

Saudi Female Students' Reticence to Participate Orally in the English classroom

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I hope that readers will find this thesis to be beneficial.

Statement of originality

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Faten', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Signature

Faten Alabasi

31/03/2024

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CC	Communicative Competence
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
LL	Language Learning
GAP	Grade Point Average
MOE	Ministry of Education
SA	Saudi Arabia
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SL	Second language
TA	Thematic Analysis
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
WTC	Willingness to communicate

Abstract

This study examines female students' interaction and engagement in English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom in Saudi Arabia. The study investigates various factors that Saudi female students encounter in their English language classroom, and how these impact their English language learning. It also examines how classroom pedagogy and curriculum influence their participation and disposition of passivity and reticence. This study is informed by Bourdieu's theory of social practice (1977; 1990) and Foucault's poststructural theory (1972, 1977) to critically examine students' and teachers' perspectives of the importance of oral engagement in the English classroom. Moreover, the study seeks to understand the importance of oral participation in developing English language speaking skills; and how classroom pedagogy and curriculum influence students' oral participation. The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, including questionnaires and interviews. Data was collected from 100 female students and five teachers from the Preparatory Year in the North of Saudi Arabia to investigate the issue of EFL Saudi female students' reticence to engage in oral participation. The findings highlight students' contradictions in their views about oral participation in the English classroom. While the students believed that oral participation is significant, they had negative feelings about speaking up in the classroom due to a lack of English knowledge and low levels of confidence in their English language proficiency. The findings also reveal that the relationship between students and teachers drives students' motivation for oral participation, and students' knowledge of and prior experience with English is important for their oral participation. Recommendations from the findings of this study inform policy and pedagogy that will enhance active participation of Saudi female students that will facilitate effective processes of English language learning; and lead to further suggestions for strategies and teaching methods to improve and promote English language learning processes in Saudi Arabia.

Keywords: reticence, habitus, capital, field, discourse, knowledge.

Chapter One

Introduction

Learning English isn't the same as knowing English, and knowing English isn't the same as being able to speak good, or even intelligible English (Yang, 2011).

This chapter provides an important foundation for understanding the main elements and broader background that comprise this thesis. It explores the state of English language education in Saudi Arabia today by looking at the country's existing educational system as well as the unique situation of English language teaching and learning in this setting. The purpose of this chapter is to offer insight into the distinct educational dynamics that exist in Saudi Arabia and how they affect English teaching and learning. The study's rationale for examining the dimension of oral participation in English instruction in the Saudi Arabian context is clarified through the research questions and objectives, which are presented to readers as a roadmap for the investigation. This investigation critically looks at the sociocultural aspects influencing female students' reticence to participate orally and considers the influence of curriculum and pedagogy on oral participation. The foundation for a thorough investigation of the phenomenon of Saudi female students' reticence to participate orally in English as a foreign language (EFL) class is laid out in this chapter. Lastly, the chapter seeks to present how gender equality, informed by the feminist movement, has been viewed and incorporated into different Arab societies, including Saudi Arabia, emphasising both its successes and challenges in achieving gender equality for Saudi women and girls.

This chapter outlines the context of the study, its purpose and goals, and the research questions. It gives an overview of the background of the research, the educational system in Saudi Arabia, the globalisation of the English language, and the status of English teaching. The research questions and objectives are at the centre of this investigation

because they are designed to direct a comprehensive investigation into the causes of the observed reluctance in oral participation. The goal of the research is to identify the underlying causes of this reticence, whether they are related to the classroom, cultural norms, or personal characteristics of the female students, and whether curriculum and pedagogy have an influence on this issue. The study applies theoretical frameworks developed by Bourdieu (1977, 1990) and Foucault (1972, 1979) in order to analyse these characteristics effectively. The ideas of habitus, field, and capital as proposed by Bourdieu are crucial for comprehending the social and cultural processes that shape students' attitudes and actions in the classroom. The ideas of Foucault on discourse, power, knowledge, subjectivity, and agency offer a lens through which to view the practices and structures of education that influence students' participation. This study provides a detailed examination of Saudi female students' reticence to speak up in EFL classrooms.

Background to the Study

Oral participation is assessed as part of the student evaluation process in Saudi Arabian higher education; therefore, a learner's reticence may occasionally affect their grade (Albarakati & Jendli, 2021; Alharbi & Surur, 2019; Al-Seghayer, 2014, 2015). These factors highlight how crucial it is to investigate student reluctance to participate orally in Saudi Arabian EFL lessons. Engaging in active classroom activities has a significant impact on language learning achievement (Han & Yusof, 2019; Tatar, 2005, as cited in Hamouda, 2013). It is crucial for students to participate in class activities in order to increase their knowledge. Students who are willing to respond to questions from the teacher, offer feedback, or share their thoughts are showing that they are engaged in the learning process. Research also suggests that one indication that students are a part of the

classroom is their engagement (Havik & Westergård, 2020; Jackson, 2002; Otara et al., 2019).

Several studies have also demonstrated the need for active classroom participation in developing successful learning activities (Han & Yusof, 2019; Tsui, 1996). A number of these studies have concentrated on student reticence. They have found that compared to reticent students, students who actively engaged in the learning process typically achieve higher academic goals (Böheim et al., 2020; Liu, 2005). This attention to reticence suggests participation in the English classroom is crucial for students to learn more and better comprehend the subject. Few studies of reticence have been carried out in Saudi Arabia. Hamouda's (2013) study, however, aimed to determine the factors that caused students to be reluctant to speak; this study adds to that research, further investigating reticence in English classes in a Saudi Arabian university setting.

Globalisation of English

English is the language of prestige and power in many countries. Much attention is paid to learning English around the world. There are a range of economic, cultural, technological, and political reasons for the spread of the English language. "The worldliness of English," according to Pennycook (2017, p. 7), is the myriad of political, economic, cultural, and social contexts in which the English language is perceived and used, "not only around the world but also in the world," and it "is embedded in multiple local contexts of use." The "worldliness of English" refers to English as a global language; it is an international language that belongs to its users, not only in the West (Barker, 2023). The English language is the gatekeeper to economic and social progress and movement between countries, especially for students who move to English-speaking countries (Pennycook, 2017; Sun & Rong, 2021), as is the case with Saudi scholarship and students who study in English-speaking countries.

Pennycook's notion of "the worldliness of English" is consistent with the theories of Foucault and Bourdieu. In recent decades, language education has evolved significantly due to globalization, which has transformed English into a global lingua franca. This shift has led to a redefinition of communicative competence (CC), incorporating not only linguistic and discourse skills but also intercultural awareness and adaptability. Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), as conceptualized by Byram (1997), highlights the importance of understanding and navigating cultural differences in communication, a skill that has become essential in the globalized world. While this study focuses on Saudi female students learning English in a relatively homogeneous classroom environment, the influence of globalization is still relevant. Saudi students, like many others, are increasingly expected to engage with global discourses, making the development of both communicative and intercultural competence crucial for their academic and professional success

The discourse theory developed by Foucault addresses how English is used and perceived internationally, reflecting its worldwide importance and power in political, cultural, educational, social, and global contexts. Bourdieu's theory of social practice encompasses language as a marker of social and economic standing and this can be applied to the study of English. English is important for countries like Saudi Arabia in terms of academic and international mobility. English is widespread throughout the world its use has significant consequences for people and communities around the world.

Moreover, globalization has led to unpredictable interactions, where speakers from diverse backgrounds, with varying proficiencies, values, and languages, communicate using English. Language resources are adapted, borrowed, and mixed as individuals use them to meet their communicative needs in international contexts (Canagarajah, 2015). When speakers from

different backgrounds communicate and interact, they use the English language to attain their communicative objectives.

In addition, English language plays an important role in education and institutions; its spread has implications for interactions in different societies. Further, there is a close relationship between English and various forms of culture, such as British cultural forms and the cultures of English-speaking countries, which are connected to the global spread of popular culture transmitted through the arts and the music and entertainment industry; technology such as video games; the reproduction of goods and services; social and digital media, such as Facebook, Instagram, and the internet; and news media (M. S. Alharbi, 2018; Bui, 2016; Kuadnok, 2017; Pennycook, 2017). In terms of popular culture, “it is a phenomenon that reflects our values and arises from our active engagement with it” (Godsil et al., 2016, p. 3). English cultural products are an example of the spread of popular culture; English companies such as BBC exemplify the global news network (Godsil et al., 2016). English is the predominant language of globalisation; it is a vector and an active agent of globalisation.

Thus, when discussing globalization, it is impossible to separate it from the global spread of English (Dash & Gandhi, 2022; Louber, 2015). Accordingly, learning English can promote and facilitate globalisation, as discussed by Elyas and Grigri (2014) and Rao (2019). Moreover, English is considered a global language; there is no other language that is or has been as widely spoken as English. The English language has also been established as a lingua franca in the fields of entertainment, politics, education, transportation, science, computing, business, and research (Mastin, 2011; Zeng et al., 2023). A lingua franca, according to Yang (2011) and Zeng et al. (2023), is a specific kind of language contact that is used when speakers do not share a first language. Countries that are not postcolonial, such as Saudi Arabia, have realized the importance of English as a lingua franca for international relations

and trade (Crystal, 2012; Reza, 2015), and as a means to access knowledge and better employment opportunities (Crystal, 2012; Reza, 2015), and as a pathway to accessing various kinds of knowledge or better jobs. English as a lingua franca for technology, trade, and science (Louber, 2015; McLaren, 2011; Reddy, 2019) in Saudi Arabia facilitates communication between people from different cultures on a global scale. Moreover, the globalisation of English reflects its importance for Saudis in terms of research, since much Saudi research in recent years has been conducted in Western countries by scholarship students studying abroad (Louber, 2015). Thus, Saudi policies aim to prepare Saudi learners of English to be global citizens who will support and advance the country academically (Al-Seghayer, 2021; Al-Tamimi, 2019).

This globalisation of English has an impact on Saudi Arabia, as Saudi students are learning English and conversing in English with people from all backgrounds and countries in real-life settings. This places demands and expectations on students. Therefore, understanding why female students might be reluctant to use English and addressing reticence and oral participation in Saudi Arabian university classrooms is a crucial aspect of this study. This study focuses on Saudi female students' oral participation and reticence in English classes and is particularly relevant since, as discussed above, English is widely used as a lingua franca around the world, particularly in education. Saudi female students are required to develop proficient English communication skills, which are necessary for their success in a world that is now more connected. The study is important because it seeks to identify barriers to fluency and confidence in speaking English, which will help teachers to develop teaching strategies that will enable Saudi female students to be competent global citizens who can participate in and contribute to international settings.

Saudi Arabia's distinctive strategy in the wider Middle East is highlighted by its approach to English language instruction, driven mainly by economic and diplomatic considerations. Saudi Arabia has effectively incorporated English into its educational system since 2016 (Alsisy & Alsewiket, 2020; Choudhury, 2016). This strategic alliance is in line with the Saudi Vision 2030 objectives of global integration and economic diversification, and it supports the kingdom's aspirations for a global economy. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 emphasises the importance of English language proficiency for its citizens in raising the country's competitiveness in the global arena. Therefore, it views teaching the language as a vital component of the Saudi economic strategy, in addition to its academic benefits. This approach prioritises international relations and economic goals for the country, emphasising the utility of English as a practical language for trade and international relations and central to the purpose of EFL instruction in Saudi Arabia.

Using Bourdieu's (1991) concept of symbolic power and Foucault's (1972, 1979) notions of discourse, power, and knowledge can help in understanding how the use of English in education affects political and cultural narratives. These theories shed light on Saudi Arabia's agenda for achieving global integration and economic diversification, and on the various functions that English plays in different educational and cultural contexts, including how Saudi EFL students approach learning English in view of their motivations, attitudes, and level of language proficiency. Therefore, it is important to understand how English language education pedagogies are congruent with the cultural, historical, and contemporary global context of Saudi Arabia. By ensuring that teaching pedagogies are appropriate to culture and context, this alignment makes it possible for female students to participate more deeply in the language learning process. Understanding and responding to the female students' needs creates a helpful learning atmosphere that is in line with both their experiences and Saudi Arabia's place in the world.

The symbolic power of English as a global language plays an important role in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) in Saudi Arabia. Language, according to Bourdieu (1977, p. 648), is not only an instrument of knowledge and communication but also an instrument of power. Thus, in Saudi Arabia, English proficiency is accepted as an important criterion to measure an individual's capability, both in school and in the job market (Al-Seghayer, 2021; Ruan & Jacob, 2009), which means that in Saudi Arabia, the ability to speak and understand English is valued as a crucial indicator for evaluating an individual's capacity in both the academic and professional fields. This reflects Bourdieu's (1977) view of the power of language: "A language is worth what those who speak it are worth, i.e., the power and authority in the economic and cultural power relations of the holders of the corresponding competence" (p. 652). Similarly, Skutnabb-Kangas (2013) and Telser (2023) argue that language influences power relations, particularly in linguistic markets where one language clearly dominates others and in learning contexts where the medium of instruction is significantly different from the language or dialect students use at home.

Furthermore, Heller (1995) believes that language is fundamental to institutional processes of symbolic domination because conventional language practices serve to establish the everydayness and the normality of institutional processes. Language norms are crucial aspects of institutional norms that legitimate institutional relations of power (1995). For Heller (2003) language is also a powerful form of cultural capital. It is through language that a person negotiates a sense of self within and across different sites at different points in time, and it is through language that a person gains access to (or is denied access to) powerful social networks that give learners the opportunity to speak. Thus, language is not conceived of as a neutral medium of communication, but is understood with reference to its social meaning. Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) emphasises language as a significant social asset, in line with Heller's theory of language as a tool for identity

negotiation and social network access. Foucault's discourse theory (Foucault, 1972) emphasises the significant impact of language on social structures and power relations by delving further into the ways in which institutional language norms and practices create power dynamics and individual perceptions. When combined, these theories highlight how important language is in institutional and cultural situations.

English in Saudi Arabia

For some Saudi academics, learning the English language is considered a threat to Islamic, Arabic, and national identity (Al-Jarf, 2008; Alsolami & Saaty, 2020; Habbash & Troudi, 2015). Moreover, the Saudi culture has not been affected by European cultures because Saudi Arabia has never been under colonial rule. As a result, the Saudi community refused to accept the English language when it was first introduced (Nouraldeen & Elyas, 2014). A study conducted by Choudhury (2016) explored how teaching English literature influences foreign cultural perspectives from the Saudi postcolonial viewpoint in other countries. It showed that Saudi educational policy aims to develop people and society from their tradition and roots; in other words, the purpose of learning English is to enhance Saudi Islamic tradition and culture.

Focusing on the Saudi context, Vision 2030 (part of the current socio-economic reforms occurring in Saudi Arabia) states that the significant focus of the Saudi government is to develop the country's economic position and to be globally competitive. Under Vision 2030, the Saudi Ministry of Education (MoE) has a mandate to develop policies that will improve the education system. Since the English language plays an essential role in prompting job opportunities (Assulaimani, 2015), Vision 2030 aims to improve English language teaching and learning, and thus female students' English skills, at all levels of education. Under Vision 2030, the Saudi government is mandating a minimum 30% increase in the female workforce by 2030, and is seeking to prepare female Saudi citizens for this, with English language

learning a key part of this preparation. Furthermore, preparing the next generation to meet global job requirements is one of the principal goals of Vision 2030(Khan, 2016):

We want Saudi children, wherever they live, to enjoy higher quality, multi-faceted education ... [by] refining our national curriculum and training our teachers to ensure that the outcomes of our education system are in line with market needs (Khan, 2016, p. 40).

Given that English in Saudi Arabia is vital for employment prospects, its prominence in Vision 2030 is crucial. Thus, this shift in Saudi educational policy may lay the foundations for new ideas and new ways of thinking within the Saudi education system, which should improve supporting English language skills for all learners (Alkhannani, 2016; Al-Seghayer, 2021; Al-Tamimi, 2019).

In terms of teaching English then, there is a close connection between the globalisation of English and English language teaching, as it is now taught everywhere around the world. In the Saudi context, the English language is now an important subject in the preparatory year of universities, and an increasing number of tertiary subjects are also taught in English, such as medicine and engineering (A. M. Alharbi, 2022; Al-Hawsawi, 2013). Moreover, the King Abdullah Scholarship Program, which started in 2005, has funded the education of over 200,000 Saudis at international universities worldwide (Assulaimani, 2015). The Saudi government aims to raise Saudi universities to “world class” standards in teaching and research, which requires teaching and learning English (Aljohani, 2017; Al-Seghayer, 2021), in line with the importance of English as global language.

As the discussion above suggests, the English language is becoming increasingly necessary for most people in Saudi Arabia, and for young students in particular Saudi Arabians are aware of this, and many want their children to learn the language to cope with the

requirements of the world. As a consequence, students should be able to speak the language and be motivated to speak up in the classroom, which is the starting point for learning and practice. Facilitating students' abilities and confidence to speak up in English in the classroom is the aim of the current study. Mahboob and Elyas (2014) and Alzahrani (2023) also state that English plays an essential role in Saudi society in general, and Saudi lives in particular. Young people are now aware of the importance of the English language in their lives as a significant tool to spread their religion, build their nation, and advance their careers. Moreover, learning English influences all (political, economic, social, and religious) spheres of society at the national and international levels. Young people know that learning English enables them to work in various companies, such as Saudi Airlines, Saudi Telecommunication Company, and Saudi Aramco, which are among the largest companies in the kingdom, with numerous opportunities for employees (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014; Alzahrani, 2023).

Further, Alrashidi and Phan (2015) and Al-Seghayer (2021) emphasise that learning English allows Saudis to communicate with foreign people, including foreign expatriates who work in Saudi Arabia; as a consequence, this benefits the business and economic environment of Saudi Arabia. In other words, young people will obtain benefits from those foreign workers, and in the future they will be sufficiently qualified to replace foreign expatriates in the labour market. Military trainers, advisors and technicians in the Saudi army are mostly American, and Saudi Arabia still buys a large amount of military equipment from the United States, indicating a need to learn English to build the future of the Saudi army (Almansour, 2022; Alshahrani, 2016; Cordesman, 2003). Learning English allows young people to spread technology and globalise Saudi society, since obtaining access to such technology enables young people to communicate with others across borders through social media (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015; Alzahrani, 2023). Last, from a religious perspective, which is the main concern

of the MoE, English is the key to enabling communication with pilgrims who visit Medina and Mecca (holy places for Muslims). In addition, English may help to spread Islam by teaching non-Arabic speakers Islamic values (Almansour, 2022; Assulaimani, 2015; Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013).

Since the English language is now prominent in Saudi Arabia in line with the focus of Vision 2030, this study aims to concentrate on English language learning and support the achievement of the Vision by exploring strategies and methods that may enhance students' communication and interaction with others in the English language, and to support teaching English to Saudi females in universities. It is anticipated that this study's focus is on learning more about reticence in relation to Saudi female students which will promote and enhance English learning and possibly motivate female students to master the language, which is currently the first requirement for any professional position in Saudi Arabia.

English Language Teaching in Saudi Arabia

In the academic environment English is predominant, as a large proportion of textbooks globally are published in English. Thus, students around the world are obliged to achieve a high level of competence in English to pursue their studies. In 2008, MoE acknowledged the significance of the English language in assisting students to transmit the science and knowledge of Saudi Arabia to other nations and gain the scientific knowledge of other nations available in English (OECD, 2020). Given this, the MoE started to take essential steps to reform the teaching of English in Saudi Arabia.

As an illustration, textbooks used in the TEFL curriculum in Saudi Arabia have different titles for each level—*Flying High*, *Super Goal*, *Full Blast*, *Traveller*, and *Lift Off* (Abahussain, 2016)—and these titles have been revised and updated to focus on promoting students' communicative competence and the four skills of reading, writing, listening, and

speaking with functional grammar and vocabulary. This approach of teaching seeks to improve students' language skills as well as make the learning materials culturally relevant by reflecting the customs, traditions, values, and beliefs of the Saudi community. This focus, however, can be restricted and problematic because mastering these four skills requires proficiency in related competencies, such as learning new vocabulary, comprehending meaning and usage, analytical thinking, making predictions, critical and visual literacy, and the capacity to interpret visual content. These extra skills are necessary for a more comprehensive and contemporary approach to communicative competence. If they are separated from the basic four skills, students may not be able to achieve authentic communication (Haydarov & Suyunova, 2022).

The criticism of limited emphasis on traditional language skills has been addressed through the integration of visual and critical literacy into English language teaching in Saudi Arabia, in addition to the traditional four skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Tatweer Company, 2015). Accordingly, confidence among the students is enhanced as they become able to communicate effectively, progress and develop in all areas of language learning (Mulyani et al., 2023; Riadil, 2020a; Sadiku, 2015), and this could enhance their engagement and participation in the classroom. Along with teaching the traditional four skills, students are provided with the instruments needed to critically engage, analyse, and interpret content. This comprehensive method is essential for improving Saudi female students' confidence and perhaps decreasing their reluctance to participate orally. It creates a secure environment for learning, where students are encouraged to participate in class discussions. Additionally, the emphasis on using language effectively in everyday situations is in line with Saudi society's cultural and societal standards, making the learning relevant to the setting and promoting the use of English by students as a means for communication with people around the world. This comprehensive method not only increases student engagement in the classroom but also gives

students the language and critical thinking skills they need to succeed in their language learning.

However, despite all those efforts by MoE to enhance English language learning, progress in TEFL has a long way to go (Abahussain, 2016; Alrashidi & Phan, 2015; Rahman & Alhisoni, 2013) for example, English teaching activities are limited in range and number to those included in the curriculum. Teachers and students cannot choose to participate or engage in activities beyond those set in the curriculum (Alqarni, 2020; Alsulami, 2016). Further, the English curriculum is designed based on Saudi designers' perceptions, not on the students' actual goals and needs (Alqarni, 2020; Al-Subahi, 1991), which is demotivating for students (Dörnyei, 2001). This discrepancy raises the possibility of a mismatch between the curriculum and what students need to study and their interests. In addition, the English curriculum in Saudi Arabia seems to neglect oral skills—there is limited use of techniques and practical strategies that help students to develop their oral communicative competence (Abahussain, 2016; Alqarni, 2020; Mohammed & Muhy, 2021). While there are quizzes, assessments, and exams for skills such as reading, writing, and listening, there is no assessment for oral skills (Al-Seghayer, 2015). Moreover, teaching practices in the classroom still focus on memorisation and rote learning, preparing for summative exams, translating literary texts, and learning grammar. For comprehensive language development, it is crucial to close this gap by integrating pedagogical practices that support oral proficiency and matching curriculum design with students' interests and needs.

Turning to teacher practices, Almalki (2014) conducted a study to explore Saudi teachers' perspectives of the English curriculum. The results showed that although teachers believed that the new English curriculum has high-quality instructional design, they encountered difficulties in implementing the new strategies and methodologies. They explained that this

was because they were inadequately trained on how to use the new curriculum. Teachers tend to follow orders in implementing the curriculum, which may limit their search for learning and knowledge, because there is no training course that prepares teachers to implement innovative teaching approaches such as communicative language teaching (CLT) (Abahussain, 2016; Mohammed & Muhy, 2021).

To achieve effective communication, second language acquisition (SLA) educators and textbook designers such as Abahussain (2016), She (2022), Tran (2022), and Yan (2022) argue that learners should have different opportunities to apply and practise what they learn in authentic, interactive contexts to achieve effective communication. They also argue that it is important to relate material to students' interests to increase their motivation, enabling them to learn the target language more effectively. Researchers emphasise that oral interaction with peers or a teacher helps students to apply their understanding of the language (Adams & Oliver, 2019). However, in the Saudi English classroom, the English curriculum emphasises grammar over other skills (Aburizaizah, 2022) even conversation and dialogue are read by students from the textbook as a speaking activity, which prohibits achieving communicative classrooms and developing students' speaking abilities (Alnatheer, 2013). With these concerns in mind, it is important to consider oral participation in this context. EFL, and SLA educators are becoming more concerned with student silence, perceived as a lack of engagement in or avoidance of engaging in classroom activities (Bao, 2023; Karas & Faez, 2020; King, 2013; Maher & King, 2022; Tsui, 1996).

In this thesis, curriculum is understood as more than just a static document that outlines content and activities. Rather, it is seen as a dynamic, socially contextual process shaped by the interactions between policymakers, teachers, and students (Graves, 2008). This conceptualization of curriculum includes not only the formal aspects of the intended

curriculum but also the enacted curriculum (what teachers actually implement in the classroom), the learned curriculum (what students acquire), and the hidden curriculum, which includes implicit lessons and values conveyed through classroom interactions and institutional norms (Apple, 1993).

This holistic understanding of curriculum is essential in analyzing the challenges faced by female students in Saudi EFL classrooms, particularly regarding oral participation. As later discussed in Chapter 8, the curriculum's emphasis on grammar and memorization, and its limited focus on communicative competence, creates structural barriers to student engagement. By understanding the curriculum in this broader sense, this thesis explores how institutional and sociocultural factors shape the educational experiences of Saudi female students, impacting their oral participation in the classroom.

Statement of the Problem

The issue of student silence and perceived lack of engagement derives from the last few decades of growth in the language learning field of communicative language learning pedagogies (Karas & Faez, 2020; Littlewood, 2007; Nunan, 2004). Consequently, this kind of silence is seen negatively by many academics since it might hinder language learners' progress by depriving them of significant educational opportunities. This viewpoint has been extensively researched and is supported by research evidence (e.g., de Bot, 1996; Ellis, 1999; Ellis & He, 1999; Gass, 1997; Izumi, 2003; King, 2013; Swain, 2005).

However, limited research has examined learner reticence and its implications in the context of Saudi higher education or addressed it as a major concern. It is common to use the word reluctance to characterise Saudi students' refusal to participate in class. Yet several studies have looked into Saudi students' low-level speaking abilities, and suggest that students feel

anxiety when speaking English, and lack motivation in EFL classes (Alhmadi, 2014; Alrasheedi, 2020; Hamouda, 2013; Rafada & Madini, 2017).

While internal factors like anxiety and lack of motivation are significant contributors to female students' reticence, it is essential to recognize that structural and cultural elements play a more substantial role in shaping this reluctance. Education policy, curriculum design, and practices in SA often prioritize rote learning and limit opportunities for meaningful oral participation. Cultural norms regarding gender and communication further compound these challenges. The intersection of these structural and cultural factors significantly influences female students' participation, as will be explored in detail in the data chapters and revisited in Chapter 9.

In this thesis, curriculum is understood as more than just a document that outlines content and activities; it is a dynamic social construct. Curriculum is seen as a socially contextual process that is shaped by the broader educational environment and the actors involved, such as policymakers, teachers, and students (Graves, 2008). By understanding curriculum through this lens, this thesis provides a holistic framework for analyzing how educational structures influence student engagement and participation in EFL classrooms. This conceptualization is carried forward in the analysis in Chapter 8 and in the data chapters, where the study examines how curriculum design and pedagogy influence oral participation.

The reluctance of Saudi female students to participate orally in English classes cannot be fully understood without considering the structural and cultural factors that shape their learning environment. Educational policies that prioritize grammar and written skills, a curriculum that may not align with students' interests or lived experiences, and teaching practices that emphasize rote learning over communicative competence all intersect to create barriers to oral participation. These factors, explored in detail in the data chapters, suggest

that addressing student reticence requires not only psychological interventions but also structural reforms in curriculum design and pedagogy. The analysis of these factors in Chapter 9 will provide insight into how these intersecting issues influence student engagement.

In addition to addressing the structural and cultural factors influencing female students' reticence, it is important to problematize the gap between (CLT) principles and actual classroom dynamics. While this gap may appear to simply require bridging, there are deeper assumptions that need to be critically examined. CLT has been critiqued for its English-centric position, inability to adapt to local contexts, and its potential colonising effects (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, 2006). The inherent assumption within CLT is that Western pedagogical models are universally applicable, often disregarding the socio-cultural realities of non-Western settings like SA. This critique aligns with the theoretical frameworks of Bourdieu and Foucault used in this thesis. From a Bourdieusian perspective, CLT may privilege certain forms of cultural capital that align with Western norms, marginalizing students whose habitus is shaped by different socio-cultural contexts. Foucault's theory of discourse further highlights how CLT can act as a mechanism of power, reinforcing dominant linguistic norms and potentially silencing local practices and forms of knowledge.

This thesis will critically explore these issues, providing a clear explanation from Chapter 1 through to the analysis of curriculum, pedagogy, and oral participation in later chapters, ensuring that the assumptions underlying the use of CLT are not taken for granted but are rigorously interrogated within the context of Saudi EFL classrooms.

All of these considerations highlight the need to research Saudi female students' reticence. The goal of this study is to bridge this gap in the Saudi EFL learning context. It also aims to inform further research studies on topics in relation to the internationalisation of higher

education. This movement emphasises the value of using CLT in EFL classrooms and positions English as the primary language of higher education (Abdulkader, 2019; Barnawi, 2019).

Reticence to participate among Saudi female students indicates a discrepancy between the goals of the CLT approach—which involves using the language, communicating, and engaging—and the real dynamics of the classroom. Many factors, such as cultural norms, the classroom setting, the teaching style, or student fear, may have an impact. In spite of the focus on communicative skills, there are obstacles standing in the way of successful engagement and participation in language usage in Saudi Arabia which this study attempts to investigate and comprehend.

Researchers (Al-Hawsawi, 2013; Al Mogeerah, 2023; Alrabai, 2014; Alrashidi & Phan, 2015; Alshammari, 2022; Elyas & Picard, 2010) contend that Saudi students are frequently criticised for low speaking proficiency, even though they have received at least 7 years of formal EFL education, resulting in the MoE making an effort to raise the level of English proficiency among Saudi students. Recent studies on Saudi university students found that while most were aware of the value of English, many of them acknowledged that they had encountered obstacles in their attempt to reach their desired levels of proficiency in the language (Abdulkader, 2019). In Saudi Arabia, there is a clear tendency towards women's empowerment when it comes to EFL education. To fulfil their responsibilities and obtain the opportunities that have been provided, proficiency in the English language is essential (Mustafa & Hamadan, 2020). Given that oral communication is regarded as a crucial ability when studying a foreign language (Alrasheedi, 2020), it is essential to look into the reticence of Saudi female students.

Additionally, it is necessary to comprehend the act of reticence in language classrooms from the viewpoint of the female students and teachers; that is, without making any assumptions about how to categorise or characterise the female students before the investigation. No previous study in the Saudi EFL setting has used empirical methodologies to investigate learners' reticence. To close this gap, my study investigates the topic of reticence in the Saudi EFL classroom using a mixed-methods approach. In the Saudi context, this methodological approach to comprehending the phenomenon of reticence is new. Saudi students' reticence to participate was examined by Hamouda (2013); however, Hamouda's study had limitations, such as its exclusive focus on male students and its use of a questionnaire for data collection. Because of the education system's segregation in Saudi Arabia, male and female students experience reticence in very different ways, and their sociocultural experiences differ (Al-Otaibi, 2004). The differences result from the obvious gender imbalance embedded in Saudi society's social structure and customs (Alsuwaida, 2016). Alhamdi (2014) conducted a relevant study in which she investigated speaking difficulties among female Saudi students. However, one of the weaknesses of this study was its method of collecting information, which was confined to classroom observation alone.

Lastly, while a number of earlier researchers have examined the lack of oral participation of Saudi Arabian students, none of these studies focused on student reticence from a curriculum or pedagogy perspectives. Studies by Alhamdi (2014), and Al-Sobhi and Preece (2018) described Saudi Arabian learners as "unmotivated to speak," and "weak in their speaking skills," indicating that the terminology used in these studies was biased at best. The literature review chapter of this thesis (Chapter 2) will discuss this issue in greater depth, providing a thorough analysis that enriches understandings of Saudi female students' participation in EFL classes.

In this study, the concept of engagement is understood as a broad, multifaceted construct that encompasses cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions (Hiver et al., 2024; Svalberg, 2018). Engagement refers to a student's active involvement in the learning process, which can manifest in various forms, including focused attention, emotional investment, and sustained effort. However, it is important to differentiate between overall engagement and 'oral participation,' which is the primary focus of this research. While engagement includes both non-verbal participation (such as attentive listening and task completion) and emotional involvement, 'oral participation' specifically refers to the verbal contributions that students make in classroom discussions.

In the context of Saudi EFL classrooms, where cultural and educational factors significantly influence student behaviour, it is crucial to explicitly focus on oral participation as a form of engagement. This study examines the factors that contribute to female students' reluctance to speak up in class, with an emphasis on verbal interaction. The distinction between general engagement and oral participation will help clarify the scope of the investigation, particularly in light of the sociocultural factors that influence Saudi female students' experiences in EFL settings (Kettle, 2017; Hiver et al., 2024). By focusing on oral participation, this research aims to better understand the barriers to verbal engagement and identify strategies to enhance active verbal contributions in the language learning process.

What Brings Me to the Study

Being a teacher in a secondary school before becoming a lecturer at a university from 2008 until the present, I have observed that a large number of Saudi female students encounter serious challenges when speaking in the EFL classroom. They are mostly passive in English classrooms and reticent in using the language most of the time. Based on my experience as a teacher, I wondered whether the problem of female students' reticence may be due to the

traditional methods of teaching English, particularly speaking in a classroom where teaching does not focus on a communicative methodology. Female Students are reticent to speak up and often respond to the teacher's questions with a few words only. Moreover, the focus of teaching is mainly on reading and writing in isolation, rather than the development of speaking and listening skills. Therefore, it can be argued that perhaps students feel that speaking is an ambiguous entity and a goal that is too hard to reach or achieve (Aburizaiozah, 2022; M. S. Alharbi, 2022).

I have discussed this problem with my colleagues and have found that they also share my concerns about female students' reticence to participate. Teachers complain that some female students seem to be very passive and do not talk in class, rarely participating in classroom discussions. This causes unease for me and for my colleagues, as speaking is one of the indicators (along with listening, writing, and reading) that shows female students' understanding of their learning and also their proficiency in the English language. Research shows that talking promotes students' learning, increases their achievement in the comprehension of texts, enhances their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and improves their overall achievement (Gillies, 2014; McElhone, 2013; Piazza et al., 2015). These features will be discussed further in the literature review (See Chapter Two).

My need to find out more about this topic prompted me to undertake a postgraduate degree; I realised that this topic needed further investigation, since engagement and vocalisation (speaking up) are important elements of learning the English language. As an English language lecturer, I am very interested in understanding ways to overcome the low oral participation of female students in the English classroom, and believe that investigating female students' reticence, silence, and passivity in the English classroom will benefit me as a lecturer by helping female students to overcome this tendency. Therefore, the issue of

reticence in the Saudi Arabian context drives this investigation and understanding this is the key goal of the study in order to obtain more in-depth knowledge about this issue.

Significance of the Research

A review of the literature reveals that there is limited research in the field of learning English in Saudi Arabia, particularly research that assesses student engagement in the English classroom. This study investigated the factors that Saudi female students encounter in their English classroom, how those factors affect their English learning, and how the classroom curriculum and pedagogy influence their participation. Further, the research investigated female students' and teachers' perspectives of oral participation. Finally, the study sought to understand the importance of oral participation in developing English language speaking skills, which led to recommendations that may enhance the process of English language learning.

The study is also beneficial to many stakeholders in Saudi Arabia including EFL learners, who will be able to recognise the barriers that lead them to be passive and unwilling to participate in English lessons and to understand strategies that could help them learn the English language. To achieve these benefits, this study aimed to investigate female students' understanding of the importance of oral participation as a tool that may help female students learn the language effectively. This study aimed to promote the active participation of Saudi female students in English classrooms.

