on inside the classroom without any interference; I sat at the back of the class taking notes. However, I was aware that my influence might affect the natural occurrence of events inside the classroom. The teacher and the students might not act naturally because of my presence. Therefore, I tried to minimise my presence influence by telling the teachers about the purpose of my observation which is a descriptive rather than evaluative. In addition, I asked the teachers to talk to their students before observation to explain the purpose of my observation. Some teachers asked me to talk to their students in order for the students to feel more comfortable. I told both teachers and students that acting naturally in their classroom would help me greatly in my study. The teachers were having evaluative observations (conducted by their institution) at the same time. Some teachers told me that their classes were not running as usual during their evaluative class observations, as both teachers and students were feeling stressed out. Another teacher said that her students were comfortable when I was attending their classes. Informing teachers and students about the purpose of my study helped them to feel more comfortable about my presence in their classes. In fact, informing anyone who is going to be involved in the observation process is important, as ‘covert observation in educational research is generally considered unethical’ (Borg 2006: 237). Teachers were informed about the general purposes of the study; the study would be conducted to gain insights about their beliefs and classroom practice. The participants were aware of the first and second but not the third research question.

Disclosure was partial as I thought full disclosure would influence teachers' behaviours.

While observation is described as a non-interventionist approach, this issue seems to be problematic as the researcher's presence might affect what takes place inside the classrooms (Cohen et al. 2013:472). One of the teachers asked me to participate in her class as by getting engaged in the class activities, her students may feel more relaxed and comfortable about my attendance, I told her that I would prefer not to interfere with her class and focus on taking notes. In one of her classes, she asked me to answer a question. Not answering the teacher's question would be considered rude, so I answered the question to avoid any embarrassment.

#### **4.7.3 Data analysis approach**

Data analysis is described as 'a process of bringing meaning to raw inexpressive data' and displaying the meaning to the reader (Marshall and Rossman 2011:207). I took an abductive iterative approach. The abductive approach is a combination of inductive and deductive reasoning (Patton 2000). Draper (2004:642) says that 'qualitative research is broadly characterized by the process of analytical induction, in which the researcher moves from observation to generalization'. On the other hand, deductive reasoning moves from generalization to specifications. Research studies can go through both processes (Hartas 2010). In summary, abduction is a cyclical process where the researcher moves between using inductive and deductive reasoning to get results. My analysis was based on the set of themes that guided my data collection and it drew on relevant literature to interpret the emerging themes.

My data analysis process can also be described as iterative. Iteration is described as moving between the different stages of qualitative research: data collection, data analysis, data representation and the writing stage (Crabtree and Miller 1999). Woods (1999) mentions that qualitative researchers constantly move back and forth between theories and data in order to identify patterns and to test their interpretations. Initial analysis of the pre-observation interviews occurred during the data collection stage; as the interview data informed the class observations. Then, during the data analysis and the writing stage, I was moving back and forth between analysing the data, reviewing the literature and presenting the findings. Each case study was analysed separately, then, cross-case analysis was conducted in the end. In the following, I explain the different stages my data analysis went through.

#### **4.7.4 Organizing data**

Participants' transcribed (written) data were organised according to their dates and type. Audio recordings were saved in separate folders. Some of the classes I attended were integrated where teachers were teaching more than one skill in the same class. Therefore, the class observation audio recordings were cropped to extract the speaking lessons. Extracting the speaking parts was based on the post-observation interview where teachers talked and commented on their speaking lessons. As a constructivist researcher, I needed to consider teachers' views of what teaching speaking is.

After extracting the 'speaking lessons', the observational data was transcribed. All interviews and some observational data were transcribed by professional transcribers

and I edited and revised them. I transcribed and translated the Arabic parts of the data. I used ALA-LC ‘American Library Association – Library of Congress’ system to represent the Arabic texts in Latin letters. ALA-LC is the standard system for Romanisation in the library of Congress and it is used for a number of different languages (ALA-LC 2012).

Each participant’s data was saved in a separate folder to get the data prepared for the analysis. Summaries of the pre-observation interviews were written during the data collection and they were revised at the beginning of the data analysis. Reading and re-reading through the data was important to make me more familiar with it.

#### **4.7.5 Coding and categorising**

Coding is a central stage in qualitative analysis. Miles and Huberman (1994:56) define codes as:

Tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study. Codes usually are attached to ‘chunks’ of varying size – words, phrases, sentences, or whole paragraphs, connected or unconnected to a specific setting.

Richards (2005) notes that in most studies there are three types of coding: descriptive, topic and analytic coding. I used descriptive coding to organize the data. It was used to put labels on the transcribed data (Boeije 2010). These labels were general such as beliefs about speaking, beliefs about students and comments on teaching.

Topic coding comes in the middle between descriptive and analytical coding. It involves organizing data into different themes and categories. Categories and themes are used sometimes interchangeably in research (Morse 2008). However, themes are more general than categories. For example, in my research, influences on teachers' beliefs was a theme and the contextual factors were considered category, which on its own had other sub-categories: time, materials or policies. Emergent categories and themes were coded using abbreviations for keywords and numbers (Marshall and Rossman 2011). I prepared a set of themes and categories based on the literature on teacher beliefs and the teaching of speaking to start coding with. However, other themes and categories emerged from the data. As new themes and categories emerged from the data, the topic coding became more analytic. In the analytic coding stage, I tried to look for recurring topics in each type of data and shared topics between the different types of data. Stake (1995:74) mentions that there are two strategic ways to find new meanings about cases: starting by 'direct interpretation of the individual instances' and moving to aggregating these instances. In the analytic coding stage, I was moving between these two trying to analyse different parts of the data and then trying to find relations between them.

#### **4.7.6 Interpreting**

Interpreting went into two main stages: firstly, interpreting single cases, then, conducting a cross-case analysis. Patton (2002:480) notes that:

Interpretation means attaching significance to what was found, making sense of the findings, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, extrapolating

lessons, making inferences, considering meanings and otherwise imposing order.

In the first stage, I tried to look at the main themes in each of the case studies and tried to understand the significance of these themes. Also, I aimed to build relationships between the different sets of the data. For example, justifications for some aspects of teacher teaching practice (observational data) were found in the pre-observation interviews or post-observation interviews. After that, I wrote the case study reports which were edited and revised a number of times. Finally, I tried to look for relationships, similarities, differences across the five cases to represent a summary of the study findings. Mackey and Gass (2005: 172) suggest that findings from different case studies can be combined together to help researchers draw stronger conclusions from their research.

#### **4.8 Quality issues**

Enhancing the quality was important in all research stages: research design, data collection, data analysis and data presentation. Different quality issues were discussed earlier in interviews and observation and more general issues will be discussed in the following.

Issues of reliability and validity are central to the quality of the research study. The two concepts 'validity and reliability' are more related to quantitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose an alternative concept in qualitative research: 'trustworthiness'. They explain that trustworthiness is the extent to which a researcher can persuade his readers that his research findings are 'worth paying

attention to' or 'worth taking account of'. It involves establishing credibility (confidence in the 'truth' of the findings) (Lincoln and Guba 1985). There are a number of strategies (some were used in the data collection and some in the data analysis) to enhance the trustworthiness of my research study: prolonged engagement, thick description and reflexivity. I describe each in more detail in the following.

#### **4.8.1 Prolonged engagement**

Prolonged engagement is a frequently used technique to enhance the trustworthiness of qualitative research (Creswell and Miller 2000; Lincoln and Guba 1985). I interacted with the teachers through different interviews and observations. Since I used to work in the same context, it was not very difficult for me to build a good rapport with the participants as most of them were my colleagues. I met each of the participants before the first interview, I explained everything about my study and I ensured them that I am conducting my study to describe for descriptive and not evaluative purposes. Teachers asking the researcher to evaluate their classes or to comment on their practice are some of the risks of prolonged engagement with the participants. The researcher needs to deal sensitively with these situations in order to keep a good relationship with the participants without crossing any ethical limits or affecting the research quality. Two participants asked me many times to tell them about my opinion in their classes but I had refused politely and I explained that I am not in a position to evaluate them as I was aiming to describe the classes for my research purposes.



#### **4.8.2 Thick description and contextualization**

Thick description is a rich, comprehensive and detailed description of actions and interactions of the phenomenon under study (Crabtree et al. 2012; Dey 1993). Thick description provides a detailed description of the phenomenon and of the contextual factors that surround it. Descriptive accounts serve as evidence for the researchers' interpretations and explanations of the data and they show how these case studies 'fit into a context' (Potter 1996: 184). A thick description implies that a researcher needs to pay attention to the contextual factors and experiential understandings that surrounds the studied behaviour when observing and interpreting the phenomenon by looking at rich details of the case and being aware of the complexity of the social world (Mills et al. 2010). While collecting data, I was collecting information about different issues in the context such as, policies, teachers' non-teaching tasks, students' general backgrounds and level. I tried to collect information about different aspects of the context, which might be significant to my research. Also, having multiple sources of data helped in providing more detailed description of the cases under study.

#### **4.8.3 Reflexivity and searching for alternative understandings**

Qualitative researchers need to reflect upon their data and their interpretations of the data. Reflecting on the data is an on-going process through the different stages of research. Reflection starts from the first day of conducting a research study and continues until the end. Reflexivity helps qualitative researchers to reduce the amount of subjectivity in their research (Packer 2010). Richards (2003: 269) notes

that ‘the researcher should keep in review the continually evolving interrelationship between data, analysis and interpretation’. In this study, I started reflection before the data collection stage and I continued reflection throughout the data collection and data analysis stages.

Marshall and Rossman (2011:220) note that ‘alternative explanations always exist’. Therefore, the researcher’s explanations need to be tested and challenged and reflected upon to maximise the quality of the data. After analysing the data, I re-examined my data searching for different evidences that might show different or contradictory results. My supervisors’ feedback helped in testing and challenging my interpretations of the data and motivated me to go back to the data and look for more evidence for specific instances.

#### **4.9 Ethical considerations**

Researchers need to show commitment ‘to protect the well-being of their research participants and respect their confidentiality, privacy, safety and other legal and human rights’ (Duff 2008:146). Before my data collection, I sought the approval of the ethics committee at the University of Leeds and an approval letter was then obtained from the Saudi state university to conduct the study. Participant teachers and their students were asked to provide an informed consent. I had an initial meeting with the teachers where they signed the informed consents. I ensured teachers and students that the research results will be confidential and their identities will be anonymised. I provided the participants with enough information about their rights and their role in the study and they had the opportunity to ask questions. Also,

we discussed issues of confidentiality and anonymity. I asked them to choose pseudonyms and we used these pseudonyms in the interviews. In addition, participants were informed that they can withdraw from the study at any time. Protecting teachers from harm was a first priority in this study; participants were dealt with sensitively: i.e. avoiding criticising or judging their teaching.

#### **4.10 Summary**

This chapter presented a detailed account of the research design. As a researcher, I adopted a constructivist approach to understand teachers' beliefs and the teaching of speaking from their own perspectives. The data was collected qualitatively through semi-structured in-depth interviews and class observation which aimed to provide a thick detailed description of the cases under study. The following five chapters present the findings of these case studies. Each chapter focuses on one of the participant teachers.

## **5 Teacher 1: Rana**

### **5.1 Profile of the teacher**

Rana was a novice English language teacher in her first year. She had completed a Bachelor of Arts in English Language in a Saudi Arabian University in June 2011. After graduating, she started working as an English language teacher at the English language institute in September 2011. Rana had not received any educational courses nor received any formal teacher training. The structure of this chapter reflects that which I will follow the next four chapters. Each chapter describes the teacher's approach to teaching speaking where the key characteristics of her teaching are highlighted and it examines the beliefs that shaped her practices.

### **5.2 Overview of Rana's classes**

Rana was lucky to give her classes in a new building that has movable chairs and ICT facilities. However, many ICT facilities were not working yet in that building at the time of my observation. The class seating layout was traditional, with students sitting in rows facing their teacher. The class capacity was about 30 chairs and the number of Rana's registered students was 29; however, only 15 students attended the first observed class, 11 in the second and 19 in the third. All Rana's observed lessons were entirely course book-led.

Rana was teaching level one, Beginner preparatory year students. Rana expressed some negative beliefs about her classes; she said: 'I feel like my classes are too

conventional. They are not that creative' (Rana, Pre-I1). Rana was comparing her classes to the classes she had at the University:

At university, it was more interesting for me as a learner. But then now I don't feel like I can do this same thing that my teachers have done, I appreciate my teachers more now (Rana, Pre-I1).

Rana's learning experience seemed to be very influential on her beliefs. This will be discussed further in [1.7](#).

### **5.3 Teacher role**

Rana said commenting on her relationship with her students: 'I want to be their friend' (Rana, Post-I1). She also added: 'They can talk as free as they want but they need to know that I'm their teacher' (Rana, Post-I1). Rana wanted to make her students feel comfortable to speak in her class but at the same time, she did not want to lose their respect for her as a teacher. Rana's age was probably one reason for having this struggle as the age difference between Rana and her students was around four years. Rana wanted to keep the balance between commanding respects and being gentle but was not able to:

Most of them are not studying. Those who are studying I am really happy and I feel like I really appreciate whatever they are doing. And those who are not trying I feel like I want to scream at them, I feel like I am their mother or something, I am like come on girls, do something, do something, study at home (Rana, Pre-I1).

Rana's ideal belief of her role was of a friend but the reality of her classroom made her feel like a mother. This tension between Rana's ideal belief and the role she had to take in reality made her feel disappointed. She was aiming to be friendly to her students to help in creating a supportive environment for speaking; she said: 'I want

them to be free and talk to me about anything they want' (Rana, Post-I1). However, as many of Rana's students were generally reluctant to speak and she did not seem to have enough skills to deal with her students' reluctance. Rana's disappointment was sometimes evident on her body language. She tried to hide her disappointment; she used phrases such as 'lovely ladies' and 'little birds' when she spoke to her students. When I asked her about why she used such phrases, she said: 'I don't know. Sometimes when I'm angry I would say something bad, so instead of saying something bad I'll try... I don't want to teach them bad words' (Rana, Post-I1).

#### **5.4 Students' speaking level and motivation**

In the first pre-observation interview, when I asked Rana to describe the class she was teaching, she said:

Well, they are not perfect. Maybe I could say most of them are good. They know how to construct a sentence, they can convey whatever they want to say but sometimes I try to focus, I try to make them not only focus on speaking because if they don't have grammar it doesn't make sense. So they need to think about grammar, speaking and vocabulary all at the same time. These two are the most important components (referring to grammar and vocabulary) (Rana, Pre-I1).

Rana's general evaluation of her students' speaking level was based on their ability to form sentences and to convey their intended meaning. She believed that focusing on meaning was not enough as students need to focus on both form and meaning.

When Rana commented on her students' motivation, she said:

Well, most of my students now are... are... some of them are really motivated, very motivated to learn or are eager to learn and the rest, well, they are mostly active (Rana, Pre-I1).

Rana hesitated when she commented on her students' motivation level as she seemed to be trying to express positive beliefs about them. But then, she gave more details about her students' motivation, she said:

They are not motivated about; you know, if I ask them to give me, I tell them and make them understand, I explain the grammatical rules they are having, the vocabulary they have but they are not open to speaking to actually participate, not all of them. At least I can capture, there are five or six students who are okay with actually stepping up and talking on their own. But the rest I actually force them, come on, talk, I want to hear you, the rest of the class should hear you as well (Rana, Pre-I1).

Rana felt disappointed that she had to 'force' most of her students to speak. She felt that her students' good 'competence' was not reflected in their poor 'performance'. She believed that her students had the ability to do what she was asking them to do in the class but they were not making enough effort 'their mind – their brain grasps everything but they need to dig deeply inside' (Rana, Post-I2). In addition to Rana's students' reluctance to speak, she felt that her students had negative attitudes towards English in general, she said:

They just want to finish this; they're not interested sometimes. They don't care about this; it's just English, right. They hate English. Most of them hate English. They used to hate it at school and this feeling would go on [laughs] (Rana, Post-I1).

Rana seemed to have negative beliefs about her students' attitudes towards English. She felt that their negative attitudes are the reason for their demotivation; therefore, she tried to change these negative attitudes by trying to build her students' self-confidence. The following two episodes show how Rana was trying to encourage her students.

## Episode 1

Rana and her students were doing an exercise where students had to use can or can't in a sentence.

S: I can't speak English at all.

R: What are you speaking now? Are you speaking German?

Ss laughed.

R: No, you can speak English.

(Rana's class 1)

## Episode 2

R: Now look at the sentences and try to match the expression with the sentence.

After 1 minute,

R: Are you done?

After 30 seconds,

R: Come on you should be finished.

S: Miss!

R: What is it? What is wrong? Tala, What is wrong?

S: Lissah ba-a'mil awwal wahdah ['I'm still doing the first one' in Arabic].

R: No you don't. You need to match it. Go ahead. I know you can. I wouldn't have asked you do it if I know you couldn't. I know you can do it.

(Rana's class 1)

Rana tried to change her students' negative views about themselves in order for them to be more motivated to speak. She expected her students to finish their given



exercise in the allocated time but none of them did. She said: ‘I expect too much of them. I feel like I am expecting too much of them because they are disappointing me sometimes’ (Rana, Pre-I1). When Rana felt that her encouragement was not working, she had to force her students to participate in the speaking activities. The following episode shows how Rana forced her students to take part in a role-play activity.

### **Episode 3**

R: Come on. Who wants to do their role-play?

(None of the students volunteered)

R: Come on, Shaden and Salma (nominated a pair of students to start)

SS Shall we do it here? (She wanted them to perform their role-play in front of the class)

R: No come up here, please come on!

(Rana’s class 2)

Before the role-play, Rana gave her students an overview of some grammar rules they were expected to use in the role-play and she provided them with some vocabulary. However, none of the students volunteered to participate in the role-play activity. When I asked Rana about the reasons for her students’ reluctance to speak, she said: ‘It’s either they are a little bit lazy, or they just don’t feel like talking. They are afraid of being embarrassed’ (Rana, Pre-I2). She added: ‘Maybe it’s a personal preference or... or maybe because of the level of the language they don’t – their proficiency level ... (Rana, Pre-I2). Rana felt that explaining related grammar and vocabulary to students and trying to motivate them would be enough make them

willing to speak. She felt she has performed her role as a teacher and the rest was her students' responsibility. This might explain why most of Rana's stated reasons for her students' reluctance were student-related and not teacher-related. The only teacher-related reason she mentioned was her high expectations.

## 5.5 Teaching speaking

In this section, I start by discussing Rana's beliefs about the course book she was using. Then, I discuss the speaking activities Rana implemented in her classes. Rana was using *New Headway Plus Special Edition*, beginner student's course book.

When I asked Rana about the course book, she said:

Well, it is chaotic. I don't feel that it's organised. It needs more work to be focused on one thing. They are trying to focus each unit on a specific subject and specific grammar but still, for example, if you look at some of the units you will find the everyday English section totally different from the other sections (Rana, Pre-I1).

She also said:

Yes, some parts are repeated, they keep on repeating the same part, the old part. Why do we have to teach this? Sometimes it's pointless to repeat what everybody has learnt yesterday or two weeks ago (Rana, Pre-I1).

Rana obviously had negative beliefs towards the course book; she was not able to make sense of the rationale of how the units were organised. She felt the topics of the 'Everyday English' part, which mostly focus on speaking, did not align with the theme of the unit. For example, in Unit 12, the theme was about Politeness 'Please and Thank you' but the Everyday English part was about signs and their meanings. Also, in the Everyday English part, students were expected to practise can/can't in the context of 'be allowed to' which relates more to Unit 11 rather than Unit 12. In

some units, in the beginner's student book only, there are no activities labelled clearly as speaking activities. Grammar and vocabulary are the two main sections in each unit. There are some role-plays and discussion activities mainly under the grammar practice section and the Everyday English part is usually about speaking. The focus on grammar in the course book influenced Rana's approach in teaching speaking.

These activities seemed to fall into two categories: individual activities and pair activities. Rana regarded the individual activities as speaking activities though they were not under the speaking section in the course book. According to her, these activities aimed to develop students' speaking skills. In the following, I discuss the two types of speaking activities in Rana's classes.

### **5.5.1 Individual activities**

In Rana's speaking lessons, individual activities aimed to practise pronunciation, grammar or introducing students to new vocabulary. In the following, I discuss three types of activities which were implemented as a part of Rana's speaking classes.

#### **5.5.1.1 Pronunciation**

Rana commented on her students' pronunciation level, saying:

Their pronunciation has not improved. Some of them are not improving their pronunciation because they keep saying – instead of saying *went* they say something else, I don't know. It's something *want*, some other vowel they mix (Rana, Post-I2).

Rana added: ‘sometimes even when they talk I do not understand what they’re trying to say’ (Rana, Post-I2). The following episode presents a listening and pronunciation practice. Students were asked to practise pronouncing some new expressions such as ‘a little bit,’ ‘quite well,’ ‘(not) at all,’ ‘fluently’ and ‘really well’ (Appendix 5).

#### **Episode 4**

- R: Look at these expressions in the box. Do you know the meaning of a little bit? What the meaning of a little bit?
- S1: Less
- S2: Qalīl (an adjective that means ‘few’ in Arabic).
- R: Qalīlan (an adjective that means ‘few’ in Arabic) If I say ‘I can speak Japanese a little bit.’
- S3: Qalīlan.
- R: Yeah. I don’t know everything in Japanese but I can speak Japanese a little bit. How about ‘quite well’?
- S4: ‘very good’.
- R: like ‘very good’. The same meaning as very good... Really well?
- S5: Jiddan [means ‘very’ in Arabic]
- R: yeah... The same meaning as ‘quite well’, ‘really well’, ‘really good’. You can combine different words and you can have the same...
- SS meaning.
- R: Fluently?
- S6: Excellent.
- R: not excellent.

S6: Bi-ṭalaqah [‘fluently’ in Arabic].

R: Yes. This is it... Not at all?

R: Not at all [stressing] as in nothing!

R: Now look at the sentences and try to match the expression with the sentence.

After they finished, Rana asked the students to listen to the audio track. The students listened to a British native speaker talking about herself and the sentences, which Rana’s students would have to complete, were included in what the speaker was saying. After listening for the first time,

R: Shall I repeat it again?

SS Yes.

R: Okay.

R: so who wants to read?

SS ... (No volunteers)

R: Renad, Salma, Rola, Anwar and Norah [nominating students]

Renad: I can speak Spanish quite well.

Salma: I can speak German a little bit.

Rola: My friends can speak English really well.

Norah: I can ride quite well.

Anwar: I can’t cook not at all.

R: No... Because we have (not in can’t) we just put at all. Again. Read it again and make your voice clear.

Anwar: I can’t cook at all.

R: Yeah thanks.

R: let’s read them together. She read the sentences and asked them to repeat after her.

(Rana’s class 1)

Rana started with explaining the meanings of the expressions, as students were not familiar with them. Then, she asked her students to listen to the audio track and fill-in the blanks. Finally, she asked her students to repeat the sentences after her. Pronunciation practice in all observed classes was focused on improving her students' knowledge of segmentals and it was based on choral drilling. Students had to repeat words or phrases until they were able to pronounce them right. When I asked Rana about using repetition to practise pronunciation. She said, 'their pronunciation is wrong. They need to repeat the word; they need to correct their pronunciation' (Rana, Post-I2).

### **5.5.1.2 Grammar**

According to Rana as discussed earlier in (section 1.4) grammar is an important element in teaching speaking (Rana, Pre-I1). Rana's speaking lessons had a strong focus on grammatical accuracy. Each unit in the course book started with a grammar rule and many exercises in each unit, including some speaking ones, were meant to practise or relate to this main grammar rule. This grammar focus in the course book seemed to influence Rana's teaching of speaking. Rana commented on this grammar focus, she said:

... The exercises actually expect them to know the grammatical rule just like that without actually giving them exercises. Usually, we have exercises after the grammatical point that emphasises the grammatical point like, for example, we have in unit ten, look over here, the second part of Unit 10 are exercises. Do you see this? This is what can help them improve, these questions, emphasise the grammatical point (Rana, Post-I1).

Rana felt that the focus on grammar in the course book was not enough to improve her students' speaking level as they needed more exercises to improve their

grammar and consequently their speaking accuracy. In Rana's first observed class, the focus was on 'can and can't' and in her second observed class, she was teaching her students 'would like'. The following episode is from Rana's second observed class:

### **Episode 5**

After, Rana explained the rule of using 'would like.' She explained it on the board.

R: I want each one of you to, please, come up and tell us something that you like and something you would like to do.

S: I like...erm...errrrm I like...reading. I would like to... to go...errm to University.

R: I like to go to university. Very good, thank you Salma. Next.

S: I like to go to shopping.

R: I like going to sho... No... going

S: Shopping.

R: No if you have shopping, I like going shopping.

S: I like going shopping.

R: Remember, you keep doing this. I told you before. Going shopping but not going to shopping, going to somewhere; going to... the mall. This is ok... but not going to shopping is not. Delete to, so going shopping.

(Rana's class 2)

In all the speaking observed classes, Rana taught grammar deductively. She explained the rule, then asked every student to give an example. In Rana's last post-observation interview when I asked about how she felt about her students' speaking

level, she said: ‘I can tell that most of them had improved. Their grammar had become much better than it used to be’ (Rana, Post-I3). Rana’s evaluation of her students’ speaking was focused on accuracy. Grammar was not only an important element in Rana’s teaching of speaking as it also seemed to be an important element in Rana’s assessment of her students’ speaking level.

### **5.5.1.3 Vocabulary**

Some of the activities in Rana’s speaking lessons were focused on developing students’ vocabulary. In Rana’s first observed class, students had a vocabulary exercise where they have to match adjectives with nouns (Exercise 1, Appendix 6).

### **Episode 6**

R: Okay. Let’s look at the adjectives and the nouns. Let’s look the vocabulary part. Now. I told you before that we use the adjective to describe the ... what?

SS: Noun.

R: and we use the adverbs to describe what?

SS: Verb.

R: and we use adverbs to describe the verb. Okay. Repeat after me, okay. Repeat after me. (All the adjectives in Exercise1, Appendix 6)

----- (two examples)

R: cosmopolitan

SS: cosomo..poli..tan

R: our favourite one... Cosmopolitan

SS: cosmopolitan



- R: cosmopolitan... Banan and Hadeel... say it.. Cosmopolitan
- SS: cosmopolitan
- R: exciting (She softened the T ‘American accent’).
- SS: exciting (pronounced the T normally without softening).
- R: exciting (with a softened T).
- SS: exciting (No T softening).
- R: These all are adjectives but why do we use them. We use them, as I said, to describe nouns. But what kinds of nouns do we use these adjectives to describe? For example, we have (‘old’, ‘young’ and ‘tall’). We describe people using these adjectives. Can we use them to describe the weather?
- SS: No
- R: Can we say the weather is old?
- SS: No
- R: tall?
- SS: No
- R: Can we say the food is old?
- SS: No
- R: we can say old food... but can we say young food?
- SS: Yes
- R: are you sure? Young food? Interesting
- SS: No [laughing].

They discussed more examples from the same exercise.

- R: Look at exercise number 2. Complete the sentences with the correct combination (the adjective and the noun). I’ll give you one minute.

After a while, the teacher looked at one of the students who was talking to her friend.

T: Afnan. Try it... individually.

Ss listened to the sentences after they finished.

(Rana's class 1)

Rana asked the students to repeat the words. She made sure that students are imitating her way of pronouncing the words. Then, she introduced her students to the idea of (word combinations) collocates in the second half of the episode (line 20 'underlined'). In her third class, Rana had a vocabulary activity 'In a Restaurant' (Appendix 7).

#### Episode 7

R: Okay, so be extra active, super-duper active, okay? I need you to be very active and very attentive, okay. We're gonna work very quickly.. like this (sign), so.. ... Yeah .. don't forget to put your mobiles on silent.

R: Open up the vocabulary part in Unit 12. Look at the menu. Look at the menu..... Look at the menu and tell me what do you like? Tell me the things that you like from this menu.

S1: Where?

R: The menu at Unit 12, page 94. Tell me what do you like from this menu... What do you like to eat, what do you like to drink from this menu... Rama, don't you like anything from that menu?

Rama: Pizza Margarita.

R: What else?

Rama: Cola

R: Give me a full sentence.

Rama: Chocolate cake.  
R: Give me a full sentence.  
Rama: I like  
R: Yeah  
Rama: Pizza Margarita, chocolate cake and Cola.  
R: Good. Anybody else? .... Amira.  
Amira: I like chips erm... and coffee.  
R: Okay, that's nice. How about the rest?  
Amira: And chicken and salad.  
R: So... it's gonna be chips, what else?  
Amira: Coffee... and coffee.

(Rana's class 3)

According to the teacher guide, the activity aims to practise pronunciation and grammar 'would like'. Then, the teacher is directed to put students in pairs to discuss their likes and dislikes (Appendix 8). Rana replaced the pair activity with a whole class discussion. She also accepted sentences where students were using 'like' instead of 'would like' while using 'would like' was incorrect semantically. Rana's students had another activity on 'would like' before and they performed generally well. Thus, this might explain why Rana chose not to correct their mistakes in this activity.

Rana believed that it was important for students to do accuracy-based activities individually. She did not allow them to work together specifically when working on grammar activities; she said: 'If she [referring to her students] doesn't understand it,

she'll copy it and I don't want her to do that. I want her to try and understand'  
(Rana, Post-I3).

### 5.5.2 Pair activities

Rana's students had role-play activities in the first and second observed classes. In Rana's first observed class, her students listened to a conversation between a guest and host and she asked them to do a similar a role-play (Appendix 9).

### Episode 8

R: If you say 'make yourself at home' what does it mean?  
[A student translating it into Arabic]

R: Yes .raise your voice.

S: ka-innik fi al-bait ['As if you are at home' in Arabic].

R: If I was at home and Arwa came to me, I would say: Hi Arwa. Kaif hālik ['How are you' in Arabic]. I would not ask all these questions... this is my way of making her feel home. What is your way of making her feel home? What would you offer her to make her feel home?

Rana nominated pairs. She formed a pair with one of the students and she asked them to choose who would be the guest and who would be the host. She performed an example for the other students. [The role play's aim was to practise 'would like'].

R: [talking to all students] Now I am outside her house [Knocking on the desk].

S: O! Miss Rana! How are you?

R: I'm fine. How are you, Nora!

R: Great! Okay.

S: Come on. How are you, Miss Rana?

- R: I'm fine [smiling]
- S: Well. Where (most probably she meant how) is your family?
- R: At home as usual. I just asked my father to come here; he said yes.
- S: O! Wow! [laughed].
- R: Okay. See my father is generous [smiling]. Okay.
- S: Would you like a cold drink?
- R: Yes. I'd like some.
- S: Okay! What... would you like?
- R: Do you have an apple juice?
- S: Yes.
- R: Yeah. I would really love some apple juice.
- S: Would you like to sit in the garden?
- R: Yes, sure! It's very lovely outside in the evening. Thank you.

(Rana's class 2)

The input that was provided by Rana reflected some characteristics of spoken English. She used words and phrases such as '*Yes, sure*', '*Yes, I'd like some*', '*O! Wow*', '*Great*', '*Yeah*' and '*Okay*' which are common in spoken discourse. She also used commonly spoken adjectives '*lovely*' and a stand-alone expression '*as usual*.' Rana clearly attempted to model naturalistic speaking but did not draw attention to its features explicitly. She seemed to have good knowledge of features of natural spoken English but does not seem to have these features at a conscious level where she can articulate them. When she commented on the activity, she seemed concerned

about choosing the student she worked with rather than the quality of the demonstration.

... Maybe I should've worked with someone who is weaker. Because I know Nora can do it and she's a good student but I should've put her with someone who's weaker than herself (Rana, Post-I2).

Rana felt that giving low-level students the opportunity to work with more advanced students would help the low-level students to learn from their more advanced peers. However, in most pair activities in her observed classes, students pairing was based on seating and not on students' level.

After demonstrating the role-play with one of her students, Rana asked the students to perform their role-plays in front of the class but the students were hesitant. Thus, she nominated a pair to start presenting their role-play. Then, she went pair by pair according to their seating order. The following episode is an example of the role-plays the students performed in front of the class.

### **Episode 9**

Sara: Hi. Welcome... come in... How are you?

Mariam: Fine! How are you?

Sara: Fine. How was your day?

R: What... I didn't hear you very well... raise your voice, Mariam.

Sara: How was your day?

Mariam: great.

Sara: What would like drink... drink?

R: What would you like... to drink?  
Sara: To drink?  
Mariam: An orange juice.  
Sara: What would like a cold drink?  
Mariam: An apple juice.  
Sara: Would you like a chocolate cake?  
Mariam: Yes. I would ... erm  
Sara: Would you like a chocolate cake?  
Mariam: Yes... I would like.

(Rana's class 2)

The role-play was simple and limiting in the ways students can respond. The main aim of the role-play according to the course book was to allow students to practise grammar (Appendix 10). Rana said commenting on nominating students to participate in class activities:

Those who do never, who would never volunteer I force them because they don't want to work. They expect to stay in class not doing anything. No, no, no, you're going to have to do something. You're going to do it (Rana, Post-11).

The word 'force' reoccurred more than once in Rana's interviews. In Rana's observed classes, she tried to encourage her students and motivate them. However, when encouragement did not work, she forced them to participate in the class activities.

Students did not have many opportunities to practise speaking communicatively. The speaking lessons had a strong focus on accuracy. When I asked Rana about her

understanding of accuracy, she said: ‘I don’t know, it seems like grammatically correct, good vocabulary’ (Rana, Pre-I2). When I asked her about how she feels towards her students’ accuracy, she said:

Some of them are good. Some of them are careful about their grammar, their vocabulary. But as you know sometimes they focus on that too much that they forget their fluency (Rana, Pre-I2).

The strong focus on accuracy-based activities in Rana’s classes can explain her students’ focus on their accuracy. When I asked Rana how she views fluency, she said:

Fluency does not have to do with correct grammar, right? I don’t think it does. It is important to keep your grammar check but you need to be fluent to talk and keep talking and talking without stopping without hesitating (Rana, Pre-I2).