For teachers, the study sheds light on the influence of classroom pedagogy on female students' participation, particularly in the Saudi Arabian context for preparatory year female students. This study will help teachers understand female students' reticence and accordingly work to reduce it. The research also intended to understand the importance of teachers' pedagogy in enhancing female students' oral participation and developing English language

abilities in general and speaking in particular. This might lead to further suggestions of effective strategies and methods that could help to promote the English language learning process.

Moreover, the study provides higher education faculties and administrators with new understandings of the different kinds of barriers that may affect the English language learning process; as a result, they could consider methods and approaches to overcoming these barriers based on female students' and teachers' perspectives. This will enable universities to possibly improve and enhance the English language learning process. Likewise, the study is important to the MoE in Saudi Arabia, since the findings will inform the EFL education sector through the provision of pedagogical recommendations that foster the learning process for the English language and overcome issues and barriers related to female students' passivity and oral participation. Thus, this research aims to encourage understanding of the importance of oral participation to enable effective language learning and, ultimately, to improve the global competitiveness of Saudi citizens.

The Research Approach

Aims and Research Questions

Given the complexity of the phenomenon of female students' reticence, the dynamic interplay of factors that can affect it, and the influence of curriculum and pedagogy, the results of this thesis contribute to the field of second language teaching and learning and introduce new perspectives from a large population that, at present, lacks representative research. This study, in exploring the female students' perspectives on the English language and oral participation, can help English language teachers and education stakeholders create a more conducive learning environment to better engage female students.

My results also have an important applied dimension: the findings about the dynamics of female students' reticence among female Saudi university students pave the way for investigating effective ways to reduce female students' reticence and its consequences in future work. The major aims of the present study can be formulated as follows: firstly, to provide an in-depth account of female students' beliefs about, perspectives on, and prior experiences with, reticence in the EFL classroom; and secondly, to investigate the influence of curriculum and pedagogy on female EFL students' reticence at Saudi universities. In order to achieve the research objectives, the study primarily aims to answer the following questions guided by the overarching question that underpins this study:

- What factors influence female students' oral participation in EFL classrooms in Saudi Arabia?

In order to answer the primary question, the following sub-questions were addressed:

- What are female students' perspectives of oral participation and how does this influence their disposition towards participation?

- What influence do curriculum and pedagogy have on female students' oral participation?

A questionnaire and interviews were used to investigate the issue of EFL Saudi female students' reticence to engage in oral participation. The questionnaire aimed to explore the causes of female students' reticence to engage in EFL classroom discussions and female students' perspectives of the importance of oral participation. Individual interviews sought to investigate female students' and teachers' perspectives of teaching and learning approaches that may enhance communicative interaction in the English classroom and examine the impact of curriculum and pedagogy on female students' oral participation and engagement. Thus, these data collection techniques played a significant role in achieving the purpose of the study.

The participants in the questionnaire included 100 Saudi female students who have studied English for up to 6 years (including as a school subject before starting university). The interviews included female 20 students and five Saudi teachers; all the teachers have postgraduate degrees from various universities in Western countries.

Context of the Study

The study was conducted in a university in the small city of Rafha in the northern border region of Saudi Arabia, near Iraq (see Figure 1 below). Rafha has always been a significant hub for transit and trade, given its location close to the Iraqi border. During the Gulf War in 1990, Rafha served as a shelter for a large number of refugees from Iraq and witnessed a great deal of humanitarian activity. The population of Rafha was about 90,155 in 2014 (Arar City Profile, 2019).

Figure 1

Saudi Arabia Map



Note. The pale grey spot on the map indicates the place where I collected my data.

Universities in Saudi Arabia are segregated by gender, thus all the participants in this study were females due to the religious and cultural context of Saudi Arabia. Males were not included in this study because from a Saudi religious perspective a female researcher communicating with males in face-to-face contact in educational contexts is considered culturally inappropriate. With this in mind I turn to feminism and gender equality in the Saudi Arabian context.

The Feminist Movement and Its Influence on Gender Equality in Arab Societies

Feminism is a Western movement that is rooted in Western culture. In the 1880s, Auclert was the first person to use the term feminism, to illustrate women's rights and criticise the power of men during the French Revolution (Hause & Kenney, 1981). In the early 20th century, English speakers and writers in the United Kingdom and the United States used this term; and later the term was defined by Arabic speakers in Egypt. Feminism's principal agenda is to promote gender equality in political, economic, cultural, and familial contexts. It is particularly evident in its organised activism in favour of women's rights and interests (Hannam, 2014). The feminist movement challenges the corrupt system and the social framework in recently democratic patriarchal countries. Patriarchy is a "political and social system that insists that males are inherently dominant, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females" (hooks, 2013, p.28).

Feminists work for transformative reforms in government and society in recently democratic patriarchal countries like Morocco. However, what happens in Morocco and other countries in similar circumstances reveals a more nuanced view. While there are attempts to address gender inequalities through legal reforms, critics contend that these efforts are frequently superficial and function more as a means of attracting foreign observers than as a means of bringing about significant change. This apparent contradiction may result from a complex situation in which Morocco is criticised for the efficacy and limitations of its reforms for women's rights while simultaneously making significant progress towards equity with some of its regional neighbours. The definition of feminism and what it encompasses remains crucial to the contemporary feminist ideology. Different people have different interpretations of what feminism is. The feminist movement is still one of the most effective movements for social justice currently active in the world, according to hooks (2015). The feminist

movement is still evolving and looking for new methods to build a more peaceful and non-oppressive society.

Some countries, such as Saudi Arabia, are unable to separate feminism from Quranic concepts, while countries such as Egypt and Tunisia define feminism based on their own culture and lifestyle, since they have sets of laws that are not based on Islamic law (Ennaji, 2016). Quranic principles and feminism are intrinsically connected, especially in Islamic countries where religious teaching has a significant influence on legal systems and societal standards. Islamic feminism operates within the context of Quranic teachings and interprets them to advocate for women's rights. It aims to address issues related to gender equality. This inseparability is most clear in nations like SA where Sharia, or Islamic law, serves as the foundation for governance. Islamic feminists contend that the Quran naturally promotes women's rights. Many Quranic verses are misconstrued to support male power, despite the fact that the original texts contain ideas that support equality and justice for women. For instance, **Quran 9:71** underscores the partnership between men and women, stating, *"The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, establish prayer, give zakah, and obey Allah and His Messenger."* Here, the Quran envisions men and women as mutual supporters in society, an interpretation that counters patriarchal assumptions and supports the idea of gender equality.

Islamic feminists see the Quran's support of women's property ownership and income control, for example, as the foundation of gender equality (Bakhshizadeh, 2023). According to Bakhshizadeh (2023), Islamic feminists argue that gender equality and the central ethical vision of the Quran have parallels, based on their religious understanding of Islam. Because of this, promoting feminist aims in these communities is almost impossible to do without interacting with religious perspectives.

Nevertheless, the feminist movement has significantly impacted women in Arab societies. In the Arab East, feminism's history began in the 1800s (Abu Hussain, 2020). Different factors have contributed to the growth of feminism and women's empowerment in Arabic society, including education, travel, the involvement of women in business, and the image of independent and successful Western women portrayed in movies and social media (Abu Hussain, 2020). Women's roles have experienced major developments in different parts of the Arab world (Ennaji, 2016; Hatem, 2018). Many Arabic women have been motivated by these developments, fighting for their rights and refuting the belief that associates women with the home, particularly the kitchen. Accordingly, fundamental changes have been achieved in the Arab countries in the past few decades. As an illustration, in Egypt and Lebanon the feminism has led to increased women's workforce participation. Egypt has been the leader of the feminist movement in the Middle East. In 1960, Nawal Al-Saadawi (an Egyptian activist and feminist) made a great contribution to the international feminist movement, speaking out against gender inequalities perpetuated against women in the Middle East (Moghadam, 2020; Nkealah, 2013; Rizzo et al., 2022).

The 1940s witnessed the emergence of Moroccan feminism, as the country's major political parties began to take an interest in the condition of women. The corrupt attitudes that restrict women and deprive them of the same rights as men are opposed by feminist and women's groups. The majority of women's movements throughout history have called for laws against harassment in addition to the freedom to work, attend school, and get married without permission from parents. These demands are met with hostility by traditional Moroccan society since they threaten the foundations of the entire community (Ouaryachi, 2022). In Morocco, the feminist movement has played a significant role in the advancement of gender inequality and women's political participation. Fatema Mernissi, a famous feminist leader in Morocco, points out that "if women's rights are a problem for some modern Muslim men, it

is neither because of the Koran nor the Prophet, nor the Islamic tradition, but simply because those rights conflict with the interests of a male elite” (Mernissi, 1991, p. ix; Ennaji, & Sadiqi, 2011). Studies focused on gender dynamics and feminist movements in comparable social contexts might benefit greatly from this understanding of Moroccan feminism, which places a strong emphasis on challenging gender inequity and encouraging political engagement. For example, Saudi Arabia might learn from Morocco’s experience as it navigates its path towards women’s empowerment and gender equality. Saudi Arabia can further its progress in women’s rights by applying Morocco’s successful strategies to support legal reforms, enhance women’s participation in the public sphere, and challenge traditional norms. By concentrating on creating inclusive movements that address specific cultural and societal barriers, Saudi Arabia may improve the discourse on gender equality throughout the Arab world.

Recently, gender inequality has been of significant concern in the global arena as there is a general belief that gender inequalities are common in Arab society and women are secluded, marginalised, and oppressed; they do not enjoy the same rights as men. Originally and historically, the Arab world is a male-dominated culture. For example, Arab countries hold a strict position against granting citizenship rights to children of a native woman who is married to a non-native husband. In Egypt, women are banned from the position of judge while in Kuwait they are banned from the right to political participation (ElSafty, 2003). However, gender inequality does not indicate that men and women should become the same, but rather that their opportunities, rights, and responsibilities should not depend on whether they are born female or male (Parvez, 2019).

In the Arab world, historically, women were restricted to remaining in their homes, and were not permitted to continue their education or engage in extracurricular activities (Alharbi,

2023). Nevertheless, women's rights have improved over time and women are now in a better position. Because of Vision 2030, female roles in the Saudi society has significantly improved and has promoted similar global reforms in gender equality (Embamex Arabia Saudita, 2021). Because of the historical differences in how various Saudi traditions viewed men and women, feminism has gained popularity in Saudi society today. For example, in earlier periods, women were not permitted to attend school, but this has gradually changed. In addition, promoting women's rights is one of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's objectives for developing Vision 2030, which was declared in 2018, included promoting women's rights (Alharbi, 2023).

Since Saudi women were granted the ability to vote in local elections, join the Shura Council, and were permitted to work in areas designated for men, earlier societal beliefs about women's rights and roles have all progressively changed (Al-Ail, 2021), with gender equality and women's engagement now being acknowledged. Furthermore, women's empowerment has received considerable attention from the Saudi government in recent years, led by King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (Al-Ail, 2021).

While the feminist movement in Saudi Arabia has achieved some major developments in gender equality for females, there are still challenges and constraints to overcome. The feminist movement's impact in Saudi Arabia can be viewed as a force for promoting women's rights and challenging traditional norms to build an equitable society. However, it continues to face obstacles and resistance that must be negotiated, just like any significant social movement. For example, there are situations in which some Saudis have adapted feminist ideologies while neglecting the importance of the fundamental cultural and religious beliefs that support the culture. On the other hand, many Saudis have become aware of their cultural and religious principles because of the feminist movement (Hoza, 2019). When

discussing feminism in the Saudi context, it is important to note that Islamic feminism and women's rights are supported and are present in a way that allows women to achieve their maximum potential. Moreover, because of the feminist movement, Muslims are aware that men and women have equal rights in Islam (Alharbi, 2023).

In Saudi Arabia, females play a significant role inside and outside their families. Currently, increasing opportunities for women are available in Saudi Arabia in various disciplines. Furthermore, recently Saudi Arabia has witnessed the birth of numerous movements regarding women's guardianship, political participation, and right to drive (Alhajri, 2020). Despite being a male-dominated society, Saudi government agencies now have major reforms in place to remove all barriers to gender inequality, including policies and programs that assist in alleviating gender inequality in the country (Rizvi & Hussain, 2022). Saudi Arabia has achieved major advancements in the rights of women for such a conservative society, with the Saudi government making remarkable progress in the status of gender equality in health, education, and employment (Doumato, 2020).

Through the perspective of more general cultural and educational reforms that support gender equality and women's empowerment, it is possible to see the relevance of the feminist movement to female EFL students in Saudi Arabia, and how this movement provides inspiration to these students. Gender equality and women's access to education at all levels have been promoted in Saudi Arabia's significant educational reforms. These changes are part of a bigger movement to change social standards in support of feminist principles, which is increasing the participation of women in job markets and in society as a whole. The number of women in management roles and decision-making processes has increased significantly over the past 10 years, suggesting a shift towards more equitable gender representation (Alotaibi et al., 2017). In addition, in EFL learning feminist objectives around

improving women's access to education have influenced the English curriculum and pedagogy.

Accordingly, female students may feel more motivated and encouraged to engage in English language as societal views move towards greater gender equality. Feminism assists in destroying the social and cultural obstacles that have historically silenced women's voices in academic settings by arguing for an educational atmosphere that appreciates and promotes the active participation of all students (Bates, 2017; hooks, 1984). This change not only gives female students more confidence to express their ideas, but it also modifies expectations by creating a standard in which they are expected to take an active role in their education. Consequently, the stereotype of the passive female student is called into question as societal perspectives shift towards more gender equality, as demonstrated in programs and policies such as Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. This is leading to the re-evaluation of female students' position in the classroom, which has the potential to greatly increase their motivation to participate in class activities and discussions.

Being able to speak English is essential for career advancement and job prospects, especially for Saudi women. The programs proposed under Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 seek to expand the economy and enhance female involvement in the workforce (Naseem & Dhruva, 2017), and the link between economic empowerment and EFL proficiency is highlighted. In order to acquire the communicative competence required to function in the professional environment, active participation and oral participation in EFL education are essential for proficiency (Al-Seghayer, 2014). Feminist groups naturally support the effort for educational reforms that promote women's active participation in learning environments since they fight for gender equality and traditional roles. Thus, encouraging an educational environment that supports

active engagement in EFL is not just about helping students become proficient in the language; it is also about giving women more access to better job prospects.

Thesis Structure

The thesis starts with the current introductory chapter which describes the background of the study and the significance of the study, as well as the research questions. **Chapter 2** presents a review of the literature. **Chapter 3** presents the theories which are used and included in the study. **Chapter 4** explains the research methodology, the research design and paradigm, qualitative and quantitative data, the data collection process, and data analysis. **Chapter 5** provides a detailed account of the questionnaire findings. **Chapter 6** provides detailed information of the interview's findings. **Chapter 7** and **Chapter 8** present a critical discussion of the key findings emerging from this study. **Chapter 9** summarises the whole thesis, and provides the implications of the findings, recommendations for policy and pedagogical practice, and reflections on the research process.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the study, focusing on the problem of reticence among female Saudi students studying EFL. Understanding the needs of Saudi female EFL students in higher education will be facilitated by this research. The chapter highlighted the status of the English language and approaches to teaching English within the Saudi educational setting. The theories of Bourdieu and Foucault, which offer analytical frameworks for comprehending the institutional and sociocultural influences on student engagement, are fundamental to the research. The chapter also looked at English language developments around the world and how they affect Saudi education. The study's importance was emphasised in the chapter, with a focus on how it might affect teachers, students, and educational policy. The study's mixed-methods methodology was introduced, using interviews and a questionnaire to collect various perspectives on the reticence problem. The chapter discussed the development of the feminist movement, particularly in the Arab East countries, and particularly in Saudi Arabia, and its impact on EFL learning in the Saudi context.

The following chapter will provide a critique of the research literature, identifying the research gaps associated with the reticence phenomenon among Saudi female students. It will look at oral participation from different perspectives, providing insight into how particular factors affect student oral participation. This critical analysis aims to shed light on the intricate relationship between oral participation and reticence in the Saudi educational context by examining the ways in which cultural, pedagogical, and linguistic elements interact.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter provides an overview of the literature on Saudi Arabia's English language context and second language acquisition (SLA), exploring the different aspects of this body of literature and the difficulties that arise in the Saudi setting. The chapter focuses on communicative competence, its applicability in Saudi Arabia, and the significance of each of its components—grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence—in language learning and instruction in Saudi Arabia. Within this discussion, there is an emphasis on the importance of oral engagement in the English language learning process and the critical role that classroom participation and interaction play in SLA. It reviews the research literature on the phenomenon of student reticence in language learning and its effects on students' oral participation. This chapter also sheds light on how gender affects language learning, concentrating on female students in the Saudi context. This chapter provides the foundation for current understanding of how all these components interact and how they affect oral participation.

English Policy and Practice in Saudi Arabia

In 2008, the Saudi MoE considered the significance of English language and started to take essential steps to reform the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) in SA (Alghamdi, 2019). To achieve this, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has redesigned the English curriculum and syllabus to concentrate on enhancing actual communication rather than focusing on teaching translation and grammar (Abahussain, 2016). Such integration was expected to promote students' confidence and help them in using the language to express themselves meaningfully outside the classroom (Tatweer Company, 2015).

Despite the inclusion of speaking as one aspect of the communicative competence curriculum, oral language skills are not assessed. Researchers (Al-Shamiry, 2020; Mohammed & Muhy, 2021) suggest that techniques and practical strategies that help students to develop their oral communicative competence are lacking in the Saudi curriculum. Researchers have also raised other issues about the curriculum; for example, they have expressed concern that the curriculum does not consider students' needs and interests (Al-Tamimi, 2019; Nather, 2020). It is important to consider that student control, opportunity, choice, and variety are critical dimensions of effective teaching and learning tasks from a communicative perspective (Alharbi, 2020; Alnatheer, 2013). However, these dimensions, including the absence of engaging curriculum and the lack of techniques and practical strategies to develop oral competence are not part of the English curriculum in this context (Abahussain, 2016; Alnatheer, 2013).

In this thesis, curriculum is viewed as a dynamic and socially contextual process that goes beyond its design to include its enactment and the hidden lessons conveyed through teacher-student interactions (Graves, 2008; Apple, 1993). This perspective is critical for understanding how the curriculum in SA not only shapes but is also shaped by the broader sociocultural and institutional context. By viewing the curriculum through this lens, this thesis provides insights into how the curriculum contributes to the structural barriers that limit female students' oral participation in EFL classrooms.

Teaching practices in the classroom still focus on techniques, such as repetition, memorisation, preparing for summative exams, translating literary texts, rote learning, and teaching vocabulary and grammar (A. O. Alharbi, 2022; Al Mogeerah, 2023). This suggests that English teachers' classroom practices do not necessarily align with education policy. This may be due to their lack of knowledge of how to implement innovative teaching

methods such as CLT and their lack of awareness of the government's efforts to develop TEFL (Abahussain, 2016; A. M. Alharbi, 2022). In the Saudi educational context, teachers' agency is constrained by structural and institutional pressures such as a rigid curriculum, cultural expectations, and limited professional autonomy. These constraints impact their ability to fully implement student-centered, communicative teaching practices like CLT, which affects both teaching approaches and student engagement. Applying a sociological lens—drawing on Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field, and Foucault's notions of power and discourse—enables a deeper analysis of how these structural factors shape classroom practices and influence female students' oral participation. This perspective, further explored in later chapters, connects educational policy, teacher agency, and student behaviour, clarifying how sociocultural norms and institutional frameworks shape the educational environment.

The use of both Bourdieu and Foucault offers complementary insights into understanding student reticence in the Saudi EFL context. Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital, and field explain how students' social positions influence classroom behaviours, particularly regarding language learning and oral participation. His notion of linguistic capital highlights how English proficiency serves as social capital, affecting students' willingness to speak. Foucault's discourse theory adds a focus on power dynamics, showing how institutional norms shape behaviour in the classroom. In SA, cultural and institutional power relations heavily influence both students' and teachers' actions. Together, Bourdieu's focus on social structures and Foucault's exploration of power provides a comprehensive lens for analyzing reticence, going beyond individual factors to include structural and cultural forces.

The use of the native language (L1) in English as Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms has been a topic of debate among scholars, especially in contexts where English is not widely

used outside the classroom. In Saudi Arabia, Arabic is the dominant language used in educational settings, including EFL classrooms. Alqahtani (2021) found that the majority of Saudi EFL teachers frequently rely on Arabic to explain complex grammar rules and vocabulary. While this approach may facilitate understanding, it has been criticized for limiting students' exposure to English and hindering their communicative competence.

This reliance on Arabic can be linked to student reticence and the broader issue of communicative competence. Research suggests that communicative competence, particularly grammatical and sociolinguistic competence, is best developed through immersion and practical use of the target language (Albarakati & Jendli, 2021; Uгла et al., 2019). However, when teachers predominantly use Arabic, students are deprived of authentic opportunities to practice English, which can exacerbate their reluctance to participate orally (Alrabai, 2018).

Furthermore, Alharbi (2022) and Abahussain (2016) argue that teachers' reliance on Arabic in EFL classes reflects broader structural issues within the Saudi education system, including a heavy focus on grammar instruction and traditional teaching methods. These practices, combined with the use of Arabic, may contribute to students' reluctance to speak English in class, as they may feel less confident in their language proficiency or fear making mistakes (Alqahtani, 2021; Oflaz, 2019).

Based on my own experience while teaching and lecturing at universities and schools, students find classroom activities involving English demotivating because teachers mostly impose memorisation and repetition activities upon their students. Unfortunately, rather than engaging students, they become bored and disinterested in their learning. Moreover, teachers typically do not use group work despite principals or supervisors requesting it or looking for it when observing teachers. This could be largely due to time limitations, as teachers have 50 minutes for English classes and multiple duties that need to be completed in this time. For

example, teachers have to give lessons, explain grammar rules, conduct practice exercises, and ask the class questions. This limits the teacher's independence in terms of how they can use the curriculum material and forces them to finish what is suggested in the teachers' book in the limited time available (Abahussain, 2016; Alnatheer, 2013). They have to finish a wide range of lessons, activities, and workbook exercises that are incorporated into the required textbook and are due by the end of the semester. Because of these time limitations, the incorporation of group activities is not possible. Alnatheer (2013) and Abahussain (2016) show how difficult it is to apply group activities in Saudi classrooms due to large class sizes and extensive grammar curriculum. Both males and females teachers refuse group activities because they feel pressure to cover a lot of grammar material in addition to difficulties in controlling the classroom. Therefore, traditional teaching techniques like memorisation, repetition, and lecturing predominate, even though textbooks are meant to be communication tools.

Research suggests students should have various opportunities to practise and apply the learned language in practical authentic communication (Chamot & O'Malley, 1996; Mulyani et al., 2023). The importance of cognitive methods in language learning is suggested by Chamot and O'Malley (1996), who support meaningful integration and practical language use in classroom settings to stimulate the cognitive processes necessary for language acquisition. They argue that repetition reduces the possibility of cognitive engagement and, thus, the capacity for efficient language acquisition. Similarly, Mulyani et al. (2023) stress the significance of real-world communication opportunities in contexts related to language learning. Their findings highlight the educational benefits of situational language practice, which motivates students to participate in authentic communicative situations to enhance their contextual and practical language comprehension. Additionally, spoken interactions with teachers and peers enable students to use their language comprehension (Nather, 2020).

Nather (2020) clarifies the critical function of interactive spoken conversation in language acquisition; it is a means of realising language comprehension in a process that is more natural, which is consistent with the communicative approach to teaching languages. According to this method, communication is the main concern of language learning, hence teaching strategies that emphasise real language use are necessary. However, the dialogue and conversation in the Saudi English classroom are not practical or authentic, with most speaking exercises limited to students reading from the textbook. This shows that there is a disconnect between policy, curriculum, and practice.

Students' Reticence

Participation in the classroom is important for developing communicative competence and fluency as well as for practising language structures. In language learning settings, classroom participation refers to students' responses to teachers' questions, and making comments and raising questions which are essential to their language learning process (Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Zulfikar et al., 2022). Moreover, it includes student engagement in the negotiation of comprehensible input. Krashen (1986) defines comprehensible input as the language that is provided by teachers where students understand the majority of the language but not all of it. The formulation of comprehensible output is also fundamental to language acquisition (Lee et al., 2020; Tsui, 1996). In the context of SLA, participation in the classroom is essential. It involves active participation in the language learning process through the exchange of comprehensible input and output in which learners have an opportunity to practise the language at their level of proficiency (Krashen, 1986). This is essential to developing linguistic skills, and goes beyond simply responding to enquiries (Tsui, 1996).

In addition to the comprehensible input, Swain's (1985) comprehensible output hypothesis plays a crucial role in understanding language development. According to Swain, language

proficiency increases if the student can navigate the ‘difficulties’ in communicating. In the Saudi EFL context, this theory is particularly relevant as the reticence observed among female students limits their opportunities to generate such output. Without sufficient output, students miss critical moments for feedback and refinement of language, stunting their linguistic progress. The factors contributing to this lack of output go beyond individual learner attributes and are deeply tied to sociocultural and institutional factors, which will be explored in further detail in the data chapters.

While much of the literature attributes students' reticence in language learning to individual factors such as anxiety and lack of motivation, it is important to consider how sociocultural variables, including gender, play a significant role in shaping language learning behaviours. Studies that focus solely on psychological factors often overlook the broader sociological processes that influence oral participation, particularly in contexts like SA, where gender roles and norms significantly impact classroom dynamics. As Higgins (2010) discusses in *Gender Identities in Language Learning*, language learning is not only a cognitive or individual process but also one deeply embedded in social and cultural contexts. The intersection of gender with sociocultural factors is, therefore, critical to understanding why Saudi female students may exhibit reticence in oral participation. This thesis aims to address these gaps by emphasizing the broader sociological processes, including gender, that impact female students' participation in EFL classrooms. The relationship between these sociocultural variables and reticence will be explored further in later chapters, particularly in the discussion of the sociocultural dynamics in Saudi educational settings.

Speaking reticence is a phenomenon in EFL teaching and learning, and many scholars have defined it in different ways. Phillips, an early researcher in this area, defined it as “a personality-based anxiety disorder” (Phillips, 1965, as cited in Keaten & Kelly, 2000, p. 166).

Different terms are also used to describe the phenomenon of reticence is across several studies. For example, it is referred to as students' reluctance, reticence, quietness, and unwillingness to participate (Limbong, 2020). While in the beginning Phillips considered reticence as an anxiety or personality disorder, the focus later shifted from personality to describing reticence as behaviour caused by inadequate communication skills such as a low level of English proficiency (Phillips, 1984). Later research by Keaten and Kelly (2000) indicates that reticence to peak up arises from students' belief that being silent is better than looking foolish. It is a communication problem with behavioural, affective, and cognitive aspects. This result is similar to Phuong's (2021) findings that reticence may also occur because some students believe that keeping silent is better than receiving a negative evaluation from a teacher in front of their classmates.

Reticence has also been linked to anxiety, since a person's level of concern is related to their real interactions with other people (McCroskey, 1977). I agree with this assumption because, from my experience, students believe that those who participate and speak in English are more competent in speaking than those who do not speak up or participate. Studies show that there is a close relationship between students' reticence and confidence, and that if students do not have good speaking skills, they are less confident and more reticent (Alrabai, 2018; Phuong, 2021; Yupiterani, 2016). Students who lack confidence may fail to be engaged in oral communication in the English language (Yan & He, 2020). Therefore, it is important to investigate these dimensions and Saudi students' confidence in order to see how it influences English speaking reticence.

Researchers suggest that there are a number of reasons for this reluctance to participate, such as shyness, motivation, anxiety, and target language competence (Limbong, 2020; Wu, 2019). Wu (2019) examined the perceptions of the causes of Chinese university students'

hesitation to participate in a foreign language learning environment. The results showed a high correlation between student reticence and low language proficiency, anxiety connected to learning a foreign language, introversion, and teacher influence. Additionally, Limbong (2020) examined the reticent traits and behaviours displayed by 38 Malay students majoring in English literature. Findings revealed that three factors—teacher factors, cultural factors, and student factors—were responsible for the students’ reluctance to talk and their general reserved attitude in language classes. Reticent behaviours were found to include speaking more in their native tongue, avoiding conversation, sitting in the back or middle of the class, being passive, not wanting to start a conversation, responding quickly, depending more on memorisation, requiring more waiting time, and being passive.

Although reticence has been studied in a variety of regional and cultural contexts, there is a lack of research that particularly looks at Saudi female students and the wider variables affecting their participation in the classroom (Al-Ahmadi & King, 2023; Al-Ghafri, 2018). It is important to consider cultural influences in considering the level of engagement of female students in the classroom in SA. Their hesitation to speak up could be influenced by societal rules such as being shy and unwilling to communicate (Le, 2021), particularly in situations where there are mixed genders (Alnatheer, 2013). While genders are not mixed in classrooms in SA, with Vision 2030’s progressive reforms, gender inclusion and women’s empowerment in the classroom are becoming more and more important in Saudi schools (Rizvi & Hussain, 2022). Such changes indicate that there might also be a change in favour of encouraging and supporting female students to take an active role in their language learning. Little research investigates the general factors that cause students’ reticence to speak up or contribute towards classroom non-participation or examines classroom pedagogy and its influence on the students’ oral participation. This study seeks to contribute to this gap in the research and

investigates the role of pedagogy in encouraging or discouraging students to participate orally, as detailed below.

Most studies about reticence have been conducted among student participants in Asian, Arab, and non-Arab countries (e.g., Al-Ghafri, 2018; Gushendra, & Aprianti, 2019; Yan & He, 2020; Yupiterani, 2016). However, few studies have been conducted with Saudi female students. Most of the studies that do exist discuss specific factors that could influence and impact students' participation factors, such as anxiety, motivation, shyness, and particular aspects of English proficiency (reading, writing, listening, and speaking; Alsowat, 2016; Al-wossabi, 2016; Aziz et al., 2018). Al-wossabi (2016) examined the discrepancy between the desired and actual outcomes of communicative English training in SA, emphasising the obstacles that Saudi EFL students face in achieving oral competency. However, this study did not include an examination of teacher viewpoints on these issues. Research on foreign language anxiety among Saudi English majors by Alsowat (2016) showed a modest level of anxiety among the students. The study also revealed a negative association between anxiety and language proficiency. However, this research did not focus on the relationship between anxiety and proficiency or the creation of an EFL model to reduce anxiety's negative impacts. While Aziz et al. (2018) concentrated on the impact of internal and external factors on classroom participation in the context of government high schools in Pakistan, they did not focus on a wide range of internal and external motivational factors. Unlike these studies, the current study focuses on the varied experiences and perspectives of female Saudi university students about oral reticence, particularly investigating the roles of curriculum and pedagogy. It addresses the gap in the representation and knowledge of these participants' specific language-learning needs and obstacles by providing an in-depth investigation of students' attitudes and the educational setting influencing their participation. With a particular focus on how curriculum and pedagogies affect participation, this study is

distinguished by exploring the Saudi female students' experiences and perspectives concerning reticence, and it also considers teachers' perspectives.

Furthermore, recent research (Alharbi, 2015; Alrabai, 2016a; Aziz et al., 2018), indicates that males and females teachers have a major impact on whether or not students are reticent. Students can overcome worries about receiving a poor grade and be encouraged to participate more actively in class discussions by teachers who establish a non-threatening environment and apply positive reinforcement. Many studies point to how important teachers are in determining how engaged or inactive students are in the classroom, particularly when it comes to Saudi EFL learners. For example, Alrabai (2016a) investigated the causes behind Saudi students' poor performance in EFL classrooms. Instructional variables, such as teacher behaviour and teaching styles, curriculum, and teaching methods, and issues with the Saudi education system, such as a lack of teacher training, are some examples of external factors that impact students' performance. Alharbi (2015) emphasises the authoritative posture of teachers in Saudi English language courses, suggesting that this may have an effect on the levels of participation and engagement from the students. This viewpoint is mirrored and elaborated by Aziz et al. (2018), who claim that the degree of classroom engagement is heavily influenced by teacher qualities, which can range from being supportive and encouraging to having poor teaching skills or being disconnected, his sample included mixed gender teachers. However, my study deeply explores the complex nature of reticence. It does not focus only on the impact of teachers' roles on students' reticence but also includes student-teacher interaction, teachers' pedagogies, and habitus. Moreover, this study investigates students' reticence in terms of oral participation in the English classroom and the factors leading to this reticence, since research suggests reticence is a problem that hinders the development of oral proficiency in English language learning (Gushendra, & Aprianti, 2019; Limbong, 2020).

Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

SLA refers to the process of learning another language after the absorption of the native language; sometimes, the term refers to the learning of a third or fourth language. The critical aspect of the term SLA is that it relates to the learning of a non-native language after mastery of the native language (Aljumah, 2020; Deng & Zou, 2016). Foundational theories, including Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985) and Swain's Output Hypothesis (1985), have provided important insights into how learners develop proficiency in a second language through interaction and comprehensible input. How SLA occurs has been researched by many scholars (Aljumah, 2020; Alsaiari, 2015; Gitsaki, 2018; Louber, 2015), and many theories, models, and approaches describe this process (Li et al., 2023). Psycholinguists define SLA as a complex cognitive skill (McLaughlin, 1987; Segalowitz & Lightbown, 1999). In contrast, sociolinguists argue that language is a learned process, rather than an acquisition. Indeed, when it comes to learning a language in a formal educational setting, the focus is on learning, rather than acquisition (Krashen, 1982; Louber, 2015; Zilberman & Vos, 2022). Therefore, second language acquisition is commonly known as the SLA and it implies both absorption of the native language and acquisition of the second language in a classroom situation (Gass, 2013, p. 7).

However, to fully understand the breadth of SLA research, it is crucial to acknowledge the contributions of other foundational scholars. For example, Gass and Selinker (2008) have been instrumental in exploring how learners process language input and convert it into usable language knowledge, emphasizing the cognitive mechanisms involved in language learning. Mackey (2007) further developed the role of interaction in SLA, demonstrating how conversational interaction can promote language development through feedback and negotiation of meaning. Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis introduced the idea that

language learning is facilitated through interaction that modifies input, making it more comprehensible to learners. Additionally, Saville-Troike (2006) provided key insights into the sociocultural aspects of language learning, showing how social factors such as identity, motivation, and cultural background play a critical role in SLA. These scholars have laid the groundwork for understanding both the cognitive and social dimensions of SLA, which are relevant to the Saudi context, particularly in exploring how classroom practices, cultural norms, and teacher-student interactions influence oral participation.

To enhance learners' verbal communication and oral fluency, many L2 learners take part in group and peer discussion where they use the L2 to discuss different topics based on real-life experiences (Al-Ghafri, 2018; Alrabai, 2018; Mickan, 2016; Wiboolyasarini et al., 2023). In this study, the main aim was to explore barriers that may prevent students from speaking up and engaging in classroom discussion; overcoming these barriers may enhance their English language acquisition as they become confident of their language proficiency. It is important to investigate factors that hinder students from active engagement in English classes. Research suggests these factors may include anxiety, motivation, and confidence, and they have an impact on students' language performance, as recent studies have shown (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Maher & King, 2022; Saito et al., 2017).