While Rana felt that while grammar relates to fluency. In another comment on her students’ fluency, she said: ‘...And the others, some of them are not fluent at all, they have grammatical mistakes but still they are trying, no problem. It’s okay’ (Rana, Pre-I2). When I asked Rana how students’ fluency can be improved, she said:

If they talk, if they are open to talk. I will actually have to bring up something embarrassing about myself so they can laugh and they can share something (Rana, Pre-I2).

Rana felt that fluency relates to her students’ willingness to speak; if they are more willing, they will be more fluent. I asked Rana whether she prefers to teach fluent or accurate students, she said:

Accurate is more like it. If I get students who are accurate but not fluent, I might actually try to improve them, their fluency. But I’m afraid if I take the students who are fluent but not accurate, I would have a drawback that they



will focus on their accuracy and forget about their fluency. You see, I'm afraid about that, I fear that I might not actually help them (Rana, Pre-I2).

Rana's comments on fluency and accuracy show that she believed that focusing on accuracy means less focus on fluency. She preferred to teach accurate students to make them more fluent which implies that she believes that can be developed at a later stage of learning. This belief can be one underlying reasons for her focus on accuracy in her classes, as her students were neither fluent nor accurate. There are other factors that influenced Rana's beliefs and practice, which will be discussed in (section 5.7).

### **5.6 Interaction in Rana's speaking lessons**

Whole class-teacher fronted and teacher-centred interaction was dominant in Rana's speaking lessons. When she was talking about the interaction in her classroom, she used the word 'I talk' instead of 'we talk' a number of times, for example:

I talk about something which is related to them, their mobiles, I talk about family. I talk about, of course some of them are married, I talk about husbands, I talk about shopping, activities and things that they like to do (Rana, Pre-I1).

I perceived the proportion of teacher talking time (TTT) to be quite high in Rana's speaking lessons. In Rana's third post-observation interview, she said: 'Well, I talked more but they actually were more open to speak than they did before' (Rana, Post-I2). This suggests that Rana is more focused on the improvement of her students' willingness to speak rather than the amount of their speaking compared to the amount of their speaking. It also suggests that Rana sees speaking activities as genuinely communicating and herself as an equal partner in this communication. In

one of the speaking activities, Rana asked her students to give her examples of funny and boring films.

### Episode 10

R: Okay. Give me boring movie you've watched?

S1: Priest

R: Priest? ... Yeah! It was very boring and annoying.

R: How about.... Do you think 'Twilight' is boring?

SS Yes.

R: How about 'Harry Potter'?

SS No...

R: How about 'The Terminator'?

SS very boring [laughing]

R: Do you know 'Home Alone'? Do you think it is funny or boring?

SS Funny.

S2: 'Bad Boys'

R: 'Bad Boys' is funny. What else?

S3: 'Paranormal' is very boring.

S4: 'Paranormal', it is boring.

R: It is boring.

S5: 'Titanic.'

R: 'Titanic'? ... It's romantic... It's a whole... other... other genre...Do you think it is boring?

SS No...

R: Pardon!

SS No... No

R: Okay. How about funny movies that make you laugh? Go ahead. Come on.

S6: I forgot!

R: Do you know 'Liar Liar'?

S7: 'Liar Liar' is funny.

R: All the comedia ..Comedies are ancient to me cause I don't watch comedies that much (she meant all the films she knew are very old).

R: Come on ladies... do you watch movies? Tell me... the movies you find so boring.

S7: 'Hangover.'

R: 'Hangover' is boring... ok.

R: Tala, you watch movies... come on tell me something.

S8: 'Tango.'

R: What's 'Tango'... is it a movie?

S8: It's scary boring.

R: Okay

R: Okay ladies... you're free to go.

(Rana's class 1)

Rana was using closed declarative questions that required very short answers. All what the students had to say was a film title and a word or two to describe it. The activity was not implemented as it was intended by the course book designers. According to the teacher guide, the exercise was intended to be done in groups where students would give examples of some word collocates, create lists, compare

their lists and have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss their opinions (Exercise 3, Appendix 6).

I did not observe any group work activities in Rana's speaking lessons. When I asked Rana whether she tried to implement group work in her classes before, she said: 'Yes, I did once and they didn't like it. Twice actually and they didn't like it' (Rana, Post-I3). I asked Rana why she felt that her students did not like group work, she said:

I don't know. Although it was easier for me to get them to work in groups that way but I think it was a really large circle, so maybe if I make it closer, or should I assign different circles? Maybe that would help (Rana, Post-I3).

Rana was trying to find out why her students did not like group work but she was uncertain. Later, Rana regretted not implementing any group work in her classes after she listened to her students' views about group work in a 'focus group,' which was conducted by the institute to get feedback from students. She said:

I feel ... just today, not yesterday (referring to the last observed class), today one of the students who were in the focus group said that they want group work, which I found myself not doing in class. I think that's wrong for me to just assign students individually. Maybe I should consider more group work (Rana, Post-I3).

Rana thought about re-considering group work in her classes to respond to her students' preferences. However, I was not able to observe any group work in Rana's speaking lessons because that was our last post-observation interview.

### 5.6.1 Using L1 (Arabic) in class

Both Rana and her students used Arabic occasionally to translate new words or to explain new grammatical rules. While Rana wanted to limit using Arabic to these two uses in her classes, her students used Arabic sometimes in speaking activities, or in communicating with her. She commented on this:

If they ask me something in Arabic I say, try that in English, try that in English. So, she [referring to her students] can know what she can use to express whatever she wants (Rana, Pre-I2).

Rana believed that minimising the use Arabic helps her students to improve their English speaking. During the three observed classes, Rana insisted on using English on some occasions and replied to her students in English on other occasions. For example, the students were doing pair work where they had to ask each other some questions. Rana was going around listening to some of them speaking in Arabic and saying ‘in English’ a number of times.

#### Episode 11

S: Miss.

R: Yes dear... what is it?

S1: Ni‘mil hada... [‘do we do this?’ in Arabic]

R: In English... in English!

S2: Bard [‘it is cold’ in Arabic]

(Rana’s class 1)

When I was observing Rana's first class, one of her students asked for Rana's permission to go to the cafeteria using Arabic. Rana refused to let the student go as she wanted her to request that in English. The student tried but was not able to construct a grammatical sentence. Nevertheless, Rana insisted on using English and helped the student to construct the sentence and allowed her to go after that. Rana wanted her students to use English in communication, she said:

(In) Every class, say it in English, say that in English... Try that in English. Because this is everyday English, this is everyday English when they need to go to the bathroom, or they need to buy some water, or they need to go to the cafeteria. When they want to talk to someone, can I take this call, can I go to the bathroom, may I go and buy some more... may I go to the cafeteria? This is everyday English. This is something they need to know (Rana, Post-11).

Rana wanted her students to practise using 'everyday' English. She, also, thought that limiting the use of Arabic would give the students more opportunities to practise their English.

### **5.6.2 Oral feedback**

Rana believed that mistakes were essential in the process of language learning, she said: 'They need to learn from their mistakes. So, if they don't have any mistakes ... if they don't try it's not going to work' (Rana, Pre-I2). Rana thought that trying to learn entails making mistakes. She added in the same interview: '... After they finish, I will tell them this, this and that. Look, pay attention to the grammar, pay attention your pronunciation and that's it' (Rana, Pre-I2). To Rana, corrective feedback needs to be comprehensive and covers students' grammatical,

pronunciation and words usage mistakes. In her second class, she asked each pair of students to wait to be corrected after they finished their role-play.

## Episode 12

S1: Hi

S2: Hi

S1: Come here with me. Would you like erm... A chocolate cake?

S2: Yes, please.

S1: Would you like a hot drink.

S2: Yes, please.

S1: Tea or coffee.

S2: Tea.

S1: ok.. Would you like a Kabsah (a traditional Saudi dish that contains meat and rice)?

S2: No, I would like not.

R: Would you like, so No I would.

S2: No I would not...

R: that's it?

SS Yes.

R: Ok. Shadin. When you say Kabsah, when you say cake, don't use 'a'... some. Like some coffee, some tea, some cake, ok. At least cake or some cake or some kabsah. O! We didn't clap!

[Applause]

R: erm.. I'll tell you something. When you invite somebody, do you actually say 'come on here' [flat intonation, no smile]? Or do you say

‘come here’... ‘come in’ [in a welcoming tone with a smile]. I know you were enthusiastic. Don’t worry! Good... very good.

(Rana’s class 2)

In the previous example, she corrected both grammatical and intonation mistakes; Rana regularly corrected all types of mistakes. Sometimes she interrupted her students’ role-plays to correct their mistakes. In the following are two examples from episode 9 and episode 11,

S: What would like drink... drink?

R: What would you like... to drink?

S: To drink?

(Rana’s class 2)

S: No, I would like not.

R: Would you like, so No I would?

S: No I would not...

(Rana’s class 2)

In the previous two examples, Rana used recasts to correct her students’ mistakes in the middle of their role-plays. Then, she provided more detailed corrective feedback after they performed their role-plays immediately and before going back to their seats. When I asked about the reason, she said:

Because they would be in their comfort zone when they sit down. Yes. They are under the light and that’s... she will know, she will pay attention and she will be careful. But when she sits down she’s in her comfort zone; she doesn’t care (Rana, Post-I2).



This can explain Rana's students' hesitance to participate in speaking activities specifically role-plays. Rana's belief in comprehensive, direct and on-the-spot error correction might have contributed to Rana's students' reluctance to speak.

In addition to using recasts and direct error correction. In more than one class, Rana used choral drilling to correct her students' pronunciation mistakes. She asked students who made pronunciation mistakes to repeat the wrong word after her. Sometimes, she asked the whole class to repeat a word because one student pronounced the word incorrectly.

### **Episode 13**

S: Can you come to me pic...

R: Not me, my.

S: To my pic...

R: Picnic... Afnan... picnic... ladies... all of you together...picnic...

SS Bicnic.

R: Picnic.

SS Picnic.

R: Picnic.

SS Picnic.

(Rana's class 1)

Rana commented on this saying: 'Even if they don't have that problem, this would help them to avoid it ... it's like reassuring that what they know is correct' (Rana, Post-I3). The following is another example of pronunciation error correction:

## Episode 14

S1 was reading: Does your leg hurt /hɜrt/ [mispronounced hurt /hɜrt/]

R: Leg hurt..

S: /Hɜrt/

R: /Hɜrt/

S: /Hɜrt/

R: /Hɜrt/.. not /hɜrt/.. /hɜrt/

R: It's /ɜ/ .. Try to do this /ɜ/ hɜ... hɜ...

R: Repeat after me... hɜ... say /hɜ/... hurt... it's close to the sound o, so /hɜrt/.

S: /Hɜrt/

R: From here... put your fingers here... here at this point [pointing to her throat] and say /u/, so /hɜrt/.

Ss were laughing including the student she was talking to.

R: Come on say it 'hɜrt/.'

SS: /Hɜrt/.

R: /Hɜrt/.

SS /Hɜrt/.

R: /Hɜ/, /hɜ/...

S: /Hɜrt/ ...

R: /Hɜ/, /hɜ hɜrt/...

S: /Hɜrt/...

R: Yay! [Clapped] Al-hamdulillāh ['thank God' in Arabic].

(Rana's class 2)

Rana seemed to focus on pronunciation in her error correction on speaking activities; she rarely omitted any pronunciation mistakes in her observed classes. She corrected both segmental and suprasegmental mistakes (specifically intonation mistakes), unlike the pronunciation practice which was focused on segmental language features. She said commenting on correcting pronunciation mistakes:

...they need to know the pronunciation. And apparently they don't – most of them do not listen well to the pronunciation and the listening. They just listen to the information, not for the pronunciation or the accent or... I know they say this accent is very difficult, we cannot understand it but they do not actually listen to the words and try to imitate the same way they speak (Rana, Post-I2).

Rana's did not only want her students to pronounce the words in a correct way, as she aimed for a more of a native-like pronunciation. In episode 6, when she asked her students' to repeat the new vocabulary after her

R: Exciting (She softened the 'T' [American accent]).

SS Exciting (pronounced the 'T' normally without softening).

R: Exciting (with a softened 'T').

SS Exciting (No 'T' softening).

(Rana's class 1)

Rana's students pronounced the word 'exciting' correctly. However, she repeated the word again and stressed on the softened 'T' probably aiming that they would pronounce the word in a similar way (in an American accent). Rana, similar to other Saudis, was more familiar with the American accent and she had a slightly American accent. She also believed that the British accent was difficult for her students, she said: 'some of

them are familiar with the American accent but since this book is British, so they find it kind of difficult. And they don't understand sometimes whatever they hear' (Rana, Pre-I2).

Rana believed the importance of feedback lies in error correction, she said: '...Feedback is very critical. It's critical in everything because if you don't tell them you have made a mistake here and there, it's pointless' (Rana, Pre-I2). At the end of her error correction, she provided positive feedback. For example, in episode 12, she said: 'I know you were enthusiastic. Don't worry! Good... very good' (Rana's Class 2). She used 'good', 'very good' to encourage her students and she clapped for them sometimes. She said commenting on this:

'I need to get them positive – positive energy, something. I want to give them something positive. They have accomplished something. Reward them in a way' (Rana, Post-I2).

### **5.7 Influences on Rana's beliefs**

Rana's learning experience, her lack of training and her teaching context seemed to influence her teaching beliefs and consequently teaching practices. Rana started learning English at the age of nine in a private school in Makkah, Saudi Arabia. She thought that her English learning experience was not successful until she reached year six (12 years old). Watching films seemed to be the real starting point in Rana's English language learning experience.

I didn't understand a word in English until I decided because my father loves watching American movies or movies in general... So I started watching, my most favourite movie ever 'Home Alone' I kept watching it and I understood the story, I remembered the story and after I understood everything I started

focusing on the language, what they are saying the words. Because that is how I started constructing sentences (Rana, Pre-I1).

Rana felt that films contributed greatly to her English language learning experience. She continued using films to learn other languages since it proved to be successful in learning English.

I watch animation, Japanese animation and some Korean dramas; that is the second language I am trying to learn and I try to practise language with my friends. So we try to talk to each other in Japanese or in Korean and that is it (Rana, Pre-I1).

Rana was, also, practising her new learnt languages with her friends. Nevertheless, Rana felt that watching films and practising are not enough.

I want to go to Japanese... well, take some classes in Japanese language and take some lessons but of course, I can't find the time or the place. I know there are some schools in here but I don't think I have time for them (Rana, Pre-I1).

Rana seemed to value the importance of attending formal language classes to develop her newly learnt language. She said: 'I need formal classes, I need instruction' (Rana, Pre-I1). She also said referring to her students level, 'Those who did attend the classes regularly they have improved more than the others' (Rana, Post-I1).

At the time I interviewed Rana, she was trying to share what, she believed, helped her to be a successful language learner with her students. Rana talked about films in two of her post-observation interviews. She showed great enthusiasm to bring films into her classroom,

I want to bring a movie in the class so they would enjoy the language. They would watch the movie, enjoy the movie and enjoy the language, learn from the language' (Rana, Post-I1).

However, Rana was not able to bring films to her classroom because some of her colleagues told her that the institute administration might not agree (possibly for cultural reasons). Rana did not try to talk to the administration and she did not mention the reasons for that. She felt that the institute administration was putting pressure on her, she said: 'They killed me. They are killing me' (Rana, Post-I3). When I asked her why she was feeling distressed, she said: 'first of all because these little things that are not related to our actual teaching are actually thrown on us (Rana, Post-I3). Rana mentioned that she had to help in conducting a focus group with her students in short notice.

Instead of bringing films into the classroom, Rana tried to teach her students some strategies to learn English through watching films on their own.

You watch movies. Watch them. Look at something that you like. Pick a movie that you really like and you know the story. Just remove the subtitles and watch the movie again, focusing on what is actually being said, the language, focus on the English. Listen to the language. I don't know. Maybe some of them actually did that. One of them actually did. Mariam did and I was proud of her. I was happy (Rana, Post-I3).

When I asked Rana if her student (Mariam) benefited from watching films, she said: 'I believe so. She's getting better' (Rana, Post-I3). I asked Rana about the activities she found interesting when she was learning English, she said:

Well, presentations. I remember our teachers asking us to present something in English and that is when they actually tested our speaking skills. So yes I think I am going to do this to my students. At the end of this week, they will not have anything for a whole week, so I will ask them to do me something,

to bring me something interesting for them because I need them to be motivated (Rana, Pre-I1).

Rana did not seem to have a prepared plan of how she was going to implement presentations in her classes as the idea came to her mind while reflecting on her learning experience in the interview. She was not able to implement presentation in the classes I observed possibly due to some reasons she mentioned in the same interview 'time and energy.'

Rana's general beliefs about how speaking should be taught seemed to be influenced by ideas of 'language exposure' and 'language input' she possibly was introduced to in her linguistics courses at the University. These ideas were supported by her successful experience of learning through films. Rana believed that her students need to be exposed to the language they are learning and since there are rare opportunities for the students to be exposed to English outside the classroom (restaurants, hotels or having some foreign friends). Rana believed that exposure to the new language, practice and attending formal instruction lead to successful language learning. She believed that her students need to make an effort, as she did, to learn the language. However, she did not seem to be aware that her students, who were doing the course for the second time, may not be as motivated and enthusiastic as she was.

Rana wanted her classes to be similar to the classes she had as a student at the university. This was ideal because of the differences between the level of the course she was studying and the level of the course she has been teaching. She felt she was

not able to make her classes similar. Hence, she believed that her classes were not creative; a belief, which was created as a result of the failure of her ideal beliefs.

A number of elements in Rana's context of teaching influenced her instructional decisions: students' level, time pressure and exams were all influential on Rana's teaching of speaking. Also, my presence might have influenced Rana's teaching practice. Rana asked her students to report their pair activities in front of the whole class, which she did not use to do before, after I told her about my study 'I decided yesterday to ask them to actually perform their conversation in front of the entire class' (Rana, Pre-I2). However, this can also be a result of Rana's reflection on her practice in the pre-observation interview; she said: 'I didn't focus on speaking actually before that much. I let them speak to each other but I did not ask them to speak in front of the class, the whole class' (Rana, Pre-I2). In her second observed class, Rana asked her students to be active and quick, she was facing time pressure and she needed to finish the syllabus before exam time, she commented on this in her second post-observation interview:

The problem is that they (referring to the institute administration) all of a sudden decided to finish everything by Monday. And today I have to rush them through at 13, finish that last part from unit 12 and then rush them through unit 13 which will have more speaking and more grammar. I talked to them about the present materials before but I feel like I need to give them more of this. I need to explain more; I need to make it very clear and as usual time is an issue (Rana, Post-I2).

Rana's limited training and experience made her feel distressed as she did not have enough knowledge or skills to manage her challenging teaching situation and she



felt that the institute put more pressure on her rather than providing support in her first year of teaching.

## 5.8 Summary

The following table summarizes some of Rana's practices and the beliefs that underlie these practices.

Practice	Aspect of Beliefs	Explanation
<p>1. (a) Rana's classes were teacher-centered; she was controlling the classroom interaction.</p> <p>(b) She encouraged her students by providing praise to build their self-confidence and she forced them when they did not respond.</p>	About herself and her students	<p>1. (a) Feeling like a 'mother' to her students</p> <p>(b) Students had the ability to learn English but they were not making enough efforts.</p> <p>(c) Their competence may not be reflected in performance.</p>
<p>2. The amount of TTT is more than STT; students were provided with limited opportunities to speak.</p> <p>3. Prohibiting students' from using Arabic.</p> <p>4. The teaching of speaking was focused on accuracy with limited opportunities for fluency practice.</p>	About teaching speaking	<p>2. Students need to be provided with input and be exposed to the language.</p> <p>3. Using Arabic decreases the students' opportunities to practice English.</p> <p>4. Grammar is important for speaking development.</p>

Table 5.1: Rana's beliefs and practices

All the beliefs that were mentioned in the table were practical beliefs that were used by Rana to describe and explain her practices. Rana's beliefs (1) were the result of her ideals failure. She wanted to be a friend to her students and she wanted her classes to be similar to the classes she had at the university which were different in nature and purpose.

Rana's struggle between her ideal beliefs and the reality of her classroom and the tensions between Rana's beliefs and her practices were the result of 'a reality shock' which most novice teachers face in their first year (Farrell 2008). Rana was aware of her high expectations of her students. However, at the same time, she felt that they were not putting enough efforts towards their learning. Rana wanted her students' to be open to speak, which would make them more fluent, as she believed. Also, she believed that her students need to practise speaking. However, this was not reflected in her classroom practice where controlled speaking activities were dominant. Also, Rana provided on-the-spot comprehensive error correction. All these can be reasons, which might have contributed to her students' reluctance to speak.

Rana's views of how students' speaking can be improved had a strong influence on her classes which were focused on speaking knowledge rather than skills. Most of what Rana called speaking activities were grammar practice activities. While she expressed that she was aiming at creating a balance between form and meaning, this did not seem to happen in her classes, which were more focused on form.



## **6 Teacher 2: Nada**

### **6.1 Profile of the teacher**

Nada had been teaching English for three years when I conducted this case study. She started learning English at the age of 12 in the first year of intermediate school. She had completed a Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature in a Saudi Arabian University in 2007. Nada did not take any courses in teaching; she only attended some in-service training workshops at the institute where she was working. Similar to the structure of the previous chapter; this chapter starts with providing an overview of Nada's classes. Then, it highlights the characteristics of her approach in teaching of speaking and the beliefs that shaped her teaching practices.

### **6.2 Overview of Nada's classes**

Unlike Rana, who was teaching in a new building in the main university campus, Nada was teaching in an old building in another campus. The classroom was divided into two sections; each section was divided into four rows of fixed chairs (36 chairs in total). Nada felt that 'the seating is very much restricting' (Nada, Post-I3). 13 students attended the first and the second observed classes and 11 students attended the third. All Nada's observed classes were entirely course book-led; she was using *New Headway Plus Special Edition*, Intermediate course-book.

### 6.3 Nada's students

Nada was teaching level four, intermediate preparatory year students. When I asked Nada to describe her students' speaking level, she said that her students were 'below good' (Nada, Pre-I1). She added:

They aspire to master the skill of speaking. I am sure ... I am quite sure that they do have this desire. They want to speak English fluently but they just can't do it (Nada, Pre-I1).

Nada's comment suggests that there was a tension between her students' aspirations and their ability to speak English. She further explained her statement:

I mean they're motivated to learn but they don't want to speak. They have this desire; they want to speak English but they don't want to speak in front of other students because maybe they're shy. Although I have many... reservations concerning the word shy. No, it's not about being shy, why? Because I hate saying the word 'shy' I want to analyse the word 'shy' because once I let my students speak in their L1. At first, I was asking them a question and I wanted to get answers but none of them were speaking. And then I gave them the chance to speak in their L1 and I was very much amazed because they have lots of ideas. So I think it's not a problem with speaking in front of others because a person who has a problem with this, would not speak his L1 efficiently. But they were speaking. The student who used to be, I thought was shy, she was outgoing and talkative. And so I don't think it's a matter of shyness, not to that extent that we think (Nada, Pre-I1).

Nada did not see shyness as a problem that influenced her students' willingness to speak because of the way she interpreted the word 'shy.' She interpreted the word 'shy' as a general personality trait that would influence students' openness to speak in their first as well as their second language. When I asked Nada if her students' level relates to their reluctance to speak, she said: 'I would give this like 70%, the

students were not at an appropriate English level to do the speaking task, I ask them to do' (Nada, Pre-I1). Nada elaborated on her students' level saying:

Some they do know words because I told you, I give them key vocabulary but they don't know how to structure these words into a meaningful sentence. Sometimes their pronunciation makes their speaking incomprehensible (Nada, Pre-I1).

Nada said that her students have problems in sentence structure and pronunciation. I asked her if she teaches them pronunciation and she said: 'No, there is a part where we teach pronunciation in the course books but pronunciation is mainly deleted because we don't have time.' Nada talked about her students' problems in relation to speech comprehensibility which seemed to be a main aim in her speaking classes. When I asked Nada about her intended outcomes of teaching speaking to this group of students, she said:

I want them to be understood and I want them to convey whatever message they want to say clearly, regardless of grammar, pronunciation, they should be at an adequate level of grammar, pronunciation but most importantly I want them to be understood. As long as they're understood, that's fine (Nada, Pre-I2).

Nada was focused on her students' communicative success regardless of their accuracy. In fact, Nada felt that her students' fluency and accuracy were generally poor (Nada, Pre-I2). When I asked her about her views on fluency and accuracy, she said: 'A fluent speaker, a speaker who would speak... who masters a very big command of English and a speaker who won't hesitate much when speaking' (Nada, Pre-I2). An accurate speaker is the 'one who speaks good grammar, one who chooses the adequate vocabulary' (Nada, Pre-I2). Unlike Rana, Nada said she would choose to teach fluent rather than accurate students because she thought 'it's much

easier to make those students accurate than to make them fluent'. Nada had a good understanding of the technical meanings of these terms and she expressed her views well on them.

#### **6.4 Stages of speaking lessons**

When I asked Nada to describe her approach to teaching speaking, she said:

Okay, first of all I would start with a lead-in just to engage my students in the speaking activity, for example, if I was talking about your worst holiday, if their speaking task was about talk about your worst holiday then I would start with saying, "What are the advantages and disadvantages of travelling?" I would just try to do anything to let them engage in the task. And then I would set the task, I would explain the instructions very carefully, clearly and sometimes I do a demonstration. I myself would be one of a pair and show the speaking activity in action, or sometimes I let them read the instructions so I can make sure that they do understand what they are supposed to do. And then once they start in pairs, for example, I monitor and go around the class, help whoever needs help and listen to them speaking. And then at the end, I give the feedback (Nada, Pre-I1).

In these comments, Nada explained the stages of all her observed speaking lessons. Her speaking lessons went into three main stages: the lead-in activities, main speaking activities and oral feedback.

##### **6.4.1 Lead-in activities**

At the beginning of each of Nada's observed classes, students had a lead-in activity as explained in the following:

**First class:** whole-class discussion about removing the ban on single men to enter shopping centres without being accompanied by their families. Nada told her students about a situation she faced because of the ban removal and she asked them to express their opinions.

**Second class:** prediction group activity: students were divided into two groups, each group had to predict one of its members' dream job.

**Third class:** whole-class discussion about how students spend the monthly stipend they receive from their university.

The following episode is from Nada's first speaking class:

### Episode 15

N: I think you all know about this new law that men can go in malls now.

SS Yeah...

N: Yeah... you all know. You agree or disagree?

S1: Lā ('No' in Arabic) Disagree  
Some students show disagreement with the law and others agreed that single men should get into malls without restrictions.

N: It's a democratic class, girls. It's fine, so, ha...how about you girls? Are you with or against?

S2: Against.

S3: 'Aādi ('It's okay' in Arabic)... No problem...

N: No problem. You are fine with everything.

S4: No problem.

N: Well, for me, girls, I have no problem. Okay? I mean where would they go if they don't go to malls? What if they want to go shopping and they don't have sisters? What do they do? But when you like to have this ban for years. Like ten years, men are not allowed to go inside malls. Then, we just suddenly, let them in without passing any law, without any rules. How do you think it is gonna happen?

S5: It is gonna be mess.

N: Yes, it is gonna be a big mess. It was a very big mess, girls.



(Nada's class 1)

This extract reflected some characteristics of natural spoken English. For example, commonly spoken words such as: 'yeah,' and 'gonna' were used by both Nada and her students who seemed to imitate her input. Also, the use of recasts instead of explicit error correction to correct S5's missed article 'a' in the last two lines kept the conversation natural. In Nada's third class, the lead-in activity was about the students' monthly stipend. The following episode presents part of the discussion:

### **Episode 16**

N: How about the rest, girls? Okay, so, girls, none of you a ... none of you girls a ... give money to charities like to ... Al-Bir Association. Who can give names of charities here? Charities associations in Saudi Arabia. We have Al-Bir. What else, girls? What else? Come on, girls. We have Al-Bir association what else? I think there is one called Al-Eman. Do you know Al-Eman association? Do you know what is it for?

SS: No.

N: Okay, they take care of cancer patients. They give them money if they need money. They give them food if they need food. And of course, above all they take care of their health, so they buy medications for them. They put them in hospitals, okay. So none of you girls give money to charities? [in a sad tone] all shopping, all restaurants?

[Inaudible cross talk]

S4: If I want to give me I will give money to the... the people poor in the street...

N: Okay, so she gives money to poor people in the street. Like who?

S4: Children... Women...

N: Like the one near the traffic lights... Do you think...? I want to ask you, girls, do you think they are really poor?

SS Yes... No.

N: You think they're poor?

SS No.

N: You think they're poor?

SS Yeah. Some of them.

N: Okay. The ones you think they are poor, I think they are [she mentioned a nationality], I guess.

SS Yeah.

N: Those who think they are poor, so you give them money, right? And those who think they are not poor, you don't give them money because you think they don't deserve money.

S5: No.

N: Do you give them?

S5: No.

N: Why you don't give them?

S5: I don't believe.

N: Aha, you don't believe them. How about the rest, ha, girls?

S6: I don't care poor or rich, just give, for Allah.

N: Nice, she said, I don't care. I don't want to investigate if he is rich if he is poor. All I care about is my intention because she wants to do a good thing, she doesn't care. Good point! How about the rest?  
Silence

S7: I think they need the money, if they didn't need the money, they will not in the street, the sun and hot and wait for something they need. If someone push him, like that. You have to help.

N: Okay. That's her point of view. Well, girls, my point of view, maybe some of them do need money. But what I think is I shouldn't always

be giving money because they will keep asking people. They will keep asking people for money.

S8: No. Sometime, you will find poor people and someday no, so you have to give.

N: So she is saying, she is afraid one day, if she wants to search for poor people, you won't find them, that's why!

(Nada's class 3)

Nada was expecting that some of her students would tell her they donate money to charities. However, none of them mentioned charities, so she asked them about donating to charities directly. Some of the students said they prefer to give money to street beggars. Nada used this point to start a debate about giving money to street beggars where students expressed different opinions about the issue. Nada seemed to be interested in raising debatable issues in her speaking classes. In her first observed class, she chose to discuss a controversial social issue; she commented on this:

It's very significant, first of all, because this is a topic of interest to my students. So number one, I have this interest factor and then because it's a social issue; I am sure that there will be those who are with and those who are against, so this controversial factor will trigger the students to speak more (Nada, Post-I1).

Nada felt that discussing social controversial issues enhances students' engagement and encourages more participation.

#### **6.4.2 Main speaking activities**

In the first and the second observed classes, Nada taught reading and speaking and in the third observed class, she taught listening and speaking. The following presents how

the speaking activities were conducted in Nada's second observed lesson (Appendix 11):

**Vocabulary:** Nada made sure students were familiar with the vocabulary of the questions in Exercise 1 about the students' dream jobs.

**Reading:** Nada divided her students into two groups and asked the first group to read about iron workers and the second group to read about hurricane hunters.

**Watch and discuss:** she played two video reports about ironworkers and hurricane hunters in the US. The videos showed information about the two jobs.

**Feedback from students:** Nada asked her students to give their general impression about the two jobs.

**Information exchange between pairs:** Nada asked students from different groups to pair up together to exchange information about the different articles they read.

**Whole-class discussion:** Exercise 2.

**Group discussion:** Exercise 3.

Nada started by familiarizing her students with vocabulary. This was a practice she followed in all her classes, she commented on this:

So I would check first their knowledge of the key vocabulary of this speaking task, if I know that they weren't ready, if I know that they lack the vocabulary needed, I would give them key vocabulary of the language (Nada, Pre-11).

Nada encouraged her students to use bilingual dictionaries to check the meaning of new words. In the course book, speaking activities were either combined with vocabulary or reading. When I asked Nada about her views on teaching reading and speaking, she said:

I am with teaching reading with speaking because reading is a productive skill and speaking is... No! The opposite. Reading is a receptive skill and speaking is a productive one. So I think it is very important to pair a productive with a receptive skill (Nada, Pre-I2).

Nada probably had another reason to support teaching reading and speaking. When I asked Nada about how she learnt English, she said: 'Well maybe from watching movies, reading newspapers, watching the news, mainly reading' (Nada, Pre-I1). Reading has contributed to Nada's English own learning experience. In Nada's third speaking class, she had the following speaking activity (Appendix 12):

### **Episode 17 (a)**

N: Read the question, first, girls.

S1: What do you...?

N: Okay, girls, imagine that you \$30.000. If you have \$30.000 and you, want to give it to charity. How would you divide this money and who would you give to, which charities? So we can start our sentence with 'if' because...? Yes, Hanan, you can continue.

S1: If I had,

N: Have or had, girls?

S2: Had because she or he or it.

S3: Because not true.

N: Yes, because it is imaginary, because it is impossible, so If I had...

SS: \$ 30.000

N: \$ 30.000

SS: to give away,

N: to give away I...?

SS: would

N: Why would?

SS: because 'had.'

N: because 'had'... I would; this is the structure... Simple past. If we have 'had' in the first part of the conditional, simple past, then, the other part will be, 'would'. If I had \$30.000 to give away, I would..... erm..?

SS: give

N: Give it to...Whatever you will say...You will say who you will give it to and how you'll divide the money, so who and how you will divide the money. Girls, I don't want you to work alone, I want you to work in groups. Each three will be in one group. You can choose the group.

[Students started forming groups]

N: Okay girls, I don't want you to say, I want you to write...a ... If you had \$30.000 Who would you give your money to and how would you divide your money? You have 5 minutes, girls? Write on a paper, girls because then you will say what you wrote to your friends.

[Nada was going around helping students and answering their questions]

(Nada's class 3)

Nada revised some of the unit main grammar rules before the start of the activity and this was the only time I observed Nada teaching or revising grammar rules in her speaking lessons. This activity was meant to be conducted in pairs according to the course-book. However, Nada decided to implement it in groups. She asked her students to plan for it in writing. Then, one of the group members had to share her answers with the rest of the class. The following is an example of a student sharing her answers with the class.