Moreover, "willingness to communicate" (WTC) has been identified as a major predictor of L2 oral engagement among learners (McCroskey & Baer, 1985). When there are no psychological or contextual barriers, this WTC construct captures a desire for communication (Khajavy et al., 2020; Peng, 2014). According to Khajavy et al. (2020), a person's willingness to communicate varies according to how their innate characteristics interact with their immediate learning environment. Language development is essentially a social process that emerges through participation in communicative practices, according to the social

constructivist perspective, which emphasises the role of contact in SLA (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978). The idea of “comprehensible output” discussed above is also emphasised by Swain (2000) as a factor influencing linguistic competency. The fundamental principle of this theory is that language proficiency increases as a result of difficulty communicating in the second language.

Norton’s (2013) theory of investment in language learning offers a critical lens for understanding how learners’ identities and their relationships to the target language community impact their motivation and willingness to communicate. According to Norton, a learner’s investment in acquiring a second language is not just a matter of personal motivation but is deeply connected to their evolving identity and the social and cultural capital they seek to gain through language use. This perspective is especially pertinent to my study, as it sheds light on how female students’ motivation and oral participation are shaped by more than just individual attitudes or proficiency levels. Their reticence can be viewed as a reflection of their complex identity negotiations within the classroom, where cultural norms, gender expectations, and institutional structures play significant roles. In this context, students may be less willing to invest in classroom participation if they perceive limited returns in terms of social or linguistic capital, or if participation challenges their existing identities. Furthermore, more focus is being paid to identifying creative language expression in the context of SLA. According to Norton’s (2013) research on language learning investment, learners’ motivation to take part in communicative activities is closely linked to their identities and future expectations within the target language community.

The pedagogical and physical surroundings have an impact on student engagement as well. Student participation may be hindered by traditional classroom dynamics that promote a teacher-centric approach (Aslan & Şahin, 2020; Philp & Duchesne, 2016). On the other hand,

a setting that fosters collaborative scaffolding and collaborative learning can support a fairer distribution of power and voice, creating a more inclusive environment where all students can participate (Mercer, 2019; Walqui, 2006). Language scholars have proposed pedagogical interventions that address the obstacles to oral participation in L2 classrooms (Kerimbayev et al., 2023; Lai & Zheng, 2018). These interventions range from restructuring classroom interaction patterns to incorporating digital tools that can offer alternative channels for expression and collaborative learning. With the help of these methods, second language learners can practise speaking in less threatening settings, which will help them become more confident when interacting with others in the classroom. Therefore, this research might clarify whether or not pedagogy could reduce reluctance and create an environment where learning English is more interesting and interactive. The research could provide important insights into the field of EFL education by exploring the different aspects of these approaches and their effect on students' willingness to communicate. This is especially helpful in understanding and addressing the particular difficulties experienced by Saudi female students.

Communicative Competence

According to Hymes (1972), language is a system of signs and communicative functions that cannot be separated and that have an essential relationship. He also noted that, according to the functional paradigm, language is considered an instrument of social interaction. This approach confirms that grammar would not exist without a communicative purpose (Hymes, 1972). Moreover, Hymes argued that formal linguists had turned language into an impersonal phenomenon by making language exclusively an innate and cognitive phenomenon that occurs in the mind of an idealised learner. In line with Hymes' assertion, current Saudi Arabian educational policy considers language learning to have a functional communicative approach.

Ashour (2014) and Tran and Vo (2023) argue that for learners to develop verbal skills, they need to know how to show linguistic competence, such as through vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Additionally, they need to comprehend the sociolinguistic competence that involves the answers to many questions, such as why, who, what, and when to produce a part of the language (Ashour, 2014; Tran & Vo, 2023). Thus, EFL speakers must have the ability to anticipate the linguistic elements required and then produce these elements in their specific contextualised contexts. Likewise, to consider learners as successful speakers of the foreign or second language, they should have the ability to communicate effectively and fluently in the target language (Ashour, 2014; Rahimi & Fathi, 2022).

Daar (2020), Efrizal (2012), Leong and Ahmadi (2017), Nasiri and Gilakjani (2016), and Rahimi and Fathi (2022) have noted that speaking is a significant skill for individuals; they use this skill to interact every day and everywhere, since it is the way of communicating ideas and it is how messages happen. Besides, the importance of speaking comes from its significance in sharpening learners' grammatical skills and enriching their vocabulary (Bygate, 2009). When trying to speak a foreign language, Canale and Swain (1980) note that second language learners are likely to face challenges based on sociolinguistic frameworks (Daar, 2020). For example, Canale and Swain (1980) state that communicative competence includes an individual's ability to pronounce words effectively.

Communicative Competence (CC), as introduced by Canale and Swain (1980), originally included Grammatical, Sociolinguistic, and Strategic Competence. Canale's (1983) update added Discourse Competence, emphasizing the need for learners to create coherent and cohesive communication in extended discourse. This addition is particularly relevant in the context of oral participation, as explored in this study. Drawing on Celce-Murcia (2007), discourse competence is essential for learners to effectively engage in real-life

communication, and its absence can limit oral participation in classroom settings. In this thesis, CC and CLT serve as the theoretical and pedagogical frameworks for exploring Saudi female students' reticence in oral participation. By integrating critiques from scholars like Celce-Murcia (2007), the study examines how discourse competence affects students' ability to communicate in English, addressing both structural and cultural challenges in the Saudi EFL context.

As discussed in chapter 1, while the focus of this study is on Saudi female students learning English in a relatively homogeneous classroom environment, it is important to situate this within the broader field of language education. The evolution of (CC), particularly with the inclusion of (ICC) (Byram, 1997), highlights the growing necessity for learners to not only master linguistic and discourse skills but also engage effectively across cultural boundaries. Although ICC may have limited direct application in the specific Saudi EFL context, the increasing international engagement of Saudi students necessitates that they develop skills for global interaction. This study addresses local sociocultural factors affecting oral participation while acknowledging these broader global shifts in language education.

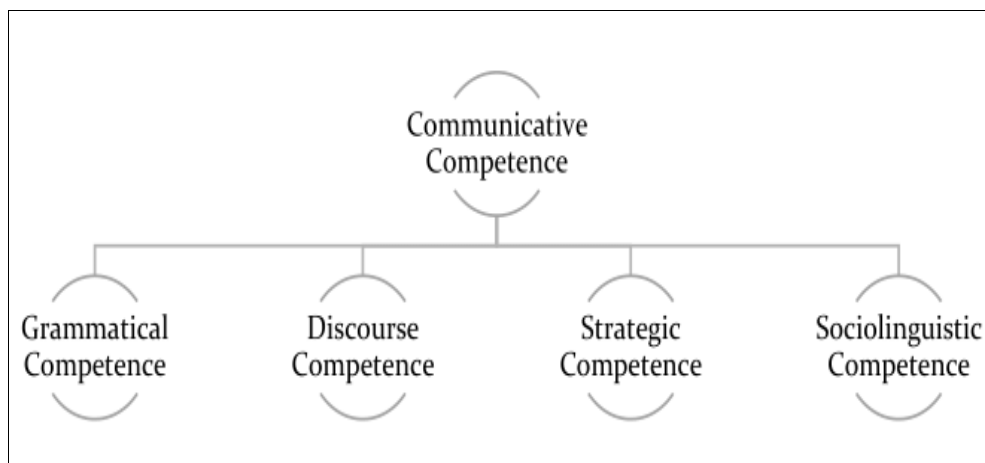
Communicative competence refers to the learner's ability to give ideas and opinions in the English language. However, communicative competence differs from one learner to another (Dardjowidjojo, 2014; Wahyuni, 2022). To communicate effectively in the English language, a learner should have a good understanding of the sociocultural, sociolinguistic, and linguistic aspects of the language (Daar, 2020). This is due to the fact that psychological variables and linguistic comprehension are closely linked to language learning and proficiency (Dardjowidjojo, 2014; Wahyuni, 2022). Such understanding enables learners to use the right language in the right situation for the right aim so that they can be considered competent in communication (Hapsari & Wirawan, 2018).

Therefore, these researchers suggest that communicative competence is a psychological and social notion (Wahyuni, 2022). If learners lack communicative competence, then they might feel isolated, with this feeling of isolation arising from feelings of inadequacy. Accordingly, they might avoid situations where they have to connect with a peer or group. Thus, developing a student's communication skills is not only useful but also necessary for students to be accepted and successfully integrated into particular social groups. It is important to consider that students might not know when and how to use certain words, which could consequently lead to embarrassment for themselves or could annoy others since they may ignore what others are saying (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995).

Grammatical, discourse, strategic, and sociolinguistic competence are important aspects of communicative competence (see Figure 2; Canale & Swain, 1980). Grammar-competence requires language learners to understand the structure and form of the language, whereas sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic-competent language learners know how to use the language correctly in various kinds of situations. More details about each of these competencies are discussed below. These components provide a framework for understanding how different elements can enhance or hinder students' desire to participate orally. Although these elements significantly contribute to my understanding of the processes involved in language acquisition, my research does not delve into detail about any of these competencies. Instead, they offer a context for the inquiry, to identify and resolve the more general issues and requirements for enhancing language competence and oral engagement.

Figure 2

Model of communicative competence adapted from Canale (1983)



Grammatical Competence

Grammatical competence refers to obtaining language proficiency and language system knowledge and the ability to use both, including in terms of morphology (the study of word formation), phonology (knowledge of the sound system of the language), and syntax (knowledge of the order elements of grammar in a sentence; Faradilla & Rukmini, 2019). According to Canale and Swain (1980), learners need to be able to use their grammatical competence to communicate using the target language.

If providing learners with the knowledge of how to accurately express and determine literal meaning is the primary concern for any communicative approach, grammatical competence is essential, according to Canale and Swain (1980). In Saudi schools, grammar is the main focus in teaching English, which may not prepare students to use the language in everyday life and may restrict their language learning to a very non-communicative range (Alqarni, 2020; Haydarov & Suyunova, 2022). This focus on grammar makes it difficult for the teacher to provide opportunities for students to speak up and interact, since there is a broad curriculum

to cover within a limited time. However, grammatical competence is important for students to produce grammatically correct language, which in turn makes them confident in their ability to speak correctly and consequently communicate well in the target language (Alqarni, 2020; Al-Shamiry, 2020; Fikroni, 2018). However, in order to do this, they also need sociolinguistic and strategic competencies.

Discourse Competence

Discourse competency is the ability of the learner to analyse and comprehend communication, with an emphasis on the composition and purpose of speech. This competence is directly related to the learner's ability to recognise and apply a variety of language techniques for expressing meanings. It goes beyond comprehension to encompass functional competence (Faradilla & Rukmini, 2019; Koran, 2016). Functional competence is the efficient use of language, both written and spoken, to accomplish particular goals within the context of discourse competence. Understanding of a range of discourse and structural markers helps students to successfully emphasise and communicate ideas, which improves their capacity to manage the flow of conversation or discussion (Al-Shamiry, 2020). Students with this level of competence are better able to communicate ideas in an organised, clear, and concise manner, which helps them use language for a variety of reasons and in a variety of circumstances.

It can be argued that Saudi students are mainly listeners in English classes because teachers spend much time "drilling," and students do not have the opportunity to communicate in the English language; this is because teachers depend on traditional methods of teaching. However, research suggests the classroom must be a place where students have the opportunity to practise the language before using it in real life (Hamad, 2016). Being listeners

all the time affects students' speaking ability this is a significant problem with Saudi students, and the primary concern of this study.

Strategic Competence

Canale and Swain (1980, p. 40) classify strategic competence as the verbal and nonverbal strategies that might be used to compensate for communicative failure caused by a lack of competence. Strategic competence is considered the most significant component in communication as it implies the learner's ability to select the appropriate strategies and approaches to begin discourse or close it. Strategic competence further implies the learner's ability to adapt their use of verbal and nonverbal language to compensate for communication problems caused by the speaker's lack of understanding of proper grammar use and insufficient knowledge of social, behavior and communication norms (Faradilla & Rukmini, 2019). Language learners utilise strategic competence to communicate fluently and effectively. The ability to use verbal and nonverbal cues from strategic knowledge to compensate for errors is a crucial component of strategic competence (Ugla et al., 2019). A wide variety of strategies are included in communication methods, such as oral communication. This suggests that applying strategies is only necessary when a learner encounters difficulties in a communicative setting and that communication strategies are the way of achieving strategic competence. Similarly, a lack of strategic competence means that speakers can only express themselves using the aspects of the language they have previously mastered (Al-Shamiry, 2020). Strategic competence, with sociolinguistic and grammatical competence, forms a framework that determines the proficiency of a learner's communication (Canale & Swain, 1980).

A number of researchers have suggested that a majority of Saudi students have a deficiency in the functional components of communicative competence (Albarakati & Jendli, 2021; Al-

Shamiry, 2020; Alturkistani, 2021), which contributes to the challenges they face when attempting to communicate in the target language and causes communication difficulties. This indicates that Saudi students may not be familiar with the sociocultural norms of the language that would enable them to adapt to a particular setting (Albarakati & Jendli, 2021; Al-Shamiry, 2020; Alturkistani, 2021). Al-Shamiry (2020) conducted a study among English language learners at King Khalid University in SA to investigate challenges that the learners faced in real-life communication settings. Findings revealed that students face numerous challenges in authentic communication scenarios. According to comments from 100 learners, they were not proficient in communication tactics, which typically results in a breakdown in communication. This indicates that the Saudi students in Al-Shamiry's study were not aware of the target language's sociocultural norms. Alqahtani (2021) examined and contrasted the sociocultural and linguistic competency levels of King Saud University's Saudi translation students. The knowledge level of respondents in both areas of linguistic competence—grammatical functions and grammatical forms—of important English language tense and aspect elements was assessed. The findings imply that the sociocultural competence of the students was less developed than their linguistic competence.

These studies point to a serious weakness in the Saudi English language education system, especially when it comes to the development of communicative competence that goes beyond grammatical correctness to include social and strategic skills. Thus, these findings are relevant to the current study, as the oral participation problem is closely related to the deficiency in communication strategies and the inadequate comprehension of the sociocultural norms of the target language. This study closes a significant gap in the literature by concentrating on Saudi female students' reluctance to participate orally in English classes. It provides a focused exploration of the pedagogical aspects promoting oral participation, building upon the established understanding of communicative competence. It also provides

useful insights that might support more culturally relevant and efficient language teaching practices in the Saudi context by examining the particular barriers and facilitators of communicative participation in the Saudi context.

Sociolinguistic Competence

Sociolinguistic competence is one aspect of communicative competence that has been addressed by many scholars. It refers to the learner's ability to both comprehend the communication of social context involving relationships between different social roles and to engage in social participation and exchange information (Canale & Swain, 1980; Erton, 2017). In Saudi Arabia, the target language may be spoken in the community (e.g., by family, in restaurants or in other social situations). However, the classroom is the only setting where students engage with the specific learning of the language, so if they are not taught sociolinguistic competence in class, we will have learners or speakers who cannot use the target language in real-life contexts since they are not communicatively competent. It is necessary to include sociolinguistic competence in the curriculum and assign this a fair weight along with pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary (Koran, 2016; Susilawati, 2020). Sociolinguistic competence is essential for applying the target language effectively in social circumstances. The lack of sociolinguistic competence could be a major factor in students' reticence because it makes it difficult for them to learn the social nuances of the target language, which lowers their willingness to speak up. Accordingly, students require sociolinguistic competence to actively engage in talking (Nunan, 2003, as cited in Phan, 2013), as such competence means they will be more orally proficient speakers of the second or foreign language. A speaker's ability to use the language that is socially appropriate and proper for the given context is essential for effective interaction (Abd Rahman et al., 2022; Shumin, 2002). It seems impossible for students who have limited sociolinguistic competence to actively participate in a discussion, leading to their silence and passivity (Susilawati,

2020). An examination of communicative competence and its defined components offers further understanding of current theory around language acquisition and SLA in this context and it also frames Vision 2030 policy in relation to language learning.

Symbolic Competence

In response to the limitations of traditional models like CC, Kramsch's concept of Symbolic Competence (2006) emphasizes the ability to navigate the cultural meanings and power dynamics embedded in language use. Symbolic competence moves beyond linguistic proficiency, focusing on how language learners interact with the symbolic dimensions of communication, which is crucial for students in intercultural and globalized environments. Waallan-Brown and Alford (2023) further elaborate on symbolic competence as a means to foster critical literacy and intercultural learning, relevant to the challenges faced by Saudi students.

Evolution and Critiques of CLT

CLT emerged in the 1970s as a response to the limitations of methods like the Grammar-Translation and Audio-Lingual methods. While CLT has been widely adopted, it has also faced critiques, especially from intercultural scholars. First, critics like Thornbury (2016) argue that CLT often prioritizes native-speaker norms, marginalizing non-native varieties like World Englishes. This critique is relevant to SA, where English is learned as a foreign language, and local communicative needs differ from Western contexts. Second, CLT has been criticized for failing to adequately consider host cultures. In SA, where cultural norms around gender and communication differ significantly, CLT's lack of cultural adaptation can hinder its effectiveness in encouraging oral participation. In this thesis, the conceptualization of practice is understood through Bourdieu's theory of social practice, where actions are shaped by habitus, capital, and field, interacting within specific social structures. This

conceptualization helps to analyze how both teachers and students navigate the educational environment in SA, particularly regarding oral participation in the classroom. Finally, while CLT claims to be student-centred, critics note that in practice, classrooms can still be teacher-dominated, with limited student agency, an issue especially pertinent in hierarchical educational settings like SA.

Central to CLT is (CC), which includes grammatical, sociolinguistic, strategic, and discourse competencies. Discourse competence, in particular, involves the ability to produce coherent and contextually appropriate communication. This is critical for fostering classroom participation, as Saudi female students' reluctance to speak is often linked to difficulties in constructing meaningful discourse, rather than just grammatical accuracy. The current curriculum in SA may not sufficiently develop these skills, further contributing to students' oral reticence.

Approaches to Language Learning: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative competence is closely related to communicative language teaching (CLT). Research suggests that CLT is an approach that is widely used in second language classrooms and particularly in the teaching of English. CLT is a concept that was developed in the 1970s from understanding language as a communicative system; its purpose was to improve learners' communicative competence (Hymes, 1971). Also, communicative competence cannot be discussed without referring to CLT, which is essential for learners since older methods such as Grammar-Translation Method (Hien, 2021) and audio-lingual methods (Ostovar-Namaghi et al., 2022) are not able to prepare learners for actual communication as well as CLT. This method is concerned with writing and reading activities that involve writers and readers in the negotiation of meaning, expression, and interpretation (Savignon, 1997) rather than in oral communication (Abdulkader, 2019). Thus, CLT focuses mainly on

group tasks, which have been found to be more helpful in many contexts as group work is a method that provides learners with motivation and opportunities to communicate (Hien, 2021). According to Haryani and Ainur (2020), the CLT method enables students to speak English more fluently. It is the most often recommended approach for EFL lessons worldwide to encourage interaction. Silva-Valencia et al. (2021) examined the effects of CLT methods on 12 high school including males and females English teachers and the development of 234 school students' speaking skills in the United States. The findings showed that the growth of EFL is positively impacted by CLT methods. The results showed that the majority of students agreed that interactive activities were effective in helping them to learn English because they provided opportunities to communicate in the target language.

Likewise, Wael et al. (2019) examined how CLT affected 32 Guinean students' oral communication skills, particularly their speaking abilities; and how students responded to CLT during the learning process. Participants agreed that using CLT in teaching and learning activities would be beneficial, particularly in speaking classes, where it could enhance their oral communication skills. The students' interest in speaking in class increased, and they gained the confidence to converse with friends and lecturers both inside and outside of the classroom. However, Hien (2021) reviewed many studies and discussed the difficulties and obstacles that come with applying CLT in academic settings, such as teacher reluctance regarding the method, contextual and cultural differences, and the need for more in-depth CLT training. These challenges may make it more difficult for teachers to use CLT techniques that promote active engagement and reduce speaking fear, which may in turn lead to students' reluctance to speak up.

CLT focuses mainly on the learner. This approach is important as it focuses on the proficiency of communicative language. Language competence is one of the most significant

aspects of CLT. Facilitating communicative competence through CLT refers to students' ability in and knowledge of the target language. Likewise, for learners to acquire and communicate with the language, they need to incorporate activities that require them to communicate in the target language. Students practising such activities might be able to use the language in a meaningful way and may be aware of the significance of learning the language; they need to be stimulated to help them to benefit from the learning process (Stefánsson, 2013).

Central to CLT is the idea that learners' need to engage in an authentic use of the target language (Kaharuddin et al., 2017; Nguyen & Balakrishnan, 2020). The principles of CLT also support the idea that student participation is essential. In order to promote language competency, CLT supports engaging students in communicative tasks (Masuram & Sripada, 2020). This methodological approach supports active student participation and engagement, which is in line with the emphasis on student-centred learning in modern education (Morgan & Rinvoluceri, 1983). Thus, by engaging in genuine interaction, such as discussion or dialogue, learners are able to organise their knowledge, ask questions, and look for explanations, which leads to enhancing their motivation to learn and participate since they have more knowledge about the lesson (Lee et al., 2020; Mickan, 2016). In order to increase students' oral engagement and willingness to speak in English, Lee et al. (2020), for example, used drama-based tactics in English for academic purposes (EAP) classrooms, with an emphasis on interactive exercises like role-play. Masuram and Sripada (2020) also found that task-based learning improves speaking abilities through the use of real-world tasks that increase involvement and fluency. These studies present creative methods for raising English language proficiency among students.

The above studies emphasised how effective CLT is at fostering language competence through communicative tasks, student participation, and authentic language. However, there is a contradiction in the Saudi context, because traditional teaching methods restrict the use of such interactive and engaging methods (Abdulkader, 2019; Abahussain, 2016; A. O. Alharbi, 2022), which in turn may lead to student reluctance and low oral participation. Abahussain (2016) confirmed that a number of implementation issues with CLT have led to inadequate practising of oral skills in the Saudi EFL environment. These difficulties include males and females teachers' emphasis on grammar-based tests and a lack of authentic materials. He emphasised the importance of using a variety of teaching strategies, incorporating real-world resources to enhance motivation and engaging students in more communicative activities to improve language proficiency. Even though it is well known that CLT improves language proficiency through real-world practice, the continued use of traditional teaching techniques hinders such practice, which increases student reluctance and reduces oral involvement in the Saudi Arabian context. Therefore, this study aims to identify the causes of students' unwillingness to participate and to evaluate the effects of pedagogical approaches and curriculum on either reducing or enhancing students' reticence.

Practising oral activities in the classroom provides students with confidence in their language proficiency. Students learn through the communicative method by engaging in speaking to each other for most of the instruction time rather than spending their time listening to the teacher. Research suggests that using communicative activities does not mean that students abandon syntax or grammar in the classroom; however, there is no insistence on accuracy, as those aspects of language are introduced as auxiliary to functional communication (Masuram & Sripada, 2020). The current study will offer insights into the efficacy of CLT from the students' perspective by examining students' views about classroom pedagogy and practice.

The pedagogical approaches employed by teachers have an important effect on students' motivation to engage in language learning activities (Hien, 2021). Thus, in this study, exploring teachers' pedagogy will help to diagnose how classroom activities help students academically by learning and practising effective oral communication skills, enabling them to feel confident and more comfortable to speak up. Focusing on teachers' pedagogy, this study will offer information about how pedagogy may enhance or demotivate students' speaking up in the classroom in this context. In addition, as current Saudi Arabian policy on English teaching and learning is informed by a communicative approach, the study will explore methods that may contribute to overcoming students' reticence, such as communicative activities, and how teachers' teaching approach may encourage students' speaking ability.

While working in groups and pairs can be beneficial, Savignon (2018) argues that communicative activities need to be relevant to the learning objectives. On the other hand, a communicative approach may be incompatible and impractical in the Saudi real-life EFL context. As an illustration, one of the principles of this approach is to encourage "learning by doing" (Nunan, 2004, p. 12), which may be difficult to apply in the Saudi context since learning in SA is based on principles such as memorisation and repetition. While CLT is required by Saudi educational policy, real classroom practices show a distinct contrast, with common methods like memorisation and repetition preferred by teachers. A study conducted by Albahri et al. (2018) reveals important insights into the viewpoints of participants in the Saudi tertiary system. The study described how teachers and students feel about CLT, emphasising their preparedness to engage with this approach, difficulties, and efficacy. Teachers' perspectives highlight their abilities and limitations when putting CLT into practice, and learners' perspectives show how the method affects their language learning process. In the context of implementing CLT, these viewpoints play a crucial role in establishing methods to close the gap between educational policy and classroom practice. A.

O. Alharbi's (2022) work also highlighted challenges in implementing CLT in SA by analysing two decades of research. Difficulties include those related to policy, teachers, and students. These include a test system that does not prioritise communication skills, limited resources, and insufficient training for teachers in CLT techniques. Students struggle with CLT because of low proficiency, passive learning habits, and worries about how their grades may affect their participation in communicative activities, while teachers frequently favour traditional, teaching methods. Teaching and learning in SA is significantly informed by the hierarchical culture in which teacher is the provider of knowledge while students are the passive recipients of that knowledge (Alkubaidi, 2014; Alqahtani, 2021; Alrabai, 2014; Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). Knowing this is essential for the current study because it reveals the more complex cultural elements that contribute to students' reluctance to participate orally, providing fuller knowledge about the difficulties in promoting communicative competence in these kinds of learning environments.

Applying teaching strategies to encourage female Saudi students' participation in language learning is essential. Research conducted by Al-Hoorie and MacIntyre (2020) focused on interactive and inclusive teaching strategies that motivate even the most reserved students to participate in oral communication. These strategies include using technology in the classroom, promoting a collaborative learning environment, and lowering the affective filter to make language output easier to comprehend. The "affective filter" refers to affective variables that influence the development of language in a second language positively or negatively (Krashen, 1986). Since the aim of this study is to investigate female students' reluctance to participate orally, I will explore whether teachers' pedagogy and practice promote active participation and reduce reticence to keep students meaningfully engaged in language use. Hence, this study goes beyond CLT, shifting the focus to how pedagogies affect students' reticence, including viewpoints from both teachers and students in order to

provide a thorough understanding of the issues that affect students' willingness to participate orally.

CLT is still a common pedagogical method that emphasises the useful application of language for meaningful communication (Albahri et al., 2018). Recent research has confirmed the effectiveness of CLT in a range of educational settings, emphasising its flexibility and learner-centred approach. It supports the idea that students need to actively participate in communicative tasks in order to learn a language (Jumamuratova, 2022; Kukharska, 2022). For example, Jumamuratova's (2022) study reaffirms the importance of a communicative approach to language learning and highlights how important it is to teach foreign languages as practical instruments for productive communication. The idea that active engagement in communicative tasks is essential for language acquisition is supported by both Jumamuratova (2022) and Kukharska (2022). They emphasise the significance of developing a learning environment where students are active participants in the communication process rather than passive users of knowledge, and where teaching is representative of real-life communication. Both researchers emphasise how crucial it is to create a learning environment that matches actual conversation, which is in line with the primary goals of CLT. They emphasise the method's usefulness and its ingrained connection to everyday communication, supporting a learning process that goes beyond linguistic accuracy to include successful language use in a variety of circumstances. Hence, this aligns with the aims of this study, which investigates language teaching and its effects on students' oral engagement.

The way teachers approach their lessons has a substantial impact on the willingness of students to participate in language activities in the classroom. Studies have started to look at how these strategies affect students' resistance, and there is increasing curiosity about how teachers may create a more welcoming and stimulating learning atmosphere (Wenning &

Vieyra, 2020; Zhao, 2022). In his study, Zhao (2022) examined the relationship between achievement in learning a foreign language, psychological anxiety, and self-efficacy in a Chinese university. It was discovered that enhanced student participation in learning activities is a result of a good classroom environment that is produced by lowering foreign language fear and raising self-efficacy. In order to promote a cordial and fruitful relationship between teachers and students, the study highlights the importance of teachers actively improving their role in teaching activities, arranging teaching activities flexibly based on students' psychological characteristics, and creating a peaceful classroom environment.

However, promoting active oral participation can be more difficult in settings like SA where cultural norms may have a greater impact on classroom dynamics, especially for female students. In an effort to integrate traditional methods of instruction with modern communication approaches, recent efforts in Saudi education have started to investigate ways to promote more engagement among female students (Sendi, 2019). In her study, Sendi examined the educational experiences of Saudi female masters students in international contexts (US and SA universities) through examining the influence of culture, religion, and the role of the English language in their academic experiences. Results revealed that the obstacles the Saudi female participants experienced varied in each scenario. Academic support was given to participants who graduated from American universities, more than cultural, social or religious help. The other participants, who were graduates of Saudi universities, received more support in terms of culture, social life, and religion than academic support. These findings show that students' participation and engagement are greatly influenced by the learning situation. Reluctance may be increased by a lack of strong cultural and social support, as the learning environment may not be supportive of oral communication skills. This study considers the learning environment.

Speaking and Language Learning

Speaking a foreign language requires much commitment and effort, as well as a substantial increase in awareness of the importance of interaction, since every language has its own rules of interaction (Daar, 2020). This is vital particularly for female students who might encounter more difficulties when it comes to oral participation. Saudi female students frequently exhibit hesitation and reluctance in contexts where the English language is not frequently used or practiced outside of the classroom. One of the recurrent challenges I have observed in Saudi EFL classes is that only a few competent students, who usually have better exposure to English, participate in class while less competent students are reluctant to speak. Even when less competent students speak in the target language, they are usually answering a question, and this attitude to learning greatly limits students' expected output. Because they might not have many opportunities to use the language outside of the classroom, Saudi learners face a particularly difficult time developing communicative competence. From experience, it can be said that there is lack of such knowledge among Saudi students; for instance, students fail to express their ideas appropriately and clearly because of their lack of English linguistic competence.

Scholars have also observed that Saudi students lack proficiency in language, particularly when it comes to properly expressing their thoughts (Al-Ghafri, 2018; Alrabai, 2014). Alrabai (2014) draws attention to a significant issue facing Saudi EFL students: despite educational improvements, students' generally low English proficiency affects their ability to have basic conversations. A study by Al-Ghfari (2018) highlighted a major obstacle that students must overcome in the context of learning English, focusing in particular on the effects of low English proficiency on engagement and comprehension in the classroom. In that study, students' self-reported low level of English proficiency prevented them from actively participating in the learning process as well as making it difficult for them to

understand the teacher's directions. The alternative technique of using their mother tongue was a normal reaction to the challenges faced in the context of learning a foreign language. The current study is more concerned with the particular difficulties of oral engagement, exploring classroom dynamics, cultural effects, curriculum, and pedagogical strategies from students' perspectives, in contrast to the above studies that focused on English competence in general.

Speaking Difficulties

Alharbi (2015) and Alqahtani (2021) focused on a significant cause for student reticence, maintaining that in addition to the students' poor knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary of the target language, EFL males teachers in Saudi Arabia cover most of the important points in Arabic. Based on more than 15 years' experience teaching EFL in Saudi Arabia, Hamouda (2013) observed that Saudi EFL learners have serious deficiencies in speaking skills and usually appear reluctant to speak in EFL classes for a variety of reasons. In addition to the learners' low English proficiency and lack of vocabulary, Hamouda considered factors related to language anxiety (e.g., the fear of speaking in front of others, fear of negative teacher evaluations, shyness, lack of confidence and preparation, low self-esteem, fear of comparisons with other students, and fear of making mistakes and being laughed at) as contributors to problems communicating in the foreign language. These factors are supported by many other studies, such as the study conducted by Oflaz (2019).

Oflaz (2019) examined the relationship between academic achievement, shyness, speaking scores, foreign language anxiety, and language learning strategies of 110 male and female university preparatory students learning German. The study showed that students' anxiety related to learning a foreign language has a negative impact on both speaking and academic performance. Shyness is somewhat associated with higher language anxiety, despite the fact

that it has no direct effect on speaking or academic achievement. On the other hand, academic success and the application of language learning strategies are closely related, suggesting that strategic learning improves performance. Overall, the results point to the fact that proactive language learning practices can greatly improve academic outcomes, even when shyness and language anxiety can hinder performance. Although these studies Alharbi (2015), Alqahtani (2021) and Hamouda (2013) delve into the complexities of oral reticence among Saudi EFL learners, examining both psychological factors like anxiety as well as instructional methods, the current study provides an in-depth investigation into identifying particular barriers that may contribute to students' reticence, including teacher practice, curriculum, and pedagogy.

The difficulty of speaking in a foreign language is common and universal among foreign language students (Al-wossabi, 2016). Despite years of exposure to the target language, EFL students may find it difficult to converse or even construct a simple question. It is no surprise that these EFL students feel incompetent and lose interest in even thinking about practising speaking. Indeed, speaking is a difficult task to perform in a foreign language (Wahyuni, 2022). It is cognitively a demanding process that requires lots of effort on the part of EFL students. While the studies discussed above acknowledge the significance of language anxiety and its influence on speaking difficulties, they do not acknowledge the broader sociological processes that impact on reticence and oral engagement, particularly in the Saudi context. These processes include cultural norms, educational policies, and institutional power dynamics that influence not just individual learner behaviour but also classroom interactions and expectations. In SA, where cultural norms regarding gender, authority, and communication are deeply embedded, these sociological factors play a significant role in shaping how students participate in language classrooms. The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, often regarded as a student-centered method, is critiqued for its

lack of adaptability to non-Western educational settings. While it claims to prioritize the student experience, CLT may fail to accommodate host cultures and local learner identities (Thornbury, 2016; Ellis, 2016; Canagarajah, 2016, in *The Routledge Handbook of English Language Teaching*). This critique suggests that CLT's framework often lacks the flexibility to consider deeply rooted cultural and institutional dynamics, which are crucial for genuine student-centered learning. In contexts like Saudi Arabia, such dynamics are essential to understand, as they directly influence learners' willingness to participate and engage orally in the language classroom.

This thesis makes an important contribution by incorporating these broader sociological processes into the analysis of reticence, offering a more nuanced understanding of why female students may be reluctant to participate orally. By considering factors such as societal expectations around gender roles, hierarchical teacher-student relationships, and the weight of institutional practices, this study provides insights that go beyond individual psychological factors like language anxiety.

This study draws on sociological theories developed by Bourdieu (1986) and Foucault (1977) to understand how societal structures, cultural capital, and power dynamics shape language learning experiences, oral engagement, and reticence. The theoretical frameworks of Bourdieu and Foucault are integral to this study, as they offer insights into the power dynamics, social structures, and practices that influence language learning in SA. Bourdieu's theory of social practice, combined with Foucault's discourse theory, provides a lens to explore how cultural norms and power relations shape the behaviours of both students and teachers in the classroom. This sociological perspective is essential for understanding the complexities of oral participation, as elaborated further in the following chapters.

As the Saudi education system is gender-segregated, female students are typically taught by female teachers, which align with cultural and legal norms. However, not all the above studies explicitly specify the gender of the teachers involved, and some focus solely on student perspectives without directly involving teachers. A critical gap in the literature pertains to the lack of gender-specific data regarding students in many studies. While existing research sheds light on both male and female teachers' challenges in EFL classrooms, such as grammar-heavy curriculum and reliance on traditional methods, the absence of detailed information on teachers' gender limits insights into possible variations in learning behaviours. This omission is significant because it restricts our ability to understand how gender performativity and the social construction of gender might influence students' engagement, participation, and learning outcomes.