## Episode 17 (b)

- N: Okay, girls, are you ready to listen to each other?
- SS: Yes
- N: Do you wanna listen to each other?
- SS: Yes.
- N: Who wants to start first? Which group? Anhar, Amal and Abrar? Would like to say it here? Or would you like to come to the front of the class?
- S2: Here.
- N: Would you like to do it, sitting?
- S2: Yes.
- N: Okay, as you like.
- S2: If I have \$ 30.000.
- N: Aha, if I have \$30.000. Let's listen very well, girls because we will vote for the best answer.
- S2: I will give it to two charities. One of all, I will give it to Cancer Research and to old people. I will divide it myself and I will give \$ 15.000 to each of them because I think they are the most people who need to ... this money and because we are Muslims, so we have to give money to people who need... it when we can.
- N: Okay, so we have to give money to people who need it when we can.
- S2: and this is a good manner of Muslim.
- N: Okay. And these are the manners of ...
- S2: a good Muslim.
- N: Okay. Thanks a lot. A very good response [clapping], so we'll call this Anhar's group.

(Nada's class 3)

As illustrated in the underlined example above, students had the opportunity to produce longer turns and more complex sentences. Giving the students' time to plan for their activity seemed to have a good impact on the quality of their speaking. However, planning was done in writing (in groups). Also, the planning was not guided Nada did not give details of what to write (notes or full answers) or how it should be produced (collaborative or individual writing).

### **6.4.3 Oral feedback**

In the second pre-observation interview, Nada said that her students have 'major errors in grammar, selection of words and pronunciation, even in stress intonation' (Nada, Pre-I2). Nada's main correction strategy was recast, her recasts took different forms:

#### **1. Repeating the phrase/sentence with the right answer**

Example:

S1: he have a...  
N: He has.  
S1: He has a...

(Nada's class 2)

#### **2. Incorporating the recast in a longer sentence**

Example:

N: when you read the article you'll know when or where actually they will sleep... Okay... So they can go skiing, they can aa ... go dog sliding ... How about the second hotel? What do you think people can do in the Burj Al Arab Hotel? It's in Dubai what do you think people can do there?  
S: loo.. Looking at the sea ...  
N: Okay. So they enjoy looking at the sea. They relaxed there.



S: They play tennis on the top floor.

(Nada's class 1)

### **3. Incorporating the recast in a question 'prompt':**

S: it was... it was especially because...

N: Why was Makkah hotel special?

S: because view on the Al-Haram (The Holy Mosque).

(Nada's class 1)

Nada implemented recasts in different ways. In the first and the third examples, recasts were followed by students' uptake where they repaired their answers. In the second example, the feedback was not followed by students' uptake as the provided recast did not seem to be clear because it was incorporated in a longer sentence; it went unnoticed and the students continued speaking. When I asked Nada about using recasts in her classes, she said:

Okay, let me tell you something. I like to ... I don't usually follow this kind of feedback [referring to recasts]. But it depends on the kind of student. If I know this student is confident and I know my direct feedback to this student after the whole class, won't hurt the student, I won't let her feel bad; then it's okay for me. I would give them a direct feedback and I would explain why this was a mistake and how to avoid this mistake the next time. But if I found that the student was a bit shy, or the student was ... or I barely could let the student speak then, of course, I will not choose this kind of feedback [referring to direct feedback] (Nada, Post, I3).

Nada's beliefs about her students can explain her choice of using recasts. She felt that this group of students were reluctant to speak and explicit correction might inhibit them from speaking. Nada praised her students when they did well in the activities.

Examples:

- N: Thank you ... very good [applause] and now let's move to the other group (Nada's class 1).
- N: Perfect! Perfect! Good girl! Good group. Now we'll move to another group (Nada's class 2).
- N: Good answer. See, good ideas. What else? (Nada's class 2).
- N: Good point! How about the rest? (Nada's class 3).

Nada's positive feedback included showing engagement or satisfaction in what her students were saying. In the following are some examples:

### **1. Repetition**

S: They play tennis on the top floor.

N: play tennis. Aha ...

S: I saw (a name of a tennis player)

N: You saw a match there? I didn't see this

(Nada's class 1)

### **2. Using 'aha'**

S: He is a meteorologist.

N: Aha.

S: He works with scientists.

N: Aha.

S: There is no average day in his job.

N: Aha.

(Nada's class 2)

In the first example, Nada repeated part of the answer spontaneously; she seemed genuinely interested in what her student was saying. In the second example, Nada used the word 'Aha' to comment on her students' answers to show them that she

was satisfied with what they were saying. When I asked Nada to comment on her discursal feedback to her students, she said:

It's really important to make the student feel that she is talking ... when she is talking someone is listening to what she's saying, not there just to tell her ... say an answer and then to move to another student. I have to comment on each answer. I think that's part of making a student feel appreciated. And also again, to give her confidence (Nada, Post-I1).

Nada felt that showing engagement in what the students were saying was a very important purpose of feedback. She emphasized the importance of commenting on students' answers to make them feel appreciated, she added:

It very much affects them because this will make a student ... will like motivate a student to answer again and to participate again in my class because she knows that she's not neglected, she knows that her teacher is listening to what she's saying. She knows that her teacher is commenting on what she is saying. And her teacher does care about what she's saying (Nada, Post-I1).

Nada's feedback was generally positive and focused on motivating her students to speak and her error correction was covert and instant. She believed that her way of dealing with students' mistakes contributed to their motivation, she said:

I've been teaching these students now for two weeks and as I told you earlier, what I was trying to plan to the early days is to give them confidence and to make them feel assured that it is okay to make mistakes. And I gave them ... I think my personality; I gave them that calm atmosphere just to talk (Nada's, Post-I1).

Nada added:

Well I think if it were someone else other than me and I'm not talking about a good teacher but I'm talking about a teacher who does not motivate their students, then the students won't be talking. I say this because I want to stress on the part I played to make those students speak because I have seen these same students before like two weeks ago and they were completely reluctant to speak. And nothing changed, as far as I know, nothing changed,

the same situation, the same hours, the same everything but I think that I did most of it, hopefully (Nada's, Post-I1).

Nada was confident about her influence on her students' willingness to communicate because of the way she dealt with their mistakes and how she managed her classes more generally.

### **6.5 Interaction in Nada's speaking lessons**

Four patterns of interaction were observed in Nada's speaking classes:

- Whole class (T → SS)
- Group discussion (SS → SS)
- Reporting group discussion: one student from each group (S→T)
- Information exchange - Pair work (S→ S)

(Nada's class 1)

When I asked Nada about her rationale in implementing pair, group or individual work in her classes, she said:

First of all, I do this to create a kind of balance between grouping and pairing and individual work. But why do I choose this? Of course, I choose this on a basis but which basis? I would say I would let them work in groups. The task was a bit difficult for a paired work and for an individual work. So in these kinds of tasks, I would let them work in groups. And in tasks where I think that each member of a group would do something to contribute to finish a task. Those kinds of tasks like conversational tasks, when a student will be student A, the other one will be student B and one is asking, the other one is answering. Individual work, they're normally the easiest tasks (Nada, Post- I1).

Nada explained that there are two principles for implementing group, pair, or individual activities: the difficulty of the task and the interactive pattern it lends

itself to: i.e. group work for tasks that require collaboration between a group of three or more. In the following, I discuss these different patterns of interaction in details and I give examples from Nada's speaking lessons.

### **6.5.1 Group work**

Group work was implemented in the main speaking activities in all Nada's observed classes. The following episode presents an example of group work from Nada's second observed class:

#### **Episode 18**

N: Now let's go to number 3 (Appendix 11), girls. Now we have three questions:

1. What exactly is a 'hurricane hunter' and 'a cowboy in the sky'?
2. Which of these job, of these two jobs, do you find most interesting?
3. And, would you like to do either of them?

I'll give you 10 minutes and I want you to work in groups and answer these 3 questions, okay? And then after 10 minutes I'll ask each group to give me her (their) answers. [Nada was going around monitoring the group discussions]

After 10 minutes, Nada asked each group to answer one question. She had four groups (question one was divided into two parts).

(Nada's class 2)

Similar to (Episode 17 'a'), this activity was meant to be done in pairs according to the teacher guide. However, Nada chose to implement it in groups. She did not seem to apply her principle 'group work is for more difficult tasks' as this activity did not seem to be challenging enough. The first question is a reading comprehension question, the second and the third questions were closed-ended and did not

encourage much speaking. In addition, the students had shown that they were not interested in the topic of ‘hurricane hunters and ironworkers’ in a previous activity in the same class. When students had to report what they discussed, Nada asked them to say why they found one of the jobs interesting. The following is an example of Nada’s discussion with one of the groups:

### **Episode 19**

N: Now this group will answer; so let’s listen to them. Which of the jobs you think is the most interesting?

S1: I think...a...most interesting

N: Aha, so the most interesting job...

S1: Hurricane hunter because you can travel so much to a lot of countries.

N: Okay, because you can travel to a lot of countries... What else? Ha, Abrar and Amal, can you think of ideas? It doesn’t have to be from the reading, girls. Just think why do you think this is the most interesting? Why a cowboy, for example, in the sky?

S2: He have a...

N: He has, aha.

S2: He has a... different information from anybody about ...

N: Aha.

S2: And about meteorology.

N: Okay. So he collects information. And his job, do you think it’s important?

S3: Yes [Over speaking].

- N: Yes. It's very important. Because without them, we won't know, for example, if this hurricane is very dangerous and we need to stay at our home. What do you think of these people?
- S3: You must study math.
- N: Aha, so she likes Math so much that's why she thinks this job is interesting, so why do you think ' a cowboy in the sky' is an interesting job?
- S3: I think it is about ... a...
- N: Why do you think a cowboy in the sky is not as interesting as a hurricane hunter? This group? What don't you like about cowboy in the sky? What don't you like about being an ironworker?
- S2: The cowboy in the sky works under the sun and have a disease and headache and...
- N: So he works under the sun and he might have a headache.
- S2: Not a healthy job.
- N: It's not a healthy job, you think.
- S2: The sun is dangerous for skin.
- N: The sun is dangerous for the skin. Good answer. See, good ideas. What else?
- S1: I'm afraid of high places.
- N: Aha, she is afraid of high places. She is afraid of height. Good! Good group.

(Nada's class 2)

Students were more open to participating when Nada asked about why they were not interested in the jobs as the question allows them to express themselves. However, this question was asked at the end of the discussion. Generally, group work took a controlled shape where Nada gave instruction, monitored the group and finally led whole class feedback. Nada changed two pair activities to group activities; however,

she did not change any of the questions in the activities. The group activities in Nada's classes did not reflect a strong sense of collaborative group work: i.e., students did not work collaboratively on the activities and they gave individual answers to the activity questions.

### 6.5.2 Teacher-student interaction

Most of the activities in Nada's classes were teacher-fronted. Therefore, the predominant pattern of interaction was Teacher – student (s) interaction ( $T \rightarrow S(S)$  or  $S(S) \rightarrow T$ ). It had different forms. Firstly, reporting group activities where students had to report a summary of their group discussion. Secondly, whole-class discussions (lead-in activities). The following episode is an example of ( $T \rightarrow SS$ ) interaction from Nada's first class:

#### Episode 20

##### *Prediction activity*

N: So what do you think people do when they go to Ice hotels? Why... why do they go to the Ice Hotel?

SS It is different.

N: It's different. It is...Because the title. What is the title... Hotels with

SS With difference.

N: Hotels with difference. They are unusual. So what do you think when people go to this Ice Hotel? What do they do? Or when people go to Burj Al Arab hotel, what do they do?

S: Take photos.



N: Take photos ... okay...I think people will take photos in all three hotels. Okay ... the first one is and ice hotel, so will people go swimming?

SS No.

N: No they will die.

SS Skiing.

N: They go skiing... I think... What else?

SS They slept.

N: Okay. Well actually if they slept in ice beds, will they ever wake up? No, they will die!

SS [laughing]

N: When you read the article you'll know when or where actually they will sleep... Okay... So they can go skiing, they can aaa ... go dog sliding ... How about the second hotel? What do you think people can do in the Burj Al Arab Hotel? It's in Dubai what do you think people can do there?

SS Loo... looking at the sea...

N: Okay. So they enjoy looking at the sea. They relaxed there.

S: They play tennis on the top floor.

N: Play tennis... Aha.

S: I saw (name of a tennis player)

N: You saw a match there? I didn't see this.

SS They can know about the Arabian customs.

N: Yes ... they can know about the Arabian customs. What else? What can people do? There is a there a sea, girls? So what would they do?

SS: Swimming ... fishing...

N: Fishing... yes... They will go fishing ... Aha ... They will go shopping, of course. It's Dubai ... Okay the last hotel

SS: Relax ... they relax... Swimming

N: Relax ... swimming... Aha.

SS: A lot of fun.

(Nada's class 1)

This is a typical example of whole class interaction in Nada's speaking lessons. The pattern of interaction can generally be described as IRF: initiation, response and feedback. The underlined part of the discussion is an example of this pattern where Nada initiated the discussion, did most of the talking and controlled the proceedings. She commented on the way she managed her classes in relation to her experience as a learner:

Okay. What I am avoiding is back to the days when I was a learner, as I told you, the class was all about the teacher and the teacher talking time was way more than the students' talking time and this is what I'm avoiding now. Now, I give the students more opportunity to speak and I prefer to ... not stay silent but to help them speaking. And to help make the class student centred (Nada, Pre- I1).

Nada stated that she was trying to make her classes more student-centred and she was observed encouraging her students to express their opinions freely. However, she was not able to make she classes students-centred as she was controlling rather than facilitating the classroom interaction. In Episode 19, Nada took more and longer turns than her students. Almost all activities in Nada's classes reflected this pattern of interaction. Nada did not feel that she is a controlling teacher, she said commenting on her role in the third observed class:

I wasn't like the controller teacher; I was joking with the students and we had a chat and it was a friendly environment, that's one factor why they were motivated. (Nada, Post-13).

Nada felt that she was not controlling her classes because of how she interpreted the role of a controlling teacher. She interpreted control in terms of giving her students the freedom to express their opinions rather than giving them control over their learning: i.e. initiating interaction. Nada provided a friendly environment for her students to express their opinions; she told her students 'this is a democratic class' in two observed classes to encourage them to express their opinions freely. She used this phrase in her first observed class while she was encouraging her students to accept their disagreement on the discussed issue. When I asked Nada why she was emphasising this, she said:

Okay, just to make sure that every student has her rights in the class, has her rights to object and has her rights to express – an opinion and if something goes against the students, any students will, then she is fine and it's okay, they're okay to tell, to say that. So just to maintain a healthy environment and to make sure that everyone is comfortable while learning (Nada, Post-12).

To Nada, a controlled class is the opposite of a democratic class. She used the word 'democratic' metaphorically to convey that students have the freedom to express their opinions. While her students were given the freedom to speak, the way Nada controlled the class interaction limited their speaking opportunities as the students did not have many opportunities to discuss among themselves or to plan for their activities. The following episode is part of the lead-in discussion in Nada's first class, which was discussed in 6.4.

### **6.5.3 Pair work**

Pair work was implemented as part of the reading activities rather than the speaking activities in Nada's speaking lessons. Nada had one role-play in the course-book in the first speaking class; however, she omitted that part. When I asked Nada about the omitted part, she said:

Well, I was planning to do this part, you know, the 'what do you think' part and this is the part where I was going to focus on speaking. But apparently, I just forgot to do it; I was going to do it after the break but I forgot. So if I did it, then this will be the part where I focus on speaking the most (Nada, Post-I1).

The English classes were long (3-4 hours per day). Possibly, Nada forgot to do the activity, as she did not have a written lesson plan for her classes. Also, this might suggest that role play activities were not a main element in Nada's speaking classes.

### **6.6 Use of L1**

Nada allowed her students to use Arabic to translate some new vocabulary words. Also, she allowed her students to use bilingual dictionaries. At the same time, she was trying to limit the use of Arabic and encourage more use of English in her classes. In her second class, she asked her students not to use Arabic in their group discussion. In the third class, when one of her students started to explain in Arabic, she told her: 'In English, please.' Nada commented on the use of L1 in her classes saying:

Okay. I believe it is always easier to speak in your L1. I myself, it is way easier for me to speak Arabic than to speak English, okay. And that is the reason why students choose to speak L1, although sometimes they do know

the words, they do know how to structure sentences but they don't want, that's the easiest way to go you know. So if I let them do it this way they won't learn. So unless I push and I stress on using English, they won't (Nada, Post-I1).

Nada believed that her students choose to use Arabic sometimes although they know how to structure the same sentence in English because it is simply easier. This seemed to contradict what Nada said in her first pre-observation interview; students 'don't know how to structure these words into a meaningful sentence' (Nada, Pre-I1). She also said that the majority of them (70%) are not at an appropriate level to do their given speaking activities.

### **6.7 Influences on Nada's teaching of speaking**

The course book seemed to have a strong influence on Nada's teaching practice. Nada had positive beliefs about the course book and the teacher guide, she said:

What I like about *New Headway Plus* is they integrate all skills together and you know we have a special edition of this *New Headway Plus*, so it fits our culture (Nada, Pre-I2).

Nada added: '... we have plenty of activities and the teachers' book is of a great help' (Nada, Pre-I2). The teacher guide influenced the structure of Nada's classes and her instructional decisions. Unlike Rana, Nada did not find her learning experience interesting. She tried to avoid what she experienced as a learner where she did not have the opportunity to speak freely. The influences on Nada's beliefs were not easy to explore as she gave little information about her learning experience and her teacher training.

Practice	Aspect of	Explanation
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## 6.8 Summary

Nada's teaching of speaking seemed to be largely shaped by the course book and indeed the teacher guide. However, her practices sometimes deviated from what is required in the course book or recommended in the teacher guide. Nada expressed some general beliefs that were reflected in her practice. The following table presents some example of these beliefs:

	Beliefs	
1. (a) Nada tried to create a safe environment for her students by providing praise.  (b) Nada used covert correction (recasts) to encourage her students to speak.  2. Nada tried to motivate her students by using lead-in activities and by providing positive feedback.	About herself	1. Nada believed that she was a source of motivation for her students.
	About her students	2. (a) Students have tensions between their aspirations and their ability (They aspire to speak English but they cannot).  (b) Nada felt that her students were reluctant to speak and overt feedback would inhibit them from speaking.
3. Nada followed most of the instructions in her teacher guide.	About teaching materials	3. The course book is good; it has plenty of activities and the teacher guide is useful.
4. The topics of the lead-in activities in class 1 and 3 were about social issues.	About teaching speaking	4. Discussing social issues is important because it is interesting and motivating for students' to express their opinions.
5. Nada provided her students with key vocabulary before they start the speaking activities.		5. Vocabulary is a basic element in teaching speaking.
6. Nada's teaching of speaking was more focused on communicative success rather than the accuracy of what her students said.		6. Comprehensibility is a main aim in teaching speaking.

Table 6.1: Nada's beliefs and practices

The previous tables presented some of Nada's practical beliefs which were observed in her teaching classes. Nada had negative beliefs about the nature of interaction in her English language classroom as a learner. Therefore, she aimed to create a

motivating environment for her students and make them more willing to speak regardless of any mistakes they would make. This was reflected in her positive feedback and her gentle indirect error correction. Also, Nada added lead-in activities to her classes to motivate her students to speak. However, not all Nada's stated beliefs were reflected in her practice. The following table presents a summary of the tensions between Nada's beliefs and practices.

Aspect of Beliefs	Beliefs description	Practice
About self	1. Nada was not a controlling teacher.	1. Nada controlled the speaking interaction in her class. 2. Speaking lessons were teacher-centered.
Learning English speaking	2. TTT needs to be less than STT.	3. Nada's speaking turns were longer than her students. TTT was generally more than STT.
	3. A balance needs to be created between group, pair and individual work.	4. No pair work was observed in Nada's classes.

Table 6.2: Tensions between Nada's beliefs and her teaching of speaking

Tensions between Nada's beliefs and her practices were probably the result of two types of constraints: personal (lack of training and limited pedagogical knowledge) and contextual (students' level and prescribed materials).



## 7 Teacher 3: Maha

### 7.2 Profile of the teacher

Maha had been teaching English for four years when I conducted this case study. She started learning English at an early age in a private school. She had completed a Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Translation in a private Saudi University in 2006. Maha did not take any courses in education at the university but had attended some ELT related symposiums and conferences.

### 7.3 Overview of Maha's classes

Maha was teaching in the main university campus. Her classroom had fixed chairs and she usually stood at the front of the class whether she was leading discussions or monitoring pair or group work activities. Maha showed her dissatisfaction with the seating arrangement in her classroom, she said:

I don't like having fixed chairs, especially in English classes, because English classes it has lots of group work and, if the seating is not flexible, how can we achieve the goal of having groups, working together and sharing ideas (Maha, Post-I2).

Maha showed positive views towards group work, however; I did not observe any group speaking activities in Maha's classes. Further, all Maha's observed classes were entirely course book-led. She was using *New Headway Plus Special Edition*, Intermediate course book. Maha was the only teacher who asked her students to do some of the exercises in the course book as homework which gave her more time to implement supplementary activities.

#### 7.4 Maha's students

Maha was teaching level four, intermediate preparatory year students. 20 students attended the first and second observed classes while only 12 students attended third class. This section presents Maha's beliefs about her students' level and motivation. In the first pre-observation interview, Maha expressed negative views about her students when I asked her to describe their speaking level, she said:

...When you enter a level 4 class, you have a lot of expectations and the students did not match my expectations. Why? Because they don't know, for example, the word for some basic... the meaning of basic words, like for example, one of them today she told me: I don't know the meaning of 'heavy.' And it's just a very basic word that shouldn't be ... and this question shouldn't be asked at such a level but I'll try my best to help them to pass this level and, as I told them today, I told them English is not about passing or having A or B, it's about being able to speak the language. Even if you have A as a grade and I start a conversation with you and you are not able to respond to the conversation, so you failed in the language. You just passed on papers but in the language you took F. It's all about actually speaking (Maha, Pre-I1).

Maha had negative beliefs about her students because their level did not meet her expectations. Her high expectations influenced how she felt about her classes, she said:

Actually, it's depressing and humiliating that going through all of these three levels with so many teachers and having these long English working hours, long teaching English hours – we have every day three hours of teaching. But that shows that students are memorising. Unfortunately, they are memorising the rules; they are memorising even the writing essays. They are not practising the language. As I said, they are just memorising and as long as they are memorising they are dealing with English as if it's Maths and it's not Maths. I told them, it's not Maths. It's a language; it's a daily life activity. You know what I mean. (Maha, Pre-I1).

This quote showed she viewed learning speaking or learning a language more generally. She felt that her students see language as a set of rules that needs memorisation while she sees it as a consistent practice. Maha continued expressing her disappointment:

It's humiliating for both the student and the teacher. It's humiliating for a teacher who has a high educational degree that she, at the end, this is the result. The result is that her students at Level 4 are as if they are at Level 1. She did not do anything. And we had a meeting with our Dean the day before; maybe you heard about it. She said that we had a lot of 'F students' last module and it's a shameful result. We have to change ... there is something wrong going on with our teaching method and I don't know what but from my own point of view I believe that we miss practice. We give a lot of rules but we don't have time to practise (Maha, Pre-I1).

Maha seemed concerned about her student' level, her tone and the words she used 'humiliating and depressing' showed how much the issue was of great concern to her. According to Maha, her students were unaware of the complex nature of learning a language; they depended heavily on memorisation. At the same time, she felt that teachers may not be giving enough time for practice. Maha was emotional; she felt that her efforts and her fellow teachers' efforts were useless. Part of Maha's anxiety might be influenced by the meeting she had with the head of the female section of the institute (vice-dean), Maha commented on that meeting, she said:

...Even our respectful doctor, she said in the last meeting that how come, teachers, we have students who passed Level 4 with high grades and when I start a conversation with her she cannot respond? Because she only memorised the theories, she did not have even one hour of speaking practice a day (Maha, Pre-I1).

Maha was worried that her students may pass the course without being able to speak or may not be able to pass at all. The oral examination weighs only 10% of the

whole course grade; therefore, students can pass the course without passing the speaking oral test. This explains why Maha described this matter as humiliating as she might be questioned if her students passed the course with low speaking proficiency. Maha tried to explain her students' problems with speaking:

They don't want speaking. They don't like speaking. They believe that standing in front of all of their colleagues or their classmates and speaking about any topic is really embarrassing, from their own point of view. They always care about not making mistakes in public. They don't care about how to improve their speaking. They just worry about what I'm going to say, what are the mistakes that I'm going to have? And whenever we tell them, speak and don't be afraid, just speak and say whatever you have in your mind, they still feel shy and they still feel that they are not up to the level of speaking a language (Maha, Pre-I1).

She added: 'the main reason that they don't speak, especially in class, is that they're shy because they're shy and they feel that their language is not that good' (Maha, Post-I1).

Maha mentioned that her students do not want to speak publicly. The dominance of whole class interaction in Maha's speaking lessons can be one reason of Maha's students' shyness and reluctance to speak. She was focusing on public speaking and there were limited opportunities for private speaking. Although Maha's beliefs about her students seemed generally negative, she showed some positive beliefs towards participation in the class, she said:

Actually, they are good in participation; they want to participate all the time. This is only maybe ... they feel that maybe the teacher is motivating them to participate, so they participate. They have participation (Maha, Pre-I1).

Maha here was referring to her students' participation in class activities where students usually have to give short answers for specific questions. When I asked Maha how her students can be more motivated to speak, she said:

I believe that their environment, they have to have an environment that supports them in speaking the language and what I mean by environment is their circle outside the class, their family. Most of them, they don't have even one member in their family who knows how to speak the language. And when they are not speaking it outside the class I believe that even inside the class they will not be that highly motivated. They always prefer to use Arabic, because it's easier, because it's more practiced than English, which is rarely used and in class only (Maha, Pre-I1).

Maha's own learning experience seemed to influence the way she viewed motivational factors. Maha mentioned that she used to speak English with her sister, English is 'a daily life activity' (Maha, Post-I1). Therefore, she believed that students need to have someone to practice speaking English with to help them to be more motivated. She was focused on external factors rather than internal class factors.

## **7.5 Speaking activities**

When I asked Maha about how her students can develop their speaking skills, she said:

First of all, they have to increase their vocab. Their vocabulary is really ... they don't have that huge number of new words. Even advanced level, they don't have that huge variety of words that they can use while speaking, so they have to increase their vocabulary. Of course, they have to use grammatical rules – not use them, to apply them while they are speaking. And basically grammar, words and last of all, practise. They just have to practise; this is what they need (Maha, Pre-I1).

In *New Headway Plus Special Edition*, speaking is usually taught with another skill: e.g., reading or listening, with vocabulary or in the everyday English section. The following table presents a summary of how Maha taught speaking with different skills:

*First class*

**A. Listening and speaking**

- General questions about the topic 'The life of a retired man.'
- Pair discussion
- Students reported their answers back to the class
- Listening
- Whole class discussion
- Five minutes speaking activity 'short conversation' (teacher → student)

*Second class*

**B. Listening and speaking**

- General questions about the topic 'Brothers and sisters'.
- Maha asked her students to work individually to answer the speaking questions (class survey).
- Students reported their answers back to the class
- Listening
- She asked her students for their feedback (whether they liked the listening and speaking part or they did not).

**C. Vocabulary and Speaking**

- Maha explained what a character adjective is and she asked students to give examples.
- Personality test exercise: each student was asked to answer one question (whole class).
- She explained the meanings of the adjectives that were mentioned in the exercise.
- She asked her students to describe themselves using three character adjectives.
- She asked her students to pronounce all the adjectives after her as some students mispronounced some of the adjectives.
- Vocabulary exercise.
- She asked two students to volunteer to describe their best friend using character adjectives (speaking).

- The five minutes speaking activity (teacher → student short conversation)
<i>Third class</i>
<p><b>D. Reading and speaking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General questions about the topic ‘football’ (Short class discussion)</li> <li>- Maha divided the students into four groups and she asked them to read four different parts of the reading passage in addition to the main part of the reading passage.</li> <li>- Whole class discussion</li> </ul>

Table 7.1: Summary of Maha’s speaking lessons

As can be seen in the above table, there are four types of speaking activities: lead-in activities, whole class discussion, group/pair activities and the five minutes speaking activity. In the following, I discuss these four types of activities.

### 7.5.1 Lead-in

When teaching listening/reading and speaking, Maha started with some general questions to lead to the topic of the lesson. In Maha’s first class, she taught listening and speaking (Table 7.1), she started by asking her students some general questions about the age of retirement and the life of retired people. The discussion between Maha and her students lasted for about 6:00 minutes. The following episode presents the second half of this discussion:

## Episode 21

- M: Do you think that those who retire; are they having a happy life, or do you think their life is boring and why? Do you think that they are happy or bored?
- S1: Happy.
- M: Everyone who says happy, tell me why and who says no, they're not going to be happy, tell me why. Yes, Abeer?
- S2: I think some of them will be happy because they don't have any work and maybe they can go out and travel a bit.
- M: Excellent, so they can go out and travel at any time. They are not sticking to a particular time, okay, so they are free, to do whatever they want to do. Okay, what else? Why they are happy?
- S3: Because they spend a lot of time with their family.
- M: Excellent. They spend more time with their families, okay. What else? Yes?
- S4: They can practice their hobbies.
- M: Excellent, they can practice their hobbies, excellent. Those who did not have enough time before, for example, to swim, or to play any other kind of sport; now they will have time to do whatever they want. Okay, who says that no, the retired man is a bored person; he will not enjoy his life? Yes? Why? Why do you think that he is not happy?
- S5: I think maybe they have a lot of health problem.
- M: Excellent, so they have a lot of health problems.
- S6: They have a lot of free time; they don't know what they should do.
- M: Excellent, so they have a lot of extra free time; they don't know what to do with this time. Excellent. Any other ideas or suggestions? Yes?
- S7: They can't do many activities, I think, that we like.



M: Excellent. They can't do any activity. They have to do certain activities. Okay, like what? Old people; what do they do? Can they run?

S7: No. Just walk.

M: I know an old person, okay? He is a British man. He runs a marathon and he is 65 years old. So it depends on what?

SS Health.

M: Health, excellent. It depends also on exercising, on eating habits. All of this will depend what will happen to you when you reach a particular age. Even research has proved that you can have a healthy life when you are old if you start since you are young; if you start eating healthy; if you start exercising. If you reach an old age, you will not face a lot of problems. It all starts from now, okay? From young age.

(Maha's class 1)

Maha asked her students some general questions about retirement. She started with Yes/No questions. Then, she followed them by wh-questions to elicit more details from her students'. In the first post-observation interview, Maha commented on lead-in questions; she said: 'Actually, first of all, I like to handle any activity, especially a speaking activity, by asking or starting with free or open questions...'

(Maha, Post-I1). She added:

...If you relate, for example, being retired to Saudi, to their own region, they can speak more and more but if you just speak in general-, this is what I have noticed throughout. So if it is-, maybe it will benefit you if you know that-, if you relate culture to some topic, students will speak more because they can relate to their everyday life, to their own culture. Yes. So when I-, when-, if you noticed, when I talked about retirement in Saudi, I asked the students 'what about retired women in Saudi Arabia?' so I-, first of all, I related retirement to gender and then I related it to country so, in this way, students will have more ideas... better than having general topics (Maha, Post-I1).

Maha started her speaking lessons with a lead-in activity. She tried to relate the topics to her students' culture to make them more engaged.

### **7.5.2 Whole class activity**

Most of the speaking activities in Maha's classes were whole-class activities. In this activity, students were asked to express their opinions about the main topic of the speaking and listening /reading lesson. Maha showed preference in teaching reading and speaking, she said:

I prefer to teach reading because I believe there is a kind of similarity. Not that similarity but I believe that reading has a lot of discussion and by discussing a lot we are able to speak and share our ideas and thoughts (Maha, Pre-I2).

She added:

Reading gives me more space to discuss the topic with my students. It gives me the chance to see their own point of view and of course to encourage them to read, because I believe that reading is the number one skill and if the students are good in reading and they read every day, their writing will improve and all the other skills will improve, as long as they are reading every day (Maha, Pre-I1).

Maha clearly stated that reading is the main skill, which helps in improving other skills including speaking. The following episode is from Maha's third observed class, which was about 'football':

### **Episode 22**

M: I need new persons other than Khulood, Norah, please. This is a good practice for your speaking exam. You might have football as a topic. You don't know! You might have football as one of the topics. Does

football, you think, unite or divide the world and how? What's the meaning of unite?

SS: Yiwahhid ['unite' in Arabic].

M: Excellent or divide the world.

SS Unite.

M: So football, complete sentence, football...

S1: Is unite.

M: Not 'is unite' football, 'unites' the world because...

S2: Because the...

M: Give me two reasons, okay.

S2: Many countries have play with other countries.

M: Many teams from different countries play with each other. And usually players travel to different countries, to learn different cultures and customs. Sometimes even they borrow some players. A player can stay, for example, in America for five years. So it really helps in uniting the world. Okay, thank you so much. Have a seat. Yes, Shaima can you come, please. Why are some clubs so famous in the world and which players are superstars now?

S3: I think famous team can famous accord its players...

M: Because its players, yes.

S4: Are good and play well.

M: Play well.

S5: They get a lot of scores.

M: Excellent, they score high, okay. They have – what else?

S6: Maybe these famous teams have a lot of people watch it.

M: They watch these and of course they win lots of cups. Which country usually always, or most of the times, took the World Cup so many times?

S7: Brazil.

M: Brazil, excellent. So this is one of the countries and which players are superstars today? Can you mention two of the famous players in the world?

SS: Ronaldo.

M: And Pele, I think.

M: Okay. Thank you so much. The last question anyone can answer this question. Do you agree with this statement or with the conclusion about why football has become a global passion? We read already that being a global passion because it is simple. Do you agree that this is the reason that football is popular and football is now a passion because it's a simple game? Do you agree or disagree?

SS: Agree...

M: Who said no? Who disagrees? Okay, all of you agree, why do you agree?

S8: All the people can play football.

M: All people can play this game. It doesn't require lots of stuff to buy. So just simple ball and having group of friends. So it is simple, this is the reason why it became a passion.

(Maha's class 3)

Maha started most of her speaking activities with explaining the vocabulary. She believed that vocabulary 'is very important for [students] to be able to speak' and it 'plays a huge role in speaking' (Maha, Post-I2). In this activity, students did not have much to say as they did not seem to be interested in the topic. However, Maha seemed to have another opinion, she said:

It's about football. It's about things that the students are passionate about so I feel that the topic is really interesting, motivating and they feel that they can bring so many examples from their everyday life because it's about what they like and what their passions are about (Maha, Post-I3).