Based on existing studies, it is evident that both male and female teachers face the same obstacles in EFL classrooms, which include curriculum heavy on grammar, and a dependence on traditional teaching methods. Studies by Abahussain (2016) and Alnatheer (2013), for instance, show that these structural problems make it difficult for teachers to perform communicative activities, regardless of gender. Because the focus is still on grammar and memorisation rather than interactive speaking exercises, these characteristics frequently make oral participation challenging. While gender-segregated classrooms may provide a comfortable environment for female students, they also promote social standards of modesty and silence, which may either facilitate or hinder participation in such classrooms. Many studies that emphasise cultural norms as a major obstacle to oral participation have found that this cultural background may hinder female students' willingness to participate verbally (Alharbi, 2015; Alrabai, 2018).

Gender

Gender plays an important role that influences language learning (Alhaysony, 2107; Mahmud & Nur, 2018; Nagasundram et al., 2021). As this study is concerned with female students only, it is significant to consider gender in relation to learning in the Saudi context. Butler (2004) defines gender as a term that reflects reconstruction, limitation, and stability supported by the concept of heteronormativity, which means accepting the heterosexuality as a social and natural norm. Moreover, gender norms refer to a set of cultural and social rules for men and women, which state what is adequate masculine or feminine behaviour (Ryle, 2015).

Stoller was the first psychologist who differentiated between the two concepts of sex and gender. He defined sex as the biological characteristics of a person, whereas gender refers to the femininity and masculinity behaviour that people are expected to demonstrate based on social norms (Stoller, 2020). Butler (2004) expands on this distinction by stating that gender is a performative act that is influenced by cultural norms and social expectations. This challenges the binary notion of gender and starts a discourse about how gender identities are constructed and adjustable. Similarly, Mikkola (2017) stated that gender dictates to women and men depending on social factors such as social positions, identity, and behaviour of women and men. Moreover, according to Butler (1999), gender focuses on peoples' behaviour; it is the variable cultural construction and the category of women as a set of meanings that are taken or not taken within a cultural field. She believed that gender is always acquired and no one is born to a gender.

Gender in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's education system is based on segregation between men and women in universities and schools. This system of gender segregation between men and women means that women can only to teach girls from an early age. At the age of six girls start school, and

from this age they become surrounded by women (Alotaibi, 2021; Reda & Hamdan, 2015). However, in 2019, the MoE declared that females could teach boys up to the third grade at elementary schools (Scene Arabia, 2019). The higher education system in SA still follows gender segregation policies, despite changes in many industries, including hospitals, shopping malls, businesses, and private companies (Aseeri, 2021). SA is the only Arabic and Islamic nation with a completely segregated educational system for men and women worldwide (Aseeri, 2021). The female campus, which has its own female staff and instructors, is distinct from the male campus; female students are not permitted to enrol at male-only institutions and colleges or attend the same classes as men.

Saudi women have a high reputation for achievement that has been reflected in international statistics and reports. For instance, in 2009, the Global Education Digest pointed out that international statistics and reports showed that Saudi women have notably more academic degrees than Western women (UNESCO, 2009). In terms of the gap between gender registrations in universities, UNESCO's report indicated that SA ranked as 25th among advanced countries such as USA and Germany. As a result, the kingdom was placed ahead of other developed nations, including the United States and Germany. Saudi female universities have thousands of female academics, which is an indication of high levels of female university education (Hakiem, 2023; MoE, 2018). This number will increase steadily, as higher education scholarships to foreign universities have continued since King Abdullah created a government-funded scholarship program. He believed in women as partners who will move SA into the new millennium (Alhoian, 2020; Reda & Hamdan, 2015). Furthermore, in 2013, King Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz gave Saudi women opportunities to participate in the previously all-male Shura Council (the equivalent of a house of parliament). Women's roles in this committee are aimed at forming decisions and making suggestions for all matters, side-by-side with their male counterparts. This is one of a series of moves that the

Saudi government has proposed to support women's role in Saudi society. It came after the decision to give women the right to vote in municipal elections in 2011 (Alhoian, 2020; Hakami, 2023). In contrast, women in developed countries started voting many years ago; for example, New Zealand has allowed women to vote since 1893, and this occurred in Australia in 1902, Finland in 1906, and the United States in 1920 (National Library of Australia, 2021).

Gender and Language Learning

Gender was and still is a central concern of second language learning, and it is a significant issue in relation to pedagogical and theoretical assumptions in L2 learning. As this study is concerned with female students only, it is significant to consider gender in relation to English language learning. Since Chapter 1 already introduces the relationship between oral participation, gender habitus, and cultural norms, this chapter examines in greater depth the main reasons behind students' reticence, focusing on classroom dynamics and cultural norms. It highlights the differences between the goals of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach and the realities of the classroom, emphasizing the strong influence that cultural norms have on these dynamics. The chapter also builds the groundwork for exploring gender habitus and its impact on female students' reluctance to express themselves, demonstrating that cultural norms directly influence oral participation. It addresses the specific challenges in promoting active participation in environments such as Saudi Arabia, where cultural norms significantly impact classroom behaviour, particularly for female students. The study highlights the role of gender in language acquisition, investigating how cultural norms shape Saudi women's gender roles and identities as non-native English speakers. By examining how gender habitus; informed by these cultural norms, affects students' reluctance to participate, the chapter reinforces the integral connection between cultural factors and oral participation.

Gender has an important effect on students' language learning, as some studies have found (Mahmud, 2018; Nagasundram et al., 2021). Mahmud's (2018) study in an Indonesian high school compared the methods, approaches to teaching, and classroom dynamics of male and female EFL teachers in order to investigate the influence of gender on English language teaching. It investigated how these differences based on gender affect the learning environment, offering insightful information about the place of gender in language instruction and the efficacy of pedagogy. According to the study, gender differences have an impact on how male and female students learn English. However, these differences are influenced by cultural expectations and the performance of gender roles rather than being biologically set. Here, Butler's (1990) concept of gender performativity which holds that gender is an act or a collection of behaviours consistently carried out in accordance with society norms rather than a fixed attribute becomes crucial. Based on expectations of confidence, engagement, or reluctance, male and female students may act out their gender roles in different ways in the classroom. These performances can vary greatly depending on the social and cultural setting.

Nagasundram et al. (2021) conducted a systemic review to investigate how gender affects the perspectives of ESL learners, with particular attention to how it affects motivation, attitudes, learning tactics, and academic performance. The study concluded that learners' motivation, attitudes towards learning, preferred learning tactics, and academic outcomes in English language acquisition are all highly influenced by their gender. Although the study acknowledged that gender can have an impact on these factors, it is crucial to recognise that cultural expectations, social norms, and educational settings, rather than being the product of intrinsic male or female features, are what shape these results. For instance, in conservative learning settings like Saudi Arabia, female students may experience pressure to stick to modesty and reticence, whereas male students may be encouraged by societal standards to show confidence. As a result, language learners have different experiences and obstacles, and

rather than being defined by their gender, learners' motivation and participation are influenced by how well they perform gendered expectations.

Many studies have focused on gender and motivation, language learning ability, learning styles and strategies, teacher perceptions, teaching materials, testing, pedagogies, and classroom interaction. For example, Bećirović (2017) examined the relationships between academic success in EFL learning, motivation and gender in high schools in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It looked at how motivating factors connected to gender affect language learning results and provides information on how these dynamics differ for male and female learners. The study revealed that female students exceed male students in all age groups when it comes to motivation for learning EFL. However, none of these studies have been conducted in the Saudi context. Based on my knowledge of the research, studies in the Saudi context on gender and L2 learning in multilingual settings have largely neglected the particular challenges faced by female students, such as classroom participation and interaction and oral skills (Abahussain, 2016). Topics such as gender and reticence in English classes in SA have been subject of discussion within SA, these conversations seem to take place more commonly in anecdotal or informal contexts than they are the subject of in-depth scholarly investigation. However, based on my knowledge, most research studies that have discussed these topics in relation to Saudi students have been conducted within English-speaking countries such as Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States. I argue that gender expectations of Saudi women make their experience in L2 learning and participation uniquely challenging because female students' learning in SA is influenced by gender expectations and roles. Since the focus of this study is on females only, it is important to think about the importance of gender within language learning and to explore under what conditions women speak. This study explores the ways in which students' oral engagement is shaped by their gender habitus, which is influenced by cultural norms and expectations in SA.

The study considers how students' gender roles and identities as non-native English speakers interact, and how these elements impact their reticence.

Research by Cobb-Clark (2010) and Gardner and Lambert (1972) are examples of studies that have demonstrated evidence of gender differences in attitudes towards and knowledge of modern languages in the US, UK, and Canada. Gardner (1985) found that female students had higher positive attitudes towards language learning. He argues that differences in achievement through genders could be caused by attitudes. Education research conducted over the past few decades have shown those learners' academic needs, achievements, and interests are significantly influenced by gender differences (Aziz et al., 2018; Swiatek et al., 2000). But rather than being the result of intrinsic abilities, such differences are mainly socially developed and represent gender norms. However, these differences are primarily socially produced and represent gender norms rather than being the result of inherent abilities. Gender performativity, as defined by Butler (1990), is crucial in this context because it illustrates how behaviours that are typically associated with male or female students are actually performances of society expectations rather than innate characteristics.

Swiatek et al. (2000) highlighted educational differences between genders among talented children in the United States. The study included 5,422 male and female children. While girls exceeded boys in reading, boys scored better in maths and science reasoning. Higher test scores among the same group of students made these inequalities more noticeable, suggesting that gender discrepancies in academic accomplishment get stronger as competency levels rise. Similarly, a study by Aziz et al. (2018) compared the participation of 40 male and female students in a high school in Pakistan. Findings revealed that boys participated more because they had higher self-esteem compared to girls, while girls' participation in the classroom was influenced by motivation. Boys' classroom engagement was more supported

by societal support systems, including teachers, parents, classmates, and the curriculum than girls, who were more impacted by the classroom atmosphere.

Most researchers agree that women outperform men in learning a foreign language (Huang, 2023; Iwaniec, 2019; Oga-Baldwin & Fryer, 2020). These findings must be understood within the framework of gender performativity. Butler (1990) argues that gendered behaviours, including assertiveness or passivity, are performed based on societal expectations, not biological characteristics. For example, a study by Iwaniec (2019) with 599 Polish school learners revealed that females were more interested in English language communication than males, who were less motivated and confident in their ability to speak and understand English. However, rather than being an inherited tendency, this can be a consequence of the cultural conditioning that drives female students to be proficient communicators. On the same way, Oga-Baldwin and Fryer (2020) conducted a study with 398 elementary school students in Japan. The study found that female students were more likely to display higher quality internally regulated motives when it came to engagement, motivation, and eventual achievement in learning a new language, whereas male students were more likely to show low quality, externally controlled motives. This is due to gender differences in the quality of thinking, attention, and memory, which can be linked to societal reinforcement of language learning for girls.

Contrary to Oga-Baldwin and Fryer (2020), Yu's (2019) study of 79 college students studying English in China revealed that males in higher education classes tend to be more responsive and are more likely to access mobile apps than female students which Yu attributes to cognitive loads. Based on societal and educational conditioning that emphasises technology use, male students may have been more capable to deal with the cognitive load: a term used to describe the mental work needed to comprehend information in this particular case (Ginns & Leppink, 2019; Yu, 2019). The findings also revealed that while female

students have nervous attitudes towards learning, male students are always confident and show self-control. However, blaming men for having confidence and women for having nervous attitudes is overgeneralized because social norms influence how each gender is supposed to act in educational environments (Butler, 1990).

Research critiquing the social construction of gender shows that confidence and authority in learning environments are not inherently male traits but are cultivated through societal and institutional support (Cameron, 2005). In contrast, female students may be conditioned to demonstrate modesty or reticence, particularly in conservative educational settings like Saudi Arabia. The reluctance of Saudi female students to engage in oral participation, for example, is more accurately understood through the lens of gender performativity where cultural expectations define appropriate public behaviours for women, thus influencing their participation in the classroom.

Therefore, the results reported by Yu (2019), which show gender-specific variations in technology use, responsiveness, and learning attitudes, emphasise how crucial it is to take gender dynamics into account when conducting research and these behaviours should not be essentialized as inherent to males or females. These variations can have an impact on the strategies and methods needed to successfully handle the distinctive requirements and challenges of female students in language learning environments. Rather, they are representations of gendered performances influenced by educational and cultural contexts. These variations are especially noticeable in regard to confidence levels, receptivity, and learning styles. Men, for example, are often encouraged to demonstrate authority, self-confidence, and independence, but these traits are socially constructed and reinforced by the educational system (Cameron, 2005).

However, other studies like those by Alsowat (2016) and Mutar (2019) have suggested that there are no gender significant differences between boys and girls in language learning in certain contexts. Gender differences may not necessarily be a significant factor in situations like anxiety related to learning a foreign language, which highlights the complex and non-essentialist nature of gendered behaviour in education. Alsowat (2016) investigated the impact of gender and academic level on the foreign language anxiety of Saudi university students. The results revealed that gender does not have a significant impact on foreign language anxiety. Mutar's (2019) findings reveal that the lack of obvious gender-based differences in attitudes is consistent with the more general idea that although attitudes towards language acquisition may differ widely amongst individuals, gender is not always a determining factor in these differences.

Hence, gender roles that emphasise calm and modesty over confidence may make it harder for Saudi female students to participate orally. Saudi EFL classes show reluctance that is a reflection of larger cultural norms regarding the conduct of women in public and educational settings. The idea of gender performativity contributes to the understanding of why female students might absorb these standards and how they appear in the classroom, especially when it comes to oral participation.

Despite these findings, gender differences in language should be taken into consideration as a significant factor that may impact the success of teaching English because some research suggests that such differences affect learning styles, motivation, and classroom engagement (e.g., Mahmud & Nur, 2018). Understanding students' different needs, including gender-related needs, might help teachers adapt their approaches more successfully, which could lead to inclusive and productive learning environments (Huang, 2023). Therefore, teachers should be aware of these differences in order to align language teaching and learning methodologies

to each student's particular needs. This study considers what teaching methods might effectively meet the specific needs of Saudi female students and increase students' motivation, success, and engagement in language learning.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed several significant issues relevant to Saudi Arabia's English language education system, emphasising oral participation, reticence, and barriers to communicative competence. The chapter has provided a critical discussion of the research studies and literature pertaining to SLA and elements of communicative competence, including discourse, sociolinguistic, grammatical, and strategic competencies. The discussion highlighted the importance of social interaction and effective language usage in the EFL classroom. However, evidence suggests a lack of these competencies among Saudi students, and this indicates a serious obstacle to their capacity for effective English communication. Research also suggests that the development of speaking skills and classroom engagement are essential components of successful language learning. The chapter also examined CLT, with evidence suggesting this is as a key approach to teaching English to foreign language learners.

This chapter also reviewed research that illuminates the problem of reticence as a major barrier that influences students' oral participation and the importance of actively participating in oral communication, as this is essential to developing communicative competence and second language fluency. Gender is a significant factor in language learning; it has a substantial influence on students and has a key role in shaping the context of education and the dynamics of language learning, especially in SA. Within this discussion, issues of gender have been highlighted in view of studies that have investigated the influence of gender in EFL broadly and oral participation specifically. However, as discussed in this chapter, areas

such as reticence, oral participation, and engagement, which remain under-researched, are yet to be addressed by focusing on the students' and teachers' voices, and their perceptions of and experiences with barriers to oral participation. This study is unique as it applies sociological explanations to understanding reticence with female Saudi Arabian university students from their perspectives.

The next chapter will discuss the study's theoretical framing, explaining how theories developed by Bourdieu and Foucault can provide conceptual understandings of the relationship between oral participation and EFL in the Saudi Arabian context. This will entail an examination of Bourdieu's notions of habitus, field, and capital and Foucault's theories on discourse, power, knowledge, subjectivity, and agency. These theoretical frameworks are lenses that will assist our understanding of the issues that influence oral participation. These sociological frameworks will be further applied in Chapter 3, where they guide both the research design and the mixed-methods approach used in this study.

Chapter Three

Theoretical Framework

The previous chapter offered a review of current research literature and focused on the field of English language learning in the context of Saudi Arabia, emphasising the complex nature of second language acquisition (SLA) and the distinctive challenges that this poses for the Saudi education system. The review emphasised the importance of oral participation and the obstacles that stand in the way of students actively participating in language learning, with attention to student reluctance. The chapter also clarified the important impact gender dynamics play in the Saudi SLA context.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Bourdieu's and Foucault's sociological frameworks are central to understanding the intersection of individual and institutional factors influencing reticence. These lenses inform the mixed-method approach used in this study, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of the data. This chapter builds on the previous review and discusses the theoretical lenses used to expand the comprehension of female students' oral participation and reticence in speaking up during English lessons in a Saudi Arabian preparatory year program. The problem is viewed through the lenses of Bourdieu's critical theory (1977, 1990) and Foucault's poststructural theory (1972, 1977). A conceptual framework serves as a foundation for researchers to comprehend the phenomenon being studied and to create explanations of the research findings (Smyth, 2004).

Bourdieuian Conceptual Framework

In this study, focus is given to Bourdieu's (1990, 1992, 1993) theory of practice. In order to understand the significance of the theory of practice, and in applying the theory of practice, it is essential to evaluate and analyse its three fundamental key concepts: habitus, field, and capital. The sociological perspective provided by Bourdieu's notions of habitus, field, and

capital provides a strong pathway to comprehending into comprehending relations in different settings. These concepts are essential for understanding social reproduction, inequality, and practice. Field refers to social contexts where hierarchical structures and power relations are prominent. A person's position in these domains is largely determined by capital, which can take many forms, including cultural, social, economic, and symbolic capital. This capital affects the level of privilege and power that an individual may achieve.

Habitus is defined as the deeply established dispositions shaped by an individual's experiences and background that direct them as they move through these fields. These concepts shed light on how personal agency and societal structures combine to maintain social inequality. With its critical analysis of the maintenance and reproduction of societal norms and power relations, Bourdieu's theory offers an in-depth lens through which to view the intricacies of social practices and the persistence of inequalities within societies.

These concepts can also help explain human interactions at individual and social levels. Although each concept may be used in isolation, the concepts work better as a group (Velez, 2004) and they come together to describe practice, in this case practice in the English language setting of Saudi Arabia. The following sections detail each of Bourdieu's concepts and how each is applied in this research.

Habitus

Habitus refers to a set of strongly rooted and internalised dispositions that an individual develops through experience, such as being born and raised into a specific social setting. Individuals who have similar experiences are more likely to gain similar sets of dispositions for understanding and evaluating the world (Bourdieu, 1990). This disposition, in turn, is significant in informing what an individual believes to be desirable and possible for them.

This includes the taken-for-granted perceptions and attitudes that appear normal for people like them. Habitus, in Bourdieu's words, includes:

the learned set of preferences or dispositions by which a person orients to the social world. It is a system of durable, transposable, cognitive "schemata or structures of perception, conception and action." (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 27).

Bourdieu (1990) relies on the idea of disposition in his conception of habitus. Dispositions lead to behaviours, viewpoints, and attitudes which are inculcated through early socialisation practices. These practices reflect the social and cultural contexts in which they are developed. Bourdieu (1990) asserts that systems of dispositions incorporate past experiences when forming a connection between dispositions and experiences. Therefore, habitus is also a result of history. It results in individual and group behaviours, viewpoints, actions, and behaviours that assure the active presence of prior experiences that make up systems of dispositions. An internal law by which the laws of external necessities, which are impervious to immediate restraints, are constantly exerted is a present past that has a propensity to continue by activating similarly structured practices. In this way, our past experiences teach us how to behave or anticipate how we should behave in the future. Therefore, previous circumstances that make up a cultural history of production frequently determine individual and community histories of habitus. The habit that is motivated by anticipation of the future is formed by what has come before. In this way habitus informs, is informing, and continues to evolve throughout one's life.

For Bourdieu, practice is human action, activity, or what people do. It is public and subject to study by other agents, and it is relational. Bourdieu's entire theoretical and methodological approach is "relational, in that field, habitus and practice refer in a sense to 'bundles of

relations' ... the concepts that Bourdieu developed to offer explanations of patterns of practice produced by individuals and groups were habitus and field" (Rawolle & Lingard, 2008, p. 731). Bourdieu's sociology is a theory of social production, and the concepts of habitus, field, capital, and practice are seen as key to producing and reproducing social structures. The habitus mediates between social agents and their social structures. Consequently, social structure has a dual nature that consists of things in an embodied sense of reality and things outside objective reality. Habitus, according to Bourdieu, is:

systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them (Bourdieu 1977, p. 72).

In other words, social agents shape social structures through their behaviour within them, and social structures in turn shape social agents. Depending on the degree of the differences or uniformity of the objective conditions, this fosters the capability and process of sociocultural reproduction and production. Bourdieu treats social life as mutually constituting interactions of structure, dispositions, and actions whereby social structures and embodied situated knowledge produce enduring orientations to action which, in turn, are constitutive of social structures (Martin, 2022).

The game metaphor used by Bourdieu to describe how habitus shapes a person's natural "feel for the game" illustrates this point. This metaphor highlights how people interact and navigate the social environment by showing the dynamic interplay between agents and the structures in which they operate. The term "feel for the game" describes a person's innate

understanding of and capacity for interacting with the unwritten rules, expectations, and behaviours of a specific social field. In the social context of that field, it is an embodiment of practice and cognition that enables a person to act and react effectively, and frequently without conscious thought (Bourdieu, 1990). In this study, students' levels of oral participation may be influenced by their innate understanding of oral engagement dynamics. In contrast, the "rules of the game" refer to the stated and unstated rules that control behaviour and relationships in a social context (Bennett, 2005; McGuire, 2022). For instance, students from settings that value free discussion might obviously participate more than those from backgrounds where this kind of engagement is not valued. This is not because of a language barrier, but rather because their habitus may conflict with these classroom standards. These can include unwritten rules of conduct, hierarchical structures, power relations, and other processes that set the bounds and possibilities of what is acceptable in a field; they are not always written laws or regulations (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). These rules have the power to influence pedagogy and curriculum, affecting not only what is taught but also how it is taught. This has an effect on students' oral participation in class discussions.

Moreover, habitus is related to a set of values, beliefs, and dispositions that individuals carry within them that shape their behaviours, attitudes, and dispositions to and in given situations (Webb et al., 2002, as cited in Ferfolja et al., 2018). Habitus is thereby conscious and unconscious; it concerns internal and external life (Bourdieu, 1984; D'warte, 2015, as cited in Ferfolja et al., 2018) and helps shape people's present and future practices. According to Bourdieu (1984), habitus operates below the level of awareness; therefore, people are not always aware that they have a particular habitus. The basic kind of classification is the "schemes of habitus," which owe their particular efficacy to the fact that they function below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of scrutiny, examination, and

control of will (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 465). It is crucial to know that habitus is very resistant to evolution and change (Swartz, 1997). Any kind of evolution can be exceedingly slow and challenging since habitus is so profoundly unconscious; it frequently takes several generations for changes to manifest. The dualistic nature of Bourdieu's concept of habitus, incorporating both conscious and unconscious dimensions, is a vital part of its theoretical richness. Bourdieu himself elucidates on this dialectic in his foundational works, arguing that while habitus generates practices, perceptions, and attitudes without presupposing conscious intention or explicit operations, it is not strictly deterministic (Bourdieu, 1990).

Bourdieu was one of the first scholars to study EFL students' motivation and tendency to learn English in relation to their previously developed dispositions (Piri et al., 2018). According to Bourdieu, students' acquired dispositions inform a consistent tendency to react to and behave in the environment in particular ways (Bourdieu, 1990). This assumes that students' reluctance and passivity are certain dispositions (habitus) that inform students' behaviours and attitudes. Therefore, Bourdieu's concept of acquired dispositions is central to his concept of habitus, which is the central tenet of his theory of practice. For Bourdieu, the habitus is a system of principles and structures that shapes individuals' practices (Velez, 2004). Thus, in my study, attention is given to classroom interactions and engagement and the ways they shape students' practices and their ability to understand and select the most appropriate practice for a particular context. Practice, according to Bourdieu, does not occur unconsciously or randomly; it is a deliberate action (Bourdieu, 1977). It is important to explore the effect of scholarly habitus on student engagement and students' dispositions toward the oral practice of English in the classroom.

Linguistic Habitus

Language is an interpretive element of habitus that individuals bring to the educational field. Educational researchers argue that an individual's practices and how an individual can participate in associated social arenas are a result of how a person is positioned in the field as a result of their habitus (Bourdieu, 1990). Bourdieu (1991) developed the theory of linguistic habitus in accordance with this notion; a person has an advantage in the domain of cultural (linguistic) capital if their linguistic habitus matches the language that society prefers. Additionally, the person gains knowledge of how societies' accepted use of language expresses itself in particular settings. According to Bourdieu's explanation of linguistic habitus, an individual's inherent tendency to speak a certain way is the result of early influences like community and family. Individual linguistic capital is assimilated into or integrated into people and eventually becomes a type of habitus. It is a collection of dispositions made up of materials and capital, similar to a type of cultural baggage (Bourdieu, 1986; Wacquant, 1989). Linguistic habitus is developed through socialisation and is impacted by the social standing of the family (Lin, 1999; Zolberg, 1986). As a result, linguistic exchange is likely to be facilitated when a person acquires a particular linguistic habitus that is akin to an articulated and valued language. As a result, it is a skill that helps in language learning and has positive social effects. An English speaker, for instance, is more likely to be able to perform well in the classroom and advance in society if their own linguistic habitus (for instance, accent) is similar to that of the best society or preferred institutions.

Gendered Habitus

Building on Bourdieu's fundamental idea of habitus, and the discussion of linguistic habitus above, the concept of gendered habitus explores how deeply social practices entrenched and dispositions contribute to creating and maintaining gender identities and differences (Bourdieu, 2001). Bourdieu investigates the intersection of gender and habitus, arguing that

gender relations are not only constructed within social systems but also internalized in the personal psyches of individuals. This idea becomes essential in understanding how social norms and expectations shape the behaviours and experiences of women in education, including language learning. Scholars, such as Reay (2004), have expanded Bourdieu's work by incorporating gendered habitus into educational settings, showing that educational experiences and outcomes are deeply influenced by gendered dispositions. Reay's analysis of gendered habitus highlights how societal expectations about appropriate behaviour, ambition, and emotional expression affect women's educational prospects. Numerous societal expectations and conventions that specify what constitutes appropriate behaviour, ambition or even emotional expression for women shape the gendered habitus of women. These norms can prescribe specific roles, such as caring responsibilities, or limit ambitions by steering women toward traditionally feminine professions or academic interests.

Furthermore, Reay (2004) explores how emotional capital (the emotional resources that women often accumulate) interacts with gendered habitus, leading to distinct experiences in education. The dominant societal norms and expectations are both reproduced and resisted by the complex, dynamic female gendered habitus. (Bourdieu, 2001; Skeggs, 2004). It acts as a valuable analytical lens for examining the complex ways in which societal structures are reflected in the practices, choices, and experiences of women on a daily basis. This is especially relevant in the context of language learning, where cultural expectations about femininity and appropriate behaviour may influence participation levels and create barriers to oral participation (Butler, 1990).

By exploring gendered habitus, this study investigates how cultural norms and expectations about gender can impact Saudi females' reticence in language learning settings. In this study, females may find themselves encouraged to actively participate in language learning settings,

with their participation potentially influenced by their social context and the way intersectionality (how different social identities, such as gender and culture, interact) shapes their identities (Norton, 2000). In the Saudi context, women may navigate societal pressures that emphasize modesty and reticence, which in turn affects their participation in language learning. However, the idea of resistance within gendered habitus also becomes significant. While societal norms may steer women toward certain behaviours, they may also find ways to resist or challenge these expectations, even within constrained environments. For example, some Saudi females might actively resist societal pressures by striving for greater academic success or more assertive participation in educational settings, even while feeling the pull of traditional expectations. By understanding the complex power relations and gender roles involved, this study aims to highlight how cultural norms affect the students' participation in academic contexts and proposes methods to promote a more empowered and inclusive learning environment.

Field

The second of Bourdieu's major theoretical ideas is called field. It offers a spatial metaphor for the settings in which habitus functions. A field is a specific location or arena in which people engage and compete with one another for the appropriation of limited resources (Bourdieu, 1992). A field is a network, or configuration, of objective relations between positions, where:

Positions are "objectively" defined in their existence and in the constraints they place on their occupants, agents, or institutions, by their present and potential situation in the structure of distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field (Bourdieu, 1992, p. 97).

Field is “the space in which cultural competence or knowledge of particular tastes, dispositions, or norms is produced and given a price” (Winkle-Wagner, 2010, p. 7). Likewise, it is an “arena of production, circulation, and appropriation of goods, services, knowledge, or status, and the competitive positions held by actors in their struggle to accumulate and control these different kinds of capital” (Swartz, 2019, p. 178; Winkle-Wagner, 2010).

Bourdieu views society as undergoing a process of construction that is distinct in different fields. This means it is not possible to understand the significance of different fields without first investigating the internal relationships that inform them. The field is a structure consisting of agents and social sites; its locations are determined by the interaction between specific rules in the field, the nature of the agent (creation) and the capabilities: social, economic, and cultural. Moreover, the field structure interacts with the other, and its structure is hierarchical. Instead of limiting its analysis of social relations and social change within the framework of voluntary agency or the structural concept of the social class, Bourdieu uses the concept of the domain that connects the agency and the structure: one with a heterogeneous historical social arena in which people are circumvented and struggling in their quest for the required resources. Habitus works together in the context within the field. Bourdieu argues that these actions in the field are not a constant reflection of the existing positions. As a result, various theories call for us to take action (Bourdieu, 2007; Calhoun, 2006). It is implied that personal intervention within a particular social setting is important for habitus to manifest and function in this context, where the interaction of the individual with the field is necessary for the habitus to work effectively. Therefore, habitus needs the support of the symbolic capital that corresponds to the context so that the individual can participate and make a difference to the field. This study considers that the linguistic market is a type of social field.

Individuals can shift their habitus under certain circumstances, such as exposure to new educational experiences. Their ability to change enables them to influence their chosen field. Evidence shows that habitus often becomes individuals' unconscious power to conduct their lives and influence societies (Bourdieu, 1972, as cited in Webb et al., 2002, p .49). For students, a field in which they participate is a structured system of social entities in the field of education, which is formed by the individuals or institutions which embody those entities. Bourdieu (1993) constantly refers to fields as "fields of forces" and "fields of struggle" (p. 30) between power relations and between social classes within these structures. He describes the relationships within fields in terms of domination, subordination or equivalence, which are designated by the accumulation or utilisation of the products, resources or capital; these are the subject of contestation in the field.

In educational contexts of which language learning and teaching is a part, the nature of students', teachers', and other actors' habitus operating within fields is defined through their relationships to capitals and the legitimacy of the field, which evolves through historical processes. These forms of engagement and negotiation are the basis for capital exchange within fields. As teachers engage with students in fields, they are able to identify forms of capital through processes of dialogue, observation, and engagement with students' families, peers, and communities and through reference to institutional records. Having identified and recognised forms of capital, teachers are then able to appraise, make judgements in relation to criteria, and evaluate that capital in terms of cultural capital. This cultural capital can be exchanged in processes for educative purposes, such as assessment for learning in classroom practice. The interaction between capital and habitus is important, since teachers appreciate the variety of students' capital, including their linguistic and cultural backgrounds and the capital that accompanies this. Evidence suggests that utilising each student's distinctive experiences in the classroom is essential for creating a supportive environment for learning

(Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). This study considered whether teachers can improve students' participation in the classroom by developing more effective English language education that takes into account diverse resources that students may bring to the classroom.

Within Bourdieu's theoretical constructions, the linguistic market presents itself as an interesting example of the larger social arena in which language is exchanged, valued, and participated in, like other forms of capital. Here, as in any field Bourdieu developed, there are social actors: students and teachers negotiate the interactions between habitus, field, and capital in a continuous attempt to claim the value of their language skills. As an element of the larger social field, the linguistic market reflects the dynamics of gendered fields, where power structures and existing gender norms are closely linked to the demand for the construction of symbolic capital. The market is not an isolated object; it is deeply integrated into the broader social structure, subject to the same complex gender dynamics that affect other sectors of society (Bradley, 2007). This echoes Bourdieu's description of society as a huge, symbolic machine ensuring masculine domination. Here, linguistic competencies, like the symbolic capital in gendered fields, are subject to the valuation and validation processes that are naturally biased by the dominant patriarchal habitus (Bourdieu, 2001). As a result, the linguistic market is a battlefield, where the symbolic benefits of language are constantly negotiated and challenged, reflecting larger conflicts in the field. This market is a place of difficulties, where people's linguistic capital is always being assessed against the context of gender biases, relationships of power, and societal norms. Thus, social actors in the linguistic market will either succeed or fail based on their capacity to negotiate these complex factors, and skilfully use their linguistic capital to claim their place in the social hierarchy.

Bourdieu conceptualises a field as "a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions" (Bourdieu, 1992, p. 97). The field consists of a set of social relations

between “social actors who are positioned within a social context according to the levels of capital that they possess” (Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; D’warte, 2015, as cited in Ferfolija, et al., 2018, p. 134). In the field of education, students participate in an organised system of social institutions that are formed by the people or institutions that represent those entities. Three key implications for the success or failure that members of different groups encounter in their efforts to move up the social class ladder may be drawn from the concept of field (Grenfell, 2008; Swartz, 1997). First, not all fields are alike, and each field has its own particular unwritten norms (Bourdieu, 1977), which people and groups must comprehend and abide by in order to successfully function in the relevant area. The second meaning of the word field is that each field competes with others for power. The person or group who has a certain habitus that most closely complies with the demands of a given field is the one who has the greatest influence in that field. Thirdly, a person’s capacity to effectively decode or interpret the norms of a specific area will determine their capacity to appropriate the capital valued in that field. This demand for consistency between field and habitus might appear as socio-economic motivation or penalties, depending on how it is viewed.

The character of students’, teachers’, and other actors’ field-operating habitus is defined in a school setting by their connections to capitals, and the legitimacy of the field is developed through historical processes. These modes of discussion and negotiating serve as the foundation for capital exchange within fields. Teachers are then able to appraise, make decisions based on criteria, and evaluate that capital in terms of cultural capital once they have identified and recognised different types of capital. In this study, how the field operates and how teachers’ and students’ distinct educational, social, and cultural backgrounds and related habitus affect classroom interactions, especially oral engagement, is in focus. Moreover, the study considers how teachers view or value and acknowledge the various

forms of capital that students bring to the classroom and how this may support inclusive and productive learning environments.

The field of education involves the structures and practices of the classroom, including the positions of the students and teachers in relation to one another, the expectations for behaviour set by the wider school and the individual teacher, and the requirements for any interactions between students and teachers as well as between students themselves (Godec et al., 2018). In other words, it is the field that indicates how capitals are viewed and valued in relation to one another and how specific behaviours, such as the interaction between habitus and capital, are regarded (Davey, 2009).

The Gendered Field

In considering how the field is gendered, it is important to consider that Bourdieu (2001, p. 9) underscores the difficulties in gender dynamics by showing how the social order functions as an immense symbolic machine that tends to ratify masculine domination. This viewpoint emphasises how gender biases exist in a variety of social contexts, making it harder for women to succeed in settings where males are usually in the dominant position. Several researchers have used Bourdieu's sociology to clarify gendered differences in social phenomena. McNay's (2004) research explores gender as a lived social relation, focusing on relational experience. McNay proposes links between identity and overt and covert forms of power relations, conceptualising gender as an abstraction: a lived social relation that involves conflict, negotiation, and tension. West and Zimmerman (1987) propose "doing gender," acknowledging that the properties of gender are both situated and processual which include socially guided, political, perceptual, and interactional activities that shape specific pursuits as masculine and feminine expressions.

Gender is understood to be a powerful ideological device produced and reproduced in social situations as the interactional scaffolding of social structure and the social control processes that sustain it. Bradley (2007) highlights the importance of the multilayering of gendering: macro (broader social networks), meso (institutional rules), and micro (individual actions) dimensions. These dimensions address the relationship between agency and structure, which is dealt with through the concepts of habitus and field in Bourdieu's social theory. Given that habitus is a style of engagement expressed in practices embedded in a field, this refers to a dynamic social space (Chia & Holt, 2006, p. 645) and the role gender plays in that space. The field of forces or the context in which perceived institutional situations are framed and the symbolic nature of requisite capitals are objectified in the schemata of agents, who compete for different forms of capital that influence their positions and power (Harker et al., 2016; Moi, 1991; Tatli & Özbilgin, 2011).

The field of education is impacted by a male-dominated habitus in patriarchal societies, where power dynamics and interactions are shaped by traditional gender roles. This influences how female teachers and students behave in this setting and how they are viewed by others. The structure of society influences how different forms of capital are distributed and acknowledged in education (Bourdieu, 2001). It does this by operating as a symbolic system that promotes masculine dominance (Bourdieu, 2001).

Symbolic capital thus has significant bearings on how gender functions in the intellectual and educational spheres. There is an unequal distribution of symbolic capital between genders in several societal arenas, including education. As a competitive arena for symbolic capital, Bourdieu's representation of the intellectual field (Swartz, 1997, pp. 117–118) emphasises the difficulties women may encounter in acquiring this type of capital. This inequality is further reinforced by dominant discourses that support existing power structures and societal

norms, as emphasised by Swartz (2008) and Tatli & Özbilgin (2011). In such situations, women's skills can be neglected, reducing their capacity to obtain the status that creates symbolic capital. In this study, power dynamics and interactions shaped by traditional gender roles are examined.

Capital

In turning from field to capital it is important to consider how Bourdieu defines capital. He defines capital as social resources that could benefit and develop other forms of capital. Bourdieu (1986) proposed four types of capital—economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital—to counter the oversimplified notion that wealth is solely a function of resources. While economic capital is made up of properties, directly and indirectly pertaining to money but institutionalised as property rights, cultural capital refers to an embodied state of dispositions of the mind and body involved in the objectified and institutionalised elements of cultural products and the institutionalisation of educational qualifications (Bourdieu, 1986). Social capital refers to human networks of families, friends, co-workers or a neighbourhood group. The final source of capital, symbolic capital, is a form of legitimate recognition and prestige (Bourdieu, 1986). These forms of capitals are most commonly discussed in education (Piri et al., 2018) as will be explained later in this chapter.

Social Capital

Researchers see social capital as referring to a series of interactions and relationships that students establish that can promote success in the field of the classroom (Moustakim, 2015). Moreover, social capital refers to the membership and connections that people have access to. An individual has the advantage of accessing privileged opportunities or information if they have access to a network of people in powerful positions (Moustakim, 2015, p. 133). Social capital plays a significant role in students' learning, as their interactions within different

social networks such as parents' expectations of education, family relations, and the academic environment in educational institutions can encourage or discourage students' academic success and engagement (Bourdieu, 1990; Piri et al., 2018). In the context of this study language is a form of social capital.

Cultural Capital

There are various sorts of cultural capital, including fundamental beliefs and routines acquired through socialisation as well as the collection of valuable cultural possessions like formal school qualifications (Anheier et al., 1995). Cultural capital is also accumulated through education, knowledge, and culture and how they influence interaction and engagement (Velez, 2004). Educational researchers suggest that cultural capital can involve different forms of linguistic capital that make up the different dispositions of individuals and that affect their ways of using language and linguistic utterances in the linguistic markets that legitimise them (Bourdieu, 1991; Jones-Diaz, 2014). Bourdieu, (1990) suggests cultural capital contains three forms. The first of these is "embodied," referring to acquired knowledge and understanding culminating in dispositions of the body and mind. The second form is "objectified," which relates to the possession of cultural resources, for instance, books, texts, music, iconography, and so on. The last form is "institutionalised," referring to qualifications obtained from formal institutions, such as universities (Asiri, 2017; Grice, 2017; Lu, 2016; Mickan, 2016; Moustakim, 2015). Cultural capital refers to competencies and cultural knowledge and can exist in embodied, objectified, and institutionalised states. Thus, "when these three forms of cultural capitals are operating with social capital, it results in dynamic relationships between students' and teachers' cultural capital, which subsequently shape their practices" (Alsowat, 2016, p. 38).

In this study, attention is given to cultural capital an embodied state of dispositions of the mind and body involved in the objectified and institutionalised elements of cultural product qualifications, as opposed to economic capital, which is made up of properties directly and indirectly related to money but institutionalised as property rights (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 64). Therefore, relationships between students' and teachers' cultural capital, and how these relationships may subsequently shape their practices is the focus of this study.

Symbolic capital

Symbolic capital refers to the prestige, recognition, and honour that individuals accumulate in a social field based on their mastery of cultural symbols and practices (Bourdieu, 1986). For Saudi female students, the ability to speak English proficiently can be seen as a form of symbolic capital, conferring social status within both the local educational setting and broader global contexts. English proficiency is not only valued for its economic potential but also for its symbolic meaning in a globalized world (Bourdieu, 1991). The ability to use English effectively in classroom discourse thus becomes a form of symbolic capital that can enhance a student's academic and social standing.

This notion of symbolic capital ties directly to symbolic competence, a concept discussed in Chapter 2. Symbolic competence, as articulated by Kramsch (2006), emphasizes the ability to navigate the power dynamics and cultural meanings embedded in language use. This competence goes beyond linguistic proficiency, focusing on how language learners can interpret, negotiate, and employ cultural symbols in communication. In this way, symbolic capital and symbolic competence are interrelated, as both concepts highlight the sociocultural dimensions of language learning. By expanding on symbolic capital and symbolic competence, this thesis provides a more comprehensive framework for analyzing how Saudi female students navigate the social and symbolic structures of the classroom.

Linguistic Capital

Bourdieu (1990) argues that students' academic achievement is influenced by the capital they bring to the classroom. He maintains that embodied academic achievement is dependent on cultural capital (Assulaimani & Althubaiti, 2021). This indicates cultural capital is the most valuable form of capital in students' education (Piri et al., 2018). Hence, the idea that a student's cultural capital plays a major role in determining their academic success is a fundamental and distinctive contribution to the understanding of academic success. Language is a form of capital, with linguistic capital being one aspect of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1990). Linguistic capital refers to the ability to use the language and produce the appropriate expression in an appropriate situation (Bourdieu, 1973). Educational researchers view communicative competence as a form of linguistic capital that is expressed through the habitus; it is acquired over time through instruction and it is valued in a specific field and facilitated by agency (D'warte, 2015, as cited in Ferfolija, et al., 2018, p. 201). This is also considered in this study of Saudi Arabian students' oral participation and, conversely, their reticence to participate.

For students to become competent learners of English, or in Bourdieu's terms, acquire linguistic capital, they need to develop an interactional competence and a discursive competence (Nichols, 2007). In their study, Malik and Mohamed (2014) noted that EFL teachers should be able to understand the impact of cultural learning in their classroom. They should be able to link new information to the students' prior knowledge. In order to achieve this, teachers needed to link instruction to the students' social, personal, and world experience. Accordingly, teachers play a crucial role in students' learning process. In the current study, analysis is applied to understand how teachers may enhance and prompt students to participate or may demotivate them and cause their reticence (McMahon & Portelli, 2004).

Research suggests that in terms of classrooms, a teacher's habitus is the main driver of their pedagogical decisions and actions and in this way may positively affect students' academic growth and participation (Burrige, 2018). Since teachers' habitus may impact students' language learning and facilitate their participation and engagement, it is important for a teacher's habitus to encourage students' participation and engagement within the EFL classroom context. Accordingly, teachers' teaching materials, pedagogies, strategies, and methods can impact and challenge students' habitus (Piri et al., 2018).

Student Engagement, Participation and Embodied Capital

In this study, the term "student engagement" is used to describe students' participation in classroom interactions on a continuum, with active engagement and speaking up at one end and non-participation and a reticence to participate at the other. It is important for teachers to develop their knowledge of students' abilities and learning experiences, and to develop new ways of intervening that encourage students to communicate (Connolly, 2012). Because of its potential for interaction, the English language is valued for its ability to improve oral communication, and promote cultural capital and better job opportunities (Malik & Mohamed, 2014). In this sense, a university may provide opportunities for students to exchange forms of embodied capital through pedagogy and curriculum. These forms of engagement are the basis for capital exchange within fields (Bourdieu, 1996). When teachers engage with students in the classroom, they afford opportunities for students to exchange forms of culture through the processes of speaking up and engaging with peers and teachers (Connolly, 2012). Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field, and capital are thereby useful for analysing and explaining students' behaviour in the Saudi English classroom. Moreover, linking students' participation levels and engagement with field, capital, and habitus helps to inform deeper and more meaningful understandings about how students participate and how teachers may more effectively promote student engagement in the EFL classroom.

In this study, student engagement, which includes both active and passive participation, can be interpreted in light of Bourdieu's definition of embodied capital. Embodied capital describes the deeply rooted skills, proficiencies, and attitudes that people develop as a result of their socialisation and experiences in life (Bourdieu, 1986). These characteristics are embodied when they are internalised and integrated into the person's identity and manner of engaging with the outside world. Accordingly, student engagement is a type of embodied capital in the context of classroom interactions since it denotes the comfort level and internalisation of communicative abilities. Students who speak up show embodied capital in terms of their confidence, linguistic skills, and comprehension of expectations in the classroom. Conversely, students who show reluctance may not possess these abilities.

Foucauldian Theoretical Framework

Building on the sociological theory of Bourdieu, this discussion is also informed by examination of the theories of Foucault (1972, 1977), with an emphasis on his concepts of discourse, power, knowledge, subjectivity, and agency. Foucault's discourse theory is a fundamental component that shapes the comprehension of the complex integration of knowledge and power relations in social practices. It highlights how discourses control what can be spoken, by whom, and in what situations, impacting social structures in the process. Foucault's concept of power is a useful lens through which to view the impact of social, cultural, and educational barriers and factors on student engagement and participation in the English classroom. According to Foucault, knowledge is created inside the limitations of discourses that are enriched with power, rather than knowledge existing as an objective thing. This approach explores how knowledge is constructed, who is in charge of forming it, and how it affects social norms and institutions. Furthermore, Foucault's analysis of subjectivity is essential to comprehending how both individual and social identities are formed in certain socio-historical situations. The goal of this research is to understand how interactions with diverse discourses and diverse forms of power and knowledge systems continuously shape students' subjectivities. Finally, the idea of agency is examined, especially in light of Foucault's viewpoint on personal resistance and the function of knowledge and power in either facilitating or hindering human agency.

Discourse

In educational settings, discourse functions not just as a means of communication but as a force that shapes pedagogical practices and interactions between students and teachers (Fairclough, 1992). The way language is used within the classroom can reflect broader societal structures, influencing how knowledge is delivered and how power dynamics unfold. Foucault's (1972) discourse theory emphasizes that power and knowledge are intertwined,

and these dynamics are often reflected in educational discourses that define what is taught and how it is taught (Ball, 2013).

In the Saudi EFL classroom, the discourses around gender roles and femininity become embedded within the pedagogy. Teachers, as agents of discourse, may unknowingly reinforce societal norms by emphasizing certain behaviours and attitudes, such as modesty and compliance, which may lead to passive learning behaviours in female students (Al Lily, 2016). The topics covered in language lessons, and the methods used, often align with cultural norms, shaping how students perceive their roles as learners and as females. This can be seen in how English is presented not just as a language skill but as a reflection of broader ideological structures related to modernity, progress, and gender norms (Weedon, 1997).

Classrooms are not neutral spaces; they are active sites where discourse operates to define who speaks, who listens, and who leads. Classroom discourse includes teacher-student interactions, curriculum content, and the implicit rules governing student behaviour (Mercer & Howe, 2012). In a highly segregated and gender-conscious society like Saudi Arabia, discourse operates within the classroom to reinforce traditional roles. Female students, for instance, may be discouraged from speaking up because of the discursive structures that associate femininity with modesty, passivity, and obedience (Al-Issa & Dahan, 2011).

These discursive structures directly impact how female students engage in oral participation. For instance, teachers might give cues that reward passive learning and discourage assertive questioning, thereby reinforcing reticence. Discursive norms around gender and behaviour thus create an environment where female students might feel less inclined to participate actively (Fairclough, 1995).

Discourse can either reinforce or not enforce reticence. When teachers unknowingly reproduce societal norms, they may contribute to a culture of silence, where female students feel their voices are less valued or that they must conform to expectations of reticence (Norton, 2013). However, discourse can also serve as a site of resistance. By consciously altering the way discussions are structured in the classroom, teachers can challenge these norms, encouraging greater participation by fostering an environment of empowerment (Weedon, 1997).

For example, by incorporating topics and pedagogical strategies that validate female voices and experiences, teachers can reshape classroom discourse to support active participation. When the content of lessons includes discussions of gender equality or female empowerment, students are exposed to alternative discourses that may challenge ingrained norms of passivity and encourage them to speak up (Al-Harhi, 2014). Teachers play a critical role in mediating discourses within the classroom. The topics they choose to emphasize and the way they frame discussions about gender, culture, and language learning can either uphold or challenge societal norms. In Saudi EFL classrooms, where gender norms are deeply embedded, teachers may need to be intentional in introducing topics that encourage female students to voice their thoughts and opinions. For example, lessons that incorporate themes of gender equality, women's achievements, or social justice may help female students see the value of their participation (Al Lily, 2016).

The discursive structures in the classroom shape not only participation levels but also students' understanding of acceptable behaviour within their gender roles. When teachers create a space that challenges traditional gender norms, students are more likely to engage actively. For instance, offering equal opportunities for female students to lead discussions or present their work allows them to navigate and potentially resist societal pressures that

encourage reticence. Conversely, when teachers unconsciously perpetuate discourses of obedience and silence, they limit female students' opportunities for engagement (Norton & Toohey, 2001).

Hence, the classroom becomes a microcosm of society, where the discourses of power, knowledge, and social norms are continually constructed and reconstructed. By critically examining these discourses and adapting pedagogical approaches, educators can contribute to creating a more inclusive and participatory learning environment that empowers female students to overcome reticence and engage fully in their language education (Skeggs, 2004).

Power

For Foucault, all relations are enriched by the concept of power, which means there is no centre of authority. The central mechanisms of power are derived from power-enforcement relationships, such as those occurring between students and teachers, which Foucault conceived as panopticism (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998, p. 14). Foucault's (1977) concept of panopticism outlines a model of power which can be applied to educational institutions, such as schools and universities, where forms of power are exercised (Gallagher, 2010). Hence, it could be argued that schools are panoptic sites providing a wide range of observations, surveillance, and gaze. In my study, the panoptic operation of surveillance is explored, as it may impact students' reticence due to fear of making errors to avoid teachers' or peers' threats of surveillance, judgement, and negative gaze,

The classroom is an area of constant visibility, and teachers' positioning of their gazes to monitor students can have an impact on their behaviour. Teachers and students are exposed to power dynamics in the classroom as a result of this monitoring, which can take the form of both physical presence and self-surveillance (Foucault, 1987; Kuadnok, 2017). Students are subjects in power-knowledge interactions as a result of the discourses that generate power in

this context (Millei, 2005). This study investigates how teacher pedagogy and power dynamics affect student engagement in EFL courses throughout the university preparation year, drawing on Foucault's theory of power. Discipline powers, according to Foucault (1977), are pervasive yet subtle control mechanisms employed within institutions to influence individual behaviour. Rather than using direct enforcement, these mechanisms affect behaviours, attitudes, and perceptions through institutional practices, routines, and discourses. As a monitored environment, the classroom continuously assesses student involvement and performance, gently advising students to modify their conduct to satisfy standards or to avoid receiving unfavourable feedback.

Thus, the engagement may be influenced by the separation from individuals' social identities and personal objectives caused by the classroom's surveillance dynamics. According to Alkubaidi (2014), in Saudi EFL courses students usually take on a passive role, essentially repeating what teachers have said without contributing to the creation or origination of content relevant to their interests. Students concentrate on accurately reproducing the target language in order to avoid errors and follow standards, which fosters the idea that language is an instrument of power and knowledge. Saudi students frequently follow their teachers' directions in a passive manner, which creates anxiety and reticence (Alkubaidi, 2014). However, teachers can create a learning environment where students are valued for their attempts at language use and encouraged to make decisions that increase student involvement. Students' confidence can be increased and their reluctance can be decreased by implementing more interactive and student-centred pedagogies, which will change the classroom dynamic and encourage more active and engaged language learning.

Students frequently interact with the language in the context of language learning in Saudi Arabia without necessarily taking up the use of English as part of their personal agency or

integrating it in their daily life practices. This means that students and teachers talk about and teach English in a way that is unrelated to their goals and personal lives. They do not use the language in a way that represents their own interests, aspirations or social identities, nor do they regard themselves as engaged members of a larger English-speaking community (Al-Seghayer, 2014; Norton, 2000). This lack of agency and personal commitment may make it more difficult to be motivated to speak up.

Power and Knowledge

According to Schirato et al. (2012), Foucault (1980) asserts that forms of knowledge and discourse practices are the only contexts in which power can be understood in connection to its practice. He explains:

The use of power always produces knowledge, and knowledge always produces the effects of power. Inherent in each other are power and knowledge. Power cannot be exercised without knowledge, and knowledge cannot exist without generating power (Foucault, 1980, p. 52).

Further research on this relationship between power and knowledge was conducted by Freire (1970). In his significant work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, he demonstrates how teacher knowledge serves as the primary driver of power linkages in the classroom. He contends that the teacher–student interaction is contradictory, since the teacher plays the position of a knower who is familiar with the knowledge that the uninformed students lack. The authority and professional knowledge belong to the teacher. The teacher has the power to decide, discipline, and choose the process’s objects, the students, because they are the subject of the learning process.

Freire (1970) also claims that teaching is a narrative process in which the teacher narrates the content that is mechanically memorised by the students, who are thereby rendered as

containers to be filled with such content. He describes education as a “banking” process, in which the teacher deposits the knowledge in students’ minds. This process prevents students from being creative or critical thinkers; he therefore proposes liberating education and solving the contradiction involved in the teacher–student relationship by enabling students to exchange power with the teacher by engaging them in critical consciousness and problem-solving.

Power is obvious at all levels and might even originate at the bottom of a hierarchy. It does not need violence, force or constraint to render individuals obedient or to have effect. Scholars argue that Foucault purports power is not something one has, but rather something one does; it is a verb, not a noun. In other words, power is active, and it is a process that we as individuals are constantly engaging in and with (Foucault, 1982). Accordingly, the role of knowledge in students’ acquisition of English language skills is important in regard to students’ speaking skills. Students who have good knowledge of the English language might be more confident about their ability to engage or participate than those who do not have knowledge. In this way it is possible to examine how power and knowledge are connected in the English proficiency discourse of the classroom. Having good knowledge of the English language does not mean having only an understanding of its pragmatics and cultural nuances but also its syntax and vocabulary. In this study, a Foucauldian lens is applied to examine how students feel about their knowledge and how this knowledge influences how well they engage or are more confident in class.

Agency, Power, and Resistance

In Foucault’s (1978) understanding, individuals play an essential role in power circulation even when they are oppressed by power. According to Mills (2003), Foucault’s conceptualisation of power encourages us to rethink not only the notion of power itself, but

also the roles of individuals in those power relations, which can be either passive (recipient of oppression) or active (playing a role in the strategy of power). In Foucault's understanding, individuals play an essential role in power circulation even when they are oppressed by power.

Agency can be applied to engage in resistance or a refusal to participate; resistance is considered to be the contestation of power relations. Agency is a disposition that an individual possesses to enable critical thinking and change. Power and resistance, according to Foucault, are inseparable; they co-exist and are at work in every social relationship, and they both have many manifestations and strategies (Gorlewski, 2011). Students' resistance, as represented in their reticence to speak up, may reveal their power against teacher's authority or power, and this study looks at the relationship between agency, power, and resistance. "There are multiple forms of resistance that constitute power relations" (Foucault, 1972, p. 95), such as pretending to study, not learning, arguing, or not participating in classroom discussion, as examined within this study. Since power is both repressive and productive, students' resistance manifests in different ways. In this study, the exploration of teacher agency in facilitating student engagement or passivity is relevant.

There is also a connection between resistance and power in the classroom according to Gorlewski (2011), who applied Foucault's conceptualisation of resistance to show the dynamic between these two concepts, in which "anyone who is subject to someone else's exercise of power has the capacity to comply or resist" (Gorlewski, 2011, p. 196). Since English language is the medium of instruction in most tertiary education fields in Saudi Arabia (e.g., engineering, medicine, and business), English language represents power within Saudi society (Alrabai, 2014, p. 227); as a result, some students may express their agency in reluctance and passivity, and this is an example of resistance to this power.

In this study, the resistance to power can also be seen in students' reluctance to speak up in the classroom, including students to students and students to a teacher. Therefore, the connections between resistance, power, and agency will be used to investigate the ways that students may resist power from teachers negatively, as students show their resistance to power in the reluctance to participate or engage with classroom activities. Based on Foucault's notion of power, students' reluctance can be seen as rejecting the teacher's power and being agentic. Thus, students have the agency of resistance and being passive to resist the teacher's power. Consequently, agency may be important in helping students to take responsibility for social and personal demands and decide how to respond to their own needs (Wardman, 2013).

Thus, Foucault's view of power reveals that power contributes to most aspects of real-life situations in which an individual could impact others in any social action. Exploring barriers that influence students' speaking up in the English classroom and the impact of pedagogy and curriculum on their participation is significant, as this can provide important insights into the potential for strengthening students' speaking abilities and overcoming their reluctance to participate. As a result, understanding how students' exercise power, and examining discourse, knowledge, subjectivity, and agency in this context offers opportunities to view the ways students can move to being independent learners rather than being passive learners. Foucault demonstrates how authority functions in complex and prevalent ways to create subjects (Foucault, 1982). He believes that power encompasses every aspect of social interaction and is not merely an instrument of oppression or the property of the dominant class. Rather, power is like a capillary system (Foucault, 1980) that is gradually integrated into social life and affects every interaction and relationship (Foucault, 1980). According to this perspective, power affects everything and extends beyond simple dominance to shape identities, knowledge, and societal processes. Instead of only exercising top-down control, it

works in all directions, influencing the institutional dynamics and daily behaviours that shape society's structure in both facilitating and restricting ways (Foucault, 1980). This viewpoint differs from traditional concepts that consider power as a centralised process.

Subjectivity

The idea that the self is a result of social and historical processes rather than a static object is central to Foucault's description of subjectivity (Foucault, 1982). According to Foucault, the self is constantly subjected to and subject to different power-knowledge regimes. This point of view is consistent with his larger philosophical goal, which is distinguished by a strong suspicion of universal truths and a focus on the dependent and changeable nature of identity and knowledge (Foucault, 1977). Foucault's position on subjectivity has been important in several domains, including sociology, cultural studies, and psychology. It throws up questions about the idea of an independent, self-governing person and proposes that subjectivity is a flexible, varied concept that is deeply integrated into the social and political structure (Foucault, 1982).

According to Foucault, subjectivity is constantly created and shaped by cultural and institutional processes rather than being an innate, unchanging feature (Foucault, 1982). This viewpoint is relevant to this research. The Saudi female students' subjectivities are shaped by their educational environment, the dynamics of the EFL classroom, and the larger sociocultural context of Saudi Arabia. The cultural and socio-economic norms that are prominent in their surroundings have an important effect on the identity and feeling of self of female Saudi students. These standards frequently emphasise modesty, restraint in public displays of emotion, and respect for traditional gender roles. In this study, I consider if students may be in conflict with their deeply formed sense of self and the expectations of the

classroom when they are placed in an EFL classroom, where they are expected to speak up and participate actively.

The interrelation between Bourdieu and Foucault's theories is crucial for a deeper understanding of the social dynamics affecting Saudi female students' oral participation in the EFL classroom. Both theorists address how social structures shape individual behaviour, but they do so from complementary perspectives. Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field, and capital emphasize the internalized dispositions and social structures that guide behaviour in specific social spaces. For example, the classroom as a field is structured by educational hierarchies, where students' linguistic and cultural capitals determine their positions. Foucault, on the other hand, focuses on how power operates through discourse, shaping both knowledge and subjectivity. In this context, power manifests in pedagogical practices and classroom norms, subtly influencing what can be said, by whom, and how students participate.

The integration of these two perspectives highlights how powers relations in the classroom are embedded in everyday practices. Bourdieu's habitus explains how students' social backgrounds shape their predispositions to participate, while Foucault's discourse theory shows how these predispositions are reinforced or challenged by the power dynamics in play. For instance, female students' reticence may stem from a habitus shaped by societal expectations of modesty, but through classroom interactions—governed by discourse and power—they may exercise agency to resist or conform to these expectations.

Thus, combining Bourdieu's focus on social structures with Foucault's emphasis on power and discourse provides a comprehensive lens to analyze how agency emerges in structured environments. This integrated approach strengthens the analysis in chapters seven and eight, as it allows for a more nuanced understanding of how both social reproduction (Bourdieu)

and resistance (Foucault) operate in the EFL classroom, influencing female students' participation.

Conclusion

This theoretical framework chapter has discussed Bourdieu's conceptual landscape, connecting his notions of habitus, field, and capital with Foucault's notions of discourse, knowledge, power, subjectivity, and agency. This investigation has attempted to analyse and comprehend the complex relationships between these sociological ideas.

The discussion of Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field, and capital emphasised their significance for understanding the dynamics of language learning in educational settings. This discussion supports an examination of students' habitus, field, and capital and their impact on language learning and classroom participation. This theoretical framework provides analytical information regarding the relationships between societal issues and educational practices, particularly with regard to Saudi female students in the preparatory year. The chapter also has provided an explanation of how Bourdieu's sociology is applied to this study and how it supports comprehension of the intricate realities of language acquisition.

The chapter also integrated Foucault's ideas of knowledge, power, discourse, subjectivity, and agency to analyse the complex issues of language learning in academic contexts. Foucault's theoretical concepts highlight the ways in which power shapes identities and knowledge, in this case during the process of acquiring a language. The chapter also highlighted the significant influence of societal structures and power dynamics on language learning by looking at the dominant discourses in educational settings and how they shape learners' experiences and engagements. The complexity of gender issues in educational and larger societal contexts is also considered in this study.

The essential concepts covered in this chapter are summarised in the diagram below, which provides a clear representation of how these concepts relate to one another and influence the analysis of female students' participation in language learning.

The diagram below (Figure 3) illustrates the theoretical framework integrating Bourdieusian and Foucauldian concepts to analyze gendered behaviour and participation among Saudi female students learning English. Bourdieu's framework includes habitus, which refers to ingrained dispositions shaped by social experiences, field, representing social contexts governed by power dynamics, and capital, comprising cultural, social, economic, and symbolic forms that influence an individual's status. These concepts are applied to explain social reproduction and inequality in English language learning. On the other hand, Foucault's framework emphasizes the role of discourse, which reinforces or challenges gender norms, power, as it relates to control over classroom dynamics, and agency and resistance, exploring how individuals resist societal norms, such as female students' reticence. The interaction of these two frameworks highlights how gendered behaviour and social power shape classroom participation, with Bourdieu's ideas explaining classroom practices and Foucault's concepts clarifying power and resistance dynamics. This combined approach provides a comprehensive analysis of the sociocultural and institutional factors affecting female students' oral participation in Saudi EFL classrooms.

Figure 3

The interaction between Bourdieu's and Foucault's Theories



Chapter 4 will describe the methodological approaches used to conduct this study. This will also include an explanation of the research design, data collection, and analytical strategies used in this study.

Chapter Four

Research Methods and Design

This chapter outlines the research approach and provides a rationale for this study investigating students' reticence in the context of a Saudi university classroom. This study examined and investigated reticence in order to understand the factors that lead to female students' reluctance to participate orally in English classroom lessons. This chapter details the design and methodology used in this thesis. It describes the methodological approach that informed the study, the research design, data collection methods, and data analysis. The chapter also discusses the context of the study, the participants, ethical considerations, and the role of the researcher. This study is underpinned by one overarching question and two sub-questions, as detailed below:

- What factors influence students' oral participation in EFL classrooms in Saudi Arabia?

Sub-questions:

- What are students' perceptions of oral engagement and how does this influence their disposition towards participation?
- What influence do curriculum and pedagogy have on students' oral participation?

Research Paradigms that Informed the Research Process

A number of research paradigms informed the methodology of this research, consistent with the characteristics of high-quality research (Creswell, 2013; Hesse-Biber, 2010). Both ontology and epistemology play an important role in understanding theoretical perspectives and the principles underlying any field of inquiry. Ontology refers to "the nature of reality

and its characteristics” (Creswell, 2013, p. 20). This includes “the worldviews and assumptions in which researchers operate in their search for new knowledge” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 190). Ontology attempts to make sense of reality and existence. On the other hand, epistemology is concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge. It questions what knowledge is and how it can be acquired. Ontology and epistemology are inseparable, and they influence the shaping of inquiries. Therefore, there are different ways of viewing the world and equally different approaches to discovering knowledge (Nguyen & Chia, 2023).

Quantitative and qualitative paradigms are underpinned by different ontological and epistemological assumptions. Hence, methods adopted to research a phenomenon can involve opposing assumptions about the nature of the social world (ontology) and how it can be understood (i.e., epistemology; Hammersley, 2008, p. 27). The view that these opposing assumptions necessitate different research approaches has been the source of ongoing methodological debates (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2014; Erzberger & Kelle, 2003; Hammersley, 2008; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011). Deciding to choose between transferability in qualitative research and generalisation in quantitative research is a reflection of the distinct nature and goals of both research paradigms.

In considering these dimensions, this study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection (questionnaire and interviews) to investigate English as a foreign language (EFL) Saudi female students’ reticence to engage in oral participation in the English classroom. It is important for researchers to have a clear rationale for choosing a mixed-methods approach (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008). The mixed-methods approach makes use of the benefits of combining both paradigms (Bergman, 2008). It enables researchers to achieve a fuller picture of the investigated phenomenon by offering more depth

than a qualitative or quantitative approach alone; this helps inform a better understanding of the research issue or problem (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

A growing number of scholars argue that using different types of data, or a mixed-methods approach, provides complementary information that sheds light on a phenomenon and allows researchers to make valid interpretations (e.g., Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2014; Hammersley, 2008; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011). Although this study used a mixed-methods approach, qualitative analysis was mostly applied. A mixed-methods approach that focuses on qualitative data analysis is an effective choice for researchers who want to gain an in-depth understanding of complicated phenomena, particularly in the social sciences and human behaviour domains. This method is recommended for its capacity to yield research findings that are both deep and comprehensive. Qualitative analysis provides a deeper comprehension of the underlying meanings behind the data, which is essential for thorough findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015).

Moreover, understanding reality in social settings can be a challenging and contentious task at times. There are two basic perspectives (paradigms) on this reality: positivist/quantitative and interpretive/constructivist (Hammersley, 2008). Choosing the research paradigm that is most suited for the specific investigation requires understanding the three assumptions of each paradigm. A number of authors, including Arthur et al. (2012), Birks and Mills (2011), and Guba and Lincoln (1994), pose the following three questions: what is the nature of reality (ontology), how can knowledge be gained (methodology), and what is the relationship between the researcher and the participants (epistemology)? Since the objective of my study is to examine the complex phenomenon of Saudi students' reluctance to participate orally in EFL classes, my research fits into an interpretive/constructivist paradigm. The interpretive/constructivist paradigm uses individual perceptions to analyse social behaviours.

Rather than existing as a stable, objective thing, it asserts that reality is created via interactions and interpretations (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The necessity to investigate social, cultural, and personal impacts from the students' points of view is emphasised. This is important for analysing complicated, context-dependent topics such as the reticence of Saudi students in EFL classes.

From an ontological perspective, this research takes the position that classroom participation reality is socially generated and highly individualistic, rather than static or globally objective. This viewpoint aligns with the constructivist model described by Creswell and Creswell (2017), which holds that meaning is created through both individual cognition and social interactions. Here, reality is subjective and highly influenced by the unique learning environments of each student as well as by their socio-educational settings (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). From an epistemological perspective, the study encourages a mutually beneficial relationship between the researcher and the participants. The study places participants as co-constructors of knowledge, rather than just as subjects to be observed. This viewpoint is consistent with the updated work of Denzin and Lincoln (2018), which promotes co-creation of knowledge in the interpretive paradigm. Rather than obtaining data in a unidirectional manner, the focus is on deeply understanding the lived experiences, attitudes, and interpretations of the individuals engaged in the research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

The constructivist/interpretive paradigm aligns with this study's research questions, which seek to identify the complex factors impacting students' oral participation, their perspectives, and the role of curriculum and pedagogy. This method allows me to explore in detail not only why students are reluctant, but also how they interpret the value of participation, how social norms and expectations shape this interpretation, and how the curriculum and pedagogical environment either encourage or inhibit these influences from their perspectives.

Research Design:

In this research, combining the findings from the questionnaire and the interviews increased the construct, concurrent and convergent validity of the research as the same trait was measured via different methods, thus enhancing the trustworthiness of the analysis (Gorard & Taylor, 2004). Using both a questionnaire and interviews in the study improves the reliability and validity of the results. The qualitative methods in this study were applicable to capturing lived experiences and perceptions from participants, while the quantitative data yielded statistical results. Integrating the two sets of data produced a comprehensive understanding of issues and challenges regarding female students' reticence to participate in spoken activities in the English classroom. The questionnaire instrument was chosen since this is an effective method for collecting data from a large number of participants (Judd et al., 1991), supplementing the data from the interviews, which provided for a more thorough investigation of the research topic. To answer the research questions, data were collected from two groups of stakeholders, namely students and teachers, using a questionnaire and semi-structured individual interviews. The research aims and questions dictated the methods and approaches adopted to conduct this study (Bergman, 2008; Hesse-Biber, 2010; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008).

Moreover, by combining two data sources—in this case, a questionnaire and interviews—a more complete image of the topic was established (Guest et al., 2012), and this, in turn, increased the explanatory power of the research findings. The qualitative data and analysis assisted in the development, refinement, and explanation of statistical results derived from quantitative data; for example, the questionnaire contained questions aimed to assess the topics associated with students' reticence to participate orally. Divergence involved examining differences to comprehend the complexity of students' hesitation, whereas convergence was defined as obtaining consistent results across both approaches. Lastly,

themes from interviews were verified against questionnaire using confirmation, and vice versa (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008). This procedure was essential for verifying the findings' accuracy and reliability, as well as their ability to accurately capture the nuances of students' participation in EFL classes.

This study takes into account how generalisation differs in quantitative and qualitative research, based on the differences in the purposes and approaches of these two methods. According to Lincoln et al. (2018), transferability is the aim of qualitative research, which evaluates how well findings apply to comparable situations using information gathered from various data-gathering techniques such as interviews, questionnaires, and participant observation. On the other hand, quantitative research aims to generalise findings to a wider population (Popper, 2004). This study integrates both quantitative and qualitative methods; it uses descriptive statistical analysis on data from a sample of 100 participants gathered using a questionnaire to generalise findings, and interview data from 20 participants to provide greater insights into their experiences and perceptions of the phenomenon under investigation. Therefore, the broader implications of the quantitative data are clarified and refined by the qualitative insights.