When I asked Maha why only two students answered her questions about their favourite team and if that relates to their interest in football, she said:

I like this. I believe that this is an interesting topic because some students like it and some students don't like this game, so it motivates students to speak...why do they like, why do they-, don't like it so- (Maha, Post-I3).

The topic seemed to be irrelevant to the students. There are some Saudi females who watch football or play football. However, females are not permitted into football stadiums, as football is usually perceived as a sport for males. Maha thought that topic is interesting because it is debatable but she did not raise any debates. The asked questions were close ended and they required short answers.

Maha implemented a whole class discussion in her vocabulary and speaking lesson. The main focus of the activity was introducing students to 'character adjectives'. The following is an extract from the first part of the activity:

### **Episode 23**

Maha asked her students to read a personality test and answer some questions.

M: Okay. Now we go by order. Please each student, answer a question okay? Now the first one, Norah, please read the question. Are you?

S: Are you usually smiling and happy?

M: Are you usually smiling and happy? What do you think? Tell me yes or no please, answer these frankly, sincerely. Don't lie, just say yes or no. Are you usually smiling and happy?

S: Yes and No [She smiled].

M: In between? Okay. She is not okay. Thanks for your honesty. Did you enjoy?

- S: Enjoy yes. Do you enjoy the company of other people? Yes.
- M: You don't want to be alone most of the time. You just want to be with people, Okay. Excellent.
- S: Do you find it is difficult to meet new people now?
- S: No.
- M: No. Excellent. You are a sociable person. Over there, can you continue?
- S: Do you have definite...
- M: Definite.
- S: definite plans for your future career?
- S: No.
- M: No you don't? You don't know what you are going to do in the future. Okay. Yes.

(Maha's class 2)

Maha did not ask her students to elaborate or explain their answers; she controlled the interaction which was teacher-fronted (between her and individual students). Also, she omitted the exercise where students were asked to discuss their answers in pairs.

### **7.5.3 Pair work**

The following episode is the only pair activity I observed in Maha's classes (Appendix 13):

#### **Episode 24**

M: Now, let's answer these questions. Question number one; it says 'Work in groups and discuss these questions.' I'll divide you now into groups. Let's have... As we said, this is group A, this is B, okay? Group A, we'll divide them into half, so this is the first half; this is the second one. The first half and the second one.  
Please discuss these questions, okay? Read them. Then after five minutes, I'm going to ask two of you. One of you will ask the question, the other one will answer. Okay? So please prepare... (Exercise 1, Appendix 13)

S1: Teacher, Which page?

M: It's page 61.

S1: Exercise 1?

M: Exercise 1, excellent. Yes, exercise 1. Read the question and work as pairs. Five minutes and then I'm going to...

[After about 3 minutes]

M: Okay, are you done? It should be really easy; not really difficult. Okay, let's have Norah and Yara, okay. Please, Norah, ask the question and Yara will answer. Please listen to our friends, yes. Norah?

Norah: Is anyone in your family retired?

Yara: Yes, my grandfather.

Norah: What job did they do before they retired?

Yara: He was a teacher.

Norah: How old were they when they retired?

Yara: 40 years.

Norah: How long have they been retired?

Yara: For 20 years.

Norah: What do they do now?

Norah: Teach my brother and sister and reading all of the time.

M: Reading? Okay, what kind of reading? What books?

Yara: All kinds of books. Medicine and language; French, English.

Norah: Is anyone in your family retired?

Yara: Yes, my aunt.

Norah: What job did they do before retiring?

Yara: She was a teacher.

Norah: How old were they when they retired and how long have they been retired?

Yara: She retired 15 years old; she has been retired for three years.

Norah: What do they do now?

Yara: She stays at home and spends a lot of time with her grandchildren.

M: Okay, excellent, so very good.

(Maha's class 1)

The activity started as group work and then Maha asked students to report their answers to the class in pairs. Pair and group work seemed to serve similar purposes in Maha's point of view. When Maha was commenting on the effectiveness of group work, she said:

I believe it motivates them more and also working as groups it motivates. You can have two pairs working with each other instead of having one who is just looking at a paper and I always tell them that they have to speak with each other in English in class (Maha, Post-I1).



Maha used the word ‘groups’ in the first sentence, then, she replaced it with the word ‘pairs’. When I asked Maha whether she prefers group work or pair work, she said:

Groups I believe. Because you can have lots of ideas and ideas-, from generating ideas, you can have various speaking, okay? They can-, instead of having two students, you can have three or four giving different ideas so it ought to be better (Maha, Post-I1).

Despite Maha’s stated preference for group work, I did not observe any speaking group activity in her three observed classes; her beliefs about seating restrictions might be one reason for not implementing group work as discussed in 7.3.

#### **7.5.4 The five minutes practice**

In each of her observed classes, Maha chose one student to discuss any topic with her for five minutes. She introduced the idea of this activity in her first pre-observation interview, she said:

Learning English as a language is not about memorisation, because especially Saudi students, they depend on memorising. I’m always saying to them, you have to speak freely, to practise the language, not to put in your mind that, I have to pass the language. So these are what I’m trying to change in my teaching method. I came up with an idea that I started doing today. Today I’ve told my students that I will give them five minutes speaking at the end of each class. The goal of this five minutes speaking is every day... I’m choosing one student and this student will talk about any topic. I will ask her about any question, either related to the topic of the unit or a topic outside the book. But she has to be ready to speak; speaking without any papers or anything, it’s just about her. Although today I found a lot of grammatical mistakes, a lot of pronunciation mistakes but it’s a good, I believe, idea to practise the language. I told them that it’s not graded, so they will not be scared. I told them it’s just a way of practicing (Maha, Pre-I1).

Maha's decided to implement this activity to get her students to practice spontaneous more authentic interaction. It also might have been influenced by my interest in speaking as she started implementing this activity after I told her about my study. The following is an episode from Maha's first observed class:

### **Episode 25**

M: Okay, excellent, so very good. Okay, I want one of you, please, a volunteer who can come here and speak. I'll ask her certain questions and I want her to answer these questions. Anyone who wants to participate or volunteer, or do I have to choose?

[Nobody volunteered]

N: Okay. Let's have Nahid. Come Nahid, please... Okay. Nahid, what is the usual retirement age for men and women in Saudi Arabia. What is the usual retirement age?

Nahid: Men, maybe from 60.

M: Please use complete sentences.

Nahid: The men usually retire in 16. 16 years.

M: 16?

Nahid: 60.

M: 60 years old; when they are 60 years old, yes.

Nahid: But women usually retire when 15. 50 years.

M: 50 years old, okay. Excellent, so this is the age. Usually women in Saudi Arabia, they retire when they are 50 and men when they are 60. Okay. What do you think is the best age to retire for Saudi women? What is the best age, do you think?

Nahid: I think the best age of retiring is 45 for women.

M: 45 for women; why? Why do you think it's 45, why not 60 or 55?

Nahid: Because the woman works more than the men, especially at home. Her work is not like the men. The men just most of the time is spent in the work.

M: Excellent; very good reason. Okay, what else? Why do you think that the best age is 45?

Nahid: Because the woman getting older than the man, because she gives babies and she could be weak.

M: Excellent, excellent. Okay, very good. When would you like to retire? You? When would you like to retire? Now, imagine you have been working for 30 years. When do you want to retire? When? At what age?

Nahid: At 55.

M: 55.

Nahid: Yes.

M: Oh. You just want to have five years and then say goodbye to the world?

Nahid: No.

M: No. So why do you think that you want to retire at 55? Why?

Nahid: Because I know I am going to [get well] in my work, so I don't want to go and another one take my place and nothing to do.

M: Excellent. Okay, what do you want to work?

Nahid: Businesswoman.

M: Oh, businesswoman. You just want to work until you are 55. Excellent. What would you like to do; the activities that you like to do when you retire? Now imagine you are 55 and you just want to retire. What are your plans? What do you want to do? The activities that you want to practise in your free time?

Nahid: I want to register in a club.

M: Excellent, yes.

Nahid: Reading all the books. Just read; just read.

M: Read all the books.

Nahid: Yes, because I don't have time to read now.

M: Excellent, okay.

Nahid: I want to maybe buy a new house.

M: Buy a new house, excellent, yes. Just read. Nothing related to your family; you don't want to have...

Nahid: Of course. I want to sit with them for a long time and go to the theme parks, like this.

M: Excellent. So you want to enjoy your time with your family. Excellent. Thank you so much Nahid; have a seat. Thanks; very good response; very good answers.

(Maha's class 1)

Maha chose to create a personalised discussion on the topic of her first speaking lesson with her student. Although the student answer was correct in terms of speaking and it reflected the nature of authentic spoken language, Maha asked the student to use complete sentences. This may suggest that Maha was not fully aware of the differences between written and spoken English. Also, Maha's comment was focused on form but in the rest of the conversation Maha's feedback was more focused on meaning as she was trying to show interest in what her student was saying. Maha had positive beliefs about the five minutes practice, she said:

I like it because the students really give me amazing feedback and they really speak interestingly about the topic and they show that they're really-, it tells me that-; it shows me what they understood from the session (Maha, Post-11).

I attended Maha's first observed class a month after she told me about the activity; she had probably talked to most of her students in the class by the time of the first post-observation interview. The implementation of the five minutes activity seems to be guided by a number of beliefs: lack of focus on speaking in classes, lack of focus on practice in classes and students' dependence on memorisation. Also, Maha's preference of public speaking, Maha's students' level and the limited time they have in the classroom.

### **7.6 Interaction in Maha's speaking lesson**

Whole-class interaction was dominant in Maha's speaking lessons and it followed the IRF (Initiation, Response and Feedback) pattern of interaction. Only one pair speaking activity was observed in Maha's three observed classes. While students had more time to speak in the five minutes activity, the interaction was limited to Maha and one student. Generally, Maha's students had few opportunities to communicate with each other. When I asked Maha about her views of the interaction in her first class, she said: 'I felt that they were the main speakers. I just guided them but most of the speaking part was done by the students as you noticed' (Maha, Post-I1). Maha's view did not seem consistent with the reality in her observed classes as she was the main speaker and students were only reacting to her questions giving short sentences. The five minutes activity was an exception where Maha was facilitating the conversation. Generally, Maha was more interested in public speaking. She preferred whole class interaction and she transformed some group activities to whole class discussions, which made it less interactive. This can be due

to Maha's dissatisfaction with the seating arrangements in her class as she said, it was restricting group work. Also, this might raise questions about Maha's beliefs about her students' ability to do group work.

### **7.7 Feedback**

In the second pre-observation interview, Maha said that most of her students' mistakes were related to pronunciation. She added 'they are not able to pronounce well. They don't pronounce the words well' (Maha, Pre-I2). When I asked Maha how she dealt with her students' mistakes, she said:

I just repeat the word and I ask all the students to repeat after me. I tell them, say it like that, so repeat it three times, to be able to pronounce it well (Maha, Pre-I2).

Maha elaborated on her students' mistakes, she said:

Mostly, if all of them have the same ... Like, for example, let's give you an example. Today they said the word, patient, as patent. They didn't pronounce the T-I-E as 'sh'. So I told them it's patient and asked all of them to repeat and most of them they repeated the same mistake, patent. So if some of the students came up with one error, mostly you can tell that most of them, the majority of them they just have the same mistake (Maha, Pre-I2).

I did not observe many examples of the use of repetition in Maha's speaking lessons. Maha only used 'repetition' in the vocabulary and speaking activity as some of the students were mispronouncing some of the new words, she said: 'Okay, because most of you don't know how to say these words, let's say them together again okay' (Maha's second class). Some examples of Maha's error correction are provided in the following table.

Example	Type of correction
<p>M: It's amazing and what else?  S: He... tau.. It's... <u>this game...</u>  M: <u>'It' or 'This?'</u> (1)  S: <u>This game...</u>  <u>M: This game, okay, you have to choose one pronoun, 'he,' 'it' or 'this,' we cannot have the three?</u>  <u>[Smiling] So this game...(2)</u>  S: <u>Teach...</u> (3)  Maha: <u>Teaches.</u></p> <p>(Maha's class 3)</p>	<p>(1) Clarification request  (2) Metalinguistic explanation  (3) Explicit correction</p>
<p>S: It teaches them <u>patient and impatient..</u>  M: <u>How come it keeps them patient and impatient?</u>  (4)  S: It <u>give ...</u>  M: It <u>gives them...</u> (5)  S: <u>It gives them impatient to...</u>  M: How come it gives them impatience? Is impatient something that you can give? Is it solid, impatient, what do you mean by impatient?  <u>Impatient is what first of all, in grammar? It is an adjective, so you need a noun as an object, it gives them what? (6)</u>  S: To join in the game.  M: So it teaches them patience you mean, because the game lasts for a long time and they have to wait until the end of the game, you mean teach them patience?</p> <p>(Maha's class 3)</p>	<p>(4) Clarification request    (5) Explicit correction    (6) Metalinguistic explanation</p>
<p>S: Players, it help them <u>be healthy.</u>  M: <u>To be healthy.</u> (7)</p> <p>(Maha's class 3)</p>	<p>(7) Explicit correction</p>

Table 7.2: Errors and error correction in Maha's speaking lessons

Maha used explicit error correction most of the time. She used 'clarification requests' when the meaning of what students were saying was not clear; she said: 'I just tell her to ... first of all, I just ask her to repeat the word, because maybe I did not hear it well'

(Maha, Pre-I2). Maha provided metalinguistic explanations occasionally. When I asked her about error correction, she said:

I correct whatever error that I come across. I don't just focus on one error and leave the other. Whatever I face I just correct it on the spot. I believe that correcting on [the] spot is better ... because I might forget, maybe we will change the topic, the students will not be really interested in the word if not on spot. You know what I mean? (Maha, Pre-I2).

Maha's preference for on-the-spot correction was evident in all her classes. She thought that students would not be interested in the feedback if it was not instant. Maha seemed to be underestimating the influence of feedback on students' willingness of speak. I asked Maha about the use of praise in her classroom, she said:

...Whenever you tell them even these simple words, it really works like magic to the students I believe because, after saying such words, you can see them smiling and even the students who you always encourage....you feel that they speak more and more in class. Every time, they speak more because they believe that what they speak is really good and appreciated by the teacher (Maha, Post-I1).

Maha felt that praise is important to encourage her students' willingness to speak. However, Maha did not provide much praise; except through the repetitive use of 'excellent', irrespective of whether students gave right or wrong answers.

## **7.8 Influences on Maha's beliefs**

Maha's learning experience influenced her beliefs about how speaking should be taught.

Maha criticized the lack of focus on practicing speaking at the Institute, she said:

Actually, I believe that this university must follow my university way of teaching, especially speaking, because I believe here it's more of a



theoretical way of teaching but when I was learning back in college, it was more practical. My university depends on practising English in our everyday life more than memorising theories but I believe here, as a teacher in the institute, I'm giving theories more than practice. So this is the difference. And I believe teaching English has to be based on practice more than theories, so it's not (Maha, Pre-I1).

Maha felt that the educational policies of the institute do not encourage students to practise English while the opposite is stated in the ELI Faculty Handbook (2012). Maha was comparing the public university to her private university. Private universities in Saudi Arabia have English as a medium of instruction. Students would usually study intensive general English course for a year, then they are required to pass a proficiency test to be able to enrol in their chosen programmes of study. In addition, in private universities, some staff do not speak Arabic; therefore, students would be able to practise English in their everyday life. The situation is different in public universities where students are studying English with other courses and they do not need to speak English except with few of their English language teachers. Also, in most public universities the highest level students are expected to pass is intermediate. The lack of practice seemed to be a result of how Maha controlled classroom interaction. She commented on how English is practised in classrooms in her private university, she said:

Our main language in the class was English. We were not allowed to discuss as students and as pairs any other topic without speaking in English (Maha, Pre-I1).

Maha's educational background (a graduate of a private Educational system) influenced her beliefs about the public educational system in Saudi Arabia, which most of her students are graduates of. Consequently, it influenced her beliefs about her students,

when I asked her about their mistakes, she said: 'I do not blame them, I blame how they were educated.'

Maha's beliefs about teaching speaking and the nature of spoken language seemed to influence her teaching practices. Some of her comments reflect her lack of awareness of the nature of spoken language. Unlike the other teachers, Maha's undergraduate programme was more focused on translation, which can explain her lack of theoretical knowledge. Maha's teaching of speaking has a clear focus on accuracy; when I asked her about her views on fluency and accuracy, she said:

A fluent speaker is the one who speaks without stopping between one word and another, just speaks freely, without thinking about what is he going to say in the next moment. He is the person who is able to say whatever he has in his mind without having a lot of errors, word errors or grammatical errors. So he is the one who can speak without constraints, he is the one who can say whatever he wants to say (Maha, Pre-I2).

[An accurate speaker] is the one who, as I said, similar to fluency, he is the one who speaks without having a lot of errors (Maha, Pre-I2).

Maha viewed fluency and accuracy in similar ways. Fluency and accuracy were about making fewer errors and this can explain the focus on accuracy in Maha's classes. Maha, unlike Nada, did not seem to have a good understanding of what accuracy and fluency are.

## **7.9 Summary**

Maha felt that she was restricted by the institute policies and by other contextual factors such as seating arrangements and students' level. Her feeling of restriction caused some tensions between her stated beliefs and her teaching practice. For

example, Maha did not implement any group activities in her observed classes despite her stated positive beliefs about group work. She stated that she wanted her students to speak freely but her comprehensive feedback seemed to inhibit students from speaking and taking longer turns. However, some of Maha's beliefs were reflected in practice. The following table presents some of the main practices in Maha's observed classes and their underlying beliefs:

Practice	Aspect of Beliefs	Explanation
1. (a) Lead-in activities. (b) Maha tried to encourage her students to express their opinions in her classes. (c) She tried to relate some speaking activities to her students' lives.	Students	1. (a) Students were reluctant to speak (b) Relating the speaking topics to students' life is more motivating for students.
2. In the vocabulary and speaking lesson, most of the time was spent on teaching new vocabulary.	Teaching speaking	2. Vocabulary plays an important role in speaking development.
3. Maha provided instant error correction.	Error correction and feedback	3. (a) Students were not expected to make this type of errors. (b) Students would not be interested in feedback if it on-the-spot.

Table 7.3: Maha's beliefs and practices

## **8 Teacher 4: Lara**

### **8.1 Profile of the teacher**

Lara had been teaching English for five years when I conducted this case study. She started learning English at an early age in the UK. She had completed a Bachelor of Arts in English Language in a Public Saudi University in 2007. Lara attended some in-service training workshops at the institute.

### **8.2 Overview of Lara's classes**

Lara was teaching in the main university campus. Her class had around 30 movable chairs. She rarely moved around the class when monitoring activities. Lara was using *New Headway Plus Special Edition*, pre-intermediate coursebook. When I asked Lara about the course book, she said:

I like Headway because it has this idea of integrating the skills together and not always in the same order. Sometimes, in some of the units, we have the speaking immediately after the grammar; sometimes after the reading. So it differs (Lara, Pre-I2).

Similar to Nada, Lara liked the skill integration in the course book as they used to use separate skills course books previously in the institute.

### **8.3 Lara's students**

Lara was teaching level three, pre-intermediate preparatory year students. 28 students attended her first, third and fourth classes and 26 attended her second one. When I asked Lara to describe her students, she said:

They are a good group. I guess their level of English is fine compared to other sections. They can communicate, they can answer, they're willing to learn, they have, I mean, a really good sense of, you know, learning and they have a desire to learn English and to improve. And this is what I like about students. Once they have this feeling they will learn. And they like to practise English. They don't like any even Arabic translating. They say, 'Teacher, we want to learn English, so we prefer that ... no translation is even better for us' (Lara, Pre-I1).

Lara expressed positive beliefs about her students. She gave more details about how she felt about them, she said:

I like this group because they do answer with me. They react, even if they are only a small group, only a few students but I find answers from students. Sometimes I have some groups who are silent, like talking to myself. So I really enjoy interacting with my students. I feel now it's going smooth and even those who don't answer, they just mime with the heads and I feel that they are with us and they are understanding what's happening. This is enough for me. I feel that everybody's ... They're looking, they're smiling sometimes, so they're enjoying the class, even if they're not participating in speaking but they're understanding at least what we were talking about (Lara, Pre-I1).

Lara appreciated all her students including those who did not participate. It was enough for her to feel that her students understood and enjoyed her class. She added commenting on her students:

Some of them really, they asked about each and every word; about why do we use this, why here we put this verb – not the other verb, what is the meaning of this word. So they always ask about – not all of them, of course but I have most of them – they're good learners. They have a positive view towards learning English (Lara, Pre-I1).

Lara perceived her students' questions positively; she felt it is an indication of their positive attitudes towards English. She commented on the influence of her students' level and attitudes on her teaching, she said:

When I feel that my students are excited I get really excited. I can prepare for them extra activities; I can get them... I can talk with them, we can discuss a lot of things, I don't worry about, whether they understood or not, or I need to translate in Arabic or something. So, I really get excited when I have like this bunch of students (Lara, Pre-I1).

Lara felt that her students are a source of motivation for her. When I discussed motivation with Lara, she said:

Motivating is essential actually for students, because, as I told you, especially for those who are weak and they believe that they can't do it. When they feel that by the time they are trying, they are improving and they do feel this by the end of the module usually. They feel, happy and this...of course motivation is not easy, because, you know, every day you have to push them to...to write and speak, to read and...and you have to...to be very skilful to bring new things to motivate students; especially if they don't have any desire to learn the language. But it is very important because when they're motivated, they will perform better, of course (Lara, Pre-I1).

Usually, students after we're done with their mid-exam, after the final, when they get lower grades...they get demotivated (Lara, Pre-I1).

Lara felt that the achievement was a main motivational influence to her students.

#### **8.4 Lara's approach in teaching speaking**

When I asked Lara about her philosophy in teaching speaking, she said:

The students...it's better for them to...to learn conversation immediately; not word and...words and then, you know, small phrases and then...they know vocab and they know expressions...new expressions and how to use them and that's it. They start practising conversations (Lara, Pre-I2).

Lara's teaching philosophy seemed to be influenced by her French learning experience, she said:

She (referring to her French language teacher) didn't start by letters and by words. She started by conversations. She believed that when we start talking together, we will learn the language. She said, 'nobody will ask you: what is

this letter?’ But you should know how to speak and how to read. This is what we need. So she believed that we start with the conversation. It was the first class and she started with conversations. We had a problem at the beginning because we didn’t understand what she was saying. But by the time we got used to the conversations (Lara, Pre-I1).

The teaching approach of Lara’s French teacher influenced how Lara viewed teaching speaking. She felt that involving beginner students in interaction and immersing them in the language helps in developing their speaking skills. When I was discussing spoken English and spoken grammar with Lara, she said:

For spoken English, Of course, it [referring to spoken grammar] is very important, because, it’s not only about speaking, maybe they don’t need to speak this language but if they hear somebody speaking they should know how to, you know, how to understand the spoken language. There are some of the words that we don’t need to use them but you need to understand at least what they mean, because when you listen to somebody or you’re speaking, having conversation with another person you should know what they mean (Lara, Pre-I2).

Lara believed that some spoken words or rules can be learnt receptively as the students may not need to use them and she gave an example of ‘have’ and ‘have got,’ she said:

Simply we can use ‘have’ without ‘have got’ but maybe when they listen to somebody saying something they might feel that there is something new or a new expression that we don’t know. So they should be aware about it (Lara, Pre-I2).

Lara provided her students with oral input, which reflected some features of spoken English. However, she did not explicitly explain any spoken features. She believed that students can imitate what they hear, which might explain her preference for teaching listening with speaking. In Lara’s first pre-observation interview, she said: ‘If they listen very well and they get used to the language, they would speak very well’ (Lara, Pre-I1).

## 8.5 Lara's speaking activities

Speaking activities in Lara's classes can be divided into three main types: lead-in discussions, group work and pair work.

### 8.5.1 Lead-in discussions

Lara implemented whole-class lead-in discussions at the beginning of her observed speaking classes. The following episode presents a discussion about fame and famous people from Lara's first observed class:

#### Episode 26

L: Okay! If I tell you, are you a person who would like to see famous people? Do you like to read about famous writers? You like to see famous people on TV? Like for example, actors, TV presenters... aaa. Football players, so what do you think about famous people?

SS: A lot of money.

L: Yes. Noor?

S1: They earn a lot of money.

L: You think famous people earn a lot of money? Yes, this is one thing about famous people. What else? Do you think it is nice to be famous?

Some students said 'yes' and other students said 'No.'

L: Not always, so you like to see famous people but you don't wish to be famous.

SS: Yes.

S2: I wish to be rich, not famous.



- L: Just only rich but you don't want to be famous, so what are the bad things about being famous.
- S3: Everything about you. They know everything about you.
- L: Yeah, that's right. They know everything about you and sometimes they don't only say the true things about you, sometimes they lie, right! So you'll find a lot of people talking about maybe real things or sometimes things that are not real and we call them rumours! Okay, so who is the first person you would like to see or read about? Is there is any person you would like to see?
- S4: Shakespeare.
- L: Shakespeare, okay. He is a very famous person.
- S5: Charles Dickens.
- L: Charles Dickens, thank you very much. Anybody else?
- S6: Agatha Christie.
- L: Agatha Christie, yes, so you are talking about old people what about new ones? So you'd like to see somebody who is new?
- S7: Ahmed Al-Shughairy
- L: Ahmed Al-Shughairy, thank you. A TV presenter... He is very famous presenter, has very good ideas about developing society and improving yourself, improving community.

(Lara's class 1)

Lara said that the discussion 'allowed the students to practise speaking' (Lara, Wr-C1). However, students had limited opportunities to speak, as the questions required very short answers; at the end of the discussion, students were only listing names of famous people. Lara commented on this activity, she said:

I think the first part of the class is very important for students because first of all sometimes we talk about something that maybe they didn't listen about before and it gets them ready for other exercises, so they get to know how to speak on this topic, for example, here about fame. So they start getting some

of the skills of talking about a special topic and then I start asking them, to let them start practice speaking about this topic. And at this stage, of course, we don't look for any mistakes. You're just talking about this topic.... [It is about] having them ready to understand what we're going to talk in this unit (Lara, Post-I1).

The lead-in discussions were aimed to familiarise the students with the speaking topic and motivate them to participate in the speaking activities.

### **8.5.2 Pair work**

In Lara's third observed class, students had a listening and speaking activity. They had to listen to a conversation between a client and a receptionist at a hotel and they were asked to complete some missing information. After that, Lara asked her students to do a similar role-play in pairs.

### **Episode 27**

L: Now what we're going to practise here is, other than making a reservation, is imagine you are in the hotel but you're having some problems. For example, the TV is not working, for example, you need extra pillows and extra whatever, for example, you need towels. So now we're going to practise making conversation between the Receptionist and you. Okay, imagine you are one of these travellers and then how is the conversation will be? In exercise five role-play these conversations with your partner. Phone Reception from your room, make these requests: you can't get the TV to work, you'd like an extra pillow, you'd like to order room service and you'd like a wake-up call at seven tomorrow morning. Okay? What is a pillow?

S1: Mikhaddah ['pillow' in Arabic]

L: Yes, that's right. Sometimes you need an extra pillow so you'd like to phone him to ask for it. You'd like to order room service, whatever room service you would like, okay, whether it's cleaning or whether it's a food order. You'd like

a wake-up call at seven tomorrow morning, you know, if you're not sure that you're going to wake up on time, so you do tell the Reception that please wake me up at seven, I have an important meeting so they call you at seven to wake you up, okay, you can't wake alone. Okay. So now I want you to form a short conversation with one of you as the Receptionist and one of you is the client, asking for one of these problems. So, as the conversation here that we have – good morning, how can I help you – and you say, for example, the TV isn't working, I need someone to come and fix it. Okay? The Receptionist might tell you we're sorry; we can't help you now; we might send you someone after an hour. Okay? So it's a similar conversation, a short conversation between only two, the Receptionist and the client. So work on two different ... one of the problems and make a short conversation with a friend.

S2: In two?

L: Yes, each two together. Okay? Each two together; you can discuss in English, please, use English. I would like to tell you something. Tell me; it's like from the beginning of the call. Like hello, who is speaking? And so on until bye bye.

[Lara was monitoring the activity by going around and answering her students' questions]

[After 10 minutes]

L: Okay. This is the end of the exercise. Okay. Okay. Who would like to start? Thank you. Basheerah and Shaima .. Okay...Listen to the conversation.

Basheerah: Hello, [name of a hotel... inaudible], speaking, how can I help you?

Shaima: Yes, I would like to get...

L: Please, I want everyone to listen. If you have any comments about the group conversation, for example if you find some mistakes, you can say, teacher, okay? You can say what you think about the conversation. I won't correct any mistakes, okay, this is a free talk.

Basheerah: Yes, I would like to get an extra billow /bɪloo/ [mispronounced pillow /'pɪloo/] and a blanket.

Shaima: Okay, that's fine, can you give me a room number, please.

Basheerah: Two hundred five to two (252), floor fourteen.

Shaima: Okay! Okay, don't worry.

L: Okay, very good. So what did you think about the conversation? What do you think about the conversation? It's nice, right? Okay, did you find any mistakes or something that you want to comment on? It's a correct conversation. I like it.

(Lara's class 3)

Lara decided not to correct her students' mistakes and she provided minimum corrective feedback at the end of the conversation. She commented on role-plays, she said:

Like, sometimes you have a role-play; and with weak students usually role-play wouldn't work, so I usually simplify it to another simple conversation form or something. Uh, so I change it sometimes. But with excellent students, if they know they're able to do it, I would do it. I would encourage them to do it. Or if I feel it's, like, a little bit difficult, I would simplify it for them. (Lara, Pre-I2).

Lara felt that role-plays might be challenging to some low-level students. She had another pair speaking activity in the syllables of her second class; however, she changed it into a group activity probably to make it easier for her students.

### **8.5.3 Group work**

Pair work and group work were implemented in similar ways in Lara's speaking classes where students had to plan, then report their answers to the class. Lara expressed positive views about group work, she said:

...Although when I was a student, I didn't like the idea of groups but now, as a teacher, I really like it because, you know, how they...need... divided according to levels is better than...uh...be...better than, you know, according to, like, sections or...ah...because usually when you have a very weak girl with excellent students, this wouldn't help her to speak. Although it might, you know, she might get new things and learn from those students but she will not be, you know ...uh...encouraged enough to speak amongst those students. So, as a teacher, the difference is that now I really believe that it's good to divide students according to levels. Because...ahm...also the excellent students; they're not enjoying discussing, you know, very simple topics. Uh...because when you have mixed levels you have to use...you have to...to...discuss something, which is very easy. And usually, the excellent students get very bored [of] this. So I think, as a teacher, it's good to divide students in order to have good exercises and good practice according to levels than by sections (Lara, Pre-I1).

Lara did not seem to differentiate between implementing group work and whole class discussions in mixed level classes; she felt it is difficult to implement group work in these classes. While implementing teacher-fronted discussion is challenging and can be ineffective, group work can be implemented effectively in mixed-level classes.

Lara had two speaking group activities in her third and fourth speaking classes. The third speaking class was on vocabulary and speaking and it had a group activity at the end. The following episode presents this group activity:

### **Episode 28**

After explaining the hot verbs (take, get, do and make) and doing some vocabulary exercises, Lara asked her students to work in groups to discuss a number of questions (Appendix 14).

L: So let's say, for example, if we're going to have here, the girls, we're talking about two questions. For example, do you get on with your parents? For example, Samiah is asking Basheerah can answer: yes, I get on with my parents; I always have similar opinions or whatever. Maya might have a different opinion, saying well usually I have

problems with my mother, we don't understand each other, okay? And Hala can have another opinion. Okay? So it's like a group discussion, a small group discussion about one of the topics you have. Okay? And can we do the work three or four together? It's fine. So we can have each four here in a group working together. Here, Amirah, Amina and Noor can work together and so on. Okay? So prepare your conversation as a group discussion. You can move your chairs if you like. Basheerah, would you like to move your chair here? Hala would you like to bring your chair here? Do it as you like, okay? You can answer questions ... you can ask Hala a question, For example, do you find it easy to make friends? So you can have two questions not only one you can discuss. Ashwaq, you're gonna work with Mariam, Nahid and Eiman okay? So if you would like to move your chairs to ..to have a circle. Okay, imagine it is a discussion about the topic and you all talk about it. Okay? So, for example, it's the same one. I'd say do you think it's easy to get friends? So talk about this topic. What do you think about getting new friends, is it easy or not? And don't forget what I want you to use is I want you to use the hot verbs, okay? You get new friends, you make friends, you do something, so make sure you use the hot verbs, okay?

[Students started working in groups. Some of the students were using Arabic]

While the students were still working in groups, Lara said: Have you finished? No? Okay. Okay. Two minutes left.

After about two minutes.

L: Now, this is the end of exercise 5. We're gonna start... We're gonna start with this group. Okay. So be quiet, please. We're going to listen to the first group. So what was the topic you chose to talk about? Okay. So, Bushrah, you will start the conversation. Okay, you'll start the conversation. Okay, listen to your friends so that you can learn from their mistakes. Yes, Bushrah, what is your question?

S1: How long does it take to get from your home to university?

L: Okay.

S1: I can get here in 45 minutes.

L: Okay.

S2: I can get here in one hour and a half.

S3: I can get here in ten minutes.

L: Okay, so you don't have any other comments like oh that's a long time? So for example, if I said one hour and a half, you say oh my God, this is a long time. Why? Do you live far away? Okay? So I want more comments. Otherwise, it's correct. Okay? It's good because this is a speaking practice and you have to practise not only giving the short answer but give more comments. Okay, Bushrah?

S: Okay.

(Lara's class 3)

Lara asked her students to move their chairs to form groups of three or four to be able to have a group discussion. Having movable chairs in the classroom seemed to facilitate group work. The activity was aimed to be implemented in pairs according to the course book. Therefore, Lara had to spend a long time trying to explain how the activity is going to be implemented in groups. Also, this might suggest that students were not used to doing group work in Lara's classes. She commented on pair and group work, she said:

I think group work is even better than pair work. Maybe we work with pairs more than group work but I guess group work is better for students, they get more motivated. Maybe because we have different people, weak ones with excellent ones, so they get to discuss it (Lara, Post-13).