Justification for the Mixed-Methods Approach

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews and quantitative questionnaires to investigate Saudi female students' reticence in EFL classrooms. The rationale for this approach lies in its ability to capture both statistical patterns and in-depth insights, offering a fuller understanding of the phenomenon. By using both methods, the study achieves a balance between broader generalizations from quantitative data and rich, context-specific insights from qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

The mixed-methods approach is further strengthened by applying a sociological lens, through Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and capital and Foucault's notions of discourse and power. These theories emphasize the influence of social structures on individual behaviours, making them well-suited for exploring how students' socio-cultural backgrounds and classroom interactions shape their oral participation.

The quantitative data was treated inductively, allowing patterns to emerge through statistical tests like chi-square, revealing relationships between variables such as parental education and participation frequency. Findings indicated a significant correlation between non-curricular English courses and students' willingness to participate, aligning with Bourdieu's idea of linguistic capital influencing behaviour. In contrast, the qualitative data was analyzed deductively, using Bourdieu and Foucault's frameworks to explore themes such as power relations and student dispositions. This deductive approach helped uncover how classroom power dynamics and cultural influences impact students' reticence in oral participation.

Using both methods enhances the validity of the study by triangulating findings. While the quantitative data provides generalizable patterns, the qualitative insights give depth to those patterns, ensuring the findings are both reliable and contextually rich. This combination ensures that the study not only identifies trends but also explains them through the lens of social theory.

The Research Setting:

Context of the Study

Participants were selected from a university in the northern region of Saudi Arabia. Due to gender segregation in the Saudi schooling system, and for religious and cultural reasons, the participants in this study were all females. The study first investigated factors that impacted

the oral participation of female students in their preparatory year at the university and, second, explored teachers' and students' perceptions about the importance of oral participation in English classrooms. The study also investigated the influence of pedagogy and practice on the students' oral participation.

The preparatory year is compulsory for all university students in Saudi Arabia to prepare students to complete their undergraduate degree with professionalism and distinction. This year was chosen as the focus for this study as it aims to help students obtain various skills in learning, communicating, and improving their English language skills (students' grade point average during the preparatory year determines their final admission into different colleges at the university).

The university was chosen as the site for the study because I had an in-depth knowledge of this institution; I was teaching there and had access to the teachers who were approached to participate in this study. Professional networks and contacts facilitated the recruitment of participants and enabled greater access to the university for the study. This also facilitated all other necessary arrangements, such as permission from the university to conduct the research.

Participant Recruitment

The study sample included both teachers and students. Teachers and students participated in the interviews, while only students participated in the questionnaire. Data collection was intended to be face-to-face; however, due to COVID-19 and travel restrictions in Australia, the data were gathered online.

The process of recruiting the students was challenging and took longer than expected. Potential participants received an information letter once the study had been permitted by the university. Information about consent was transmitted over WhatsApp and was signed by the

participants. I first emailed the link of the questionnaire to the preparatory year coordinator, who then forwarded it to students via WhatsApp. As recruitment was difficult, I also asked the coordinator of the English course in the preparatory year to include me in the class WhatsApp group to help me recruit more students. I recorded a voice message for the students in which I urged them to participate and discussed the significance and goal of the study. It took a long time to receive responses. Students could access the questionnaire through qualtrics.com. There was also a cover letter, written in both Arabic and English. The letter described the study's purpose and students' rights as participants.

Students who consented to an interview were requested to include their contact information in the questionnaire. The majority of questionnaire students did not provide contact information for a follow-up interview. As a result, I requested students who had consented to interviews to persuade their peers to take part by highlighting the ease of interview, including emphasising that it would be conducted in Arabic as many students were reluctant to participate because they thought the interviews would be in English. Fewer than the expected number of students took part in the study. Twenty students participated in the interviews, and not all of these students had completed the questionnaire. The interviews were conducted via Zoom for duration of 20–30 minutes. Of the English preparatory class teachers who were asked to take part in the interviews, five of the six teachers invited agreed to participate in the research and consented to an interview. Given the 8-hour time difference between the participants in Saudi Arabia and my own location in Australia, participants were asked to select the time for their interview. Data collection started in October 2020 and ended in February 2021.

Students

The student participants in this study comprised 100 female students from all four classes (each class includes about 30 students) from the university's preparatory year, all of whom had studied English for at least 9 years starting from Year 4. This stage was chosen because students at this level are expected to have a reasonable level of English and satisfactory speaking skills since they were going to enrol in a bachelor's degree the following year. All participants were ensured of their anonymity and confidentiality before data collection in order to respect ethical norms. This was accomplished by providing each participant with a pseudonym and making sure that all personally identifiable information was omitted or modified from the transcripts and analysis.

Teachers

All participating teachers taught English language for the preparatory year. They held master's degree in various fields, including curriculum, methodologies, applied linguistics, translation, Teaching English as a Foreign Language TFEL, and English literature. Their teaching experience varied from a minimum of 2 years to a maximum of 11 years. Three teachers were Saudi while two were from Pakistan (see Table 1 below for participant information).

Table 1*Teachers' Demographic Data*

Name	Nationality	Qualifications	Teaching Experience	L1
Siham	Saudi	MA in Curriculum Methodologies for Teaching English to Adult Students, Canada	3 years	Arabic
Ameenah	Saudi	MA in Applied Linguistics and TESOL, UK	2 years	Arabic
Doha	Saudi	MA in Translation Studies, UK	2 years	Arabic
Nahed	Pakistani	MA in TOFEL, Pakistan	11 years	Urdu
Hana'a	Pakistani	MA in English and literature and TEOFL and ILTS Diploma, Pakistan	2 years	Urdu

Note: pseudonyms for the teacher's names have been used to protect their identities

Data Collection**Questionnaire**

The questionnaire instrument in this study served the following goals: 1) to provide more context and knowledge of participants' backgrounds before the interview, and 2) to explore participants' opinions about the reasons for students' reticence in participating in English discussions. The questionnaire aimed to provide a better understanding of students' perspectives and experiences of speaking up in the English class (the complete list of questions can be seen in Appendix M).

The Questions

In order to create an appropriate and relevant questionnaire that was suitable for my research context, I reviewed and modified a number of questionnaires that had previously been used to

in studies that examined some elements of students' reticence (Aleissa, 2018; Khadidja, 2010; Wiratama Pranasti, 2013).

The questionnaire included demographic questions that provided information about the participants and their personal characteristics such as age, grade point average (GPA), and parents' level of education. This section also asked participants for details of any English courses they had completed. This information helped to establish how such factors may have influenced the students' level of participation. For example, do students who have a high GPA or those whose parents have higher degrees participate more than others? In the questionnaire, four open-ended questions asked participants to respond in their own words using a free-response text box option. These open-ended questions helped to identify factors that may have affected participation (see Appendix M).

The questionnaire had multiple-choice questions covering a range of topics. Closed and open-ended questions (as noted above) were also included in the questionnaire. According to Nunan (1992), questionnaires may include short answers; for example, how old are you? Other closed questions included a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = strongly disagree, 5 = disagree). Likert scales were applied to the questions in this study to measure students' attitudes by asking them to express how much they agreed or disagreed with a statement. This is a way to easily operationalise their perceptions and traits relevant to the research topic (Gay et al., 2009). Students were also asked to rate their English ability on a scale (excellent, very good, good, poor), which helped to indicate their self-perceptions of their own level of ability. This question sought to evaluate the student's perceptions of their knowledge of English and rate their proficiency level in the four macro skills: writing, reading, listening, and speaking. These questions also aimed to gather information about the students' wider perspectives about their abilities in English; for

example, how they feel, and their confidence levels and enjoyment during classes. Engaging students in reflecting on their competence across macro skills enabled the investigation of particular connections between one or more macro skills and students' oral participation. Yes/No questions were also used in this study, as such questions provide more complete information since the participants had to answer each item singularly (Nicolaas et al., 2015). Examples included: Do you continue speaking in English during the English lesson even when you make mistakes? Do you think that listening to the English language is important for oral participation? How do you feel when you speak English in the class? Such questions provided a deep impression of the students' experience and feelings about speaking up in English classes; choosing from only two available choices made it easier for the students to express their opinions without confusion (see Appendix M).

While closed questions are simple to answer and the responses are easy to analyse, there are disadvantages to closed questionnaire questions as well. According to Oppenheim (1992), because participants may feel compelled to select from the researcher's alternative claims, it is impossible to determine what they would actually have stated or their real opinions. A researcher can include "other" or "please specify" questions at the end of the questionnaire to help participants express themselves if they do not find an answer that reflects their opinions. I made an effort to include a variety of questions and response options in the questionnaire, including rating scales (closed questions), open-ended questions, and multiple-choice questions. I made choices such as the selection of closed questions, for example, because these questions require brief, check-mark answers; my choice was motivated by their ease of use, the minimal processing time they require, their advantages in maintaining respondent focus, the relative objectivity they offer, and the ease of sorting and analysing the data produced (Best & Kahn, 1989). In addition, since closed questions have a specific set of responses, the limited scope of responses can ensure consistency and help remove ambiguity.

Conversely, open-ended questions were included as they allow respondents to add comments or an explanation of their responses, where closed questions do not allow for any of those things. Open-ended questions allow respondents to freely add their responses to select items and provide an explanation.

Interviews

Since the study aimed to explore teachers' and students' opinions, perceptions, and views, an open-ended interview was an appropriate data collection tool. Moreover, the interview data would supplement the questionnaire data and enable me to gain a deeper understanding of students' and teachers' experiences and perceptions concerning oral participation and engagement in English lessons (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). I used a semi-structured interview; while similar to structured interviews, these allow greater flexibility (Patton, 1990). The interview was in Arabic to make participants more relaxed and less anxious in answering interview questions. This helped avoid misunderstandings and provided participants with more freedom to answer and explain their ideas. All the interviews were audio recorded and the audio answers transcribed and translated into English.

The questions were open-ended so that I could get as much information as needed to investigate students' reticence. I could get richer data because semi-structured interviews are flexible. This approach provided more opportunities for me, as the interviewer, to raise follow-up questions. Semi-structured individual interviews provided data that captured the more nuanced layers of participants' views. This method generated complicated responses, which enhanced the data although demanded careful interpretation to understand the depth of students' reluctance. Interviews were conducted with both students and teachers to collect data and acquire in-depth knowledge of the social world from the students' and teachers'

perspectives. Interviews provide an opportunity for individuals “to express how they regard situations from their own point of view” (Cohen et al., 2013, p. 349).

Punch (2009) considers interviews as a very good way of accessing people’s perceptions, meanings, and definitions of situations and constructions of reality. They are also one of the most powerful ways we have of understanding others’ views (p. 144). Asking open-ended questions also helps the researcher to establish rapport with participants, and this can encourage participants to answer questions and address any misunderstandings by seeking clarification (Cohen et al., 2011).

Students’ Interviews

My initial target was 30 interviews, as this would be representative of preparatory year classes, but only 20 students participated. However, the aim for phenomenological studies is to explore individuals’ experience rather than getting more participants. Having just a few interviewees (six to ten) is sufficient in qualitative studies (Morse, 1994; Starks & Trinidad, 2007) although common recommendations for qualitative research vary from 20 to 50 interviews (Ritchie et al., 2003). Accordingly, having a few deeper interviews may provide more relevant data than a greater number of less in-depth ones. The samples in this research are not meant to represent large populations. Instead, small and purposeful samples of articulate respondents were used since they can provide useful information relevant to the aims of the study.

I took notes during the interviews, which helped me gain a better understanding of participant responses. Some participants gave very short answers whereas others gave more detailed responses, and in some cases I needed to remind them of the question. Participants were asked to provide detailed answers to a range of questions (for the students’ and teachers’ interview questions, see Appendix N and Appendix O, respectively) related to their

perceptions and experiences concerning oral participation and reticence in the preparatory year. The open-ended questions were divided into five sections, with each having a particular focus.

The first section of the students' interview asked about participants' English language proficiency. For example: What do you think about students' reluctance to speak up? What is your level of English? Have you taken any non-curriculum English course? How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions? When are you motivated to speak up in the English class? (See Appendix N). The second section asked about factors that impact students' oral participation such as: Which topics encourage you to participate? How do you feel when you speak up? , What do you think is the main factor for students' reluctance to speak up? The third section included questions about students' personalities. For example: Do you think you are a shy person? How do you feel when you speak English in the classroom? Do you continue speaking English if you make mistakes? The fourth section asked students' opinions about learning English, such as: What do you think about the importance of oral participation? Does the teacher influence the students' participation in oral activities? Do you think that the teacher's teaching style influences students' participation? The final section asked for suggestions and recommendations to improve oral participation in the classroom. Prompts were provided, such as: Do you have any suggestions for improving the curriculum? What do you think about the curriculum? Do you have any suggestions for strategies to enhance speaking skills? Those questions were followed by additional questions that aimed to further explore some of the issues that participants raised.

Teachers' Interviews

The teachers were asked open-ended questions (see Appendix O). The interview comprised five sections. The first section asked about teachers' backgrounds and experiences. For

example, What is your qualification? How long have you been teaching? The second section was about teaching methods and curriculum, such as: What teaching method do you use? Are the speaking activities in the book sufficient? What do you think about the influence of the curriculum on students' oral participation? The third section included questions about the students' participation, such as: What's your perspective about the importance of oral participation in the English classroom? What motivates the students to participate? The fourth section asked about teachers' perspectives on the research topic: What do you think are reasons behind students' reticence to speak up? Could you suggest any strategies to motivate the students to participate?

Data Analysis of the Questionnaire:

Analysis of Closed Questions

The first step in the analysis was determining the basic frequency. In descriptive statistics, frequency denotes the number of occurrences of each value of a variable (Gay et al., 2009). These are simple counts of the number of individuals answering each question. The next stage was to undertake cross-tabulations which showed how answers to one question varied with answers to another question (Cohen et al., 2007). The closed questions were analysed by running descriptive statistical coding. Descriptive statistics are numbers that are used to summarise and describe data through percentages, averages, and amounts in tables or diagrams (Trochim, 2006). This involved reading through the data and coding each answer. The individual codes were then summarised to represent the data.

During the collection and analysis of data, it is essential for the researcher to engage deeply with the material, including translation, which is a crucial step in multilingual research (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Translation is not a mechanical process but an interpretive act,

requiring sensitivity to both linguistic and cultural nuances. In this study, the translation of questionnaire responses from Arabic to English was done to convey meaning, not word-for-word accuracy, acknowledging the syntactical and idiomatic differences between the two languages (Filep, 2009). According to Goitom's (2020), translation mediates the interpretation of meaning. Hence, I approached this process with attention to preserving the participants' intended meanings. To mitigate bias and loss of nuance, I read and re-read responses in Arabic before translating them, ensuring that the emotive tone and cultural context were maintained (McKenna, 2022).

After translating and transcribing the questionnaire answers into English from Arabic, each participant's answers were downloaded as an Excel spreadsheet and exported to SPSS (Version 27). Demographic and scale-based responses were coded numerically, ensuring that each translated response remained linked to the original Arabic context. This process aligns with Goitom's (2020) emphasis on safeguarding meaning during translation. Translation involves power dynamics, shaping the interpretation of responses (McKenna, 2022). I addressed this by switching between the Arabic and English texts to maintain trustworthiness to the original responses. Culturally specific expressions were either explained or annotated to provide context, following best practices in multilingual research (Goitom, 2020).

A numerical code was assigned to each question. The demographic questions and those that asked for numerical data (e.g., How old are you?) were entered. The coding of questions that included ordered categories, particularly those using scales (e.g., What is your parents' level of education? "No formal education, primary school, intermediate school, high school, bachelor, master, doctorate") were also assigned a numeric code (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4) for each possible answer. This enabled the data entered into the computer to be linked to the actual question in the questionnaire.

Every choice was given a number, resulting in a score for every respondent. Comparing responses from various respondents as well as within individual datasets was made easier by this scoring system. The order of the answers was also reflected in the order of codes given to each answer. The gaps between each code were not equal; this is a known characteristic of ordinal data (i.e., data that indicates order, such as first to last, smallest to largest, etc.) as opposed to nominal data (Cohen et al., 2007). Nominal data is data where the codes allocated to the categories are purely nominal; that is, the numbers themselves do not mean anything numerically nor is any sort of order implied by the numbers. The codes are there simply to act as numeric labels for each of the discrete categories. For example, the question “Do you continue speaking in English in the classroom even if you make a mistake?” can be nominally coded as Yes “1” and No “2.” The codes “1” and “2” do not mean anything numerically; they simply signify there are two different answers. For questions that used a Likert scale, responses were entered using the number of the given response (i.e., 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for neither agree nor disagree, 2 for disagree, and 1 for strongly disagree).

After the data were entered in Excel, they were exported to SPSS (version 27) software to be analysed, summarised, and described. Using statistical analysis helps to keep the researcher close to the data (Punch, 2009, p. 128). Chi-square and correlation tests were applied to further data analysis, as will be explained below. The analysed data was represented in tables to promote clarity in understanding and indicate the frequency of responses.

Chi-Square Tests

Chi-square tests between variables were also run to identify how different factors may have influenced students’ reticence and oral participation in the English classroom. Chi-square tests were chosen to show whether qualitative variables are related to other qualitative

variables. Accordingly, these tests enabled researchers to compare observed results with expected results. The purpose of these tests was to determine if a difference between observed data and expected data was due to chance or to a relationship between the variables. A chi-square test helps researchers understand and interpret the relationship between two categorical variables (Turhan, 2020). In this study 10 chi-square tests were conducted. These are listed below in Table 2, which also summarises the correlations examined in the questionnaire about students' oral participation. Items 1–3 in the table show that there was not a significant correlation between parental educational level and the frequency of participation by the participants; nevertheless, there was a significant relationship between frequency of participation and both studying English non-curriculum courses and beliefs about the importance of oral engagement. There was no significant relationship between age and either participation frequency or GPA (items 4 and 5). The participants' feelings about speaking English and making mistakes were the focus of items 6, 7, 9, and 10, with various levels of significance. Item 8 indicates that there was no significant correlation between participants' belief in participation-related proficiency and their willingness to continue speaking English even when they make mistakes.

Table 2

Chi-Square Tests

No.	Correlations	Results
1	The participants' frequency of participation in correlation to their parents' level of education	No Significant relationship
2	The frequency of participation in correlation to undertaking non-curriculum English courses	Significant relationship
3	The frequency of participation in correlation to the importance of oral participation	Significant relationship

4	The age of the participants in correlation to their GPA	No significant relationship
5	The age of participants in correlation to the frequency of their participation in the classroom	No significant relationship
6	The participants' feelings about speaking English in the classroom in correlation to continuing to speak English when making mistakes	Significant relationship
7	The participants' feelings about speaking English in the classroom in correlation to believing or not that students who participate are better than students who do not participate	No significant relationship
8	The participants' willingness to continue speaking in English even when making mistakes in correlation to the belief that students who participate are more proficient in English than students who do not participate	No significant relationship
9	Feelings about speaking in English in correlation to (continuing speaking in English even when making mistakes) in correlation to (believing or not that those who participate are better than those who do not participate)	No significant relationship
10	The participants' feelings when the teacher corrects their mistakes correlated to continuing to speak in English even when making mistakes	Significant relationship

Note. The table shows the relationships between variables. Six out of the 10 chi-square tests showed no correlation with other variables. These were responses 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9. However, four out of the ten tests revealed a significant relationship: responses, 2, 3, 6, and 10. More details and explanations about the chi-square test will be presented in the next findings chapter.

Open-Ended Questions Analysis: Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. There are many different ways to approach TA (Alhojailan, 2012; Boyatzis, 1998; Javadi & Zarea, 2016) which is particularly suited to interview data (Saldaña, 2013). Saldaña

states that TA is a strategic choice that considers the theoretical framework, the literature review, and the overarching goals of the research and contributing questions. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that it is the first qualitative method that should be learned, as “it provides core skills that will be useful for conducting many other kinds of analysis” (p. 78). In this study, I followed Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phases framework, an influential approach that offers researchers a clear and usable process for conducting thematic analysis. This method provides a flexible and structured approach for evaluating complicated human experiences, which not only improves understanding of the data but also supports the validity of the research findings.

Phase one: Familiarisation With the Data and Translations

It is important for the researcher to actively engage with the data when collecting and analysing them, even though the researcher will already be familiar with these collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This phase includes two stages: familiarisation with the data and translation. This translation involved translating directly to convey the meaning and not word by word, as diversities in the syntactical structure of the two languages (Arabic to English) may exist when gathering data (Filep, 2009). I thoroughly read and re-read the comments to understand the nuances, fully immersing myself in the data. This phase also included making a note of any initial thoughts or noteworthy findings. I started coding by highlighting features of the data that seemed interesting and related to the study questions. Repeatedly, I worked to improve the codes to convey the essence of what each data segment conveyed. Figure 3 below shows how codes were applied to data, using as an example the analysis of responses to the question: How do you feel when you speak in the English classroom?

Figure 4

Coding Open-Ended Question Responses: Example

How do you feel when you speak English in the class?				
Responses	Repetition	Themes	Codes	Statistics
confident	6	positive attitudes	1	12
confused	9	negative attitudes	2	32
proud	3			
happy	2			
motivated	1			
embarrassed	1			
nervous	8			
not interested	1			
shy	12			

Note. In this question (How do you feel when you speak in English class?) the open-ended responses were collapsed into two themes: positive and negative attitudes. Positive attitudes included happy, confident, and motivated. Negative attitudes included shy, not interested, and embarrassed. Each attitude was coded according to how often it was repeated. Using the frequency of positive and negative attitudes helped in data analysis by making the connection between the students' attitudes and how they influence students' oral participation in English classroom.

Phase Two: Generating Themes

Coding can be described as a process of data analysis in which the data are gathered, divided, and integrated to create a theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This coding can be seen as a type of content analysis whose purpose is to discover and delineate essential issues emerging from the large quantity of data (Moghaddam, 2006). During the analysis of the interviews, I concentrated on the participants' answers that most directly related to the study's objectives. This involved recognising sections of the answers that provided significant insights into the key concepts or issues that the study aimed to comprehend (Moghaddam, 2006).

Any item of data that might be useful in addressing the research questions was coded. Through repeated iterations of coding and further familiarisation, I could identify which codes were conducive to interpreting themes and which could be discarded. I documented the progression of the codes through iterations of coding to track the evolution of codes and of prospective themes.

All the codes were reviewed to identify similarities, and then categories were created to generate a more comprehensive narrative. In this analytical stage, I looked at how codes could come together to create a meaningful pattern. Based on the reflections of the participants, codes were developed and then grouped into patterns and themes (Blair, 2015). To make sure they appropriately reflected the coded data and the complete dataset, themes were developed around responses, such as, “feeling when speaking English,” “lack of English proficiency,” “and “teacher–student interaction.” For example, one theme that frequently appeared in the data collected in response to the question, “What is the main barrier to students’ oral participation?” was the participants’ perceptions of their lack of English knowledge. Additionally, student–teacher interaction provided insights into the influence of pedagogy on students’ oral participation. The repetitive process of this step of the analysis ensured a deep understanding of the participants’ viewpoints and experiences by allowing themes to be modified and developed to represent the data effectively.

After identifying individual codes, the method moved on to combining these into bigger categories, which was followed by checking for repeated patterns that may suggest themes. At this point in the thematic development process, the process moved from just looking for themes in the data to identifying themes, which were then given names that accurately reflected their main ideas.

Phase Three: Searching for Themes

This involved collapsing multiple codes that shared a similar underlying concept or feature of the data into one single category. It is important to re-emphasise that themes do not reside in the data, waiting to be found. Rather, I construed the relationship among the different codes and examined how this relationship might inform the narrative of a given theme. It was important to make codes communicate something meaningful that helps answer the research

questions (Braun & Clarke, 2013). At this point in the analysis, I assembled codes into initial themes. I then determined some codes and themes in light of the research questions and clustered the open codes. This meant similar codes were grouped together to find patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Coding facilitated the sorting of the data into categories that shared similar characteristics, leading to the identification of patterns. Interpretation included validating and defining themes to ensure that those themes explained the phenomenon of reticence and were relevant to the research questions. Each theme was defined and named in a way that accurately reflected its basic ideas, making it possible to differentiate it from other themes. Every topic was then carefully examined for coherence to see if it created a pattern that was constant throughout the data collection. For example, lack of English proficiency was a dominant theme that offered answers to the overarching question and was a factor that influenced oral participation.

Phase Four: Reviewing Themes

The analysis conducted at this phase involved two levels of review. Level one was a review of the relationships among the data items and codes that inform each theme. If the codes form a coherent pattern, it can be assumed that the theme supports the emergence of a logical argument and may contribute to the overall narrative of the data. At level two, the candidate themes were reviewed in relation to the dataset. Themes were assessed as to how well they provided the most appropriate interpretation of the data in relation to the research questions. Essentially, these two levels of review functioned to demonstrate that codes were appropriate to inform a theme, and that a theme was appropriate to inform the interpretation of the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

I made a thorough examination of every theme to determine its limits and main ideas. Throughout this process, the themes were carefully examined to define their nuances and scope. Each theme has a name that was picked with care to reflect its essential aspects while also being descriptive and meaningful. This is an important stage because it helps define each theme accurately and makes sure that the insights obtained from the data are appropriately conveyed through the themes. The clarity and accuracy of the analysis were improved by the careful defining and labelling the themes; for example, students' attitudes towards oral participation and barriers to oral participation.

Phase Five: Defining and Naming Themes

The final refinement of the themes aimed to “identify the ‘essence’ of what each theme is about” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92). What is the theme saying? If there are subthemes, how do they interact and relate to the main theme? How do the themes relate to each other?

I evaluated the themes of the research questions and the study as a whole. Themes were carefully defined and given names that reflected their fundamental concepts. Themes were created to capture the experiences and viewpoints of the participants, such as “feelings when speaking English” and “impact of teacher–student interaction.”

Phase Six: Producing the Report

My goal in reporting was to create a persuasive narrative using well-chosen data extracts to highlight the importance of each theme and convey a narrative of the participants' experiences. This reporting was done using detailed examples to support the analytical framework and telling the story of the data in an engaging way to illustrate the themes. More details on this phase will be presented in the interview analysis section.

Data Analysis of the Interviews

For the interview analysis, I continued using Braun and Clarke's (2006) TA procedure to explore the interviewees' experiences and perspectives.

Phase One: Familiarisation With the Data, Transcriptions and Translations

I started this phase by listening to the audio recordings of the interviews and by reading each transcription to gain an understanding of the main ideas or opinions expressed by the interviewees; I tried to tease out what was happening and made notes and jotted down early impressions. The use of appropriate audio recording of oral interviews to gather data (as used in this study) usually requires transcription to a textual format in order to employ TA (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Gale et al., 2013). While the process of transcribing the interviews takes considerable time, this can contribute to familiarisation with the data (Gale et al., 2013). I transcribed all interviews manually, immersing myself in the data and avoiding the involvement of any other transcribers to ensure that the transcription was correct. Manual transcription of data was a very useful activity for me as it facilitated a deep immersion into the data. When transcription of all interviews was complete, I translated the interviews and then read each translated transcript numerous times. This was necessary to be able to identify appropriate information that could be relevant to the research questions. This phase was quite time-consuming and required a degree of patience. Once all these procedures had been carried out, I was then ready to formally begin coding.

Phase Two: Generating Initial Codes

In terms of coding, I reviewed the data several times to look for other codes that might rise in addition to the ones that were first found by the examination of the questionnaire data (Moghaddam, 2006). An extensive analysis of the data for any new themes or patterns was

ensured by this repeated method. In coding the responses of the students and teachers, I aimed to identify “theoretical conceptions” (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). For example, I used the codes “symbolic power of the English language,” “students’ dispositions towards the use of English language,” “students’ agency and habitus,” and “power relations between teachers and students.” As an illustration, of the “symbolic power of the English language” code, I was referring to Bourdieu’s theory that explains how language may convey status and power in a social setting. Similarly, “students’ dispositions towards the use of English language” was coded through an examination of the attitudes and beliefs that students personally reflected in their views and interactions with the language. “Students’ agency and habitus” examined how students’ social and cultural backgrounds shaped their behaviour as they learned English. “power relations between teachers and students” were categorised by examining the dynamics in the classroom as detailed by participants, especially how power was realised in teaching instruction. Using this method ensured that the coding was firmly based on the theoretical frameworks that directed the study.

I worked systematically through the entire dataset, attending to each data item with equal consideration, and identifying aspects of data items that were interesting and that could be informative in developing themes. The main aim of the first round of coding was to find and highlight important words that were repeated frequently in the data (Moghaddam, 2006). Throughout this procedure, the comments were carefully read, and important phrases or words that were frequently mentioned were noted. This initial coding is important because it establishes the framework for creating themes by identifying common issues or ideas. Classifying the data in such a way helped to develop more relevant themes. The ongoing process of coding assisted me in identifying how frequently important ideas appeared and to better understand what the data were attempting to present.

A brief excerpt of the initial coding process of one participant’s interview transcript is presented in Figure 4. The preliminary iteration of coding was conducted using the “comments” function in Microsoft Word. This allowed codes to be noted in the side margin, while also highlighting the area of text assigned to each respective code. Initial codes included, for example, group work, peer work, lack of English knowledge, not interested in the language, positive attitude when speaking up, and negative attitude.

Figure 5

Initial Coding Process

<p>Do you enjoy studying the language? Yes, I do, so much! It helps me <u>improve myself.</u></p>	<p>Comment [FA1]: Importance of the language</p>
<p>When do you speak and participate? When <u>I talk about myself or about something I have an idea about</u> and when <u>I know the answer.</u> I sometimes speak although I don't know the answer.</p>	<p>Comment [FA2]: Importance of the language</p>
<p>Does that mean the topic of the lesson motivates the students? <u>Yes.</u></p>	<p>Comment [FA3]: topics</p>
<p>Do you think the curriculum is good or it needs development in order to appeal to females? For me, I feel the <u>topics have to be suitable for our interests.</u> We aren't taught vocabs to use in a restaurant, coffee, public place, or airport. The <u>topics are only formal, involving a few slang words.</u></p>	<p>Comment [FA4]: Knowledge of English</p>
<p>How do you feel when you make mistakes while speaking? <u>It's fine.</u></p>	<p>Comment [FA5]: Importance of topic in participation</p>
<p>What do you think the reasons? We haven't <u>learned the basic of the language</u> in primary school the students perhaps do not prefer the subjects they aren't interested in the language itself.</p>	<p>Comment [FA6]: Suggested topics</p>
<p>How will you feel if the teacher asks you a question that you don't understand or aren't ready to answer? I'll ask her for an explanation. <u>Some teachers are helpful, and they just want to know what the student will answer.</u> Other <u>teachers are rigid and accept only one answer, the same as the book's.</u></p>	<p>Comment [FA7]: Curriculum topics</p>
<p>How do you feel when you make mistakes while speaking? <u>It's fine.</u></p>	<p>Comment [FA8]: Positive feeling when doing mistakes</p>
<p>What do you think the reasons? We haven't <u>learned the basic of the language</u> in primary school the students perhaps do not prefer the subjects they aren't interested in the language itself.</p>	<p>Comment [FA9]: Lack of English knowledge</p>
<p>How will you feel if the teacher asks you a question that you don't understand or aren't ready to answer? I'll ask her for an explanation. <u>Some teachers are helpful, and they just want to know what the student will answer.</u> Other <u>teachers are rigid and accept only one answer, the same as the book's.</u></p>	<p>Comment [FA10]: Not interested in the language</p>
<p>How will you feel if the teacher asks you a question that you don't understand or aren't ready to answer? I'll ask her for an explanation. <u>Some teachers are helpful, and they just want to know what the student will answer.</u> Other <u>teachers are rigid and accept only one answer, the same as the book's.</u></p>	<p>Comment [FA11]: Teacher's traits</p>
	<p>Comment [FA12]: Teacher's negative traits</p>

Note: The excerpt above shows an initial coding procedure from an interview transcript using the comments feature in Microsoft Word. I was able to annotate codes next to relevant information using this approach. The first codes given—group work, lack of English, and

attitudes towards speaking—demonstrate an exploration stage, in which general areas of interest in the data are found and labelled. These codes were crucial for creating more themes that were in line with the goals of the research, and they also functioned as a starting point for additional in-depth examination of the data. The image above shows the initial themes that the coding process revealed in one participant’s answers. This is consistent with the explanation given in the text, which notes that tracking the evolution of codes across various phases makes it easier to see how initial insights become themes.

The original transcripts were still regularly consulted to assess existing codes and to identify new codes, ensuring that the interpretation of new codes remained consistent with the data as further familiarity with the data developed. I went back over the original interview transcripts several times during the process of analysing the interviews. This method was essential to ensure that the data coding was correct and that any new themes aligned with the actual data. As I became more familiar with the data, I was able to find new insights or patterns that prompted the creation of new codes or the improvement of existing ones; this helped me to get a deeper and more nuanced comprehension of the research findings.

The process of discovering themes and classifying individual codes into larger categories was used. This careful process of classifying and synthesising the interview data resulted in the emergence of each theme, which was thoughtfully named to reflect its fundamental concepts. For instance, students’ perception of English language and perception of the importance of oral participation developed into the theme of “the value of English and its relationship to oral participation.”

Phase Three: Generating Themes

In this stage, codes were categorised according to their relevance to the research questions. For example, as indicated in Table 3 below, teachers’ teaching methods were categorised

under “Pedagogies to motivate students,” and teachers’ focus on teaching vocabulary and topics students were interested in was categorised under “Curriculum relevance.” This would enable me to further explore the influences of pedagogy and curriculum on students’ passivity and to explicitly indicate reticence; as highlighted, for example, in the Table 3 below. I was interested in the analysis of how pedagogy and curriculum influence students’ oral participation and noted the mention of these areas for further exploration as they are related to the research questions.

Table 3

Initial Themes

Linguistic and Behavioural Factors	Students’ Personal Traits	Teachers’ Influence on Students	Curriculum Relevance	Perception Towards English Language	Perception Towards Oral Participation	Pedagogies to Motivate Students
Lack of English knowledge	Shyness	Teachers’ characteristics	Topics not related to the real-life situation	Interesting	Motivation to improve the language	The use of technologies
Not interested in the language	Lack of confidence	Relationship with students	Boredom	Necessary	Helps to understand the language	Focus on non-participating students
Not motivated to speak English in class	Embarrassed	Teachers’ accents when speaking English	Lack of focus on speaking	English as an international language	Makes you feel confident	Using mind and concept maps

The table above explains thematic codes that were arranged into categories that represent variables influencing participation in class and English language learning. It includes linguistic and personal (behavioural) barriers, students’ personal attitudes or self-identified traits, teachers’ influences, curriculum relevance, students’ perceptions of English, their perceptions/attitude towards oral participation, and identified teaching pedagogies. A number

of themes were identified, including lack of confidence of students, the accents of teachers, the usefulness of curriculum topics, the importance of oral participation, and pedagogical strategies such as the use of technology. This helped in highlighting barriers to engagement.

Phase Four: Reviewing Themes

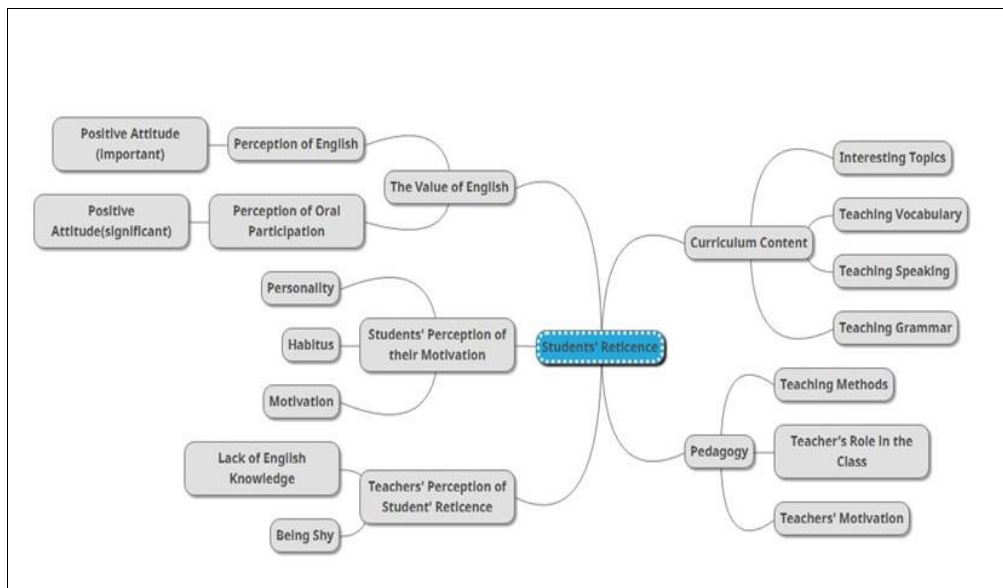
I reviewed the themes to make sure the dataset was coherent and that the themes offered relevant interpretations of the data in connection to the research questions. I reviewed, modified, and developed the preliminary themes that I identified in Phase Three, informed by the theoretical framework of Bourdieu's habitus, field, and capital, and Foucault's notions of discourse and power, by asking, "Do they make sense?" At this point, I gathered all the data relevant to each theme. This process helped to crystallise the themes (Guest et al., 2012). As the research progressed, new themes were refined, suggesting that the knowledge of the data was improving.

Phase Five: Defining and Naming Themes

In this phase, I was tasked with presenting a detailed analysis of the thematic framework. Each individual theme was to be expressed in relation to both the dataset and the research questions. At this point, the names of the themes were also subject to a final revision, if necessary. I critically reviewed my coding to check these considerations and devised a thematic map (see Figure 5 below) to show the themes and subthemes, and how they interact, in my coding process. The finalised thematic framework that resulted from the review of the candidate themes can be seen in Figure 5.

Figure 6

Finalised Thematic Map



The above map serves to dissect the multifaceted reasons behind students' reluctance to actively participate in English class discussions. It shows the four main themes that influence students' reticence to participate orally. The theme "curriculum content" details the type of material taught and suggests that engagement may be increased with interesting content. The theme of "the value of English" highlights students' attitudes towards the language and oral participation, emphasising their recognition of its importance and their positive perceptions about it. "Pedagogy" focuses on instructional methods, teacher roles, and motivation, indicating their impact on student participation. "Students' perception of their passivity" explores factors like habitus, motivation, and personality, suggesting that these self-perceptions affect their participation levels. Finally, "Teachers' perceptions towards students' reticence" explores barriers that teachers think cause students' reticence, such as lack of English knowledge and being shy.

Phase Six: Producing the Report of the Questionnaire and the Interviews

The combined TA of the questionnaire data and the interview data revealed barriers to students' oral participation in English classes. Initial TA of open-ended questions in the questionnaire highlighted themes of both positive and negative views, revealing general patterns in students' attitudes about speaking English which were able to be contrasted and further examined in interview data from students and teachers. The quantitative perspectives offered a basic comprehension of the overall attitude among students, which was enhanced by the qualitative richness of the interview data. Through the interviews, it was possible to delve further into the complex experiences, perceptions, and individual narratives that explain the attitudes shown in the questionnaire, going beyond their apparent expressions. While "lack of English proficiency" and "teacher–student interaction" were recognised as significant themes in the questionnaire, for instance, the interviews provided in-depth explanations of how these elements were expressed in students' everyday classroom experiences, providing the themes in the questionnaire with more context and nuance.

A thorough narrative was produced by contrasting the questionnaire's themes with the detailed, descriptive information from all of the interviews. Personal experiences from interviews contextualised the questionnaire results, which indicated the prevalence of specific attitudes and perspectives among the students and teachers and made it possible to comprehend the obstacles to oral participation more deeply. For example, interviewees' descriptions of particular situations when the barrier of their lack of English proficiency impacted their willingness to participate—such as concerns over making mistakes or feeling evaluated by peers—gave complexity to the subject of "lack of English proficiency" highlighted in the questionnaire.

Additionally, the interviews shed light on aspects of teacher–student interactions that the questionnaire data could not fully cover. Knowledge of the “teacher–student interaction” topic was enhanced by narratives from interviews concerning certain teacher behaviours that either promoted or hindered oral engagement. These narratives demonstrated how pedagogical approaches and teacher attitudes affect students’ desire to participate orally using the perceptions of students and teachers. Combining the results from both data sources, the study progressed from discovering common themes to comprehending the relationships and influences between these themes. The procedure provided a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of reticence in the English classroom by highlighting the intricate interactions between internal student characteristics (like self-perception and language competence) and external factors (such as curriculum content and teaching strategies) and teacher perceptions. In this context the sociological lenses of Bourdieu (1977) and Foucault (1972) were applied in making sense of these understandings of how the educational atmosphere and students’ engagement shape and are shaped by social structures, power dynamics, cultural capital, and habitus.

Ethical Procedures and Considerations

This study adhered to ethical considerations and ensured participants’ anonymity. Ethics approval to undertake the research was obtained from Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Once ethics approval had been granted, the Dean of the preparatory year of the chosen university was approached via an information letter about the study. The letter clarified what the study entailed and sought permission for the study to be conducted at the university with preparatory classes and five teachers.

After the university granted permission to conduct the study, an information letter was sent to potential participants (see Appendices D and E). Included in this letter was a request for

voluntary participants and details about the purpose and requirements of the study. Interviewees signed a consent form to indicate their willingness to participate in the study, and for interviews to be audio recorded. Participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time without any consequences. They were also informed that their personal details would be kept confidential and their anonymity would be protected, and that all collected data would be solely used for the research purpose and would be deleted after the end of the study.

In terms of the data management plan, collected data was stored securely and systematically. After the completion of the study, datasets will be uploaded to Research Data Australia and kept in the library at Western Sydney University. Data has been de-identified to safeguard the privacy of the participants. As per the university's Open Access Policy, these datasets will thus be publicly accessible for usage (Western Sydney University, 2019).

Reflexivity in the Research Process

Reflexivity refers to the process of critically analysing one's own experiences, values, and beliefs while conducting research. It acknowledges how one's personal views and experiences may affect the design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the study. This idea pushes researchers to be conscious of their own positionality and any possible biases that could influence their findings.

Inspired by McNay's (2013) critical introduction to Foucault, I have applied the concept to myself as a researcher, requiring a thorough and continuous reflection on how my personal experiences, background, and social identities influence my research methodology. Recognising the power dynamics that occur in the research context has been made possible by this reflexivity. I have tried to reduce the impact of my own subjectivity on the research findings by consistently challenging my beliefs and the frameworks I use. I was better able to

understand my role as a researcher due to this reflexivity process, which ensures that my analysis is aware of my biases and assumptions. This approach enhanced transparency and clarity, benefiting the participants by engaging them more in the research process, making them feel valued and heard, and thus enriching their contributions to the study. Furthermore, explaining the study's purpose and methods to the participants helped enhance that the study's results as participants' viewpoints were accurately reflected and minimised researcher biases, contributing to the overall integrity and depth of the research (Formplus, n.d.; Patton, 2002).

Reflexivity entails being aware of three categories of biases in research that, according to Bourdieu, might blur the sociological gaze: epistemological bias, social bias, and intellectual bias (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The first bias is the epistemological bias; through considering this I became aware of my own social class habitus; for example, my education, ethnicity, nationality, class, and gender in relation to the participants. This also relates to my position as an insider researcher; I am part of the field with its habits of thoughts and traditions similar to the students in this study, which enabled me to fully understand students' perspectives and responses. However, the power difference between me as a lecturer and the students must be acknowledged. Since my role involves inherent authority, this awareness helps in achieving a balance between insider insights and the need to maintain objectivity, ensuring that interpretations respect students' experiences without assuming absolute similarity.

The second bias is social bias, which is linked to awareness of the context and position of the researcher conducting the research. In considering this, I realised that there was a possibility that research participants would be objectified. To tackle this, and provide a more complex and accurate reflection of students' experiences I considered each participant as an individual

with a distinct experience. I ensured that the results were interpreted with more complexity and that they accurately presented the participants' actual experiences.

The third bias is what Bourdieu refers to as an intellectual bias; this is a bias that aims to establish static, absolute, and constant truths against which all findings are to be measured (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In order to preserve objectivity, I encouraged participants to provide their thoughts by themselves and recorded responses without interfering, which aimed to reduce subjectivity (Greenbank, 2003; Simon, 2015, as cited in Abahussain, 2016).

In terms of power relations, Das (2010) believes that power dynamics shape research interactions. I had natural authority over the students who took part in my study because I was a researcher, and a lecturer. Realising this, I made sure that my influence did not affect the results or force participation. Students were made aware that there was no connection between their participation and their academic evaluation. Being aware of this power relation, I was able to provide a balanced interaction that made for rich data collection. Similarly, I was aware of the possible impact my role as a researcher and teacher in the same university could have on teachers. I interacted with my peers on an equal basis, stressing the voluntary nature of their engagement and the importance of their perspectives for the study, so as to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation. It was also crucial to guarantee anonymity and confidentiality to allow the participants to talk freely and honestly. Building a relationship with the participants was essential to fostering an atmosphere that was conducive to valuable and open conversation. My shared experience as a lecturer and my shared cultural and linguistic background with the participants enabled more meaningful interactions and stronger bonds during this process (Das, 2010; Elwood & Martin, 2000; Tang, 2002).

I used my shared experiences with the participants to establish trust while addressing biases relating to my position as an insider and outsider researcher. I also made sure to remain

objective and preserve the research's credibility. I tried to reduce any potential effects on the research findings by making sure that every participant felt valued and treated equally throughout the study. Thus, power between the researcher and the participants was balanced, influencing the generation of the research results and knowledge.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the qualitative and quantitative approaches employed in this study, informed by the theories of Bourdieu and Foucault, to investigate Saudi female students' reluctance to participate orally in English classes. The chosen methodological paradigm aligns with the objective of exploring these students' opinions of the value of oral engagement, the impact of the curriculum, and the pedagogical influences on their oral engagement. Study validity was strengthened through the use of a mixed-methods research methodology, combining the advantages of both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The study used a questionnaire and interviews to gain a deeper understanding of the problem. The methodological accuracy of the research, which is supported by a careful examination of relevant ontological and epistemological components, has been essential in producing a deep understanding of the research issue.

The chapter explained the research setting, participant recruitment, and data collection. In spite of the difficulties caused by COVID-19 and the consequent switch to online data collection, I was able to obtain rich data from a representative sample of teachers and students. The chapter also discussed the data analysis process, which was successful in capturing the richness and depth of the experiences of both teachers and students. The results of the analysis make a significant contribution to the field of EFL education, especially in terms of comprehending the complex dynamics of language engagement and learning in Saudi Arabian educational settings. This comprehensive investigation has applications for

improving student oral participation in EFL classes. This chapter also highlighted the ethical issues involved in the study process and stressed how crucial it is to protect participants' rights during the research process. In this context, my position as a researcher is to interpret and analyse data based on theoretical perspectives in this case from Bourdieu and Foucault. I also followed ethical norms in terms of protecting the participants' anonymity and confidentiality through a de-identification of all data.

The following chapters present the findings from the data. Chapter 5 discusses the questionnaire results while Chapter 6 presents a detailed analysis of the interview findings. A chapter 7 provides an analysis of findings related to the overarching research question, presenting a contradiction between students' positive attitude towards oral participation and their reticence. It also exposes the factors that influence students' dispositions towards participation. Chapter 8 examines the findings on the impact of curriculum and pedagogy on students' oral participation and the importance of student–teacher interaction for students' oral participation. Chapter nine concludes the thesis with a review of the thesis, the key propositions emanating from this study and possible directions for future research, implications and limitations of the study.

Chapter Five

Findings and Results of the Questionnaire

This chapter is the first of four chapters that discuss the findings of this study. This chapter focuses on data from the questionnaire conducted with 100 students. The following chapter discusses the data emanating from the interviews with students and teachers. The discussion that follows addresses the overarching theme of this study, which is an investigation of the factors influencing students' oral involvement in English as a foreign language (EFL) classes in Saudi Arabia. The chapter begins with an analysis of the students' perceptions of oral engagement in the EFL classroom in Saudi Arabia, and how these perceptions influence their disposition towards participation. The discussion highlights two central aspects: students' attitude towards oral participation and the dominant barriers they perceive to be the cause for their reluctance to orally participate.

Attitudes Towards Oral Participation

In the questionnaire students were asked to select an item from a set of choices to show their perspective on the value of oral participation. Table 4 below reveals that students have generally positive perceptions of oral participation. This question was answered by 90 out of 100 students; the results show that the highest percentage (29%) think that oral participation is "extremely important" with an additional 15 students categorising it as "very important." "Moderately important" was the second-largest group of answers, with 24 participants selecting this response. This indicates that over half of the students who participated in the questionnaire considered oral participation as being of high or moderate importance, while 17 said it was "slightly important." This suggests that most of the students recognise the value of oral participation, but to different degrees. When asked to scale the importance of oral participation in the classroom, only five questionnaire participants indicated that oral

participation is not important. When students were also asked to express the value of oral participation in an open-ended question, students' comments demonstrated their understanding of the importance of oral participation in EFL learning. For example, some respondents commented: "It helps improve the language, know words and vocabulary"; "To learn new words and become familiar with words which motivates me to participate"; "It helps to learn different pronunciations"; "When I speak up and make mistakes, I learn from those mistakes"; and "Oral participation helps me to speak the language fluently."

It appears that the importance students placed on oral participation in questionnaire responses aligns with the interview data, which will be discussed in the following chapter. This finding also matches with Getie's (2020) study, which found positive attitudes toward EFL learning among Grade 10 students in Ethiopia. Also relevant, Zulfikar et al. (2019) conducted a study on 55 students in an English language department in an Indonesian university to explore their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour towards English learning. Results showed that students' positive attitude was one of the success factors in language learning.

Table 4

Evaluate the Importance of Oral Participation

Value	Frequency
Extremely important	29
Very important	15
Moderately important	24
Slightly important	17
Not important	5

Total	90
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When students were asked how much they participate in the English classroom (Table 5 below), the majority of the students ($n = 86$) chose either “Always” or “Sometimes,” highlighting once again the degree of engagement. This information shows that most students participate in the English classroom, either frequently or infrequently, which is closely related to their values and attitudes towards oral engagement.

Table 5

How Much Do You Participate in the English Classroom?

Value	Frequency
Always	32
Sometimes	54
Never	4
Total	90

In responding to the question “Do you agree or not with the comment: ‘Those who participate are better than you?’ And why?” (Table 6 below), the difference between those who thought that students who participate are better than those who do not was slight. Of the 90 responding students, 47 chose “Yes” while 43 chose “No” and 10 students did not respond. Those who agreed indicated that the main reason was the students’ knowledge of English, as they considered these students understood English, were able to speak fluently, and read and pronounce the language correctly. Moreover, some participants stated that these students were better because they do not feel nervous or shy, while four believed that these students have the confidence and courage to speak up. The student also believed that teachers play an

important role in encouraging students to participate, as they may encourage these students more than those who do not participate. Those who disagreed with the statement explained their views, which reflected their sense that no one class member is better than another: “I am better but sometimes feel tired”; “We are all on the same level”; and “They have confidence but this does not mean that they are better than me.”

This analysis highlights the significance of taking into account students’ attitudes regarding participation by showing how their willingness to participate orally may be influenced by their beliefs of linguistic competence and comparing themselves to their friends’ level of participation. This result suggests a complex relationship between students’ perceptions of the importance of their engagement, and how frequently they participate.

Table 6

*Do You Agree or Not With the Comment “Those Who Participate Are Better Than You?”
And Why?*

Value	Frequency
Yes	47
No	43
Total	90

Table 7 below shows students responses to the open-ended question “How does oral participation improve your understanding of the English language?” The majority of the students commented that oral participation is important as it helps them improve their language by learning new words and correct pronunciation; it improves their reading and speaking skills, and gives them opportunities for practising the language. Others believed that oral participation also helps them to get high marks and improve their speaking skills.

Table 7

How Does Oral Participation Help You Improve Your Understanding of the English Language?

Value	Frequency
Improving the language (learning new words, sentences, improve reading skill, sentence structure, correct pronunciation, learn different pronunciation)	28
Practising English	14
Improve speaking skill, getting high marks	6
Do not know	15
Total	63

Students’ perceptions of the advantages of oral engagement in English language acquisition are supported by recent studies (Mohammed & Muhy, 2021; Riadil, 2020a). Mohammed and Muhy (2021) asserted that oral skills are vital for students to be able to interact and communicate in productive and meaningful ways that help them to exchange information, negotiate meaning, and support ideas. Riadil (2020b) also emphasised the positive effects of oral presentations on improving speaking abilities, indicating that speaking ability may be

greatly increased by active participation through presentations. These studies support the perspectives of the students in the current study regarding the significance of oral participation in English language learning.

The results in Table 8 below show that the relationship between the teacher and the student encourages 76 of 90 responding participants to speak up. The results also show that seven of the sample answered “do not know” regarding how this relationship influences oral participation, and six thought that this relationship has “no impact” on them. Only one student thought that the relationship, “does not encourage them to speak up” in the English classroom. The finding indicates that most students believe that having a positive relationship with their teachers encourages them to speak up. This suggests that pleasant interaction with teachers has a positive impact on students’ attitudes towards oral engagement. Accordingly, the relationship between the teacher and the student is an important factor in encouraging students to participate orally, particularly as this also emerged in the data collected from the interviews (discussed in Chapter 6). Coristine et al. (2022) and Sadoughi and Hejazi (2021) also highlighted how important the student–teacher relationship is when it comes to learning English. The important finding of both of these studies was that, in EFL environments, students’ engagement and general learning experience are greatly enhanced when they have a positive and supportive relationship with their teachers. In order to improve EFL teaching and learning methodologies, they suggest the inclusion of emotional characteristics and teacher support as essential elements in the educational framework.

Table 8

How Does the Relationship Between a Student and a Teacher Influence Students' Oral Participation Inside the English Classroom?

Value	Frequency
Encourage a student to speak up	76
Does not encourage student to speak up	1
No impact	6
Do not know	7
Total	90

Table 9 below shows that the majority of the students (44 out of 90) have a “positive feeling” when the teacher corrects them, as they can learn from their mistakes, improve their language skills, and learn the information. The “negative feeling” reported by 26 of the students included shyness, nervousness, and embarrassment, while 20 students indicated that they feel “nothing” when they are corrected by the teacher.

This finding is associated with the students' attitudes, as it illustrates how students feel about making mistakes and being corrected in the classroom, highlighting how they view these situations as either positive learning opportunities or as causes of negative feelings.

Table 9

What Do You Feel When the Teacher Corrects Your English-Speaking Mistakes?

Value	Frequency
Nothing	20
Negative feeling (shyness, nervous, embarrassment)	26
Positive feeling (learn from mistakes, improve the language skills, learn the information)	44
Total	90

The results shown in Table 10 below, retrieved from an open-ended question, reveal additional information about students' attitudes regarding oral participation by looking at the kinds of topics that encourage students to speak up (categories were expressed by the students' own words). Only a few of the students selected "Any topic", 11 reported that they like "Stories, such as history and proverbs". The option of "Free topics, including own life and free choice" was chosen by 34 of the students; "Simple topics from the book that are easy, understandable, and that promote reading comprehension" was chosen by 13 of the students; nine chose "Interesting topics" that included life and sport; and 13 chose "No topics", indicating that there was no specific topic that would encourage them to participate. This variation in topic preferences shows that teaching students about topics they find interesting or relevant can improve their language comprehension, which could enhance students' comprehension and involvement in English language acquisition.

Table 10*What Kinds of Topics in the English Curriculum May Encourage You to Participate?*

Value	Frequency
Any	8
No topics	13
Interesting topics (life, sport)	9
Simple topics from the book (easy, understandable, promote reading comprehension)	13
Stories (history, proverbs)	11
Free topics (own life, free choice)	34
Do not know	12
Total	100

Barriers to Oral Communication

This section presents the questionnaire findings concerning barriers that students encounter when attempting to speak up in the classroom. This section identifies a range of linguistic and affective factors that hinder students' willingness and ability to participate orally.

The main barriers to oral participation were identified by analyzing the frequency of each barrier's selection, even when students had the ability to select more than one answer (see Table 11 below). Thirty-three out of 100 students identified the main barrier to participation as "No English knowledge." In relation to other barriers, "Feeling shy when speaking" was reported by 32 students; 10 chose "Fear of criticism"; nine chose "No motivation to speak";

and nine chose “Disinterested in English activities.” Accordingly, the most common barrier reported is lack of English knowledge; feeling shy and fear of criticism are the next most important barriers to oral participation. These results are consistent with the interview findings that will be discussed in the following chapter.

Table 11

What Are the Barriers to Participating Orally in the English Classroom?

Value		Responses
		Frequency
The main barrier	No motivation to speak	9
	Disinterested in English activities	9
	No English knowledge	33
	Feeling shy when speaking	32
	Fear of criticism	10
	Other	7
Total		100

Correspondingly, many obstacles to oral engagement in English language learning have been revealed in recent studies (Gushendra & Aprianti, 2019; Wu, 2019), particularly for students with low English language proficiency. As with my findings, other studies have shown that the main barrier is a lack of English proficiency, which is compounded by other obstacles such as shyness, fear of criticism, and a lack of enthusiasm for activities involving oral participation in the language. Gushendra and Aprianti, (2019) examined the variables causing reticence among 102 students in English classes at a high school in Indonesia. The results emphasised both linguistic and affective aspects, with low English proficiency being

identified as the main reason for students' reticence during class talks. The affective components included introversion, shyness, anxiety, and motivation. The results of this study are consistent with those found by Wu (2019), who noted that hesitation among students in EFL settings is largely caused by low language proficiency and anxiety related to learning a foreign language.

Another barrier that was assessed in the questionnaire related to error correction and the fear of making mistakes. Table 12 below shows that 76 of the students continue speaking in English even if they make mistakes while only 14 reported not speaking again after a mistake. This reveals that making mistakes is not a barrier for oral participation for most students; however, this result contradicts Gushendra and Aprianti's (2019) and Wu's (2019) studies which found that making mistakes was among barriers that cause students' reticence. This finding will be discussed further in the interview analysis chapter that follows.

Table 12

Do You Continue Speaking in English Even When You Make Mistakes in the English Classroom?

Value	Frequency
Yes	76
No	14
Total	90

When students were asked about their feelings when they speak English in the class (see Table 13 below), the majority of the students ($n = 64$) stated that they have “negative feelings” when they speak up in the class, such as feeling nervous and shy. This shows that

oral participation is not a happy experience for the students, and these predominantly negative feelings should be considered as a barrier to oral participation. Only a few participants were positive about speaking up, reporting free response feelings such as “proud” and “happy.” These results support the contention that a student’s level of oral participation is influenced by their level of English ability and confidence. This finding also indicates different emotional reactions from students, highlighting the obstacles that influence their oral participation. It reveals that the majority of students have negative emotions that frequently prevent them from participating, although some were positive when speaking up in class.

Table 13

How Do You Feel When You Speak English in the Class?

Value	Frequency
Negative feeling (nervous, shyness)	64
Positive feeling (proud, happy)	25
Total	89

Adamson (2022) and Richards (2022) have highlighted the significant role that emotions play in the classroom by showing how negative emotions such as shyness and anxiety can prevent students from speaking up and how positive emotions like happiness and confidence can encourage engagement. However, the current study delves beyond the common emphasis on shyness and anxiety and examines how students’ approach to oral language use impacts on their participation in the EFL classroom, as discussed more extensively in Chapter 7.

Table 14 below shows student responses when they were asked if they had attended any English courses outside of the English classroom, revealing whether the students had English experience outside the classroom. The results show that most of the students ($n = 73$) did not participate in English courses outside the classroom while only 27 students did so. It appears that one obstacle preventing students from participating orally in class is their lack of access to opportunities for language learning outside the classroom. This could be a barrier to developing their confidence and speaking skills, thus making them reluctant to participate orally. This aligns with the interview findings which will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Table 14

Have You Attended Any English Courses Outside of the English Classroom?

Value	Frequency
Yes	27
No	73
Total	100

Curriculum Strategies to Overcome Barriers to Oral Participation

Table 15 below displays students' suggestions of strategies that could improve the students' oral participation. Only 58 students answered the relevant question: "Suggest strategies to improve the students' oral participation." Most of the students recommended activities such as "competitions, games, conversations, and discussions" as methods that could encourage them to participate. "Other" answers suggested that "easy and interesting topics" such as talking about a "famous character" or "the weekend" can also motivate students to speak up. The teacher is also an important factor in motivating students' oral participation, with 12 of the sample commenting that a teacher can motivate the students if she is kind, gives marks for participation, encourages the students, and accepts all answers.

This finding goes beyond listing attitudes and obstacles, and instead helps investigate important solutions to these problems. It explains how curriculum and pedagogies might promote better oral engagement.

Table 15

Curriculum Strategies to Improve the Students' Oral Participation

Value	Frequency
Activities (competitions, games, conversations and discussions)	17
Nothing	16
Teacher (kind, give marks, encourage, accept all answers)	12
Others (easy and interesting topics, such as famous character, weekend)	13
Total	58

Table 16 below shows students' free responses of different methods that they use outside the classroom to enhance their English proficiency. Thirty-six students reported listening to "English songs and programs, YouTube, and movies" to improve their English. This suggests the need for learning atmospheres that integrate entertainment with language learning. However, 19 students improve their English by "reading English books, magazines, and stories, and memorising words", reflecting a traditional method for learning. Twelve students try to "prepare the English lessons or take English courses" to improve their language, which is a planned learning method. Only a few participants ($n = 6$) practise English through

“speaking with others (friends and family) or having contact with people on the social media.”

Table 16

What Do You Do to Improve Your English (Explain and Give Examples)?

Value	Frequency
Reading English books, magazines, and stories, and memorising words	19
Listening to English songs, programs, YouTube, and movies to improve their English	36
Prepare the English lessons, take English courses	12
Speaking with others (friends and family), contacting people on social media	6
Do not know	18
Total	90

Chi-Square Tests

As mentioned in Chapter 4, 10 chi-square tests were used in this research since this method allows for a thorough analysis of variables and insights into the relationships between these variables.

The first test (see Table 17 below) compared data from the questions: “How much do you participate in the English classroom?” and “What is your parents’ level of education?” An analysis of these variables sought to examine if parents’ level of education impacted students’ participation positively or negatively. The test result showed no significant relationship between students’ participation in the English classroom and parents’ level of education.

Table 17

The Relationship Between “How Much Do You Participate in the English Classroom?” and “Parents’ Level of Education”

			Parents’ Level of Education						Total	Pearson Chi-Square	p value	Contingency Coefficient
			Non-educated	Primary	Intermediate	Secondary	Bachelor	Master				
How Much Do You Participate in the English Classroom?	Always	Count	5	6	6	7	5	3	32	8.325 ^a	0.597	0.277
		%	15.6%	18.8%	18.8%	21.9%	15.6%	9.4%	100.0%			
	Sometimes	Count	8	18	11	10	16	1	64			
		%	12.5%	28.1%	17.2%	15.6%	25.0%	1.6%	100.0%			
	Never	Count	0	1	0	1	2	0	4			
		%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%			

From the table we can see that there was no significant relationship between students' participation and their parents' level of education, as the chi-square test is not significant (the p value of .597 is greater than .05). However, other research has shown a significant relationship between parents' educational background and students' English achievement (Marzulina et al., 2018; Okunnuga & Olagundoye, 2017). According to these studies, parental education has an important impact on students' English competence. This is mainly because it increases exposure to the language and provides academic assistance, which creates a favourable learning environment. Nonetheless, my study revealed no link between parental education and students' oral participation and this raises the possibility that, although parental education helps students succeed academically overall, it might not have a direct impact on particular classroom behaviours like oral engagement in the Saudi Arabian context.

The second test (see Table 18 below) analysed the relationship between "How much do you participate in the English classroom?" and "Have you attended any English courses outside the English classroom?" This inquiry aimed to measure whether students who had completed English courses outside the classroom participated more than those who had not completed English courses. This analysis is important because it clarifies how taking English courses outside the English classroom could increase students' oral participation.

The test revealed a significant relationship between students' participation in the English classroom and having access to English courses outside the classroom, showing that students who have attended English courses outside the classroom participate more than those who have not.

Table 18

The Relationship Between “How Much Do You Participate in the English Classroom?” and “Have You Attended Any English Courses Outside of the English Classroom?”

			Have You Attended		Total	Pearson Chi-Square	p value	Contingency Coefficient
			Yes	No				
How Much Do You Participate in the English Classroom?	Always	Count	15	17	32	10.103 ^a	0.006	0.303
		%	46.9%	53.1%	100.0%			
	Sometimes	Count	12	52	64			
		%	18.8%	81.3%	100.0%			
	Never	Count	0	4	4			
		%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%			

From Table 18 we can conclude that there is a significant relationship between students’ participation and accessing English courses outside the English classroom, as the chi-square test is significant (the p value of 0.006 is less than 0.05) and the relationship is moderate as indicated by a contingency coefficient of 0.303. This correlation suggests that using English in a variety of settings not only improves language skills but also fosters oral engagement.

The third test (see Table 19 below) examined “How much do you participate in the English classroom?” and “The importance of oral participation” to see if there is a relationship between students’ participation and their perspective about the importance of oral participation. The test showed a significant relationship between these two variables; those who believed that oral participation was important participated more than those who did not.

Table 19

The Relationship Between “How Much Do You Participate in the English Classroom?” and “The Importance of Oral Participation”

	The Importance of Oral Participation							Total	Pearson Chi-Square	p value	Contingency Coefficient
		Extremely Important	Very Important	Moderately Important	Slightly Important	Not Important					
How Much Do You Participate in English Classroom?	Always	Count	20	5	6	0	1	32	43.166 ^a	0.000	0.549
		%	62.5%	15.6%	18.8%	0.0%	3.1%	100.0%			
	Sometimes	Count	13	17	19	13	2	64			
		%	20.3%	26.6%	29.7%	20.3%	3.1%	100.0%			
	Never	Count	0	0	0	2	2	4			
		%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%			

From the table we can conclude that there is a significant relationship between students' participation and their belief about the importance of oral participation, as the chi-square test is significant ($p = 0.000$, which is less than 0.05) and the relationship is moderate (contingency coefficient = 0.549). This result is important because it highlights how students' attitudes directly influence their behaviour in the classroom and demonstrates the strong correlation between higher engagement and valuing oral participation.

The fourth test (see Table 20 below) shows the relationship between "How old are you" and "Last GPA." This inquiry aimed to measure whether or not age affects grade point average (GPA). The test revealed no significant relationship between students' age and their GPA, as $p = 0.573$ (more than 0.05), and thus is not significant. This finding is important for educational policy and practice because it shows that, rather than using age as a determinant of academic success, other factors should be the focus of efforts to improve academic accomplishment.

Table 20

The Relationship Between "How Old Are You?" and "Last GPA"

			Student GPA				Total	Pearson Chi-Square	p value	Contingency Coefficient
			(100–90)	(89–80)	(79–70)	(69–60)				
How Old Are You?	(18–20)	Count	59	7	3	10	79	7.615 ^a	0.573	0.279
		%	74.7%	8.9%	3.8%	12.7%	100.0%			
	(21–23)	Count	5	0	1	2	8			
		%	62.5%	0.0%	12.5%	25.0%	100.0%			

(24–26)	Count	1	0	0	0	1			
	%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%			
(other)	Count	1	1	0	0	2			
	%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%			

As indicated in Table 21 below, the fifth test shows the relationship between “How old are you?” and “How much do you participate in the English classroom?” This inquiry aimed to measure whether or not age affects participation in EFL classrooms. The test revealed no significant relationship between students’ age and their participation in the English classroom ($p = 0.740$, which is greater than 0.05).

Table 21

The Relationship Between “How Old Are You?” and “How Much Do You Participate in the English Classroom?”

		How Much Do You Participate in the English Classroom?				Total	Pearson Chi-Square	p value	Contingency Coefficient
		Always	Sometimes	Never					
How Old Are You?	(18–20)	Count	27	49	3	79	3.533 ^a	0.740	0.194
		%	34.2%	62.0%	3.8%	100.0%			
	(21–23)	Count	3	4	1	8			
		%	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%	100.0%			
	(24–26)	Count	1	0	0	1			
		%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%			

(Other)	Count	1	1	0	2			
	%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%			

Table 22 below shows the sixth test, which examined the relationship between “How do you feel when you speak English in the class?” and “Do you continue speaking in English even when you make mistakes in the English classroom?” This inquiry aimed to measure whether positive or negative feelings when speaking English in the class affected speaking after making mistakes. The test revealed a significant relationship between the students’ feelings when they speak English in class and continuing speaking when they make mistakes. The p value of 0.034 is less than 0.05, and therefore significant. The contingency coefficient = 0.264, so the relationship is weak. This finding is important because it emphasises how important emotional reactions are to learning behaviours in general and language learning in particular.

Table 22

The Relationship Between “How Do You Feel When You Speak English in the Class?” and “Do You Continue Speaking in English Even When You Make Mistakes in the English Classroom?”

			Do You Speak When You Make Mistakes?		Total	Pearson Chi-Square	p value	Contingency Coefficient
			Yes	No				
How Do You Feel When You Speak English in	Negative feelings	Count	50	14	64	6.735 ^a	0.034	0.264
		%	78.1%	21.9%	100.0%			
	Positive	Count	21	0	21			

the Class?	feelings	%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%			
	Nothing	Count	5	0	5			
		%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%			

The seventh test, shown in Table 23 below, examined the relationship between “How do you feel when you speak English in the class?” and “Do you agree or not with the statement, ‘Those who participate are better than you?’” This inquiry aimed to measure whether the positive or negative feelings when speaking English in the class affect students’ perceptions of whether those who participate are better. The test revealed no significant relationship between students’ feelings when they speak English in the class and their agreement about those who participate being better ($p = 0.603$, which is greater than 0.05 and therefore not significant).

Table 23

The Relationship Between “How Do You Feel When You Speak English in the Class?” and “Do You Agree or Not With the Statement, ‘Those Who Participate Are Better Than You?’”

			Do You Agree or Not That Those Who Participate Are Better Than You?		Total	Pearson Chi-Square	p value	Contingency Coefficient
			Yes	No				
How Do You Feel When You Speak English in	Negative feelings	Count	21	12	33	1.012a	0.603	0.147
		%	63.6%	36.4%	100.0%			
	Positive feelings	Count	9	3	12			
		%	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%			

the Class?	Nothing	Count	1	0	1			
		%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%			

The eighth test, presented in Table 24 below, shows the relationship between “Do you continue speaking in English even when you make mistakes in the English classroom?” and “Do you agree or not that those who participate are better than you?” This inquiry aimed to measure whether continuing to speak up after making mistakes affects students’ agreement that those who participate are better. The test revealed no significant relationship between these two variables ($p = 0.398$, which is greater than 0.05 and therefore not significant).