This comment might explain why Lara changed the activity from pair into group work as she stated her preference for the latter. Also, she felt that she was using enough pair work in her classes. In the activity feedback, Lara explained to her students that they were supposed to give longer answers and she gave them an example; this information would have been more useful if it was included in the activity instructions. While some

students' performance in the activity did not seem to fully meet Lara's expectations, she showed positive views about this activity, she wrote:

I feel that the students enjoyed the class very much, especially the conversation part which allowed them to talk, discuss and even laugh with their friends. I can say that the idea of forming conversations is not only enjoyable for students but it also allows them to ask each other about certain words or expressions and how to use them in a question or a reply. Weak students learn a lot when they work with a partner or with a group. (Lara, W1-C3).

Lara felt that low-level students can learn better when working in groups. She emphasised this in more than one interview, she said:

Yes, I think they enjoy it more because they feel like they can do it, when they work with other students who are better than them they are able to form conversation and feel more comfortable to speak (Lara, Post-I3).

Lara did not comment on the specific learning outcome of the activity, how her students did the activity or their use of Arabic during planning, which she expressed her dissatisfaction with, in another interview, she said:

They need sometimes... and even to discuss the thing with their friends when I give them, uh, sometimes discussion. I ask them sometimes to prepare; we're gonna discuss now, after ten minutes, this topic as a group, two groups. So I hear them sometimes, um, saying in Arabic, 'I'll say this, you say that'. And I tell them, 'try to practise English even if you're discussing things together.' (Lara, Pre-I2).

The following episode presents another example of group work in Lara's speaking classes:

### **Episode 29**

L: Now, I want you to add more inventions and discoveries. Work in groups, copy the list of discoveries and inventions in exercise 1 and



add three more. Give it to another group. Okay, now what I want you to do is to think about other three inventions and three discoveries you think around you in your life. Okay? And then we're going to talk about it together.

[Students started working in groups]

L: Okay, so think about inventions and discoveries. You can work with a friend; you can work in groups. Put your chairs together, each three together. You can think about three inventions and three discoveries that we have and we'll talk about it.

[One of the students was talking to Lara but her voice was inaudible].

L: Yes, work with a friend. Quickly, think about three inventions and three discoveries. Of course, everything around us, almost everything is an invention, so we have a lot of examples of inventions. You can work in a group if you like.

L: Okay, who can give me examples now? Who can give me an example? What did you write? Listen to the other groups. Give me examples. Inventions, like what?

S1: Cooker.

L: Cooker, okay, raise your voice. Cooker, yes, that's an invention, yes, what else?

S2: Telephone

L: The telephone. Yes. But other than what was mentioned.

S3: Mobile phone.

L: Yes. Mobile phones or cell phones. Okay. What other discoveries you have?

S4: Gold.

L: Yes. You can say gold or silver.

(Lara's class 4)

Similar to episode 28, students had little to say as they only had to list a number of things. Lara had positive views about the activity and the class in general, she said:

I think today's class, as I said, I didn't feel that I'm playing a big role for the students, like most of the time, I'm explaining and talking and today we were equal. I felt like I'm with the students. It's more relaxing, I think. Group work is helpful for students because at the beginning I asked them to draw up three examples and I felt that they wanted to work together, so they started moving their chairs and so I said, yeah, it's fine to work together because I heard them saying, "What about this? Is it invention or discovery?" So, it's good to ... it's a general information exercise. It's good to have them work together (Lara, Post-I4).

Lara was focused on making the activities enjoyable for the students. She seemed less concerned about the learning outcomes of the activities; her speaking classes did not seem to have clear learning objectives. She mentioned group work when we were discussing the training workshops she attended, she said:

Well, I can't remember something specific...specifically for speaking maybe they only...just encourage us always, you know, to not have only one-to-one speaking exercises. Because, you know, working in groups always helps students to speak, to have, you know, weak students with good students (Lara, Pre-I1).

Lara was encouraged to use group work in the training workshops she attended; however, probably she was not introduced to how group work can be implemented, for what purposes and what type of challenges she might face. Also, Lara felt that there were more opportunities for students to benefit from group work. However, the reality in her speaking classes showed that there are more opportunities for students to speak in pair activities than in group activities.

#### **8.5.4 Interaction in speaking activities**

The dominant type of interaction in Lara's speaking classes was whole class interaction; her speaking classes were teacher-centred. Similar to Maha's classes,

Lara's students rarely initiated conversations or asked questions as they were mainly responding to her questions. She implemented fluency-based activities but there were some issues with how she implemented the activities; the activities were teacher-centred and some topics and some types of questions were limiting. Sally commented on her students' fluency, she said:

I can say they're good. Because, you know, I've been with groups who have, you know, very weak English. So I think even their vocab level is, I can say, is good. Um, their fluency is fine. Sometimes they have translation problems; sometimes, as I told you before, in grammar problems (Lara, Pre-I1).

Lara felt that her students' fluency level is acceptable compared to other students she taught. I asked her about her perception of a fluent speaker, she said:

Well, a fluent speaker is a person who can speak smoothly, without pauses, without, you know, uh, with a correct grammar, with, uh, you know, he's able to communicate with other...with, uh, another person. This is fluency. Yeah, acquiring the language and knowing how to use it, uh, perfectly (Lara, Pre-I2).

Lara seemed to view fluency in its more general sense 'language proficiency' rather than its narrow sense 'oral fluency'. This explains her evaluation of her students' fluency. She felt that their language proficiency is acceptable (according to their level). The class interaction was aimed to promote students' participation rather than their speaking fluency.

## **8.6 Corrective feedback**

When I asked Lara about her students' problems, she said:

They have problems in grammar. They do have problems in grammar, especially with the 'person' sometimes, the...um...what else? Yeah, usually

the prepositions, they always have mistakes with the articles, they don't how to use 'a, an and the'; when to put 'the' and when 'a', the definite and indefinite articles. So, they usually have, like, grammatical mistakes in forming sentences. And lack of vocabulary. They always say, "Teacher, how can I say this word, how can I say this, how can I..." So they need words and they need sometimes to...to correct the forming of the sentence (Lara, Pre-11).

Lara felt that her students' main problems were related to grammar and vocabulary. She did not mention pronunciation mistakes. When students made some pronunciation mistakes (for example, billow instead of pillow), she did not correct them. When I asked Lara about how she felt about her students' mistakes, she said:

I take it easy. I always encourage them to make mistakes and errors and it's fine and I always make it, you know, like a relaxed atmosphere for them to make mistakes. I try sometimes not to correct them directly. I let them finish and then I, you know, I tell her that you had a small mistake, which is you should say, for example, not, um, I want to, for example, to going shopping. You should say for example, "I will go shopping" immediately without the preposition 'to'. So, I just, you know, try to...to ...to bring to their attention the small mistakes they made (Lara, Pre-12).

Unlike Maha, who felt disappointed by her students' mistakes, Lara did not view her students' mistakes as a problem. She avoided on-the-spot correction and ignored some of her students' mistakes completely. In her third written commentary, she wrote:

I didn't concentrate on correcting their mistakes today; I gave them more freedom to speak which I think gave them more confidence, especially when we discussed the best hotel in Jeddah, I feel that students were talking naturally about their opinions forgetting that it is a speaking exercise (Lara, Wr-C3).

In Lara's third speaking class, she said to her students: 'I won't correct any mistakes, okay; this is a free talk (Lara's class 3). Students made mistakes but she did not correct any, for example:

### Episode 30

S1: What time did you get home last night?

S2: I get home at 12:30 o'clock.

(Lara's class 3)

In the same class, Lara asked her students to correct their classmates' mistakes but none of them provided any correction. When I asked Lara to comment on this, she said:

I tried it because first I want them to concentrate with their friends. And second I want to train them to correct others, to learn, because sometimes maybe if I am just correcting this group the others might not listen to the correction or are aware of the correction. So I wanted them to actually try and correct others because this is a good way to learn how to form a conversation. But I didn't hear anybody correcting their friends, so I don't know whether they are not listening to the other groups or maybe they are not interested to correct others or they are not trained to do this. So I might try it next time, I would like to apply it another time and to really get feedback from the students (Lara, Post-I3).

Lara seemed interested in implementing peer feedback in her speaking classes but she did not seem aware of how it can be implemented. Generally, Lara did not seem to give big importance to accuracy in her speaking classes, she said:

...Sometimes I have excellent students who've been, uh, abroad and they have a very good spoken English. However, they might have a lot of problems, which means maybe sometimes, um, even if they're not familiar with the grammatical rules, if they're used to listen to the language and speak it...they might speak very well and fluently, even if they don't know the grammatical rules very well... This is actually...it really proves that sometimes it...it doesn't mean that you have to know the grammar rules very well. If you've been in a...in a culture, you're exposed to the language and you start to talk immediately with the people without thinking about the grammatical rules; you would speak very well without knowing the grammar (Lara, Pre-I2).

Lara felt that language exposure is more important than teaching grammar rules for spoken language development and she gave an example of people who learn the language informally by immersing in the second language culture. I asked Lara if she prefers to teach fluent students or accurate students, she showed preference to teach accurate students and she said:

An accurate might become a fluent but a fluent, who got used to the language in this way, will be very difficult to go and be accurate maybe (Lara, Pre-I2).

When I asked Lara about how she views accurate speakers, she said:

An accurate speaker, who speaks, who knows when to use special words, in a special context and to use the correct grammar, of course and to know how to pronounce it very well, that's it (Lara, Pre-I2).

Lara views on accuracy reflected a good understanding of the concept. While she believed that accuracy is important, it was not a priority in her teaching of speaking as she was more focused on motivating her students to speak.

## **8.7 Using L1**

When I was discussing Lara's students' problems with her, she said:

...Sometimes they want a really direct translation English to Arabic and sometimes when they translate it to Arabic literally they ask the teacher how does this meaning go. So I tell them it doesn't have to be like a literal translation, they just need to understand the meaning in general, you don't have to compare directly to the Arabic word. And they always have this problem and maybe they are not convinced even not to translate; they have to do it. But what I do sometimes, I do sometimes ask them to give me the meaning in Arabic if you notice because if I know that the meaning is the same in Arabic and they want to get it when I explain [in] English, so I try to let them guess the word in Arabic to get it quickly. But maybe for the phrases, it won't work (Lara, Post-I3).

Lara asked her students to guess the Arabic meanings of new words. The following is an example:

### **Episode 32**

L: ... So what the meaning of invention, when people invent new things, what does this mean?

S1: Iiktishāf [‘discovery’ in Arabic]

S2: Iikhtirā‘ [‘invention’ in Arabic]

(Lara’s class 4)

Lara encouraged this translating new vocabulary into Arabic. She also provided translation of some phrases:

### **Episode 33**

L: So usually the verb that goes with crime is commit, commit a crime. Like when you say in Arabic, what do you say in Arabic?

S1: Iijrām [‘The act of committing crime’ in Arabic]

S2: Fā’il Al-jarīmah [‘a person who commits a crime’ in Arabic]

L: Zay lamman nigūl irtakab jarīmah [‘like when we say commit a crime’ in Arabic]. This is the correct collocation that goes with the word crime is commit a crime.

(Lara’s class 4)

Lara said that translation might work with words but not with phrases, therefore, I asked her why she provided the Arabic equivalent of the collocation ‘commit a crime’, she said:

Because some of them ... they see ... and I can tell from how they look, they see me and they're not convinced and why we say 'commit a crime'? Why don't we say 'he did a crime'? We can say it but they have to know that the most suitable word with 'crime' is 'commit a crime'. They have to know this collocation (Lara, Post I-4).

She also said:

We took a lot of collocations before – what goes with make, what goes with do and get and they should know. And so they understood it but when I said it in Arabic it clicked quickly. We have no time today so everything should be very quick, they have to understand, because the time was limited and I felt to get it correctly and perfectly I would say it in Arabic (Lara, Post I-4).

Lara used Arabic to save time and to make it easier for the students to understand.

Her students were not only using Arabic to translate words or phrases, as I observed students using Arabic while working in groups. Lara commented on this, she said:

When I ask them to do an exercise, for example, as a conversation between two of them, uh, they start by thinking in Arabic. This is usually their common problem. They can't think in English now. They're still in this level (Lara's Pre-I2).

She added:

They need sometimes... and even to discuss the thing with their friends when I give them, uh, sometimes discussion. I ask them sometimes to prepare, we're gonna discuss now, after ten minutes, this topic as a group, two groups. So I hear them sometimes, um, saying in Arabic, 'I'll say this, you say that'. And I tell them: try to practice English even if you're discussing things together (Lara's Pre-I2).

Lara felt that her students think in Arabic, which is normal to students at their level and does not change easily. It is unrealistic to expect students at their level to think in English. This belief might be a result of Lara's lack of teaching experience. Lara tried to provide her students with enough time to plan for their speaking activities to



help them to use English but they used Arabic for planning. It seems that Lara's students did not know when they can and when they cannot use Arabic as Lara was not explicit about this to them.

### **8.8 Influences on Lara's beliefs**

Lara's English language learning experience seemed to influence her teaching of speaking. Firstly, in (1.4.3), Lara expressed positive beliefs towards dividing students according to their level as weaker students might become reluctant to speak in front of their more advanced peers in mixed-level classes. She said commenting on her learning experience:

I remember that when I was in elementary they used to ... divide us according to levels. So they moved the grade (four, five and six) and they mixed all together according to levels. So the excellent students go to A and the good students go to B and the weak ones go to C. So, it was a good idea actually to mix with other students, you know, who's, you know, older than you and younger than you (Lara, Pre-I1).

Lara's personal English learning experience influenced how she viewed the teaching of speaking. She expressed her preference to teach speaking with listening; she said: 'I think I knew this lately when I started listening a lot. That listening really improved my speaking' (Lara, Pre-I1). Also, Lara's French language learning experience influenced her beliefs and her class interaction, she said:

When you know English very well, you feel it's easy. And you don't feel the feeling of the beginners of English. But when we took the French courses we really remembered, like, how the beginners feel when they can't understand any word. It's very difficult if you don't know even the numbering. I have some of the students sometimes they don't know the colours. So imagine we are talking about a picture or a certain page and they don't know what we're talking about. So it's a good feeling to know how those people, who doesn't

acquire the language very well, how they feel. And you try to use, like simple language; you speak very slowly; you try sometimes to translate in order to help the beginners to learn the language (Lara, Pre-I1).

Being a beginner in French helped Lara to have more empathy for her students.

## **8.9 Summary**

Lara had optimistic beliefs about her students and she was empathetic with them. This seemed to influence how she dealt with them in the classroom. Her students had few opportunities to practise speaking in class and the classroom speaking interaction was generally controlled. Lara's belief in the importance of providing input to students, which would develop their speaking can explain the dominance of teacher talk in her classrooms. When she implemented pair work and group work in her classes, students were expected to have more interaction among themselves in these activities; however, there were some issues with group work:

- She viewed group/pair work as a preparation stage for the activity; she told the students explicitly that they need to prepare and they need to report their answers to her.
- Lara's instructions were not clear and the students did not know what they have to do exactly.
- Sometimes students were using Arabic in their group discussions.

Lara used to dislike group work as a student but she was told about its value in the training she received. While this seemed to make her more positive towards group work, she did not seem to have sufficient practical knowledge to use group work effectively. The following table provides some of the prevalent practices in Lara's speaking classes and the beliefs which underlie these practices:

Practice	Aspect of Beliefs	Explanation
1. (a) Lara took longer turns than her students.  (b) TTT was perceived to be higher than STT.	About teaching speaking	1. Providing students with good input helps them to speak.
2. She implemented group speaking activities in her classes and she changed some pair work into group work.		2. (a) Role-plays might be difficult for weak students.
3. Lara implemented lead-in discussions at the beginning of each speaking lesson.	About motivation	3. (a) Students need to be prepared for the speaking activities and need to be motivated.  (b) Motivation is essential for students' learning.
4. (a) Lara provided indirect and selective error correction.	About error correction	4. (a) Dealing with students' mistakes positively would help in creating a good learning atmosphere.
5. She provided feedback to her students after they finish their activities.		5. Lara believed that students need to become aware of their mistakes.

Table 8.1: Lara's beliefs and practices

## 9 Teacher 5: Sally

### 9.1 Profile of the teacher

Sally had been teaching English for five years when I conducted this case study. She started learning English at an early age in the UK. She had completed a Bachelor of Arts in English Language in a state Saudi University in 2007. Sally did not receive any formal training but she attended some in-service training workshops.

### 9.2 Overview of Sally's classes

Sally was teaching in the main university campus. Her class had around 30 movable chairs. Sally commented on the seating arrangements in her class, saying: 'So no, I don't really like the way the chairs are seated in the classroom (Sally, Post-I1). However, she did not try to change the seating. When I asked her about the influence of seating arrangements on teaching speaking, she said:

I feel if a student wants to learn and she wants to like talk to her friend, we're going to find them talking anyway. So they're going to turn around and talk to their friends and they explain ideas if they're interested to do the thing, the task I give them, I think this (referring to the seating) would not affect them (Sally, Post-I1).

Unlike Maha, Sally felt that seating arrangements do not inhibit students from speaking. All Sally's speaking lessons were entirely course book-led. She was using *New Headway Plus Special Edition*, pre-intermediate course book. She expressed positive views towards it, she said: 'I feel it is good because the topics are interesting and the level is fine. It is good for them, for their level' (Sally, Pre-I1).

### 9.3 Sally's students

Sally was teaching intermediate preparatory year students. 25 students attended the first, 28 attended the second and 26 attended the third observed class. When I asked Sally to describe her students, she said:

I have 29 students. They are all level three. So it means that all of them passed level 2 and moved to level 3 and they are Science students. So usually Science students are excellent, most of all they can understand most of the words in English. This is what I found from like comparing between Arts and Science students (Sally, Pre-I1).

Sally's beliefs about her students seemed generally positive; she felt that they are able to understand most of what she says in English. When I asked Sally how willing her students were to speak, she said:

They feel sometimes reluctant to speak because they don't have enough vocabulary to say what they want, so they are like: 'teacher I am going to say what I have but I might use some Arabic. So I tell them: 'Okay, you can say whatever and if you are stuck I can help you, so if you are stuck with an expression and you don't know what to say in English I can help you.' So I start like letting them, in a way when she started speaking I can continue with her, okay you mean this and that and I say it in English so that she can learn (Sally, Pre-I1).

She gave more details about their level:

Well actually they are good students and they told me even they have some problems understanding a few words and but generally I can tell they are very good, most of the grammatical rules I discuss they know them before. They have some problems understanding new words and I have to explain words but they can understand sometimes a definition in English. I don't have to give an Arabic meaning. If they fail to understand it, then I can give an Arabic meaning, or sometimes they help each other by giving an Arabic meaning. But generally, they would prefer at least a 70% or 80% English class to learn (Sally, Pre-I1).

Sally evaluated her students' level according to their grammatical knowledge and how much they use Arabic. Sally viewed the use of Arabic as a measure of her students' lexical repertoire and as an indication of their speaking proficiency level more generally. The use of L1 in Sally's classes will be discussed further in 9.6.

#### **9.4 Sally's speaking activities**

Sally implemented different types of speaking activities. In her first class, she taught speaking and grammar. She taught speaking with grammar in her first class, with listening and grammar in her second class and with reading in her third class. In the following, I present extracts from the activities in each speaking class and I discuss Sally's views on these activities.

##### **9.4.1 First class: grammar and speaking**

In Sally's first class, students had a grammar practice activity where students had to answer questions about four cities, then, compare the four cities using the comparative and superlative forms (Appendix 15).

#### **Episode 34**

Sally had two sheets of papers; each sheet included information about two cities. She divided the class into four groups; two groups had the answers and the other two groups had to ask the questions from the course book. She asked them to do the activity as a group, one student from each group would ask the question and one student from the other group would answer. She gave them about 4 minutes to do the exercise.

Sa:                   Group number two, ask group number one about the two cities they have. Yes, Noor, ask them.

N: How old is Damascus?  
Sa: How old is Damascus? Yes, Raja.  
R: It's founded on six thousands three hundred years.  
Sa: Six thousand  
Grp1: Three hundred  
Sa: Three hundred. Okay... Okay?

Group one discussing the answer.

S1: BC.  
S2: Mīlādī ['Gregorian' in Arabic].  
S3: Lā mū mīlādī ['No, it doesn't mean Gregorian' in Arabic]  
Sa: Yes, Before Christ. Do you have another question? Group number two do you have another question? Ask another question. The population, number of people. What else? You have a list of questions here in the book. Yes Ghadah, your questions?  
G: How many people live in Brasilia?  
Sa: How many people live in Brasilia?  
S4: One million One hundred twenty-nine.  
Sa: Okay, another question. Nasreen, do you have a question?

[Nasreen asked the questions but her voice was inaudible]

Sa: Sorry?  
N: How wet is Brasilia?  
Sa: How wet is Brasilia? What does wet mean?  
SS Ruṭūbah ['humidity' in Arabic].  
Sa: That's right. How wet is Brasilia?

SS ...

Sally to Grp1: Yes you can share the answer together.

SS ...

Sa: You don't have the information?

SS Nighayyir al-suaāl? ['Shall we change the question' in Arabic]?

Sa: Okay change the question. Give them another question.

S5: How big is Brasilia?

Sa: How big is Brasilia?

S6: It's five thousand five hundred thirteen kilometre.

Sa: Thank you, very good. Okay, now let's move to group 3 and 4.

Sally did the same with the other two groups but she did not ask the students to compare between the four cities. She moved to the next exercise and asked the students to compare between cities in their country.

Sa: Can you compare now between two cities here in Saudi Arabia using some of the comparative or superlative adjectives? Give me some examples. Compare between two or three cities or compare one to all. Yes, Hanan.

H: Abha is colder than Jeddah.

Sa: Very good. Abha is colder than Jeddah. Very good. What else? Yes, Renad.

R: Jeddah is the hottest city in KSA.

Sa: Maybe that's right. Jeddah is the hottest city in KSA. Yes, Amany.

A: Al-Dammam is the best city in Saudi Arabia.

Sa: Al-Dammam is the best city in Saudi Arabia [smiling]. It's her point of view, right?



(Sally's class1)

According to the course book, this activity was a pair information gap activity which aims to get students to practice comparative and superlative adjectives. Sally changed the activity into a group activity which was implemented as a whole class teacher-led activity and it was more similar to reading comprehension rather than information gap activities. Also, according to the teacher guide, the last part of the activity, (Exercise 4 in Appendix 15) was a personalized pair speaking exercise that would give students more opportunities to speak if implemented effectively. I asked Sally how this activity can contribute to her students' speaking development, she said:

Okay, because when they're going to compare of course they're going to use some adjectives, they're going to use a lot of words, names of places or things they can see in the picture. So they're going to learn a lot of the words they might use when they speak. So basically they're describing, not only comparing. So when describing something, of course, you're going to speak and practice. So it relates a lot to speaking, because as if they're speaking about the same city they're seeing there in the picture (Sally, Post-11).

Sally thought that this activity would be a good speaking practice but she realised that the activity did not fulfil its aims. She commented on this activity in her written commentary, she said:

I think the students were not really interested in the speaking activity today, may be because it was a bit boring for them just to choose from the list of questions they have to ask the other group. This exercise didn't involve any creativity and it didn't give the students a chance to think or practice. Even the other groups were asked to answer from a list of information. I think that the idea of the exercise was not interesting (Sally, Wr-C1).

In the post-observation interview, Sally added:

When we started this exercise I thought it was boring because both groups were not really thinking about what they want to say, they just, you know, choose one of the things that they want to speak about. They copy the answers. So there was no creativity in this exercise, no ... it did not involve any thinking of how to form a question because they just chose a question from the book. And they give it to the other students. So they're really bored and I even like ended up like finishing this exercise quickly because I thought we were going to take a long time, it's going to be really boring. And after I finished the class and I took a look at the book again, I thought that I did not really do it in a way that I achieved the objective of the exercise, because the exercise was done to use the comparative forms between cities and when I felt it's boring I just ended this exercise without letting the students compare between the information they were giving each other. So I was not doing it in the right way because I was bored, too. So I thought that there was no use doing this exercise (Sally, Post-I1).

Sally's reflections on the activity show that she was aware that the activity was not implemented effectively. This might indicate that Sally did not have a clear plan of how to achieve the objectives of her lesson. Also, it raises questions about Sally's use of the teacher guide. In her first pre-observation interview, she commented on the teacher guide, she said 'sometimes I read in the teacher book and see what other extra activities I can add to my class' (Sally, Pre-I1). Unlike Nada, the teacher guide seems to be of a secondary importance to Sally. She viewed the teacher guide as a source for extra activities rather than a guide for planning and teaching.

#### **9.4.2 Second class: listening and speaking and grammar and speaking**

Sally showed preferences to teach listening and speaking and explained the reasons:

Because I feel this part, it is a chance for me to interact more with the students, to listen from them and to give them more, to let them learn what they want to learn because a lot of students when they enter the first year they are like teacher we want to learn how to speak, so they can like benefit from the course and the real life. So I was interested more, also in the topic that was listening and speaking was really interesting for me to give and talk

about some things like incidents that I have in my life and to interact with students, it was interesting for me to do that (Sally, Pre-I1).

Sally expressed that her preference for teaching speaking was a response to her students' preferences to learn how to speak. Also, she mentioned that teaching speaking is an opportunity for her to talk to her students and interact with them. Similar to Rana, Sally viewed teaching speaking as an interactive process where she takes an active part in it.

In Sally's second observed class, she taught a 'listening and speaking' lesson (Appendix 16). After they had finished the listening part, they had two speaking exercises (Exercise 4 and 5: Appendix 16). Exercise 4 was a controlled speaking practice where students were asked to re-order words to form questions. In exercise 5, students were asked to discuss the questions from exercise 4 in pairs. Sally decided to replace exercise 5 with the following whole class discussion:

### **Episode 35**

Sa: Okay. If someone is coming to our country and they ask me these questions before they come, what is the weather like in your country or what is the weather like in your country? Or what is the weather like in Jeddah?

S1: Very hot.

Sa: Very hot, right, in summer, mild in the winter.

Sa: Very good, mild in the winter. Do you have any questions? Girls, so now repeat some answers. Okay. If this person is visiting Jeddah and she is saying what clothes should I take with me when I'm coming here?

S2: T-shirts.

- Sa: T-shirts, right.
- [SS laughing]
- Sa: Okay, so right, t-shirts.
- S3: Shorts.
- Sa: Jeans and t-shirts, right, shorts, okay. Number three, what sort of things can I do, so say when I come to Jeddah, what type of things can I do?
- S4: Go to the beach.
- Sa: You can go on the beach, right.
- S5: Malls.
- Sa: Give her a full sentence or you gonna tell her 'malls'? What are you gonna tell her? You...?
- S5: You can go to mall
- Sa: You can go to the malls, or you should visit, for example, 'Red Sea' Mall [a famous mall in Jeddah], you can give them some names, right, okay. What if she asks you, are there any special places I should visit? Okay, so you said, she should visit the beach.
- S6: Markets in the centre of Jeddah.
- Sa: Very good, you might tell her she should visit the markets in the centre of Jeddah, old Jeddah,
- S7: Maybe mosque.
- Sa: Right, okay. What food would you recommend her to eat?
- S8: Kabsah [a traditional Saudi dish 'rice and meat or chicken'].
- S9: Seafood.
- Sa: Seafood, very good. Where she is gonna, go to eat Kabsah? Māfī makān ['there is no place that sells this type of food' in Arabic].

S10: AlBaik [a name of a famous Saudi fast food restaurant].

Sa: You want to recommend that she eat in AlBaik, right. Okay.  
Thank you so much.

(Sally's class 2)

Students had very little to say in this whole class discussion; the questions required very short answers. Also, the exercise was a repetition of the whole-class discussion they had at the beginning of the class (giving advice to someone who is coming to your country). Exercise 5 (Appendix 16), which Sally decided to replace with this the whole class discussion, was a pair speaking activity where students would exchange information which would be more interactive. This seems to contradict what Sally stated about adapting activities, she said:

They give us sometimes exercises and say this is an exercise of group work, sometimes I want to do it in pair work. Some of the exercises I cancelled them because I see they are repeating another exercise that we already did before and the objective of this exercise we covered and I feel the students are okay with it, so I cancelled this exercise. Sometimes there is repetition; sometimes there are some exercises that I know is boring for the students and I tried them before, so I cancelled them, so it depends (Sally, Pre-I1).

Repeating the same exercise seemed to make the students unmotivated to participate, however; Sally did not show awareness of this, she said:

Maybe more to the end of the class and I had a last discussion with them, I had a hard time letting them speak because I felt that they're not motivated anymore. Maybe we've talked enough today and they're tired by the end of the class, so they didn't want to talk more. So, yes, towards the end of the class I was like maybe handling the whole speaking thing (Sally, Post-I2).

Sally showed awareness of the dominance of her talking time in episode 35. However, she expressed positive views about the class in general in her written commentary:

I really enjoyed today's class. The theme was interesting and so much related to everyday life. The students seemed motivated to speak especially in the 'jobs task' (Sally, Wr-C2).

Most probably Sally was excluding the exercise in (Episode 35). She was focused on the jobs task, which was a grammar practice which included two exercises 2 and 3 (Appendix 17) a pair guessing exercise and whole class discussion.

## Episode 36

### *Exercise 2*

Sally explained the vocabulary the students had in exercise 2. She asked her students to give her the equivalent meanings of some job titles in Arabic and to describe them in English. Then, she discussed the questions with her students.

Sa: Now what I want you to do. I'll divide you into group A, here group A [pointing at half of the class] and group B. Group A you're gonna choose a job,

SS: Okay.

Sa: Kullakum ḥatkūnū ma'a ba'ad tikhtārū ['you are going to choose one job together' in Arabic], you gonna choose a job. You are not going to say it, okay? Group B will ask you some questions. Of course from the questions here [referring to the questions they have in the book], they can ask you any question. You have the chance to ask only five questions and know the answer. Law jawabtu ['if you answer' in Arabic ] you're gonna win a mark, okay? You're gonna ask them, for example, ya'nī zay 'arustī ['it's like ('arustī ) in Arabic. ('Arustī is a name of a guessing game that is based on Yes/No questions – based on an old Egyptian children's TV programme).  
Do you work inside or outside? If they say Yes, You're only gonna answer yes or no, you're not gonna give information.

S1: Bas khamsah asilah ['only five questions' in Arabic].

Sa: You're gonna ask five questions and then you have three choices, momkin ti'tū talātah ijābāt tikūn waḥdah minnaha

saḥīḥah [‘you can give three answers where one would be the right answer’ in Arabic]. Ready? Bardū intū group B nafs al-shay [‘and it is the same for group B’ in Arabic]. You’re gonna choose a job, you gonna keep it a secret. Think of the questions you want to ask the other group to win the game. If you do it quickly, we’re gonna do more than one job, okay, ready? Okay, I’ll give you three minutes. Girls, three minutes, you choose a job from the box here and be ready for the questions.

SS were discussing in groups [SS were laughing]. After about 4 minutes.

Sa: Did you finish? I gave more than enough... time. Shsh.. It’s up to you. You want to discuss the questions before you ask walla ḥābbīn ay waḥdah min al-group ‘indahā sūāāl tīsalu, ḥaykūn maḥsūb sūāāl ‘alaikum [‘or would you like any group member to ask a question and this is going to be counted as a question from your whole group’ in Arabic]. It’s up to you. Once one of you ask a question, raḥ yuḥsab ‘alaikum sūāāl [‘it’s going to be counted as a question’ in Arabic]. And the same goes for answers. Ready? Ready to ask? Now start asking, first question?

S2: Min al-kitāb ya ostathah [‘shall we use questions from the book, teacher?’ in Arabic].

Sa: Min al-kitāb aw min barrah [‘it’s up to you from the book or any question you have’ in Arabic]. But it needs to be a Yes/No question.

SS discussing.

Sa: Okay, Yallah [‘come on in’ Arabic] start question number one.

Noor?

Noor: Do you have to earn a lot of money?

Sa: Do you earn a lot of money?

S3 (Grp B): Yes.

Sa: Yes or No?

Grp B: Yes.

Sa: Okay this is the first question. Question number two? Ashjan?

Ashjan: Do you have to answer the phone?

S4 (Grp B): Maybe.

Ashjan: Māfi maybe imma yes aw No [‘No maybes! Either yes or No’ in Arabic].

[SS were laughing]

Grp B: Sometimes.

Sa: Mumkin sometimes [‘you can use sometimes’ in Arabic].

Grp A: Mū lāzim yes or No [‘but you said yes or No’ in Arabic].

Sa: Sometimes means yes. Okay, question number three.

S5 (Grp A): Do you have to wear a uniform?

Sa: Do you have to wear a uniform?

Grp B: Yes.

Sa: Question number 4, Yes Areen?

S6 (Grp A): Do you have to work inside or outside?

S7 (Grp B): Inside.

S8 (Grp B): Sometimes inside, sometimes outside.

[SS were laughing].

Grp A did not like the answer.

Sa: Bi-al‘aks da ḥaysa‘idkum [‘On the contrary this will help you’ in Arabic]. Usually inside but ahyānan yḥtāj yitla‘ [‘sometimes he need to work outside’ in Arabic]. ḥābbīn tākhdū wāḥid gabil ākhir sūaāl? [‘Would you like to make a guess before asking your last question?’ in Arabic]. Yes, Ghada?

Ghada: Shop assistant?



Grp B: No.

Grp A: Police officer.

Grp B: No.

S9 (Grp A): A woman can make it?

Sa: Can a woman work in this field?

Grp B: Yes.

Sa: In our country?

Grp B: Yes.

Grp A: Decorator.

Grp B: No!

Grp A: Aish huwwa? ['What's, is it' in Arabic]?

Grp B: A nurse.

They continued the same with group B.

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### ***Exercise 3***

Sally asked the students 'which of these jobs you would not like to work in? and why?'

S10: A housewife.

Sa: So a housewife, tell me the reasons, why?

S10: Because work long hour.

Sa: Because you work for long hours.

S11: Stay with the family.

Sa: She wants to work as a housewife because she would stay with her family for a long time.

- Sa: Okay. Choose another job. Okay, you can say whether you want to work this job, or you don't like it and tell me why? Yes, Amirah.
- Amirah: I don't like to work a firefighter because very dangerous.
- Sa: Excellent, she said I don't want to work as a fire fighter because it is very dangerous. Excellent, Ameera. Yes, Hana.
- Hana: I don't work.
- Sa: I don't like...
- Hana: I don't like work an vit /vit/ [mispronounced vet /vet/].
- Sa: A vet...
- Hana: A vet because I don't like animals.
- Sa: Very good. She does not like to work as a vet because she does not like animals.

(Sally's class 2)

Sally changed the pair activity into a group activity. She expressed positive views towards it, she said:

Well, I can say it was a very interesting exercise. The students were really motivated. They were talking together, exchanging ideas and they seemed like really motivated to win the game. Talking about the outcome of the exercise it was an interesting task. I know maybe the outcome of the exercise would not really be that much compared to the time we took maybe in this exercise. I know at the end of this exercise they were able to know all of the vocabulary words of all the jobs, they were able to ask yes, no questions using have to or not have to where maybe they mastered it before. But it was one activity where they... even the weak students can master these words and not forget them later on. And also for them like to try a new exercise that we didn't do before to enjoy the English class (Sally, Post-I2).

Similar to Lara, Sally seemed more focused on how engaging the exercises were more than their learning outcomes. Exercise 2 was interesting and the students were motivated to participate but it was based on a limited set of questions. In exercise 3,

students had more opportunities to express their opinions. However, the whole-class and teacher-controlled nature of interaction with the frequent use of Arabic by both Sally and her students limited the students' opportunities to practise English.

### 9.4.3 Third class: reading and speaking

In Sally's third observed class, she was teaching 'reading and speaking', she said:

I feel that when the topic is ... reading and speaking, students read about it and they're able to talk about it more. They have enough information to talk about. Sometimes the listening does not help the students pick up because a lot of them may not understand what was in the listening track, so they're not, of course, able to say or add anything else. So I thought that the reading helped them to speak more. I like combining the two skills together (Sally, Post-13).

Sally felt that reading provides more comprehensible input to students than listening and it helps students to be more willing to speak. After reading, she started a whole-class discussion about pursuing university education (Exercise 5, Appendix 18).

### Episode 37

Sa: Right, very good, excellent. So now I can understand that you understood the whole thing, okay? So what about your opinion, do you think study at university is very important, how important it is, or if you live in a rich family and you have everything ready for you. Some girls they feel that when they got married after school, I don't want to study, I don't want to work ... I have my husband, we have enough money, I want to live this way and that's it. So what do you think?

S1: I want to study because I want to have a high degree in education.

Sa: Very good, so it depends on your aim. Some people study for money, just to work and have a job and they can live. She said no, I want to study for the education, I want to have a degree, I want to improve myself. Yes, Maram what do you think?

- S2: We should study to improve our knowledge.
- Sa: Right, very good. So she thinks too that study is important for our knowledge.
- S3: Not a problem if you study and a... and my family get a money ya'nī ['I mean' in Arabic]. ḥattá inta ḥa-taḥsul 'ala al-māl ['and you will get money' in Arabic]
- Sa: Right, some people feel no, if I don't need it, I have a lot of money, I don't need it. She says it's not a problem; you can have both.
- S4: Al-wahid aṣlan yidfa' fulūs 'ashan yidrus ['The person would give money to study' in Arabic].
- Sa: Right, excellent, very good, girls. If you want to do well in life, you should work hard.

Then they had a long discussion about pursuing higher education where students were using Arabic frequently. The conversation lasted for over 10 minutes.

They continued second and the third questions.

(Sally's class 3)

Sally's students seemed comfortable to speak and express their opinions and they also seemed interested in the topic.

### **9.5 Sally's approach in teaching speaking**

Some of Sally's speaking activities were not under the speaking section in the course book. When I asked Sally about her views on effective speaking activities, she said:

An effective speaking activity is when an activity is very motivating for the students, is interesting, the topic, or the way of this exercise. When the activity can reach the objective of the lesson, okay, when an activity can ... also sometimes an activity can cover all what I taught them concerning vocabulary, it covers the theme of the topic, the theme of the unit, it covers the grammatical study, so this is a good speaking exercise. It covers all what

we took together plus it's motivating for the students and it can reach the objective of the class (Sally, Pre-I1).

Sally's views on effective speaking activities were focused on developing grammar and vocabulary. It is possible that the course book had influenced Sally's beliefs about speaking. In New Headway, there is an explicit focus on grammar and speaking lessons are usually combined with listening, reading or vocabulary. Also, Sally showed more interest in teaching integrated rather than teaching separate skills classes, she said:

I like the integrated more. I don't want to feel like this is a speaking class, this is a grammar class, we're learning this and that. My students practise speaking a lot with the whole classroom. Even when we're talking and reading, we're discussing the reading topic. We're discussing something about the vocabulary we're learning, so I like the listening and speaking to be along with the classroom from the beginning till the end to learn how to speak with each and everything (Sally, Pre- I2).

Sally seemed to consider any activity, which includes speaking a speaking activity even if the activity was explicitly focused on grammar. I asked Sally about the distinction between teaching speaking and practising speaking, she said:

The difference is that when I teach them speaking, I have to make sure that I pinpoint some of the important things they have to put in mind when they use a certain expression, like use it in this context but you don't use it in that context. And I sometimes write some questions on the board and compare between them and we have some practice in these expressions. But when I say I give them a chance to speak, I just let them say whatever they want to say about the topic, express themselves in any way. And I might comment on some of the mistakes that I have but it's not my main focus. The focus is that we're talking about the topic; we're enjoying the topic itself. So it is a chance for them to speak continuously about the topic, not thinking what the mistakes they might have (Sally, Post-I1).

Sally's comment here shows that she believes teaching speaking involves raising the students' awareness of some rules of how to speak. It also shows that the focus on

accuracy is another difference between teaching speaking and practicing speaking in Sally's point of view. In Sally's observed classes and based on her differentiation between teaching and practicing speaking, students seemed to be practicing speaking rather than learning how to speak.

## **9.6 Interaction in Sally's speaking lessons**

The main pattern of interaction was teacher-fronted and whole-class interaction which was dominated by teacher talk. Sally said: 'I am with learning English and acquiring English not only by learning the grammatical rules but also by acquiring a language from the teacher' (Sally, Pre-I1).

The idea of providing input might explain Sally's long turns and dominance in the class interaction. I did not observe any pair activity in Sally's speaking lessons as she seemed to change all the pair activities into group activities; episode 34 and episode 36 are two examples. Sally commented on episode 36 in her written commentary, she wrote:

Working in groups helped them [referring to students] to correct each other's mistakes. Also, it gave them a chance to think before they speak. They were so interested to participate and exchange ideas to win the competition (Sally, W<sub>r</sub>-C2).

In the post-observation interview, she added:

Well, when I give the students a few questions to answer and I don't divide them into groups, they need a student to think about the answer and sometimes she's going to be hesitant to give her answer. Maybe she's going to be shy even to say an answer with a lot of mistakes and I'm going to correct her in front of the students. So, by dividing them into groups I give her a chance to discuss and say the answer with her friends. And you know in one group we're going to have different levels of students. Some of them might be good enough to correct her mistakes, so she's going to be confident

when she participates after this group work. This encourages students to talk more in class, their confidence. They're motivated. Also, they exchange ideas. Especially if I make it in a competition, they are getting more motivated to talk (Sally, Post-I2).

Sally felt that working in groups is less face threatening to her students and it makes them more comfortable to speak 'in English.' However, there were some issues with implementing group work in Sally's classes. In episode 34 and 36, she divided her students into groups but the activities were more of a whole class teacher-led activities. The students did not have the opportunity to exchange ideas as Sally stated, therefore; I asked her to give me more details about this point, she said:

If she has any ideas which she cannot express it very well in English she's going to ask her friend, for example, how would I say this in English? And she's going to help them. I saw this in... I was monitoring the activity and I was looking between the students and they were like, I would like to say this, how do I say it. And she tries to make an expression and her friends come and help her do it in a correct way. So, in this way they exchange ideas and also she can add and tell her, for example, you can say this also and you can add this word or that. So, by this way she can improve her English too (Sally, Post-I2).

Sally viewed group work as a source of peer support rather than speaking interaction. Arabic was not only used during group work but was also used when students were reporting their answers. The frequent use of Arabic by Sally and her students seems to reduce the students' opportunities to practice speaking in English. Sally commented on her use of Arabic:

... I am not saying that I have to use the first language, I have to use it in the first class or second class or always with the students to understand no, I always ask the students, I start speaking in English and then I ask the students did you all understand and give me a percentage. Give me a percentage, did you understand 50% of what I said, 80% or what and I rate the class. If most of the students said yes we understood all of what you said I'd say okay so I am going to start, do you want a class 100% English and

then okay yes, so if I have X number of students they would say yes teacher we want 100% English class, we want to learn. If I have weak students, they would say, most of them I can tell from their faces that they didn't understand what I said. So they are like no teacher we didn't understand it. So if I find this kind of group I would say okay so I am going to use most of the class in English, I am going to repeat some parts in Arabic (Sally, Pre-I1).

## 9.7 Feedback

In Sally's first pre-observation interview, she expressed her concerns about her students' mistakes, she said:

They still have problems a lot in speaking. Sometimes they are stuck with a lot of words where they cannot express them in English. They have problems in pronunciation. I think that students here didn't learn good basics for pronouncing correctly each word they learn. So I try to tell them about some of the transcription of some words in the dictionary and how can they benefit from some of the programmes where they can learn how to pronounce the words correctly (Sally, Pre-I1).

While Sally felt that her students had problems with pronunciation, I did not observe any pronunciation activities in Sally's classes. The following table presents some examples of Sally's students' mistakes and how she corrected them:

Example	Type of correction
<p>S1: If she is a woman, she <u>should</u> wear Abaya.            Sa: Very good, so again saying 'you <u>should</u>' or 'you <u>must</u>' or 'you have to'? (1)            SS: <u>Must</u>.            S1: <u>Should</u>.            Sa: <u>Is this something that you said and you think it's very important or is the rule in the country?</u> (2)            S1: Rule in the country.            Sa: So what are you going to say?            S1: <u>Must</u>.</p> <p>(Sally's class 2)</p>	<p>(1) Clarification request</p> <p>(2) Clarification request</p>



<p>S1: <u>Malls.</u>  Sa: <u>Give her a full sentence or you gonna tell her 'malls'? What are you gonna tell her? You...? (1)</u>  S1: <u>You can go to mall</u>  Sa: <u>You can go to the malls or you should visit, for example, 'Red Sea' Mall [a famous mall in Jeddah], you can give them some names, right, okay.</u></p> <p>(Sally's class 2)</p>	<p>(1) Clarification request</p> <p>(2) Explicit correction</p>
<p>Hana: <u>I don't work...</u>  Sa: <u>I don't like... (1)</u>  Hana: I don't like work <u>an vit /vit/</u> [mispronounced vet /vet/]. Sa: <u>A vet (2).</u>  Hana: a vet because I don't like animals.  Sa: Very good. She does not like to work as a vet because she does not like animals.</p> <p>(Sally's class 2)</p>	<p>(1) Explicit correction</p> <p>(2) Explicit correction</p>

Table 9.1: Errors and error correction in Sally's speaking lessons

In more than one example, Sally used clarification requests to explain the mistakes to her students. Her corrective feedback was based on grammar; she viewed accuracy in terms of grammatical accuracy, she said: an accurate speaker is 'one who doesn't make mistakes while speaking' (Sally, Pre-I2). When I asked her what types of mistakes, she said: 'grammatical mistakes' (Sally, Pre-I2). Sally believed that students 'need grammar to speak correctly' (Sally, Pre-I2).

I didn't observe many examples of corrective feedback in Sally's speaking lessons mainly because students spoke in very short sentences and they used Arabic when

they faced a difficulty in expressing themselves in English. Also, Sally said that she used selective corrective feedback, she explained:

Well as you said, I think I did not really correct a lot of the students' mistakes. I tried to let them just go and speak to build their confidence first. And then they feel like they're doing well, even if they're not really doing well, because I want them to really ... I want to motivate them to speak a lot in class. So when they feel, yeah, I'm doing well, the teacher is happy, they will speak more. And then I can correct them later on. (Sally, Post-I1).

Sally's efforts to make her students interested were reflected in their voluntary participation in all the activities.

### **9.8 Influences on Sally's beliefs and practices**

Sally claimed that engaging students was a main aim in her speaking classes. This seemed to be influenced by her English learning experience, Sally commented on how she disliked forcing her to speak when she was a student, she said:

Okay what I dislike is that I don't force students to speak when they don't want to speak, this is the things that I didn't like. Because when I was a student I didn't like the teacher to just say you, Sally make a conversation about this and that or talk about this all of a sudden, I am not prepared. So I really hated that when I don't want to speak and the teacher forced me to do that. So I try to avoid this. Plus I try to make the atmosphere of the classroom really friendly for the students to be comfortable to make mistakes and speak and try so that if they make a mistake I correct them in a friendly way. I hated the teacher when someone makes a mistake and she is making fun of it. So she really makes the atmosphere of the classroom uncomfortable for students to speak because all of them don't want to have the same experience and be embarrassed in front of all the students. So this is what I tried to avoid (Sally, Pre-I1).

Sally's English learning experience influenced her teaching, how she dealt with her students and with their mistakes. Class participation in Sally's classes was voluntary; she believed she was focused on motivating her students and creating a

comfortable atmosphere for communication. Also, she provided selective corrective feedback.

Sally's use of L1 was influenced by her French learning experience; she commented on her French teacher's use of French, she said:

At the beginning, it was so hard for me because the teacher started speaking French immediately from the first class, so I felt like what is this, I can't understand. And I felt that I am in a position of I can understand now how the students feel when they learn English and when I enter the classroom speaking all in English and they can't understand what I am saying. So I started to feel what the students feel and put this in mind that I am not supposed to come from the first day and blah, blah, blah, talk fast in English, not putting in mind that I have to use like easy words and speak slowly for the students who can't understand English (Sally, Pre-I1).

Sally's French language learning experiences influenced her views about using L1 in the language classroom and it explains why she used L1 in her speaking classes. Also, this experience made her empathise with her students. Sally's views on fluency and accuracy seemed to influence how she approached teaching speaking. Sally stated that her students were not accurate and they need help, she said:

To help them improve their accuracy and speaking, as I told you, they have to learn the grammar first. Also I start to speak more English in classroom, so I start to avoid some Arabic expressions where they can ... they listen a lot for like two/three hours of every day of English. By the time at the end of this course they're going to acquire the language from me, so learning the grammar plus listening to the teacher and start to practice both can work together to improve their accuracy (Sally Pre-I2).

Sally felt that her students need to improve their accuracy and this might explain focusing on grammar in her classes. When I asked Sally about fluency, she said:

A fluent speaker is a speaker who can express himself with the correct words and with good speed. She doesn't hesitate between words or chop the

sentences into different parts or think about what he wants to say. So a fluent ... the one who is able to express himself quickly and have enough vocabulary to say a comprehensive sentence where other people can understand quickly (Sally Pre-I2).

Also, she said she prefers to teach fluent students and she explained her reasons:

[A fluent student is] able to communicate, interact, say what she wants, make a wonderful conversation, or presentation, even if she has small mistakes but still she is an interesting student for me and I can tell her the points that I want (Sally Pre-I2).

She added: 'Yes, because I feel interested to communicate with students in class' (Sally Pre-I2). Sally's belief that she is a participant in her class speaking interaction. This belief seems to relate to her preference for teaching fluent students as interacting with them will be easier.

## **9.9 Summary**

Sally's beliefs and practices seemed to be influenced by her learning experience and the course book, though she did not follow the teacher guide. Using Arabic was a strong feature in Sally's speaking lessons. She used Arabic in giving instructions or explaining some of the points in the discussion and she allowed her students to use Arabic to encourage them to speak more in the classroom. Sally's use of Arabic in her English classes was influenced by her French learning experience and by her students' level. She felt that using Arabic will motivate them to participate and to speak more without feeling restricted. Keeping the students motivated and interested was an important aim in Sally's speaking lessons. When evaluating the success of the speaking activities she looked at how much the students enjoyed them before

evaluating how much the activities contributed to their speaking development. She believed that motivated students would eventually speak more. Whole class interaction was dominant in Sally's class and I perceived TTT to be considerably more than STT in her observed speaking classes. The following table provides some of the prevalent practices in Sally's speaking classes and the beliefs that underlie these practices:

Practice	Aspect of Beliefs	Explanation
1. Speaking activities had other aims than practicing speaking.  2. Sally's speaking classes had an explicit focus on grammar.	About teaching speaking	1. Sally believed in an integrated approach to teaching English where all the skills can be taught and developed at the same time.  2. (a) Students need grammar to speak correctly.  (b) Teaching speaking involves teaching students how to use words and expressions in their suitable context.
3. (a) TTT was more than STT; Sally took longer turns than her students.  (b) Students had few opportunities to practice speaking.	About herself	3. (a) The teacher can provide students with useful input so that the students can learn from her.  (b) She enjoyed being part of the class interaction. She viewed herself as an interlocutor.

<p>4. (a) Few examples of corrective feedback were observed in Sally's classes.</p> <p>(b) Participation was voluntary in all Sally's observed classes.</p>	<p>About corrective feedback</p>	<p>4. Students need to build their self-confidence, which will help them to be more willing to speak.</p>
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Table 9.2: Sally's beliefs and practices

## **10 Cross Case Analysis**

### **10.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I present the results across the previous five case studies. My aim in this chapter is to provide a summary of the recurrent themes from the previous accounts of teachers' beliefs and practices. Similarities and differences between the five teachers are highlighted.

### **10.2 Methodology of teaching speaking**

All the teachers stated that vocabulary, grammar and oral practice were important for teaching speaking; however, the teachers prioritised grammar and vocabulary differently in their practices. Some teachers chose to implement grammar-focused speaking activities in their speaking lessons (T1 and T5), while other teachers focused only on providing feedback pertaining to grammar mistakes (T2). T2 and T3 pre-taught vocabulary prior to the speaking activities. Moreover, all the teachers stressed the importance of providing students with opportunities to practice speaking. They used different techniques to encourage their students to speak. For example, T2 chose to implement lead-in activities at the beginning of her speaking classes, whereas T4 implemented free speaking activities where no corrective feedback was provided. Furthermore, other teachers focused on encouraging their students to express their opinions on different topics in the language classrooms (T2, T5). These practices helped to create a motivating atmosphere for the students to practice speaking. Nevertheless, students had limited opportunities to practice

speaking due to a number of factors: dominance of accuracy-based activities, ineffective implementation of fluency-based activities, students' low proficiency level and the use of comprehensive corrective feedback. In addition, the observed practices of some teachers reflected misunderstandings about the nature of spoken language. This was evident in T3's speaking classes when she asked one of her students to 'speak in complete sentences'. One may assert that by using complete sentences, it does not reflect an understanding of the nature of spoken language, which is usually composed of incomplete sentences. The teachers' spoken language seemed to reflect natural features of spoken English; however, they did not explain these features explicitly to their students.

While all the teachers believed that the students had problems in their pronunciation, pronunciation was not formally taught, with the exception of one pronunciation activity in T1's first observed class. Developing pronunciation was based on drilling, correcting pronunciation errors and rarely listening.

### **10.3 Use of course books in speaking lessons**

As previously noted, the teachers had to use the special edition of New Headway Plus course books. All teachers seemed to have positive beliefs towards their course books, with the exception of T1, who felt that the course books were not well organised and had some repeated activities. Upon analysis, it was noted that New Headway Plus had a strong focus on grammar and controlled practice, and focused less on free speaking activities. This seemed to influence how speaking was taught in most observed speaking classes.



Teachers followed their course books in teaching speaking, rarely deviating from the order or the contents of the activities. However, some teachers seemed to omit some of the activities that they perceived as repeated (T5), particularly when they did not have enough time or when they forgot to do them, as stated by T2 in one of her interviews.

The ELI Faculty Handbook encourages teachers to use supplementary materials within their lessons (Institute Faculty Handbook, 2012). The teachers said that implementing supplementary activities would increase students' engagement and motivation, whilst also providing more speaking opportunities. Nonetheless, only two teachers used supplementary materials and activities. Time pressure can be a possible reason for the lack of implementing supplementary in other classes. T1 stated that, due to the new final exam date, teachers had very limited time to cover the full syllabus. However, T3 was able to overcome this obstacle by assigning students to do some non-speaking exercises as homework, giving her more time to implement speaking supplementary activities in the class.

#### **10.4 Oral interaction in the language classroom**

The following table presents the different types of interaction in the observed speaking classes, as discussed in detail in the previous chapters:

Teacher	Types of interaction and speaking activities
T1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Individual activities (listening, vocabulary or grammar).</li> <li>- Pair and group activities.</li> </ul>
T2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Whole class lead-in discussions.</li> <li>- Group activities.</li> </ul>

T3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Whole class lead-in discussions.</li> <li>- Pair activities.</li> <li>- The five minutes activity (teacher → student).</li> </ul>
T4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Individual activities (grammar or vocabulary).</li> <li>- Pair and group activities.</li> <li>- Whole class discussions.</li> </ul>
T5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Group activities.</li> <li>- Whole class discussions.</li> </ul>

Table 10.1: Types of interaction in the observed speaking lessons

Three teachers stated that teacher talk is important to provide input for their students. This belief was reflected in the speaking classes, where whole class teacher-fronted interaction was the dominant method of interaction. In such instances, interactions adopted the IRF (initiation, response, feedback) pattern (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975 cited in Wells 1993). Most of the teachers' questions were limiting and prompted only short answers.

Both group and pair activities were presented in the course books. All teachers, aside from T4, implemented either group work or pair work during their lessons. Table 10.2 summarises the reasons that teachers gave for not implementing pair or group work in some speaking lessons:

Observation	Reasons
No group work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Group work was implemented in her past classes but students did seem to like it (T1).</li> <li>- The fixed seating arrangements restricted group work activities (T3).</li> </ul>
No pair work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Group work is more effective than pair work (T2).</li> <li>- Working in groups made students more comfortable to</li> </ul>

	<p> speak, as it was less face threatening than pair work (T5). </p>
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Table 10.2: Stated reasons for not implementing group or pair work

T1, who believed her students did not like group work, held a focus group with her students after her second observed class, and she discovered that they were interested in having group work during their classes. As evidenced, teachers' beliefs about their students' preferences may be inaccurate, particularly, if the beliefs were not based on students' stated preferences. T3 said that fixed seating impeded upon group work and therefore, she did not implement any group work in her classes. T2 also said that seating was a restricting factor, but this did not stop her from implementing group work in her classes. T1, who had movable chairs, did not implement group work in her observed speaking classes at all. These findings suggest that seating arrangements do not completely restrict the teachers' choices.

Group and pair activities were implemented in a controlled manner, which did not seem to promote interaction among students. In most cases, the activities adhered to the following pattern of interaction:

1. Teachers explained the activity and what students needed to do.
2. Students prepared what they needed to report to their teachers (sometimes students worked individually on the activity).
3. Students shared their answers with their classmates and teachers.
4. Teachers provided feedback.

It was noted that the interaction in these activities was teacher-led. Teachers initiated the activity by giving instruction, then the students prepared their answers and

reported back, followed by the teacher evaluating their answers. Subsequently, the structure of these activities was limiting and did not encourage interaction; the activities were teacher-centred and the students' main aim was to report their answers back to their teachers.

Generally, the teachers controlled and led the interaction during the speaking lessons. The teachers' beliefs on group and pair work seemed limited and were not theoretically informed, which may reflect their limited theoretical and pedagogical knowledge. Moreover, they were encouraged by the institute and in their course books to implement group work, but they did not seem to be informed on how these activities can be implemented effectively.

In terms of students using Arabic (the students' L1) during group work and classroom interaction, all the teachers, with the exception of T5, identified this as an issue. Teachers were against the idea of using Arabic in English classes because they wanted their students to have more opportunities to practise English. The linguistics courses that those teachers had taken in their undergraduate degrees may have influenced their beliefs about using L1. That is, these linguistics courses emphasised upon SLA research that negatively viewed the use of L1 in the classroom. In addition, the Institute itself have a policy where they ban the use of Arabic in the classroom. The first instructional policy in the Institute handbook for teachers was as follows:

‘English language is the language of instruction and instructors are not allowed to use Arabic in the classroom under any circumstances. Students are not allowed to speak Arabic in class’ (Institute Faculty Handbook 2012).

Most teachers endeavour to control the use of Arabic in their classes; however, it was noted that both teachers and students used Arabic in all the observed classes. The amount of Arabic used varied in different classes. For example, Arabic was rarely used in T3's observed speaking classes, but it was used fairly often during T5's observed classes. T1 and T3 were trying to imitate the classes they had taken as (English major) students, but those classes differed in level, nature and purpose from the classes they were teaching.

As I was observing one of the classes, a student asked me about the meaning of an Arabic word in English. I did not want to interfere in the class, so I did not reply. When I said nothing, the student followed up by guessing the meaning. I only replied affirmatively and nodded. Yet, this incident demonstrated that students may need to use their L1 in the classroom, at the very least when they cannot appropriately express themselves in English. T4 adopted this belief whereby, although she was against using Arabic freely, she allowed her students to use Arabic when necessary.

The amount of TTT was more than STT in all observed classes, as illustrated in the lesson extracts provided in the previous chapters. T1, T4 and T5, who were all aware of this, viewed TTT as a way of providing input for students. T2 also stated that she was trying to control it. In contrast, T3 did not show any awareness of this.

Dominance of TTT opposes what is recommended in the ELI Faculty Handbook for Teachers (2012). Learner-centeredness is presented as the first value in the institute values, and is one of the main criteria for evaluating teaching. The terms 'learner-

centred’ or ‘student-centred’ were not used in any of the interviews. Absence of these terms suggests that the institute has not been able to share its vision of learning and teaching with its teachers.

### 10.5 Teacher-student relationship

In this section, I discuss teachers’ beliefs about their students, focusing on students’ mistakes and oral feedback. The cross case analysis suggests that there is a shared belief amongst most teachers, that providing students with a supportive, positive environment would make them more willing to speak. This belief was reflected differently. Whilst T1 focused on building her students’ self-confidence, as she felt they were insecure after having failed the course the first time, T3 avoided explicit feedback and used recasts to correct her students’ mistakes.

Table 10.3 summarises the teachers’ beliefs about their students, which are based on the cross case analysis. A tick (✓) indicates that the teacher recognises the statement as true and a cross (×) indicates that the teacher has an opposing belief to the statement. The code (NM) indicates that the topic of the statement was not mentioned by the teacher.

Beliefs	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
Teacher role					
1. Teachers can be a source of motivation for students.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Beliefs about students’ level and willingness to speak					
2. Students have positive attitudes towards English.	×	✓	×	✓	✓

3. Students are good in class participation.	×	NM	✓	✓	✓
4. Lack of vocabulary, grammar and low language proficiency are reasons for students' reluctance to speak.	✓	×	✓	×	×
5. Students are focused on passing the course.	✓	NM	✓	NM	NM
6. Students have negative attitudes towards English.	✓	NM	✓	NM	NM
7. Students' ability is incompatible with their speaking performance (they can do more).	✓	NM	NM	NM	NM
8. Students have conflicts between their aspirations and their speaking performance.	NM	✓	NM	NM	NM
9. Students are not putting forth enough effort to improve their speaking.	✓	NM	✓	NM	NM
Beliefs about students' mistakes					
10. Students are afraid of making mistakes.	✓	NM	✓	NM	NM
11. Students make mistakes in pronunciation.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12. Students' mistakes are acceptable as they contribute to learning development.	✓	✓	×	✓	✓
13. Students need to accept making mistakes, as mistakes are part of their learning process.	✓	✓	NM	✓	✓
14. Students' mistakes are not acceptable from students at their level.	NM	NM	✓	NM	NM
15. Effective corrective feedback is comprehensive and on the spot.	✓	×	✓	×	×
16. Corrective feedback needs to	×	✓	×	✓	✓

be selective.					
17. The value of mistakes lies in correcting them.	✓	NM	NM	NM	NM

Table 10.3: Summary of teachers' beliefs about their students

T1 and T3 expressed negative beliefs about their students' performance, as they felt their students could do better. These two teachers shared a set of beliefs about their students' willingness to speak, their students' mistakes and the necessity of corrective feedback. Interestingly, both teachers were comparing their classes to an ideal. T1 was comparing her classes to her university undergraduate classes, while T3 was comparing her classes to the English language classes she had attended at her private university. Thus, tensions between their ideals and the reality contributed to creating some negative beliefs about their students. Consequently, these tensions influenced their classroom practices.

In addition, both teachers stated that their students were not willing to speak, they viewed their students' mistakes negatively and they chose to provide comprehensive corrective feedback. Aside from T1 and T3, the other teachers seemed to have positive attitudes towards their students' mistakes and were selective in correcting errors. Recasts and explicit error correction were the most common types of corrective feedback, and clarification requests were used rarely. T2 stated that using recasts was more appropriate for less confident students, as explicit feedback might be face threatening.



## 10.6 Teacher roles

As shown in Table 10.4, all the teachers agreed that they are a source of motivation to their students. Each of them tried to motivate their students in a different way. For example, T1 provided positive feedback to help her students build their self-confidence, while T2's strategy was to avoid explicit corrective feedback. T1 did not feel that her students were responsive, while T2 believed that she was successful in playing this role, as her students apparently became more willing to speak. In addition to the role of a motivator, four main teacher roles emerged from the interviews. Two of these roles were observed and two were not. Table 10.4 presents a summary of these roles.

Teacher's role	Observed practices
Friend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was not observed (T1)</li> </ul>
Mother	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forcing students to participate (T1)</li> </ul>
Discussion facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was not observed (T2)</li> </ul>
Motivator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using praise (T1, T2, T3, T4)</li> <li>• Joking with students (T2)</li> <li>• Avoiding explicit feedback (T2)</li> <li>• Allowing students to use L1 (T5)</li> <li>• Discuss topics that relate to the students' lives (T1, T2)</li> <li>• Using recasts and selective error correction (T4)</li> <li>• Implementing free speaking activities where no errors are corrected (T4)</li> </ul>

Table 10.4: Teachers beliefs about their role

T1 identified the role of a 'friend' as her preferred role, but she felt she had been unable to achieve it. However, the role was an ideal, because the students' level and the nature of teaching in the institute were barriers to implementing this role. As a result, T1 said she found herself taking the role of a mother, who was forcing her students to speak and participate in the classroom activities, and therefore, a role that she viewed negatively.

T2 identified the discussion facilitator role, which was the opposite of a controlling teacher who does not give the students opportunities to express themselves. Therefore, she felt that this was her main role in her speaking classes. However, the role of the teacher as a discussion facilitator implies a student-centred classes, but this was not reflected in T2's observations, in which the session were heavily teacher-centred.

The last role was the teacher as a motivator, which was mentioned by all teachers in their interviews. This role was reflected in teachers' practice in different ways.

### **10.7 Influences on teachers' beliefs and practices**

The teachers claimed that a number of factors played a role in their beliefs and practices.

- 1- **Teacher knowledge and training.** Teachers had limited theoretical and pedagogical knowledge due to their lack of training and teaching qualifications. Some teachers seemed to have more theoretical knowledge

than others. For example, T2 showed good awareness of the technical meanings for accuracy and fluency, whereas T3 did not seem to have a good understanding of these terms. Their educational backgrounds might have influenced these differences: unlike the degrees that the other teachers held, T3's undergraduate degree was more focused on translation than linguistics.

- 2- **Teachers' learning experiences.** Most teachers' beliefs and practices seemed to be influenced by their learning experiences. T1 and T3 showed interest in providing their students with similar learning experiences. In contrast, T2 did not enjoy some aspects of their learning experience, and subsequently wanted to provide their students with a different learning experience.
- 3- **Teaching context.** A number of contextual factors seemed to influence the teachers' beliefs and practices: the course books, students, exams, the institute policies and expectations. Teachers taught integrated classes, and in most cases, these classes seemed to be less focused on speaking in comparison to reading, writing or grammar. Three factors seemed to influence this: firstly, the speaking exam constitutes only 10% of students' final grade. Secondly, the course book gives more focus to grammar and reading. Thirdly, students have a supplementary writing portfolio and separate slots to work on this portfolio with their teachers. Teachers were in a controlled environment where they had to use specific course books, follow the syllabus and finish within a specified time, as the institute has to make sure all students receive instructions in a similar manner, regardless of the

teachers' qualifications and training. All these factors seemed to make teachers prioritise teaching other skills over teaching speaking.

- 4- **Teachers' teaching experiences.** A lack of experience was evident in T1's ideal beliefs and from the sense of frustration she expressed in her interviews. Conversely, the other teachers, who were more experienced, seemed to be more relaxed in their teaching and, in general, their beliefs seemed to be less ideal.

## **10.8 Summary**

This chapter has highlighted the main themes, which characterised the teaching of speaking in this study. The observed speaking classes were course-book based and teacher-centred. The teaching of speaking was based on developing students' grammar and vocabulary and on providing controlled practice. Less attention was given to developing students' speaking fluency. All teachers identified motivation as an important concept within the classroom; they used different strategies to motivate their students. In the following chapter, I discuss these results in relation to the literature.

## **11 Discussion**

### **11.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims to discuss the main themes that emerged from the previous five chapters, in order to provide answers to the following research questions:

Q1: What are the beliefs that English language teachers hold about teaching speaking?

Q2: What are English language teachers' classroom practices in teaching speaking?

Q3: What is the relationship between English language teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices?

Semi-structured interviews and classroom observations were used to explore the beliefs and the practices of five Saudi English language teachers in an English language institute at a Saudi University. The data was transcribed, coded and analysed. The findings of the case studies were presented in Chapters 5-9. The previous chapter, Chapter 10, provided a summary of the cross case findings. This chapter is based on the themes in Chapter 10 and it follows a similar structure and layout. Here, I argue that this study contributes to understanding how untrained Saudi teachers teach speaking and the beliefs that underlie their practices, the influences on teachers' beliefs and practices, as well as the relationship between these two concepts. These insights are relevant to the Saudi context studied, but may also contribute more generally to an understanding of the factors that shape what teaching practices English language teachers adopt in their classroom.

## 11.2 Course books and teaching speaking

The teaching of speaking was course book based; teachers were required to use these course books by the institute. In this section, I discuss the teachers' beliefs concerning these course books and how they used them to teach speaking. All of the teachers, except T1, expressed positive beliefs towards their course books. These findings are similar to Zacharias (2005), where most teachers expressed positive beliefs towards using internationally published materials in Indonesia. Teachers' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their course books can be influenced by a number of factors, of which, teachers' experience and qualifications play a key role in their evaluation of materials (Lee and Bathmaker 2007; Johnson et al. 2008). Skill integration was the first point mentioned by two teachers when they were asked about their opinions of the course books. All the teachers, except T1, had used different separate-skill course books to teach English before the institute started using New Headway Plus. It seems therefore, that their experience of teaching different course books influenced their beliefs pertaining to their current course books. On the other hand, T1, who expressed negative beliefs over the course books, was in her first year of teaching, and thus, her lack of experience might have influenced her evaluation and belief. T1 felt that the course books were confusing for her, and she was not able to understand was not able to understand the rationale behind the order of some activities.

Teachers followed their course book with few additions or amendments; a high level of conformity was expected in their context. Al-Seghayer (2011:81) notes:

'Teachers [in Saudi state universities] are expected to follow the structure of [their] textbooks closely when planning their classes. As a result, teachers tend not to deviate from the materials in the textbooks and they work hard to teach structurally based lessons, by way of textbook.'

In Saudi Arabia, teaching English is based on course books, particularly, in state schools and state universities. Teachers' adaptation of materials is limited due to time and examination pressures. Therefore, in addition to the institute's policies, which require teachers to use the course books, exams can be another reason for abiding by course books. Mid-module and end of module oral exams are based on items from the course books, which are prepared by the exam committee in the institute, and only a limited number of teachers are involved in this committee.

Teachers implemented speaking activities in a controlled manner; the interaction was dominated by teacher talk and students had few opportunities to speak. When teachers reflected on their implemented speaking activities, they described the activities in terms of their contribution to students' willingness to speak and their suitability to their students' levels, but none of the teachers described the activities in terms of their expected learning outcomes. When I asked them about the aims of their speaking activities, they gave general aims, such as, to provide students with opportunities to speak. They did not articulate specific learning objectives of the speaking activities, even though specific learning objectives were mentioned in the teacher guide. This raised questions over the teachers' use and adoption of the teacher guide.

Most teachers did not seem to follow their teacher guide, particularly in implementing speaking activities. T2 was the only teacher who referred to the

teacher guide in her interviews and stated that she found it useful. Although a high level of conformity was required in the context of the study, teachers' use of the course books in teaching speaking was different based on their different beliefs. Jacobs and Ball (1996:101) suggest that 'the influence of the course book may be even less than that of the teacher, given that some teachers ignore teacher's manuals and even the instructions in the student's book'.

The labels for each activity within the course books did not seem to influence how the teachers taught speaking. For instance, a number of activities, which were labelled as grammar and vocabulary activities, were implemented as part of the speaking lessons and viewed as speaking activities by the teachers. Teachers who implemented these activities stated that grammar and vocabulary are basic elements for speaking development. Cohen and Fass (2001:17) found that,

'Teachers tended to value form and accuracy in oral language as can be seen by their ranking 'grammar' as the most important and 'vocabulary' and 'pronunciation' second of the items they listed as characteristics of good oral production.'

Teaching speaking was focused more on grammar and vocabulary, with less importance given to pronunciation. While most teachers reported that their students have problems with pronunciation, pronunciation was not systematically taught in any observed class. I observed one pronunciation activity in T1's class, which involved oral drilling. In the other observed classes, the teachers provided corrective feedback on pronunciation mistakes and also made students repeat the correct forms (individually or chorally). Macdonald (2002) explored teachers' reasons for avoiding teaching pronunciation. He found that the lack of suitable teaching



materials and the lack of understanding of how to address pronunciation in an integrated way were two reasons for teachers' avoidance or the difficulties they faced in teaching pronunciation. This may also apply to the teachers in this study.

To sum up, the teaching of speaking was largely shaped by the course books. However, teachers' beliefs over what teaching speaking constituted influenced their teaching practices. Teachers did not use the course book as it was designed to be used. The implementation of the activities did not reflect the instructions of the teacher guide, and when the activities were occasionally changed or amended, they were transformed into less interactive and less effective activities. For example, T5 changed a pair activity into a whole class discussion, which was a repetition of another activity they had at the beginning of the class, and as a result, only a limited number of students were able to participate.

### **11.3 Oral interaction in the language classroom**

The speaking classes observed were teacher-centred and dominated by the IRF pattern of interaction. McCarthy and O'Keefe (2004:30) state that the IRF 'pattern of interaction fails to give opportunities for tackling the complex demands of everyday conversation'. However, some researchers point out that the IRF is not always negative; it depends on its purpose and functions (Wells 1993). Wells and Chang-Wells (1992) state that if the last move in the IRF structure was an interactive follow-up, rather than an evaluative feedback move, the quality of the interaction would be enhanced. The five minutes activity, which was implemented in T3's class, is an example of a positive 'IRF' pattern of interaction, where the teacher's

follow-up was focused on motivating the student to speak, rather than to evaluate what she was saying. In the other teacher-led speaking activities, teachers' follow-up movements varied between providing corrective feedback and interactive follow-up. Although implementing the IRF carefully and purposefully in the classroom can be useful, the dominance of the IRF pattern of interaction in this study made lessons teacher-centred and contributed to making the speaking classes less interactive. Clifton (2006:143) argues that this pattern limits the students' interaction to responding to their teachers' questions, whereby 'the student's answer is dependent on conditions that have already been defined by the teacher'.

Whole class interaction dominated the speaking classes. These findings are consistent with those by Cohen and Fass (2001:7), who found in their study of EFL classes at a Colombian University, '[the] classes consisted primarily of teacher talk. When students did communicate orally, it was generally with the teacher rather than with other students'. Teachers expressed positive beliefs about whole class interaction, similar to what Burns and Myhill (2004) found in their study of teachers that expressed positive beliefs towards whole class interaction. Similarly, whole class talk was not interactive as it was used for 'teaching rather than being an instrument for learning' (Burns and Myhill 2004: 47).

Furthermore, Teacher Talking Time (TTT) was dominant in most speaking classes; the teachers did not seem to view this as a problem except for T2. In fact, T4 expressed positive beliefs about the dominance of TTT, similar to what Cohen and Fass (2001) found in their study, where teachers stated that they think they need to

speak more than their students to give instructions or to provide feedback. Providing input can be another reason for teacher talk, as stated by three teachers in this study.

A number of factors seemed to influence the quality of speaking interaction in this study. The first factor was the teachers' planning and management of interaction. The teachers gave general aims for their speaking classes, which were to provide students with opportunities to practice speaking, but they did not state details of how these aims can be achieved. In addition, during the speaking lessons, students had limited opportunities for initiation and self-expression. Most of the questions that were used by teachers did not encourage longer responses; that is, display and closed questions were used more than open questions. Yang (2010) reported similar results in her study of three pre-service trainee teachers in Hong Kong. She found that open and referential questions were rarely used in their classrooms.

The quality of the interaction depends on how teachers manage this interaction more than the type of the interaction or the activity. Some well-managed teacher-student activities (e.g., the free speaking activity in T3's classes) were more interactive than some of the student-student activities that were implemented in other observed classes. In the free speaking activity, T3 was focused on getting the students to speak more than evaluating what they were saying. While the conversation followed the IRF sequence of interaction, the last move was a follow-up rather than evaluative feedback. It can often be assumed that pair/group work is more interactive than teacher-student(s) interaction although, as this study shows, this is not necessarily always true.

Secondly, teachers' beliefs about their students seemed to influence the quality of the interaction in the classroom. Teachers who had positive beliefs about their students provided a more relaxed environment for their students to practise speaking; students showed that they were more open to express their personal opinions in these classes. For example, students in T2, T4 and T5 classes were more open to speaking than students in T1 and T4.

The influence of teachers' beliefs about their students has been reported in a number of studies (Pettit 2011; Mantero and McVicker 2006; Karabenick and Noda 2004; Burns 1996). Teachers' negative beliefs about their students (e.g. that students' levels of English are too low) could be one of the reasons for students' unwillingness to express their personal opinions, particularly, if teachers are focused on accuracy and they provide constant error correction.

The use of the L1 was another factor that had two distinct influences on classroom interactions. Arabic was used in some classes, regardless of it being banned by the policies of the institute. Lucas and Katz (1994:558) state that 'the use of native language is so compelling that it emerges even when policies and assumptions mitigate against it'. In the observed classes, where students were allowed to use Arabic, it was noted that students were more comfortable and confident to express their opinions because they were able to use Arabic when they were not able to convey what they meant in English (e.g. T5's classes). Atkinson (1993:13) states that 'for many learners, occasional use of the L1 gives them the opportunity to show that they are intelligent, sophisticated people'. Additionally, using L1 reduces

anxiety and creates a more encouraging environment for students (Arthur 1993; Auerbach 1993; Brooks-Lewis 2009). Consequently, the results from these studies seem to support T5's beliefs, as it was important for her to build her students' confidence and to make them feel comfortable to speak. She felt that allowing students to use Arabic would make them more willing to speak English. Brooks-Lewis' (2009) study findings showed that the learners found L1 use to be beneficial, as some students stated that using their L1 helped in facilitating their learning and making it more pleasurable.

On the other hand, in the observed classes where students were not allowed to use Arabic, although students were less willing to express themselves, they had more opportunities to practise speaking in English (e.g. T3's classes). While using Arabic seemed to reduce students' opportunities to practise speaking, it made them more willing to express their opinions and to speak. Cangarajah (1999:132) stated that 'using own language puts learners at ease and creates a less threatening atmosphere'.

However, Aleksandraz (2011:38) argues that the tendency to formulate utterances in the native language first may aggravate problems in speaking as, 'these mental operations create obvious costs in terms of fluency and may lead to producing artificial discourse'. Thus, using L1 might slow down students' speaking development. In light of this, it is important to highlight that using L1 needs to be purposeful and it needs to have limits. While L1 can be used to ask questions or give instructions, Cole (1998) argues, 'during speaking activities there is very little

justification for using L1'. In conclusion, using L1 when needed and justified would decrease the pressure on both teachers and students.

#### **11.4 Oral feedback**

The teachers in the study mentioned different reasons for their students' reluctance to speak, but none of them mentioned anxiety. Horwitz et al. (1986) say that one third of EFL students face anxiety in their language classroom. It has been reported in a number of research studies that students feel most anxious during speaking activities (Horwitz et al. 1986, Von Wörde 2003 and Young 1991). Moreover, error correction has been reported as anxiety-provoking by students in Von Wörde's (2003) study. T2 and T4 were aware that students might feel demotivated if teachers focused on error correction, and subsequently chose to provide selective corrective feedback in their observed classes. On the other hand, T1 and T3 believed in providing comprehensive corrective feedback. They asked their students to perform their role-plays in front of the rest of the class, to which students were reluctant to participate in such activities. Putting the students under the pressure of public speaking can provoke anxiety, particularly if accompanied with providing comprehensive feedback. Therefore, it is not surprising that T1's and T3's students had negative attitudes towards English or were reluctant to speak. Young (1991:428) says:

Instructors who believe their role is to correct students constantly when they make any error, who feel that they cannot have students working in pairs because the class may get out of control, who believe that the teacher should be doing most of the talking and teaching and who think their role is more

like a drill sergeants than a facilitator may be contributing to learner language anxiety.

Teachers' behaviour can be a source of students' reluctance to speak. Focusing on error correction, the absence of pair or group work and dominance of teacher controlled and accuracy-focused activities were observed in a number of speaking classes. Teachers' beliefs about their students seemed to influence their way of correcting errors and consequently, students' willingness to speak. T1 and T3 had negative beliefs and high expectations of their students; they used constant comprehensive error correction and their students were reluctant to speak. On the other hand, T2, T4 and T5 had more positive beliefs about their students, were more accepting of their students' mistakes, provided occasional selective error correction and as a result, their students were more willing to speak.

Irrespective of whether the teachers provided selective or comprehensive corrective feedback, they did use recasts. It is widely reported in the literature that recasts are the most frequent type of feedback used in language classes (Ahangari and Amirzadeh 2011; Lyster and Ranta 1997; Panova and Lyster 2002). However, Lyster and Ranta (1997) in their study of the relationship between teachers' feedback and students' uptake in four immersion classrooms also found that:

Recasts led to the lowest rate of uptake-including the lowest rate of repair. What is more, both recasts and explicit correction cannot lead to any peer-or self-repair in that they already provide correct forms to learners.

Recasts and explicit error correction were the most frequent type of feedback used in this research study; I only observed a few examples of clarification requests in T3's and T5's classes. Sheen (2004), in their study of corrective feedback and learner

uptake in four contexts, found that recasts led to the lowest rate of uptake, while clarification requests and metalinguistic feedback led to high levels of uptake. These findings are similar to the findings of this study, as more uptake and higher levels of repair were observed in T3's and T5's classes. Sheen (2004:263) states that,

The extent to which recasts lead to learner uptake and repair may be greater in contexts where the focus of the recasts is more salient and where students are oriented to attending to linguistic form rather than meaning.

In the observed classes, when recasts were incorporated into questions or when they were partial, and thus their focus was more salient, students responded to the teachers and repaired their mistakes. However, when recasts were incorporated into a longer sentence, they did not lead to any repair.

### **11.5 Teacher role**

In this section, I will discuss the teachers' roles in their classrooms. I will discuss teachers' real and preferred roles, how they interpreted these roles and how these roles influenced the teaching of speaking. Farrell (2011) distinguished between ready-made teacher roles and individually created ones. Farrell (2011:60) mentioned that roles such as entertainer and care provider are ready-made roles, of which the teachers in his study did not 'actively seek out although they also all agreed that this is part of their job as an ESL teacher'. On the other hand, individually created roles are roles that teachers seek out to take in their classrooms, such as collaborator and motivator (ibid). In this study, teachers' beliefs about their roles can be divided into beliefs about preferred roles and beliefs about actual roles.



T1 was the only teacher who used metaphors to talk about the role she wanted to take (a friend) and the role she had to take (a mother). Block (1996:51) explains that teachers use metaphors as ‘explanatory vehicles’. T1’s use of metaphors was done to explain her struggle between her ideal preferred role and her actual role. Mann (2008:22), in his study of the use of metaphors by first year teachers, found that the metaphors used by teachers reflect the demands and pressures they faced in their first year. In the case of T1, she was faced with a number of pressures such as time limitations and exam pressures, whilst also struggling between her ideal beliefs and the reality of her classroom, which subsequently led her to take a role she did not want to take.

The role of the teacher as a motivator is an actual role that the teachers in this study viewed positively. This role was played differently in different classes. While T1, T2 and T3 focused on providing positive feedback, T4 implemented free speaking activities where no errors were corrected. Moreover, T2 focused on building a good rapport with her students, as she used jokes and tried to motivate her students to express their opinions by discussing issues that relate to their lives. Burk and Stets (2009) state that individuals might interpret the same identity role differently and the teachers in this study implemented the role of ‘motivator’ in different ways.

Alshehri (2012), in her study of six female Saudi teachers and five students at the preparatory year in a higher education institute in Saudi Arabia, found that the significance of a pleasant classroom atmosphere was recognised by teachers and students. (Alshehri 2012:34) elaborates, asserting that ‘a classroom environment

based on respect and consideration of the students' personal needs is clearly one of the strongest motivational strategies in EFL learning'. Additionally, creating a pleasant relaxed atmosphere was reported by Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) to be a significant motivating strategy.

Teachers' beliefs about which roles they have to take and how these roles can be implemented in the class influenced their teaching practice. All teachers, with the exception of T1, adopted their preferred roles in their observed classrooms. All of them tried to take on the role of the motivator, but the extent to which these roles fulfilled their aims and the influence of these roles on students is questionable.

The teachers' focus on motivation was evident on different aspects in their practices. T2 was more explicit in discussing this role and how it was implemented in her classes. She used different ways to motivate her students and she believed she was successful. Comparing T2's students' willingness to speak and participate in class activities to the students in the other observed classes show that they were more motivated. This belief seems to be at the core of T2's beliefs. Borg and Phipps (2009) notes that 'core beliefs exert a more powerful influence on behaviour'.

## **11.6 Influences on teachers' beliefs and teaching practice**

In the following, I discuss the three main influences on teacher' beliefs and practices in this study: teachers' learning experience, teachers' knowledge and training, and the educational context.

### **11.6.1 Teachers' learning experience**

Lortie (1975) argues that the students' learning experience (during which they observe teachers for many years) is crucial in creating their beliefs as teachers. Thus, the teachers' learning experiences that they underwent influenced their teaching in different ways. The general findings of this study are aligned with other studies, which showed a significant impact of learning experience on teachers' beliefs (e.g., Bramald et al. 1995; Cabaroglu and Roberts 2000; Calderhead and Robson 1991). T1 and T3 wanted their students to have similar experiences to those that they had had as language learners. On the other hand, T2 wanted her students to have a different learning experience, a phenomenon that has been reported in a number of studies (e.g., Golombek 1998; Johnson 1994). T1 and T3 beliefs about their learning experiences were ideal and hard to implement. Beliefs that are based on teachers' learning experiences can be difficult to implement; this because these beliefs can be inaccurate (Kagan 1992), oversimplified (Urmston 2003) or ideal (Nespor 1987). Such ideal beliefs can be one reason for the tensions between teachers' beliefs and their practices. For example, T1 wanted to use films in her classes and she wanted her students to do presentations. However, this was not possible due to a number of contextual restraints, such as her students' proficiency level, limitations in the amount of time available and the nature of the course. On the other hand, T2 was influenced by her learning experience in a different way. T2 wanted her students to feel free to express their opinions in her classes - an experience that she did not have as a learner. She praised her students, encouraged them to speak and provided discursal feedback to show engagement in what they said, as well as providing

gentle selective corrective feedback. Teachers' learning experience is one of the strongest influences on their beliefs; however, these beliefs can rarely be reflected in practice.

### **11.6.2 Teacher knowledge and training**

Teachers' beliefs and practices were influenced by their limited theoretical and practical knowledge. They often lacked the background knowledge to make informed pedagogical decisions. T1, T4 and T5 had degrees in English Language, T2 had a degree in English Language and Literature, and T3 had a degree in English Language and Translation. That said, they did not undergo any teacher training, nor did they hold any teaching qualifications. Gatbonton (1999:45) found that 'the pedagogical knowledge deduced from the teachers' verbal recollections reflected many of the pedagogical points stressed in teacher education'. However, this was not possible in this study, given the lack of training teachers had.

Most of the teachers' beliefs and practices were based on their learning experience, whilst some of their beliefs were influenced by their linguistics courses. Teachers' learning experiences at the university seemed to influence their subject knowledge and thus, their beliefs about teaching speaking and second language acquisition. The teachers talked about language exposure (T1), language input (T4 and T5) and competence and performance (T1). These ideas were used to justify or explain some of their teaching practices. For example, teacher-talk in speaking lessons were viewed as a way of providing input and exposing students to the second language. In

addition, the teachers' available knowledge of linguistics influenced their teaching practices and beliefs.

When their institute provided training, the teachers reported that it was short and focused primarily on practical issues. The teachers were encouraged to implement certain practices, but they did not know how to implement them effectively in the face of personal and contextual barriers. They were often unaware of terms that were mentioned in their institute's policy documents; for example, 'student-centred' or 'learner-centred' are common terms in these documents, but they were never mentioned by any of the teachers in their interviews. Furthermore, they did not show awareness of widely discussed issues in the literature of English language teaching, such as 'authenticity'.

Although teachers wanted to develop their students' speaking skills, they lacked knowledge that would enable them to achieve this aim. This is similar to what Cohen and Fass (2001:7) found:

Although teachers wanted to add an oral component to their classes in an attempt to adopt a communicative style of teaching, they lacked the knowledge with which to do it.

The lack of knowledge and training was most obvious in T1's case study, as she did not have any teaching experience. As a result, she had ideal beliefs and had high expectations of her students. Cook and Pang (1991:15) compared trained and untrained teachers in their first year and they found that 'training may lessen the discrepancies between teachers' expectations and reality and reduce the number and

range of problems and difficulties that they encounter'. T1 clearly experienced a big gap between her expectations and the reality she faced in her classroom.

Hansen and Feldhusen (1994:115) also found that trained teachers 'demonstrated greater teaching skills and developed more positive class climates' than untrained teachers. While that study was focused on gifted education, it makes the obvious point that training does matter and again highlights the likelihood that the way teachers in this study approached the teaching of speaking was severely limited by their lack of training in English language teaching.

### **11.6.3 The educational context**

The nature of the context did not encourage teachers to be reflective or creative. They did not seem to have thought about their beliefs deeply before they were asked about them in the interviews. Teachers were required to abide by the rules and conform to using the compulsory course books and they were under the pressure of exams. The institute's expectations were another source of pressure. Students were expected to 'achieve an intermediate level of proficiency [that is] equivalent to the Common European Framework Reference for Languages (CEFR) of B1 Threshold level' (ELI Faculty Handbook 2012). In turn, teachers were expected to help students to achieve this level and to help them to pass the exams. However, teachers were not trained or equipped with the necessary skills to help them to achieve this aim. The contextual pressure was mostly evident in the cases of T1 and T3, where they explicitly expressed their concerns about the institute's expectations of them. T1's concerns were focused on time, pressure and exams, while T3 was focused on

her students' expected speaking level. The findings of this study are congruent with other research studies, where the contextual factors were reported as sources of tensions between beliefs and practices (Chen 2008; Farrell 2008; Phipps and Borg 2007).

### **11.7 The relationship between teachers' beliefs and classroom practice**

Presenting the relationship in terms of congruence or incongruence seems to be a simplification of the depth of this relationship. Congruence between beliefs and practices is a controversial construct, as some beliefs might be reflected in practice from the teachers' perspectives, but not from the researchers' perspectives. Teachers' beliefs about their roles can be an example; most teachers believed that they are not controlling but in reality, they taught speaking in a controlled manner. The issue therefore ultimately resides in how teachers interpreted their beliefs. Teachers' interpretation of control is context-based, where teachers in traditional classrooms, in their context, would control what students are allowed to say. In that sense, teachers were not controllers. However, if control is interpreted in terms of interaction, teachers controlled the speaking interaction in their classrooms. In other words, relative to the norm in their context (e.g. teachers talk and students listen), some of the teachers' practices in this study reflected a lessening of control compared to the notions of control discussed in the literature on speaking, even though teachers did control a great deal what students were able to say.

Another issue with congruence is that congruence between beliefs and practices is not always positive. This depends on the type of beliefs and how effective they are.

For example, T3 believed that constructive corrective feedback should be comprehensive and this belief was implemented in her classes. However, the congruence between T3's belief and teaching practice is not positive, as both are not theoretically based and might have negative consequences on students' willingness to speak. On the other hand, incongruence is not always negative, but it can be problematic and it might influence teachers' negatively. For example, T1 felt frustrated because she could not achieve the role she was aiming for.

In this study, some beliefs were reflected in practice and other beliefs were not. Contextual barriers and the type of beliefs seemed to influence their transfer into practice. Ideal, peripheral and contradictory beliefs were not reflected in teachers' teaching practice. Ideal beliefs were the beliefs that were difficult to implement in that specific context of teaching. Peripheral beliefs were the beliefs, which were not emphasized by teachers in the interviews and they did not comment on their absence in practice. For example, T3 believed that pair, group and individual work needs to be implemented in the speaking lessons, but this balance was not created in her classes. However, this idea did not seem to be emphasized in her interviews, which suggests that this belief might be peripheral.

Contradictory beliefs were another source of tension between beliefs and practices. For example, T3 believed that motivating students is important, but at the same time she believed that constructive corrective feedback needs to be comprehensive. Error correction can provoke anxiety (Horwitz et al. 1986; Young 1991) and thus, comprehensive corrective feedback is more likely to provoke anxiety. The



implications of implementing comprehensive corrective feedback seemed to contradict T3's belief in motivating students. Turner et al. (2009) mentioned that contradictions of beliefs could be the result of the institutional or political pressure on teachers. Teachers' lack of knowledge can be another reason for contradictions.

Contextual factors and the type of beliefs are the main reasons for tensions between beliefs and practices in this study. Other sources of tensions can be teachers' beliefs about themselves and their willingness to implement their beliefs, but there was no evidence for these in this study.

### **11.8 Conclusion**

This study highlights aspects of teachers' teaching of speaking and their beliefs, which has not been explored before in Saudi Arabia. Teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices were greatly influenced by their learning experiences, shaped by their course books and restricted by their limited theoretical and pedagogical knowledge. The approaches to the teaching of speaking adopted by the teachers in this study did not seem consistent with the contemporary literature and views on teaching speaking. Teachers were focused on speaking as a product rather than a skill. Their teaching practices were based on developing students' linguistic knowledge (mainly grammatical and lexical) and providing students with opportunities to speak. However, there was less focus on students' ability to use this knowledge in real time, and the teachers did not seem aware of how challenging this can be for students. In addition, teachers talked about teaching speaking in terms of 'giving students' opportunities to speak'; yet they did not seem to differentiate

between ‘teaching speaking and using speaking in teaching and learning’ (Hughes, 2011). In many instances, the students were using speaking to achieve the objective of a grammar or vocabulary activities rather than developing their speaking skills. Teachers’ practices did not seem to be rationalised and their beliefs seem to be simple, as both beliefs and practice were usually theoretically informed. The study’s implications and recommendations are presented in the next chapter.

## **12 Conclusion**

### **12.1 Introduction**

The discussion of the findings in the previous chapter has important implications for language teacher development, as well as for continuing research on teacher beliefs and the teaching of speaking. In this concluding chapter, I highlight the study implications and recommendations for future research. I also provide my reflections on the methodology and conclude with the study contributions.

### **12.2 Implications**

The institute can use the results from this study to develop their teacher training, their general teaching environment, and to enhance their ways of communicating policies and expectations to their teachers.

Training programmes need to aim at developing both teachers' theoretical and pedagogical knowledge. While teachers were aware of the importance of group work, they were not able to implement it effectively. Teacher training programmes need to provide teachers with techniques to implement activities and to manage their classroom interaction. Moreover, teachers need to be provided with training on how to evaluate, use and adapt course books, and how to plan for their lessons to help them use course books more effectively. Finally, teacher training needs to prepare teachers to deal with the teaching pressures and with different contextual issues or teaching problems they might face. Teachers need to be provided with opportunities to reflect on, and to discuss their beliefs. Borg (2003:81) states that research

suggests ‘that although professional preparation does shape trainees’ cognitions, programmes which ignore trainee teachers’ prior beliefs may be less effective at influencing these’. Considering teachers’ beliefs when designing training programmes would therefore enhance the effectiveness of these programmes.

In addition, teachers need to be encouraged to reflect on their practices and also reflect on other teaching practices. Raising teachers’ awareness of the importance of reflection and providing them with skills to help them to be reflective needs to be an integral part of the institute training programmes. Furthermore, the mentoring programme’s benefits would be questionable if they did not encourage reflection. The institute can help in developing teachers’ knowledge, not only through training, but also through encouraging teachers to read about teaching by making books available for them.

Collegial support was not found to be influential in this study. The institute seemed to encourage formal collegial support (mentoring programme) but not informal collegial support. Informal collegial support is important in providing an encouraging environment for reflection and development. As a novice teacher myself, when I was teaching in the same context, collegial support was one of the most important sources of support. The institute can encourage this by giving some experienced teachers less heavy teaching loads in order for them to provide support to novice teachers.

Teachers did not show awareness of the institute policies. The institute therefore needs to work on conveying its policies and also needs to inform teachers on how

they are expected to implement these policies. This would help in reducing the pressure that teachers go through. It is also important to re-examine the role of supervisors in the institute, in order for them to provide both pastoral and professional support for teachers.

### **12.3 Recommendations**

- 1- Research on other aspects of teaching.** This research study was focused on teaching speaking in relation to beliefs in Saudi Arabia. The area of English language teachers' beliefs is generally under-researched in Saudi Arabia. Further research can be carried out on teaching other skills or teaching English in general in Saudi Arabia.
- 2- Longitudinal research.** This study was a cross-sectional study. Conducting a longitudinal study would give insights into teachers' belief change and their interaction with the different contextual factors.
- 3- Research on pre-service teachers.** Similar studies can be conducted in the context of pre-service teachers to examine their beliefs and teaching practices in their practicum courses. The findings of these studies can be compared to the findings of my study to examine similarities and difference between the beliefs of pre-service and in-service English language teachers.
- 4- Replications in other contexts.** Conducting similar research studies in other EFL or ESL contexts would be useful to gain more insights into teachers' beliefs and their teaching of speaking.
- 5- Comparative studies.** It would be interesting to replicate this study's

participants with participants from different backgrounds (trained and untrained, males and female or native and non-native) to examine the differences and the influences of their individual differences on their beliefs and practices.

**6- The influence of in-service training.** Informing the development of teachers' training programmes is an important implication of this study. New training and mentoring programmes have been recently developed in the context of this study. Thus, Investigating teachers' beliefs about these training programmes and the influence of these programmes on teachers' beliefs and practices is definitely an important suggestion for future research in the same context.

#### **12.4 Reflections**

In this section, I will reflect on my study, considering its limitations and challenges.

**A) Participants.** This study was limited to female teachers because universities are segregated in Saudi Arabia. In addition, I had participants in three different campuses. This meant that I had to cancel one of the case studies, which were originally six, because of the time conflicts between participants in different campuses.

The participation was voluntary in the study. Voluntary participation correlates with a higher degree of authenticity (Reips 2002). It helped teachers to be more open to speak about their beliefs and practices.

However, the voluntary participation and the limited number of participants can be limiting, as other teachers who were less interested in participation or those who did not have the opportunity to participate might have different beliefs and practices, which were excluded. Nevertheless, having the advantage of working in the institute before and being known to many teachers encouraged the participants to take part. The same participants may not agree to participate in a research study that is conducted by an external researcher.

Generalisation from this study might not be possible due to the limited number of participants. However, the in-depth case studies provided a thick description of the participants, the context and the observed classes. Therefore, some of the case studies results might be related to other untrained teachers with similar backgrounds in the same context or similar EFL contexts. Likewise, the findings can be relevant and beneficial to other researchers who are tackling similar research topics.

**B) Interviews.** I tried to develop my interviewing skills through reading, conducting pilot interviews and reflecting upon them. However, there were some limitations in the way interviews were conducted. Looking back at the interviews, I found that more data can be generated and more questions can be answered through more probing. Teachers were not prepared to reflect on their beliefs; they needed more help from my side to be able to reflect more deeply. However, I was not able to provide enough support to

them due to my novice experience as a researcher and due to time constraints. Furthermore, I was concerned about asking questions that might threaten the teachers or sound judgmental. This might have influenced the nature of the interviews, as I avoided asking some acceptable questions, which would have enriched the data.

**C) Class observation.** The ‘Hawthorne effect’ could have altered the nature of the research data (Cohen et al. 2013). To minimise this effect, I explained to teachers that I would like to attend their normal classes and I would like the classes to be as authentic as possible. In addition, I told participants that my observation is for descriptive purposes and it is non-judgmental. One of the teachers told me that students had more opportunities to practice and to develop their speaking skills in her reading classes. Attending a wider range of teaching classes could have enriched our understanding of teachers’ beliefs about the nature of speaking and of teaching speaking.

Subjectivity needs to be acknowledged in qualitative research. I attempted to minimise any subjectivity during the data collection. I reflected on and made myself aware of any beliefs or biases that I might have towards any of the participants based on their educational backgrounds. However, my expectations based on my experience in the context might have slightly influenced the way I approached my data collection.

Conducting interviews and observations, and reflecting upon them helped



me to improve my research skills. Despite all these issues, I can argue that the data collection methods were sound and contextually sensitive. Teachers were open to speak and express both positive and negative opinions, as they were ensured that their identities would be anonymised throughout the study. Moreover, questions were worded clearly and sensitively and they were easy to comprehend.

## **12.5 Contributions**

My study contributes to the literature on teacher beliefs in a number of ways. First, as noted earlier, this study is one of the few studies on beliefs about the teaching of speaking, and it is the first in the Saudi context. Second, this study provides deeper insights into the complex nature of teacher beliefs and their relationship with teacher practices. Third, this study showed how speaking is taught in an EFL context like Saudi Arabia; an aspect of research that has not been widely researched.

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## Appendices



## Appendix 1

### Information Sheet for Participants

#### **Research Study: Saudi English Language Teachers Beliefs and Practice regarding Teaching Speaking**

I would like to thank you for your interest in participating in this study. This study is concerned with investigating Saudi English language teachers' beliefs regarding the teaching of speaking. At the moment, very little is known about teachers' beliefs at the beginning of their career in Saudi Arabia. This information would greatly help the development of teacher pre-service and in-service training programmes. Participation in the study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw without giving any reason. You will have to sign a consent form before conducting any interview or observation.

I would like to attend three of your speaking lessons during the second semester of the academic year 2011- 2012. I would also like to conduct five interviews: two before the first observation and one after each of the three observations (preferably directly after the class observation). Both observation and interviews will be audio recorded. All the information collected from the interviews and the observation will be used for research purposes and they will be anonymised. The research study is expected to be completed by October 2013. If you need further information about the study, you can contact the researcher:

Arwa Gandeel  
Email: [arwagandeel@gmail.com](mailto:arwagandeel@gmail.com)  
Mob (KSA): 00966504610661  
Mob (UK): 00447887972621

## Appendix 2

### Teachers' Consent Form

**Research Study: Saudi English Language Teachers Beliefs and practice  
regarding Teaching Speaking**

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet  
for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that  
I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.

I understand that my participation in this research study is anonymised  
and I am not going to be identifiable from the research reports.

I agree that interviews and observation are going to be audio recorded.

I agree that the data collected in this study may be stored anonymously  
and may be used for future research.

I agree to take part in the above research project.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

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Name of Researcher

Date

Signature

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## Appendix 3

### Students' Consent Form

- الموافقة الخطية من الطالبات
- عنوان الدراسة: معتقدات معلمات اللغة الانجليزية و طرق تدريسهم للمحادثة.
- ١- لقد قرأت ورقة المعلومات الخاصة بالدراسة و كانت لدي الفرصة لطرح الأسئلة.
  - ٢- أنا على علم بأن مشاركتي تطوعية و بإمكانني الانسحاب بدون إعطاء أسباب.
  - ٣- أنا على علم بأن مشاركتي -إن دُكرت- فلن يتم ذكر اسمي و لن يستطيع أحد التعرف علي من خلالها.
  - ٤- أنا على علم بأن الدروس ستُسجَل صوتيًا.
  - ٥- أوافق على تخزين البيانات التي جُمِعت و أنا على علم بأنها ستُحفظ بشكل سري و قد تُستخدم في أبحاث مستقبلاً.
  - ٦- أخيرًا أوافق على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة.

#### Research Study: Saudi English Language Teachers Beliefs and practice regarding Teaching Speaking

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.

I understand that my participation in this research study is anonymised and I am not going to be identifiable from the research reports.

I agree that observation is going to be audio recorded.

I agree that the data collected in this study will be stored anonymously and may be used for future research.

I agree to take part in the above research project.

اسم الطالبة

Name of Participant

التاريخ

Date

التوقيع

Signature

Name of Researcher

Date

Signature

## Appendix 4

### Initial Interview Questions

### First Pre-observation Interview Questions

#### 1- Background Information

- Qualification including teacher education.
- Teaching Experience: how long have you been teaching English, teaching at the ELI?
- Which skill do you prefer to teach?

#### 2- Influences on beliefs

##### a- Previous learning experience:

- When did you start to learn English at School? Private or state school?
- How were you taught English in School?
- How did you learn speaking?
- What can you tell me about the similarities and differences of the way you were taught speaking in school and at the university?
- Have you tried to learn other languages?
- How was your second experience in learning? How successful you were?
- Does your experience as learner affect your current teaching practice?
- If you compare your experience of teaching of speaking to your English language learning experience, what similarities or differences might be there?

##### b- Context and students:

- How can you describe this class? How does this affect your teaching? Why?

- How do you describe your learners' attitudes towards studying English speaking?
- How do you rate your students' general level of English speaking proficiency?
- Are your students motivated to speak? How motivated are your students to speak English?
- What does affect your students' motivation?
- How do you get your students to speak in the classroom?
- What are your students weak and strength points in speaking?
- Do you have the opportunity to discuss your teaching with any one?
- What do you think of class time and the students' number?
- What do you think of the teaching amount?

## **Second Pre-observation Interview Questions**

### **3- Beliefs about teaching speaking**

- How long have you been teaching speaking?
- How can you describe your approach in teaching speaking? Why do use this approach?
- What is your main purpose of teaching speaking to your students?
- What do you want your students to achieve? How can you help them to achieve it?
- What other skills you prefer to teach with speaking? Why?
- What do you think of this course book 'New Headway'?
- What do you think of the course book activities?
- What do your students need to know, learn to improve their speaking skills?
- Do students face problems in speaking lessons? If yes, what type of problems students face and how do you deal with them?

#### **4- Issues in teaching Speaking:**

- What are the skills or types of knowledge students need to develop their speaking?

##### **Fluency**

- What does a fluent speaker means to you?
- How do you feel about your students' fluency?
- How can you help them to improve their fluency?

##### **Accuracy**

- What does an accurate sentence means to you?
- How do you evaluate your students' general accuracy level?
- How can you help them to improve their accuracy?

##### **Pronunciation**

- Do you teach pronunciation?
- What is your aim of teaching pronunciation to your students?
- Which pronunciation feature you think is most important for them to acquire?
- Is there is an accent that your students are more familiar with? Why?

##### **Speaking activities**

- What can you tell me about effective speaking activities?
- What are the characteristics of a successful speaking activity?

##### **Feedback**

- How do you feel about your students' errors?
- When you need to provide feedback to you students? How?
- Do you prefer comprehensive or selective feedback? Why?
- How do you provide constructive feedback?

### **Closing**

- Do usually teach in line with your beliefs? Why? Do you think it is conscious?

**Post-observation Interview Questions** (More questions will be developed after collecting and analysing the observation data)

- 1- Talk about the speaking lesson: discuss some activities and ask teachers to describe the rationale for their lessons.
- 2- How do you feel about this speaking lesson?
- 3- How do you feel about your approach in teaching speaking?
- 4- Discuss implications of different issues such as fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, feedback and pragmatic knowledge.

## Appendix 5

### Episode 4

Soars, J. and Soars, L. 2011. New Headway Plus Special Edition, Beginner student's  
book, page: 82

**3** Complete Jenni's sentences with words from the box.

a little bit	really well	(not) at all
quite well	fluently	

- 1 I can speak Spanish \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 I can speak German \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 My friends can speak English \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 I can ride \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 I can't cook \_\_\_\_\_.

**7.11.6** Listen again and practise the sentences.



## Appendix 6

### Episode 6 Exercises: 1 + 2

### Episode 10 Exercise 3

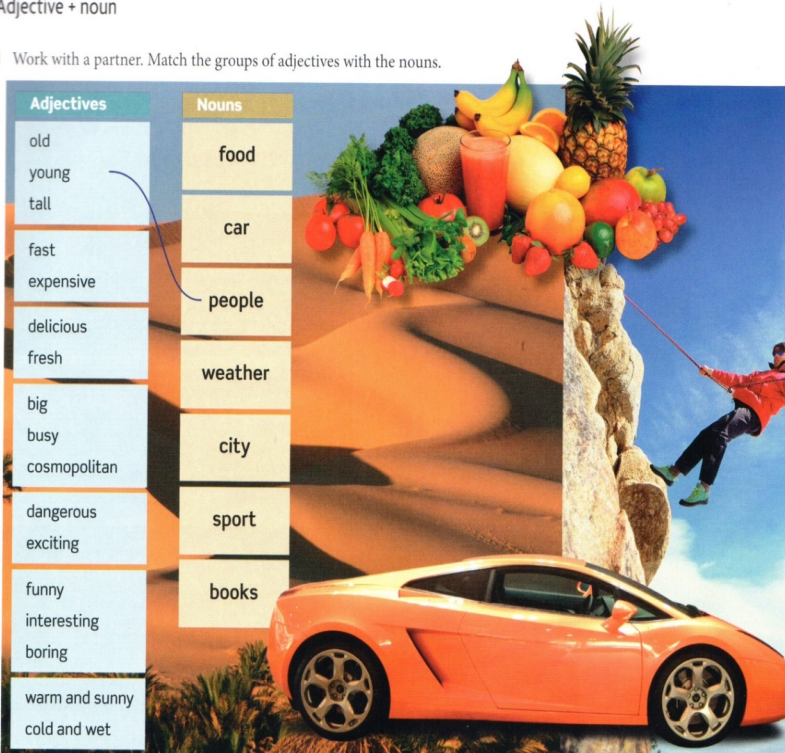
Soars, J. and Soars, L. 2011. New Headway Plus Special Edition, Beginner student's

book, page: 86

**VOCABULARY AND SPEAKING**  
Adjective + noun

1 Work with a partner. Match the groups of adjectives with the nouns.

Adjectives	Nouns
old	food
young	car
tall	people
fast	weather
expensive	city
delicious	sport
fresh	books
big	
busy	
cosmopolitan	
dangerous	
exciting	
funny	
interesting	
boring	
warm and sunny	
cold and wet	



2 Complete the sentences with words from exercise 1. Compare answers with a partner.

- 1 A Ferrari is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 'How \_\_\_\_\_ is your brother?'  
'He's very \_\_\_\_\_, 1.9 metres.'
- 3 I think motor racing is a \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Can I have a \_\_\_\_\_ orange juice, please?
- 5 New York is a very \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6 This book makes me laugh - it's very \_\_\_\_\_.
- 7 We can't go for a walk. It's too \_\_\_\_\_.

**T 11.10** Listen and compare. Look at the tapescript on p120 and practise the conversations.

3 Work in groups. Think of examples of these things.

- an **expensive car** and a **cheap car**
- a **dangerous sport** and a **safe sport**
- an **old city** and a **modern city**
- an **old person** and a **young person**
- a **funny book** and a **boring book**

Compare your lists.

86 Unit 11 • I can do that!

## Appendix 7

### Episode 7

Soars, J. and Soars, L. 2011. New Headway Plus Special Edition, Beginner student's book, page: 94

#### VOCABULARY AND SPEAKING

##### In a restaurant

- 1 Read the menu. What do you like on the menu? What don't you like? Tell a partner.

I like ... and ... I don't like ... or ...

- 2 **T12.9** Listen to Liam and his wife Maddy ordering a meal in the CAFÉ FRESCO.

Who says these things? Write L (Liam), M (Maddy), or W (Waiter).

- W** Are you ready to order?  
— Well, I am. Are you ready, Maddy?  
— Yes, I am. What's the soup of the day?  
— French onion soup.  
— Lovely. I'd like the French onion soup to start, please.  
— And to follow?  
— I'd like the salmon salad with some chips on the side.  
— Thank you. And you, sir? What would you like?  
— Er - I'd like the tomato and mozzarella salad, followed by the burger and chips.  
— Would you like any side orders?  
— No, thank you. Just the burger.  
— And to drink?  
— Sparkling water for me, please. What about you, Liam?  
— The same for me. We'd like a bottle of sparkling water, please.  
— Fine. I'll bring the drinks immediately.

- 3 Practise the conversation in groups of three.

##### Roleplay

- 4 Work in groups of three. Roleplay being customers and waiters in a restaurant.

94 Unit 12 • Please and thank you



### CAFÉ FRESCO

**STARTERS**

Soup of the day	£4.25
Tomato and mozzarella salad	£5.95

**MAINS**

Burger and chips	£7.25
Fish and chips	£10.25
Salmon salad	£10.95
Spaghetti Bolognese	£9.25
Pizza Margherita	£7.95

**SANDWICHES**

Chicken and salad	£6.50
Cheese and tomato	£5.95
Egg mayonnaise	£5.95

**SIDE ORDERS**

Chips	£2.50
Mixed salad	£3.75
Mixed green vegetables	£2.00

**DESSERTS**

Chocolate cake	£3.85
Apple pie and ice-cream	£3.85

**DRINKS**

Mineral water, still or sparkling	£1.85		
Cola	£2.85	Fruit juice	£2.25
Coffee	£2.00	Tea	£1.65

**OPEN 11AM TILL 11PM**

## Appendix 8

### Episode 7

Soars, J. and Soars, L. 2011. New Headway Plus Special Edition, Beginner teacher's  
book, page: 115-116

#### VOCABULARY AND SPEAKING (SB p94)

##### In a restaurant

This section reviews and extends the lexical set of food and drink, and recycles *would like* in the context of ordering in a restaurant.

- 1 Write the following words from a menu on the board:  
*Starters, Mains, Sandwiches, Side orders, Desserts, Drinks.*  
Elicit examples of things for each category, e.g. *soup, pasta, cheese sandwich, chips, chocolate cake, orange juice.*

Focus attention on the menu. Give students time to read it through. Encourage students to ask a partner for help with any dishes they don't recognize, but be prepared to deal with any vocabulary queries students may have. Check pronunciation of the following items, especially the silent *l* in *salmon* and the *g* in *Bolognese*. Drill the word stress as necessary.

tomato	/tə'mɑ:təʊ/
mozzarella	/,mɒtse'relə/
salmon	/'sæmən/
spaghetti Bolognese	/spə'geti bɒlə'neɪz/
mayonnaise	/,meɪə'neɪz/
mixed salad	/,mɪkst 'sæləd/
apple pie	/,æpl 'paɪ/
mineral water	/'mɪnərəl ,wɔ:tə(r)/
sparkling	/'spɑ:kliŋ/

Give a few examples of things from the menu that you like and don't like. Put students in pairs to compare their likes and dislikes.

Ask students to report back about their partner's preferences. Use this as an opportunity to review the third person *-s* on *likes/doesn't like*.

- 2 Tell students they are going to hear Liam and his wife Maddy ordering a meal at the Café Fresco. Check they understand that Liam is a man's name and Maddy is a woman's name. Also check what the letters *L*, *M*, and *W* stand for. Give students time to read through the sentences.

**T 12.9** [CD 2: Track 62] Focus attention on the example and play the first line of the recording. Play the rest of the recording and get students to complete the task.

Ask students to check their answers in pairs. If there is disagreement on the answers, play the recording again and get students to check/amend their answers. Check the answers with the whole class.

## Appendix 9

### Episode 8

Soars, J. and Soars, L. 2011. New Headway Plus Special Edition, Beginner student's book, page: 90

#### PRACTICE

##### Make yourself at home!

- 1 **T 12.5** Listen to the conversation between Roger and Jack.  
Where is Jack? What would he like? What would he like to do?

##### Roleplay

- 2 You have a friend at your house. Make him or her feel at home. Offer some of these things.

- some ice-cream
- a coffee
- a cold drink
- a glass of fruit juice
- something to eat

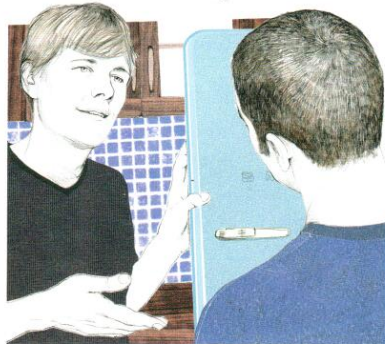
- watch the football
- listen to the radio
- watch TV
- see the garden
- play some computer games

Would you like a cold drink?

Yes, please.

What would you like?

An orange juice, please.



Would you like to watch the football?

Yes, I'd love to!



## Appendix 10

### Episode 8

Soars, J. and Soars, L. 2011. New Headway Plus Special Edition, Beginner teacher's  
book, page: 106

- 3 Elicit a few possible examples for each category and write them on the board. Put students in groups of three or four to draft their lists. Feed in useful language for this stage, e.g. *What's an example of an expensive car? A Mazda? I don't really agree with that. How about a Porsche?*

Students continue in their groups. Make sure one student writes down the examples.

Students then work with people from another group to compare their lists. Elicit the most common example for some of the categories in a short feedback session.

#### **SUGGESTION**

Students can play '10 questions' with the examples in exercise 3. One student thinks of a category, e.g. an old city, without telling the others in the group. They have a maximum of 10 questions to find out what it is.



## Appendix 11

### Episode 18

Soars, J. and Soars, L. 2011. New Headway Plus Special Edition, Intermediate student's book, pages: 58-59

#### READING AND SPEAKING

##### Dream jobs

- 1 What is your dream job? Close your eyes and think about it. Then answer these questions.

- 1 Does the job require a lot of qualifications?
- 2 Does the job require a lot of training?
- 3 Is it well-paid?
- 4 Does it involve working with other people?
- 5 Is it inside or outside?
- 6 Do you need to be physically strong to do it?
- 7 Is it dangerous?
- 8 Does it involve travel?

Work with a partner. Ask and answer the questions to guess each other's dream jobs.

- 2 Here are the stories of two people who have found their dream jobs. Work in two groups.

**Group A** Read about Stanley Karras, the hurricane hunter.

**Group B** Read about Michael Doyle, the cowboy in the sky.

Answer the questions in exercise 1 about your person. Then find a partner from the other group and compare information.

- 3 Read the other article quickly. Discuss these questions.
- What exactly is a 'hurricane hunter' and a 'cowboy in the sky'?
  - Which of the jobs do you find most interesting?
  - Would you like to do either of them?

##### Language work

- 4 Answer the questions.

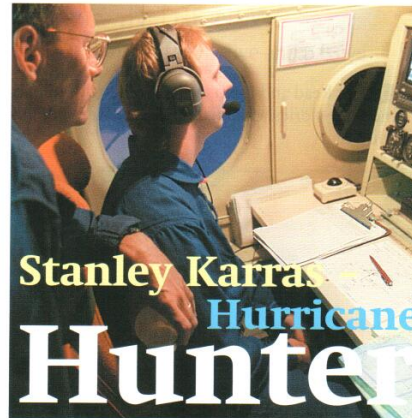
- 1 Who came across his job in a newspaper?
- 2 Whose job is handed down from father to son?
- 3 Who finds it exciting to end up in different cities?
- 4 Who helped to put up a really important building?
- 5 Who has to get on well with the people he works with?
- 6 Who takes off at a moment's notice?
- 7 Who is cut off from his family?
- 8 Who can't fall out with the people he works with?
- 9 Who hasn't come up with an experiment for space yet?
- 10 Who often give up after trying the job once?

- 5 The words underlined in exercise 4 are all phrasal verbs. Match them with a verb or expression from the box below.

build/construct	separated from
arrive unexpectedly	have a good relationship with
found by chance	argue and no longer be friends with
stop (a job or a habit)	passed from one generation to another
leaves on a plane	thought of an idea for

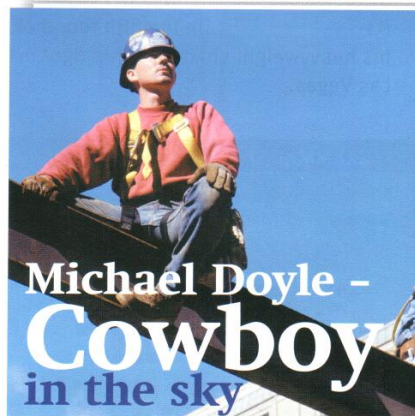
##### Roleplay

Work with a partner. Look at p154.



HE SAYS:

‘There’s no such thing as an average day in my job!’



HE SAYS:

‘Many of today’s ironworkers are descendants of the men who built New York’s first skyscrapers.’

**Stanley Karras** works as a meteorologist in Tampa, Florida. It's his job to follow hurricanes by plane and provide information about them to scientists.

**How did you get the job?**

I was working for the National Meteorological Office in Bracknell, near London, in the autumn of 1999, and I saw a documentary with my family called *Stormchasers*. It was about hurricane hunters and I thought, 'Wow, that's an interesting job!' As it happened, two months later I came across an ad in a newspaper for a meteorologist to work in Florida with the same people who had made the documentary. I applied, was interviewed over the phone, moved to the US, and started work here in Tampa in May 2000.

**What do you like most about it?**

I love the travel. Chasing hurricanes has taken me all over the world. It's exciting to end up in different cities and different countries day after day. If you're a meteorologist, you have to love flying. I also love working with top scientists. I've learned so much from them and we've had a lot of exciting times together. For me, it's like a classroom in the sky.

**What's an average day like?**

There's no such thing as an average day in my job! It all depends on the weather, and you can't control that. It's constantly changing. We often take off at a moment's notice to chase storms. I'm the one who decides whether we fly low through a storm. I don't want to take us into a hurricane that could be particularly nasty. There's a lot on my shoulders.

**Have you made any sacrifices to do this job?**

Yes, one big one. I'm so far away from my family. They all live in the UK. My wife's with me, of course, but her family is also in the UK, so we're pretty cut off from them all over here.

**What would you like to do next?**

I'd like to join a space programme and be the first meteorologist in space, but I haven't come up with an experiment to do in space yet. There aren't any hurricanes!

**What advice would you give to someone who wanted to do your job?**

Study maths and science and get a degree in meteorology. There are many areas in meteorology to study. I've taken the hurricane hunter path, but you could be a weather forecaster or do research in other areas. It's a fascinating subject and the pay's pretty good.

**Michael Doyle** is an ironworker in New York City. He's one of 100 or so ironworkers currently employed by Boston Properties to erect the steel frame of a new 40-storey building in Times Square. These ironworkers are known as 'cowboys in the sky'.

**How did you get the job?**

Ironwork is a trade that is still handed down from father to son. Many of today's ironworkers are descendants of the men who built New York's first skyscrapers. My great-grandfather was Irish. He came over from Ireland in 1930 to work on the construction of the Empire State Building. My father and grandfather were also ironworkers. My father did it for 40 years. I've never wanted to do any other job.

**What do you like most about it?**

To me, ironworkers are the kings of construction. We make the skeleton that the other workers build on. We have real pride in our work - you look at the New York skyline and think 'I helped build that.' Also, we work hard, we play hard. Ironworkers have to get on well together. We depend on each other for our lives so we can't fall out. Oh, and the pay is good!

**What's an average day like?**

You never stop in this job. Eight hours a day, from seven in the morning until three in the afternoon. You're moving all the time. The crane lifts the iron girders, and you have to catch them and move them into place. There's always danger. It's a fact of life for us.

**Have you made any sacrifices to do this job?**

Yes, one big one - physical health. The wear and tear to the body is enormous. I've fallen three times. My father fell two storeys, lost a finger, and broke his ankles. He needed two new knees when he retired.

**What would you like to do next?**

I'd like to help put up a really important building like my great-grandfather did. And I'd like to travel. I'd like to see some of the world's tallest buildings, such as the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur, and one of the world's tallest hotels, the Burj al-Arab in Dubai. I'd love to see that.

**What advice would you give to someone who wanted to do your job?**

You need to be strong, really strong. You have to be OK with height. It usually takes about a year to get used to it. Many guys who look strong and want to earn good money try it once, but then give up. It's just too frightening.



## Appendix 12

### Episode 18

Soars, J. and Soars, L. 2011. New Headway Plus Special Edition, Intermediate student's book, pages: 68-69




#### LISTENING

##### Charity appeals

- 1 Work with a partner. Choose three of these charities. Discuss why you think people should donate to them.
  - a charity that helps elderly people with food and housing
  - a hospice for people who are dying of an incurable disease
  - an organization that provides emergency supplies and medicine for disaster victims
  - a charity that helps homeless people
  - cancer research
  - a charity that helps people with AIDS
  - animal rescue shelters

Compare your answers with other pairs.

- 2 **T 8.7** Listen to information about three more charities and complete the chart.

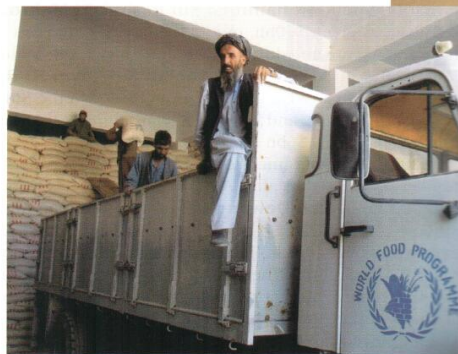
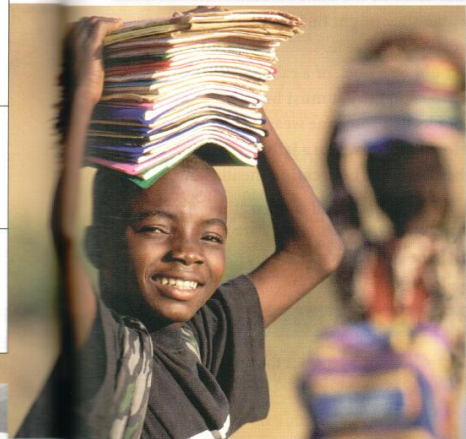
	Who or what the charity tries to help	How the charity helps
1  Red Crescent		
2  WWF		
3  Save the Children		

#### What do you think?

Imagine that you have \$30,000 that you want to give to charity. Who would you give the money to? How would you divide it?

Think about what you would do, and then discuss your ideas with a partner.

*If I had \$30,000 to give away, I'd give it to three charities ...*





## Appendix 13

### Episode 24

Soars, J. and Soars, L. 2011. New Headway Plus Special Edition, Intermediate student's book, page: 61

#### LISTENING AND SPEAKING

##### The busy life of a retired man

- 1 Work in groups and discuss the questions.
- Is anyone in your family retired? Who?
  - What job did they do before retiring?
  - How old were they when they retired? How long have they been retired?
  - What do they do now?
- 2 **T 7.6** Look at the photo of Thomas Wilson and his grandson, Philip. Listen to them talking.



Who do you think is happier, Thomas or Philip? Why?

- 3 Underline the correct verb form. Then answer the questions.
- 1 How long *was he / has he been* retired?
  - 2 How long *did he work / has he worked* for Courtauld's ?
  - 3 When *did he go / has he gone* to Wales?
  - 4 How long *was he married / has he been married*?
- 4 Answer the questions.
- 1 Why does Thomas like playing golf?
  - 2 Which countries has he visited since he retired? Where did he go two years ago?
  - 3 Who are the following?
    - Keith                      • Kylie
    - Ted and Marjorie      • Helen
  - 4 What is the sad event that Thomas mentions?
  - 5 What does Philip complain about?

#### What do you think?

- What is the usual retirement age for men and women in your country?
- What do you think is the best age to retire?
- When would you like to retire?
- What would you like to do when you retire?

## Appendix 14

### Episode 28

Soars, J. and Soars, L. 2011. New Headway Plus Special Edition, Pre-intermediate student's book, page: 76

- 5 Discuss these questions with a partner.
- How long does it take to get from your home to university?
  - When did you last do someone a favour/make a complaint/take a photo/get angry?
  - What time did you get home last night?
  - Do you get on with your parents/your neighbours?
  - Do you find it easy to make friends?
  - Is your English getting better?

## Appendix 15

### Episode 34

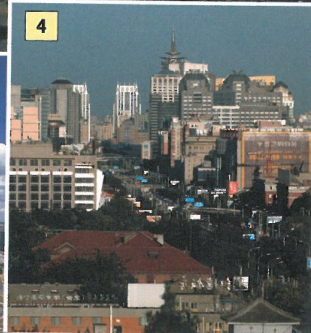
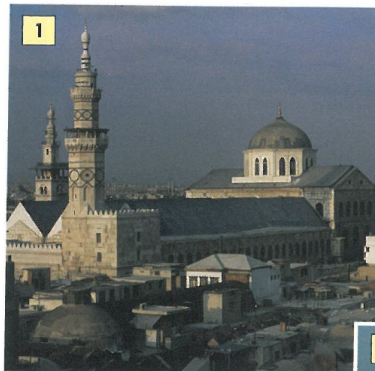
Soars, J. and Soars, L. 2011. New Headway Plus Special Edition, Pre-intermediate student's book, page: 48

#### PRACTICE

##### Comparing four cities

- 1 Match the cities and the photographs. Which countries are these cities in?

Paris Beijing Damascus Brasilia



- 2 Work with a partner. Your teacher will give you some information.  
**Student A** Read about Paris and Beijing.  
**Student B** Read about Damascus and Brasilia.

Ask and answer these questions to find out about the other two cities.

- How old is it?
- How big is it?
- How many people live there?
- How hot/cold does it get?
- How wet is it?
- How far is it from the sea?

How old is it?

It's very old. It was founded in ...

- 3 Now compare the four cities.

Paris is bigger than Brasilia.

Beijing is the oldest.

- 4 Compare some cities in your country.



## Appendix 16

### Episode 35

Soars, J. and Soars, L. 2011. New Headway Plus Special Edition, Pre-intermediate student's book, page: 65

#### LISTENING AND SPEAKING

##### Holidays in January

- 1 Do many people in your country go on holiday in winter? Where do they go? Where would you like to go for a winter holiday? Write a sentence and read it to the class.

*I'd like to go to... because...*

- 2 **T 8.4** Listen to three people giving advice about visiting their country in the month of January. Complete the chart. Compare your answers with a partner.

	Weather and clothes	Things to do, places to go	Food and drink
Silvia			
Fatima			
Karl			

- 3 Answer the questions.

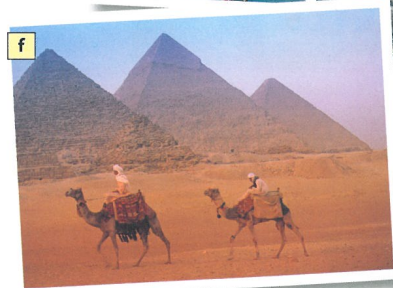
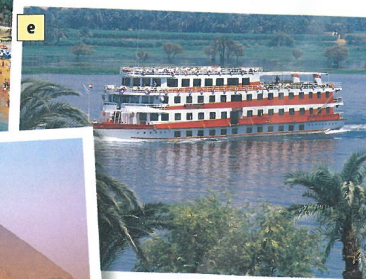
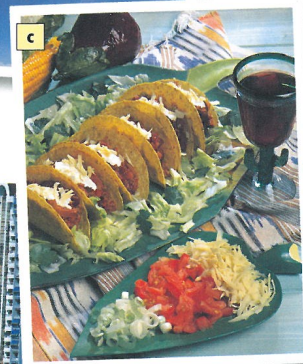
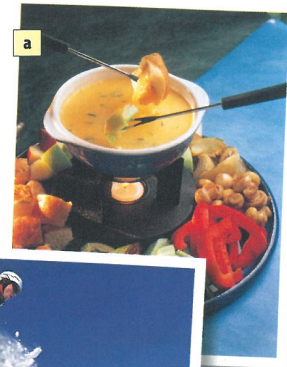
- Which countries are they talking about? How do you know?
- Look at the photographs. Which country do they go with?
- Who talked about sport? Which sport?
- Who talked about money? What did he/she say?
- Who suggested going on a boat trip? Where?
- Which of these countries would you like to visit in January? Why?

##### Speaking

- 4 Put the words in the correct order to make questions.

- weather / is / like / in / what / the / January?
- take / clothes / what / should / I?
- can / things / sort / of / what / do / I?
- special / any / there / places / are / that / should / visit / I?
- food / you / recommend / do / what?

- 5 Work with someone from a different country, or choose another country you know. Ask and answer the questions.





## Appendix 17

### Episode 36

Soars, J. and Soars, L. 2011. New Headway Plus Special Edition, Pre-intermediate student's book, page: 63

#### PRACTICE

##### Pronunciation

1 **T 8.2** Listen to these sentences. What are the different pronunciations of *have/has/had*?

- 1  I **have** a good job.  I **have** to work hard.  
 2  He **has** a nice car.  She **has** to get up early.  
 3  I **had** a good time.  I **had** to take exams.

Put a-f in front of the sentences according to the pronunciation below.

- a /hæz/ b /hæv/ c /hæd/  
 d /hæf/ e /hæs/ f /hæt/

**T 8.2** Listen again and repeat.

##### Jobs

2 Work with a partner. Choose one of the jobs from the box, but don't tell your partner. Ask and answer *Yes/No* questions to find out what the job is.

shop assistant	receptionist	taxi-driver	farmer	architect	lawyer
ambulance driver	police officer	nurse	soldier	decorator	detective
vet	mechanic	dentist	housewife	plumber	firefighter

Do you ... ?

- work inside
- earn a lot of money
- work regular hours

Do you have to ... ?

- wear a uniform
- use your hands
- answer the phone

Do you work inside?

Yes, I do./No, I don't.

3 Which of the jobs *wouldn't* you like to do? Why?

*I wouldn't like to be a farmer because they have to work outside all year.*

##### Talking about you

4 In groups, discuss the questions. If you live at home with your parents, use the present tense. If you've left home, use the past tense.

- 1 What 

do		did
	you have to do to help in the house?	

 What about your brothers and sisters?
- 2 Can 

	you stay out as long as you		want?				
Could		wanted?		Or		do	
	you have to be home by a certain time?		did				
- 3 Do 

	you always have to tell your parents where you		are	
Did		were		going?
- 4 How strict 

are		were		your parents?	
What		do		did	
	they let you do?				
- 5 What 

do		did	
	you argue about?		



## Appendix 18

### Episode 37

Soars, J. and Soars, L. 2011. New Headway Plus Special Edition, Pre-intermediate student's book, page: 67

*Readers' advice*

**1** Diets are a waste of time! There are lots of 'crash diets' that help you lose weight quickly, but they're not healthy, and as soon as you return to eating normally and healthily, the weight will soon come back. \_\_\_\_ to your normal diet at first, and eat just a little less, so that your body can slowly get used to it. And \_\_\_\_ exercise - then you can lose weight without worrying about what you eat, and feel great!

**Jill** San Francisco USA

**2** I know how you feel. I was worried about leaving my home town to go to teacher training college, but now \_\_\_\_\_. It's difficult to imagine finding new friends that will be as important to you as your old friends. But \_\_\_\_\_: is it likely that of all the people in the world, the only ones I can be good friends with live in my town?! Of course not! You have a whole new life and some great new friendships waiting for you in Toronto. Go for it!

**Robert** Cape Town South Africa

**3** Like you, I've been on a few different diets. But I have found one recently that works! It's a no carbohydrate diet, so no bread or pasta, and lots of high protein, low fat foods such as fish and chicken. And \_\_\_\_ water every day. \_\_\_\_ Believe it or not, you can eat as much as you want if it's the right kind of food.

**Simone** Qala Malta

**4** Why \_\_\_\_ it? You aren't their slave, they don't own you. \_\_\_\_ that outside of work you have your own private world. And I totally agree about people having work conversations in public. On my train ride home I want to be able to forget about work, not listen to other people's boring talk with colleagues and customers.

**Jerry** Bristol UK

**5** I think you're right to think again about your plans. Why do so many people think \_\_\_\_ to get a good job and have a career? Nobody in my family has been to university, but we're all very successful, happy, and well-off! So, \_\_\_\_, and take your time before making a decision.

**Chris** Perth Australia

**6** \_\_\_\_ your company and try to come to an arrangement with them. You could agree on times when you will turn it off, and for those times when they want you to be contactable, you could ask for an extra payment. That's what happens with doctors - \_\_\_\_ for you?

**Bill** Auckland New Zealand

**4** Where do these lines go in the reader's advice? Put a letter in the gaps.

- a ... should you accept ...
- b ... you should ask yourself ...
- c ... you must do lots of ...
- d ... think hard ...
- e ... you have to drink a lot of ...
- f You should make small changes ...
- g ... they have to go to university ...
- h You should have a word with ...
- i ... I'm really glad that I did.
- j You must make it clear ...
- k ... why should it be any different ...
- l You really should try it!

**T 8.5** Listen and check.

**5** Which reader ... ?

- thinks diets can work
- suggests solving the problem by discussing it
- has also moved to another town
- thinks people shouldn't take their work home with them
- didn't study after leaving school
- suggests taking things more slowly

Which of the readers' suggestions do you agree with?

**What do you think?**

- What are the alternatives to going to university? Is going to university always the best thing to do?
- Should mobile phones not be allowed in some public places? Which?
- Do people worry too much about their weight nowadays? Why do you think it has become more of a problem in society?

**Roleplay**

With a partner, choose a situation and roleplay the conversation.

- Andrew and one of his friends
- Jason and his boss
- Samantha and her doctor

**Group work**

In groups, write a problem for an advice website forum.

Exchange problems with another group, and write some advice for the problems.

Unit 8 • Do's and don'ts 67