Table 24

The Relationship Between “Do You Speak When You Make Mistakes?” and “Do You Agree or Not With the Statement, ‘Those Who Participate Are Better Than You?’”

			Do You Agree or Not That Those Who Participate Are Better Than You?		Total	Pearson Chi-Square	p value	Contingency Coefficient
			Yes	No				
Do You Speak When You Make Mistakes?	Yes	Count	26	11	37	.713 ^a	0.398	0.124
		%	70.3%	29.7%	100.0%			
	No	Count	5	4	9			
		%	55.6%	44.4%	100.0%			

The ninth test, shown in Table 25, examined the relationship between “Do you continue speaking in English even when you make mistakes in the English

classroom?” and “Do you agree or not that “those who participate are better than you”? The test revealed no significant relationship, as the p value = 0.242 (greater than 0.05).

Table 25

The Relationship Between “How Do You Feel When You Speak English in the Class?”(Q13) and “Do You Continue Speaking in English Even When You Make Mistakes in the English Classroom?”(Q15) and “Do You Agree or Not With the Statement ‘Those Who Participate Are Better Than You?’”

Q19: do you agree or not with the statement “those who participate are better than you”				Q15. do you continue speaking in English even when you make mistakes in the English classroom		Total	Pearson	P.value	Contingency Coefficient
				Yes	No				
Yes	Q13. how do you feel when you speak Eng in the class	negative feelings	Count	16	5	21	2.839 ^b	0.242	0.290
			%	76.2%	23.8%	100.0%			
		positive feelings	Count	9	0	9			
			%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%			
		nothing	Count	1	0	1			
			%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%			
No	Q13. how do you feel when you	negative feelings	Count	8	4	12	4.408 ^a	0.110	0.289
			%	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%			
		positive	Count	3	0	3			

	speaking English in the class	negative feelings	%	100.0 %	0.0%	100.0 %			
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The tenth test (see Table 26 below) examined the relationship between “What do you feel when the teacher corrects you?” and “Do you continue speaking in English even when you make mistakes in the English classroom?” This inquiry aimed to measure whether positive or negative feelings when the teacher corrects them affects the student continuing to speak after making mistakes. The test revealed a significant relationship between students’ feelings when the teacher corrects their mistakes and their continuity of speaking after making mistakes ($p = 0.001$, which is less than 0.05 and therefore significant). The contingency coefficient was 0.379, so the relationship is strong.

Table 26

The Relationship Between “What Do You Feel When the Teacher Corrects You?” and “Do You Continue Speaking in English Even When You Make Mistakes in the English Classroom?”

			Do You Speak When You Make Mistakes?		Total	Pearson Chi- Square	p value	Contingency Coefficient
			Yes	No				
What Do You Feel When the Teacher	Nothing	Count	44	2	46	15.055 ^a	0.001	0.379
		%	95.7%	4.3%	100.0%			
	Negative feelings	Count	16	10	26			
		%	61.5%	38.5%	100.0%			

Corrects You?	Positive feelings	Count	16	2	18			
		%	88.9%	11.1%	100.0%			

Six out of the 10 chi-square tests (1, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9) showed no correlation between the variables being examined. The analysis of the tests highlights the complex context affecting students' engagement in the English classroom. No significant link was found in six of the 10 tests involving factors such as students' participation and parents' educational background, students' age, attitudes towards speaking English, and parents' level of education. This indicates that motivation, personal interests, and the classroom environment are complex variables that influence students' participation more than demographic and affective characteristics alone. However, four out of the 10 tests (2, 3, 6, and 10) revealed a significant relationship. These tests reveal many factors that affect students' oral engagement. Results show that taking external English courses considerably increases students' participation, demonstrating how this increases students' confidence and level of engagement. Additionally, there is a clear correlation between the perceived value of oral participation and students' actual participation in the classroom. The important finding that students' attitudes to receiving corrections from teachers influence their tendency to continue speaking in spite of errors emphasises the crucial role that teacher feedback plays in creating a positive learning environment.

Connection between the statistical findings and other chapters:

In examining the factors affecting students' oral participation in English classes, both quantitative and qualitative data reveal overlapping themes that highlight the complex challenges students face. As Chapter 6 reveals through students' interviews, despite

students' clear recognition of the importance of oral participation (Table 19), many of them hesitate to engage due to barriers like shyness and fear of making mistakes, underscoring the nuanced nature of their attitudes. The positive correlation identified between external English course attendance and classroom participation (Table 18) aligns with students' perspectives in chapter 6, where those with additional language exposure report greater comfort and confidence in speaking. Limited English proficiency emerges as a primary barrier to participation (Table 11), a finding supported by students' accounts in Chapter 6. Interviewees like Aseel and Dai describe how their lack of foundational knowledge restricts their ability to confidently engage in class discussions. Similarly, statistical findings reveal that shyness and fear of mistakes are significant obstacles (Table 11), which is echoed in chapter 6 by students like Amal and Mona, who cite concerns about peer judgment as major barrier.

Moreover, the statistical finding that a positive teacher-student relationship enhances oral participation (Table 8) is corroborated by students in Chapter 6, who attribute their willingness to participate to teachers' supportive attitudes and feedback. This theme is further developed in chapter 8's theoretical framework section, which explores the role of teacher support in fostering engagement. Finally, students' participation is often limited by a curriculum heavily focused on grammar, aligning with teachers' comments in Chapter 6 about the challenges posed by rigid curriculum structures. Chapter 8 explores this issue in greater depth, suggesting the need for curriculum reform to enhance communicative competence in real-life contexts.

The discrepancy in the findings suggests a need for further research into potential factors that might influence students' reporting behaviour, such as class performativity; a concept where students may act or report to act in ways they believe

are expected within the academic environment. This highlights the importance of critically engaging with the literature to better understand how such performative behaviour might shape self-reported participation. Further elaboration on class performativity is crucial, particularly in relation to Bourdieu's concept of habitus as previously discussed in Chapter 3. Habitus, which reflects deeply ingrained social norms and dispositions, may influence how students respond to questions about their classroom participation. In an EFL context, students may adjust their responses to align with what they perceive as the expected or ideal behaviour, rather than reporting their actual engagement. While this idea has been explored in ESL literature chapter, more critical work is needed to examine how habitus shapes students' performative responses, particularly in culturally specific settings like Saudi Arabia. Further research could delve into how these factors affect both actual classroom behaviour and self-reported data, offering a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between student participation and perceived expectations in academic environments.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the data gathered from the student questionnaire. The findings show a contradiction between the students' belief and their negative performance in the English classroom. Students believe in the importance of oral participation, including its importance in relation to learning the English language; however, many reported shyness in speaking up in class because of their perception of their limited English proficiency (discussed further in Chapter 7), which prevented them from participating orally. The fear of making mistakes appeared as a key barrier to student participation in language learning settings. Although the educational importance of making mistakes in order to improve language proficiency is recognised by students, the fear of being judged frequently hides this understanding,

leading to a stressful atmosphere for learning. The students' perspective on making mistakes, which frequently results in reluctant oral engagement, also stands out as a significant barrier.

The next chapter considers the influence of curriculum and pedagogy on students' reticence. Drawing on interview data, the chapter will discuss teachers' views about students' reticence, and the relationship between curriculum, teaching pedagogies, and students' reluctance to speak up.

Chapter Six

Interviews Findings and Results

The previous chapter discussed the questionnaire data findings showing the substantial significant difference between the students' positive perceptions of the importance of oral participation in English language learning and their actual levels of participation. It presented the factors that hindered participation, for example, shyness, limited language proficiency, the fear of making mistakes, lack of external English learning, the relationship between students and teacher, and the types of curriculum topics. In order to obtain a deeper understanding of the factors impacting Saudi female students' oral participation, this chapter discusses the findings from interview data collected with the 20 students and five teachers. The perceptions of the significance of oral participation are in focus. The chapter provides an analysis of the interview data, highlighting two previous findings detailed in the questionnaire analysis: students' attitude to oral participation and their perceived barriers to oral participation.

The chapter begins with the analysis focused on students' attitudes towards oral participation. I then explore the second research question, examining the influence of the curriculum and pedagogy on students' oral participation. Findings highlighted include students' perceptions of how curriculum and pedagogy influence their engagement, and teachers' views about students' reticence including how their teaching pedagogies motivate students to speak up in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom.

Attitudes Towards Oral Participation

An analysis of interview data about students' experiences of obstacles to oral participation provides a more complex understanding of such obstacles than was possible through analysing questionnaire data. According to the findings of the interviews, almost all of students have an overall good attitude towards oral participation; however, this attitude is sometimes tempered by the difficulties they encounter. All students highlighted the significance of oral participation for life skills and overall language proficiency, confirming the importance of oral participation. In her interview, student Ithar pointed out, that "it's the most important thing in English because the only real-life benefit of learning English is the ability to speak." Her perspective is consistent with Worood's assertion, "It's certainly necessary because no one can be improved without participating orally." These claims support Haya's statement: "The students will never learn without practice speaking."

The qualitative data gathered from student interviews highlights the diversity of viewpoints regarding the value of oral participation in English language instruction. For example, Albandari is motivated to participate because she feels proud of herself for being able to use English well in social situations like restaurants. This shows that, despite certain obstacles that need to be addressed, she is not only willing but also internally excited to participate orally in the classroom. Moving on to Aldanah, although she does not participate, she knows the importance of oral participation. For her, participation is necessary to get marks, to understand the lesson, and to make the class more interesting: "Participation makes the class a lot more dynamic and engaging." Aldanah feels confident, proud, and cultured, aligning with comments from most of the interviewed students about their feelings when they speak English

and give the correct answer; however, Aldanah has to be prepared and ready to answer. Aldanah asked me about ways to improve her English, which reflects her motivation to learn the language and, consequently, her desire to participate, as improving her English means that she will be confident in her language. The experiences of Albandari and Aldanah reflect the overall findings about students' attitudes towards oral participation: despite difficulties, there is a clear understanding of its importance. Their experiences highlight a broader tendency of students being motivated to communicate verbally, and the significance of removing barriers to promote a positive learning atmosphere that supports engagement.

Likewise, oral participation is necessary and important for Ghadah because it helps her to improve herself and memorise information. Ghadah was also motivated to speak up when she had an opportunity and knew the answer. She reported feeling great about this, "as this will benefit me in the future. It's exhilarating when I answer correctly." For Ftoon, participation is important to get better marks, while for Farah, speaking up is important to understand the lesson. Haya pointed out that participation means the opportunity to practise the language. Worood supported her friend's belief about the importance of oral participation, saying, "It's like an evaluation for their speaking, understanding of the language, and pronunciation."

The findings that students had positive perceptions of oral participation are supported by similar studies. The importance of learners' attitudes in the process of language acquisition is highlighted in research by Gardner and Lambert (1972) and Savignon (1997). Savignon's claim that a learner's attitude has a significant impact on how well they learn a second language. Gardner and Lambert (1972), who contend that learner attitudes and perceptions are critical to target language learning, also provide support

for this viewpoint. Accordingly, students' attitudes play a critical role in language acquisition, especially when it comes to oral engagement.

Furthermore, Jawaher expressed the importance of oral participation as helping students to memorise the studied information. Oral participation is important for Dai as "it improves the students, boosts their culture, and helps to increase their marks." For her, speaking up will improve students' English language as they practise it. As with most of the students when they can participate and speak English, Dai feels proud of herself and has a sense of accomplishment.

A study by Gu et al. (2022) in China evaluated the attitudes that university students have regarding the English language and how these attitudes impact their desire to study the language. The study concluded that students' beliefs about language learning enabled them to modify the language to suit their needs. The study also revealed that students' beliefs about oral participation and English language learning can impact their learning behaviour and motivate them to behave in certain ways.

Findings from the current study reveal that students know that oral participation is the key to learning English. The students recognised the benefits of a positive attitude in speaking up in English. These benefits included improving their skills in the target language. In addition, students understood the positive relationship between the frequent use of English and the increase in language proficiency; as Ghaida'a stated, "The more we speak, the more we learn and become fluent. For example, Haya said, "Speaking up means exposure and practice of the language constantly and as a consequence, improving the language."

Language proficiency is increased through oral participation since students use expressions, grammar, and vocabulary they have learned, and are exposed to new

words and expressions at the same time. This kind of exposure and practice of the language improves the students' language proficiency, and this is supported by similar studies (Al Zoubi, 2018; Ellis, 2002). The majority of students also agreed that those who do not participate would never understand the lesson. For Aldanah, "participation is necessary to understand the lesson ... participation may help me understand the lesson more if there's something I haven't understood from the teacher." Similar to my research, Bo et al. (2022) identified that a barrier to students' academic progress and learning at the post-secondary level is a lack of English language competence. Their research showed that students with better English proficiency participated more actively in class discussions than their less proficient counterparts. This shows a clear relationship between student oral participation skills and English language competency. The relationship between oral participation and English proficiency that this study describes is significant in the Saudi Arabia (SA) EFL context in understanding the important relationship between oral engagement and English language learning.

Barriers to Oral Participation

Language Proficiency

Low English proficiency, including insufficient vocabulary and grammar knowledge, was the common linguistic factor identified by the interview participants. These language obstacles represent a barrier that hinders students' oral participation. For example, Aseel drew attention to the comprehension barrier by stating that she is eager to participate but only after fully comprehending the lesson. When she was asked about her feelings when the teacher asks her a question, she said that it depends on whether she knows the answer or not. If she knows the answer, she has the desire to participate. This means that understanding the question is important for most

students to speak up. However, they will not be able to answer or understand the question if their English proficiency is low; in Aseel's words, "I won't participate if I don't know the answer." Low language proficiency negatively influenced the students' oral participation. As a consequence, there is a contradiction between students' attitudes towards the importance of oral participation and their reluctance to participate orally. The findings indicated that there was a significant relationship between students' positive beliefs about oral participation and negative feelings when speaking up due to a lack of English proficiency, which acted as a barrier to the students' oral participation. This finding echoes Wu's (2019) research that investigated Chinese university students' perceptions of factors that influenced their reticence. Wu's findings showed a substantial positive correlation between learner reluctance and low language proficiency.

Likewise, Dai, Reham and Bayader all highlighted that oral engagement is significantly hindered by an insufficient foundation in English. Their comments support the claim that in order to support effective language learning environments, educational systems need to address these foundational deficiencies. Dai attributed students' reluctance to their lack of a foundation in English at high school, while Reham attributed students' reluctance to their shyness, lack of knowledge, or being afraid of bullying if they make a mistake. She feels confident in herself and distinguished if she is able to speak up in English. When asked if she is self-confident when speaking in English, Reham said:

I'll become confident when I learn it perfectly. I don't master it, but

I keep trying until I do. I learn from the doctor or hear the answers

from students. I feel confident when I'm sure that my answer is correct.

Although Byader enjoys studying English, she does not understand it: "When the teacher asks something, I don't understand what she wants." Lack of an English foundation in primary school or not being interested in the language are causes for students' reluctance, as Byader indicated. The lack of a basic English foundation was also mentioned by Taif. She said, "Students do not participate because they do not have the English foundations they have had since they were in school," which also reflects students' low level of English proficiency as an important element in their reluctance. Taif said she would not participate in the interview if it was in English, as she was not confident in her language abilities. Both Byader and Taif point to a key contributing factor for later academic reluctance as the absence of a primary level English foundation. In the context of my study, the experiences of Byader and Taif reveal that students' confidence and willingness to participate orally are greatly impacted by their lack of an early English foundation.

Similar to my finding that students' lack of basic English language skills from their early learning has a major effect on their confidence and willingness to speak verbally in English, Fu and Lim (2022) identified a lack of English language proficiency as an obstacle to students' learning and academic success at the post-secondary level. Irwanti (2017) also discovered that inadequate language proficiency is a major contributor to students' reluctance to talk in English. Irwanti found that higher proficiency students were actively engaged in oral English activities, whereas lower proficiency students preferred to stay silent because they found it difficult to communicate.

Similarly, Ftoon's viewpoint explains clearly that a poor linguistic foundation can cause reluctance in students. Ftoon attributed her weakness in speaking to a lack of English foundation in primary school. According to Ftoon, students without strong English foundations feel stressed and shy about speaking up. She indicated that "about 40% of the students don't participate, while the others, who learned the foundations of the language and joined courses before, participate a lot." Ftoon likes English, but she does not participate because "I neither understand it well nor participate in the class because I haven't mastered the foundations." For Ftoon to participate, she has to prepare the lesson before the class because she has not mastered the foundations of English. When she was asked if the preparation of the lesson helped her to participate, Ftoon said, "Yes, it helps me to participate a lot and speak, which is better than staying silent." Being unable to answer the question correctly makes her feel stressed and embarrassed. On the contrary, she feels excited and "feels like [she has] made a breakthrough" when she willingly answers a question. The results of Wu's (2019), and Gushendra and Aprianti's (2019) investigations showed that two primary individual factors—lack of preparation and challenges with understanding English—were responsible for students' reluctance in English classes. Wu (2019) observed that when students find it difficult to understand questions posed to them, they frequently prefer silence over engagement, suggesting a direct correlation between understanding and oral engagement. In addition, Gushendra and Aprianti (2019) clarified that students' confidence levels are greatly impacted by being unprepared, which increases their anxiety and decreases the chance of speaking up in class. However, when they are well-prepared, students seem more confident and less nervous, indicating that being prepared is essential to encourage oral participation.

Farah's experiences reflect a similar pattern and highlight the negative long-term effects of inadequate early language teaching. Farah said that she and other students feel embarrassed because they speak broken English. They feel like children because "we cannot differentiate between 'B' and 'D,' 'Q' and 'K.' When reading long sentences, we make a lot of mistakes, such as pronouncing the 'e' at the end of words." She thinks that lack of English is the reason behind the problem of participation because students "graduate from each school year with poor English skills." She referred to poor English foundations as the main reason for students' reluctance, saying that she graduated from high school with zero English skills, and she did not understand anything in English except, "What is your name?" and, "How old are you?" When Mona was asked about the reason for students' reluctance to participate, she said, "I think half of them have neither understood nor learned the basics of the language." Lastly, Ghmood's comment serves as an important reminder that a lack of basic understanding can hinder even the most courageous students. Ghmood explained that "the lack of English foundations is the main reason behind the students' reticence to speak up." Ghmood herself has the desire to participate, but said, "I wish I had learned the foundations of English in primary school, which would have helped me become fluent."

Confidence and Expression of Shyness

As mentioned above, students have negative reactions towards oral participation partly because of a lack of English knowledge. The second factor that impacts their negative reactions is lack of confidence in their English, which makes them shy to speak up. Students' unwillingness to participate orally due to their lack of both confidence and English proficiency highlights a major issue in English language learning in SA. This problem of low oral participation is crucial since it has an impact

on students' engagement in language learning. This, in turn, has major implications for EFL pedagogy in SA which will be discussed further in Chapter 9.

Shyness strongly and negatively impacted students' oral participation. The following comments from students offer a variety of viewpoints that help in clarifying the complex relationships between variables influencing classroom engagement, especially those related to confidence and shyness. Feeling shy is a reason behind students' reluctance, as Aldanah indicated when asked about barriers to students speaking up. She said she does not participate because she feels shy. Amal answered the question about factors that hinder students' oral participation as:

“If you ask them a question, they'll be shy to answer in front of the students, although they know the answer. Students feel shy of their friends' judgement if they make mistakes and being shy in their personalities prevents them from speaking up.”

Like other participants, Byader has no problem speaking up and answering questions if she knows the answer, but otherwise she feels embarrassed due to her shy personality, which makes her lack confidence: “I'm not confident enough to speak in front of the students.” Mona said that she is too shy and embarrassed when she pronounces a word incorrectly in front of her teacher and classmates, as they may laugh at her. Even with these difficulties, she sometimes finds English to be “fun” and she commented that she is proud that she can speak English.

This feeling of confidence in her language happens when she prepares and understands the lesson and can answer correctly. Likewise, Hoda reported having improved her language and having made efforts to master it, but she still needs to improve her speaking to be confident in her language skills and able to speak up.

Tarfah's perspective outlines a basic tenet: a student's shyness in the classroom is partly caused by their lack of understanding. It is important to remember, though, that Tarfah experiences the effects of this lack of knowledge, such as shyness and anxiety, particularly when confronted with questions she cannot understand. Tarfah said that students do not participate due to feeling shy or confused, which is caused by their inability to understand the lesson. She feels nervous if she does not understand the question although she believes that feeling nervous in this situation is a normal reaction. Tarfah is also shy and introverted, which also influences her participation in class.

Dai connected with Tarfah's point of view when she elaborated on how problems with self-perception and confidence can prevent students from actively participating in class, even though noting that she is not shy. Although Dai likes the language, she said that she has not learned a lot of English and that she cannot speak as well as she reads. This makes her unmotivated to participate in class and unconfident of her English ability. For her, students do not participate because:

They don't understand English, lack self-confidence, and underestimate themselves. They compare themselves to others and disappoint themselves by wondering why they aren't like their classmates, who frequently participate. Other students are lazy and careless.

However, Dai believes in the importance of oral participation. She is sociable, calm and prefers to speak on topics she likes; she does not feel shy when participating, meaning that she is able to "ask for clarification when I don't understand something." But Ghadah, who is more eager to take chances when participating, rejects the idea

that shyness is an obstacle; she presented rashness and enthusiasm as qualities that can motivate participation even in the absence of skill. Ghmood is similarly courageous, but she feels nervous and too stressed when speaking up. As a consequence, she loses her ideas and does not concentrate. She is not shy, but she does not participate because she does not want to pronounce the words incorrectly, as she is unconfident in her English. If a student feels confident in her language, she would be motivated to participate and speak up. Amal provided an example of this; when she improved her language this was reflected positively in her participation: “I was getting nervous when speaking English, but I’ve become self-confident and more motivated to speak by knowing English perfectly.”

Recent research confirms the finding that EFL students frequently feel shy when speaking in front of classmates and professors. Studies by Gushendra and Aprianti (2019), Wu (2019), and Rahmani et al. (2022) all highlight shyness and lack of confidence as major obstacles to oral engagement in EFL classes. Gushendra and Aprianti’s study revealed that students’ lack of confidence is a major element in their reluctance, which affects their desire to participate in class discussions. It also emphasised how students’ reluctance to speak in public is made worse by shyness, which has an effect on their general participation in class. Wu’s (2019) research focused on more general issues such as shyness, anxiety, and weak English foundations that lead to students’ reluctance in EFL contexts. My study highlighted the relationship between these affective factors, in particular emphasising the need for confidence and effective learning strategies to remove these obstacles. Ftoon’s comments, “I feel shy when they ask me something and I answer it wrongly,” and Mona’s reflection, “I feel shy when I pronounce a word incorrectly in front of my teacher and classmates as they may laugh at me,” are consistent with this finding.

These opinions support the idea that shyness may be a major obstacle to oral engagement and speaking ability development.

Students Perceptions of the Role of the Teacher

Based on the students' interviews, teachers play a significant role in their oral participation. Students' comments provided the basis for a nuanced analysis of how teacher characteristics and various teaching methods can significantly impact students' engagement, especially when it comes to oral participation. This influence operates on several interrelated levels, including motivation, error tolerance, and a safe atmosphere. For example, Amal's statement about the attitudes of teachers—"We'll get motivated if the teacher is kind and encourages us and vice versa"—highlights the importance of having helpful and encouraging teachers who can promote student engagement. This clear correlation between teacher performance and student motivation emphasises the significance of a supportive learning environment that fosters participation in oral activities. The idea that mistakes should be seen as teaching opportunities is expressed in the following remark by Jawaher: "She has an influence when she doesn't get mad about those who make mistakes while reading or cannot read at all because of their poor language." This method creates a secure space in the classroom for students to practise their language skills while acknowledging that mistakes are a necessary part of the learning process. Jawaher's advice on fostering a safe atmosphere highlights the importance of a classroom setting where students feel protected from criticism or mockery, allowing them to engage more fully in class.

Ghadah made a distinction between teachers who simply "read from the book" and those who bring a deeper connection to the material and to students into their

teaching. Her comments highlight the value of an engaging teaching approach as a means of encouraging student participation. Mona also highlighted the transforming power of teacher enthusiasm to synthesise difficult subjects. For her, this enthusiasm serves more as a catalyst to enhance other motivating factors than as an independent variable; when she says, “The more enthusiasm in the class, the more the participation,” she conveys this. Moreover, students may have had an unfavourable experience, reaction, or result previously which may make them further disengage in the classroom. Taif, for example, explained that she liked English in high school, but her teacher was strict, nervous, and made her afraid. She sometimes participated, but not much. Similarly, Worood stressed the difference between university and school settings when talking about her experiences:

The doctors make us nervous when participating which I don't prefer in university. Some of them shout at us, so many students feel confused about participating. In school, the teachers don't mind whether the students participate or not. They only give their classes, and that's it.

Such negative experiences may cause a lack of confidence that hinders students' engagement and exacerbates their reluctance to speak up.

Earlier studies have pointed to how important it is for teachers to be able to support (rather than hinder) students' engagement in EFL classes (e.g., Gushendra & Aprianti, 2019; Reza, 2015; Wu, 2019). Studies have indicated that students' reluctance, anxiety, and motivation to learn English are highly influenced by teachers' actions, their methods of instruction, and their general attitude to students' engagement. My finding that teachers have an influence on students' participation aligns with results

found by Reza (2015), who studied reticence in first-year students at a university in Saudi Arabia. He found that in addition to motivation and anxiety, one of the top three factors influencing student reticence was the role of teachers. According to Reza's study, a teacher's manner and method of instruction have a significant impact on both students' overall sense of fear in the classroom and their willingness to participate. While my study does not address motivation or anxiety explicitly, it does consider the role of teachers.

Worood and Albanadri outlined how some teaching approaches make students more anxious, supporting the contention that educational environments can either help or hinder student engagement. Albanadri reported that participation makes the students stressed and nervous, as they feel the pressure to participate when the teacher asks them a question. In a similar way, Worood highlighted how pedagogical strategies can have a big impact on how students engage in the classroom, which is in line with Albanadri's previous comment of the role of the teacher. Worood emphasised how important it is for teachers to know how to use approaches to either promote or inhibit students' participation.

Studies by Januariza and Hendriani (2016) and John (2020) have pointed to the crucial influence that teaching methods have on the motivation and anxiety of EFL students. They demonstrated how traditional grammar-translation techniques, which emphasise grammatical correctness rather than oral skill, cause anxiety and discourage students' engagement in the classroom. According to Ahmad (2014) and Al-Seghayer (2014), this teaching style is common in the Saudi EFL environment, although it conflicts with the requirement for communicative and supportive pedagogical approaches. Students' experiences of increasing fear and reluctance to

participate, particularly in university environments, serve as examples of the negative impacts of such methods.

In line with these earlier studies, findings from this study revealed that the teacher's approach and style can have a significant impact on students' engagement levels in the classroom. The students' comments below demonstrate how teaching strategies may increase participation, engagement, student interest, and attention.

The teacher sometimes uses “the wheel of names” activity, where she lists our names and chooses one at random (Taif).

My teacher explains well and puts an effort into each and every paragraph ... What I also like about her is that she has a schedule where she explains the lesson in a day, and we do homework on the same lesson the next day (Ghaida'a).

The teacher can change her teaching style from time to time to avoid boredom. She can use different strategies such as assigning two students every week to explain a lesson (Reham).

These viewpoints from the students emphasise the significance of flexible, student-centred educational strategies that encourage students' participation and engagement.

These findings are in line with other studies' results which highlight the important influence of teachers' methods and approaches on students' interest and engagement levels in the classroom. For example, Toro et al. (2019) explored the problems of poor teaching strategies in Ecuador. The findings revealed that authentic communicative

situations greatly improve oral language development. For language learning to be effective, a focus on real-life interaction and student motivation is essential.

Making Mistakes

Making mistakes is another obstacle to oral engagement which was expressed by students. For example, the anxiety that Aldanah and Amal experienced about making errors created a barrier to participation; in this case, a barrier that the individual puts on themselves. Aldanah confirmed this when she was asked if she feels embarrassed when she makes mistakes while answering. She said, “Yes, and this confuses me to the point that it becomes impossible for me to participate in reading with a teacher who corrects my mistakes.” Her statement identifies error correction or making mistake as a barrier to oral participation. Likewise, Ghida’a and Ithar felt embarrassed to answer or speak up, particularly if they make mistakes. Ghida’a, like other participants, was sure, however, about the importance of oral participation: “We have to learn to speak fluently without making mistakes. The more we speak, the more we learn and become fluent.” When Ithar was asked about students’ being reluctant to speak up, she listed making mistakes as one of the barriers that causes students’ reticence: “... and being afraid of making mistakes, are the main reasons for students’ reluctance.” Ithar expressed her fear of making mistakes when she speaks up. This shows that she avoids participating because she does not want to make mistakes. Making mistakes might be due to her lack of English proficiency. Although she believes that making mistakes is normal for second language learners, she still feels nervous and stressed. Similarly, Haya said that the majority of students feel afraid of making mistakes and that this hinders their oral participation. Worood is like Haya: “I feel nervous and think about whether I’ve pronounced a word correctly or not.”

Moreover, “students feel nervous, afraid of failure, or embarrassed about pronouncing the words incorrectly, which creates many obstacles.

This connects well with to something that Jawaher also clarified. Jawaher reported being under stress, but her main worry was not just learning the lesson, but rather her fear of making mistakes in front of others. Her point of view adds complexity by arguing that stress also serves as a barrier that prevents students from participating. Based on Jawaher’s experience, feeling stressed or afraid of making mistakes in front of the teacher and classmates are factors that hinder students’ oral participation. As with other participants, she felt motivated to participate if she was sure about the answer. She believes that it is only the thought of making mistakes, or actually making them, that causes her embarrassment and stress.

Reham’s experiences present a more assertive attitude towards classroom engagement, which contrasts sharply with these perspectives. Reham, in contrast to her friends, is not afraid to speak up and thinks that engagement is valuable in and of itself, regardless of how accurate the response is. When Reham was asked about the reasons for students’ reticence, she said, “The students may not be sure about the answer. They believe the answer must be correct.” Unlike her friends, her courage and enthusiasm serve as instruments to help her get over the obstacles: “I may be unsure about my answer, say something wrong or make a mistake because I speak fast.” When she was asked if these traits are good for her participation, she explained that she thinks that her traits are positive, and that answering even if you are unsure about the answer is better than being reluctant. This reveals that making mistakes is not a barrier for oral participation for at least some students, which aligns with the questionnaire result (see Chapter 5). Recent studies have indicated that the fear of

making mistakes can greatly hinder students' willingness to engage in oral activities (Gushendra & Aprianti, 2019; Januariza & Hendriani, 2016; Murad & Jalambo, 2019). With similarities to my research, Murad and Jalambo (2019) investigated the main causes of 104 EFL students' hesitation to engage in oral activities during English language classes at a college in Palestine. Their findings and those of other studies suggest one of the main reasons that students are reluctant to talk is that they are afraid of making mistakes, and engagement is seriously hindered by students' concern about making mistakes.

Students' Perspectives About the Curriculum

Students' perceptions of the Saudi curriculum offer some indication of its effect on their oral participation. Student Aseel presented a vision for a curriculum that takes into account the realities of communication in the actual world: "We are not taught vocabularies to use in a restaurant, coffee shop, public place, or airport. The topics are formal, involving a few slang words." She proposes a curriculum that balances formal structure with the spontaneity of real-life interactions. Though recognising the curriculum's current relevance and benefit, Tarfah emphasised the significance of improving it by better aligning it with real-life skills and interests: "It's all about skills, things we know how to do. It's more interesting and useful than high school curriculums." Her viewpoint emphasises the value of a curriculum that is not only thoroughly language-rich but also strongly linked to the experiences and goals of the students' real lives.

Reham gave the curriculum a positive review, praising its relevance and modernity: "The topics are modern, and I feel they've been useful for me; we've previously learned some topics but are currently learning them more extensively." Her remarks

highlight the value of an evolving curriculum that responds to students' skills and continues to encourage them to achieve competency. Dai provided a broader viewpoint on the curriculum's emphasis on grammar, recognising its significance but proposing a shift towards more useful applications:

“The curriculum mostly emphasises grammar, but in my opinion, the present and past tenses are the only significant issues. Speaking is the skill I've gained the most from my teacher since she corrects me when I talk. Therefore, I'm hoping that the curriculum focuses on the most grammatical structures.”

Dai's comment highlights the need for a curriculum that covers significant grammar that enhances particular tenses, but also supports effective communication by providing priority to speaking skills that are most useful and relevant to students' real-world communication needs.

While acknowledging the curriculum's potential to promote linguistic competence, Ghaida'a also pointed out areas in need of development: “The curriculum includes topics we have already studied in detail, it is neither difficult nor unfamiliar”; this suggests that in order to meet the varied requirements and skill levels of students, the curriculum needs to be more challenging and interesting.

The problems with curriculum design in Saudi EFL education, especially in higher education, result from a mismatch between the requirements, aims, and preferences of the individual students and the curriculum as it is given (Alrabai, 2016a). This disconnect has been noted as a major barrier to student motivation and involvement. Dörnyei (2001) stated that forcing students to study material that does not seem relevant to their goals for the future or their personal lives is one of the main factors

that demotivates them. Alrabai (2016b) proposed that curriculum design should be based on teachers' perspectives and customised to the unique interests and experiences of students. This method would not only help students find the learning process more interesting and relevant, but it would also motivate them to participate actively in class activities. In contrast, a lack of interest leads to disengagement from the learning process and passive engagement. Accordingly, the curriculum should be created with the needs of the students to maintain active engagement and interest (Kettunen, 2011, as cited in Assulaimani, 2019). The findings in this study are similar to those of the above studies, as they highlight how curriculum material affects students' oral engagement and the disparity between curriculum design and students' requirements. Also similar to this study, other scholars have noted the importance of student interest and viewpoints regarding the need for a curriculum that aligns with real-world scenarios.

Teachers' Perspectives on Students' Reticence to Participate Orally

Since this study aims to investigate the complex problem of students' reluctance to participate orally during English lessons, it is important to provide teachers' perspectives, as they are actively involved in the teaching process. Their points of view offer a sophisticated comprehension of students' engagement. Teachers Ameenah offered insightful explanations of the function of the classroom environment and students' motivation. She said that "the students who usually participate have a strong desire to do so while the others aren't interested at all." Furthermore, she supported the students' views that fear of making mistakes hinders students from participating in class. Ameenah said that students always say that they do not participate because "they haven't learned the foundations in primary school and don't have self-confidence." Likewise, teacher Hana'a offered her perspective on the factors influencing oral involvement. She said that "Students have words in their minds, but they are unable to convey the message in their minds." This statement indicates that lack of English knowledge prevents students expressing their ideas orally. "They have the desire to speak up but they are afraid that their colleagues could laugh if they make a mistake," she continued, adding that students' fear of mockery from their peers contributes to the problem. These comments from teacher Ameenah and teacher Hana'a align with the students' perspectives about barriers to oral participation.

Teacher Doha talked about the relationship between participation willingness and English language proficiency. She asserted that "those who are good at English participate the most," while also recognising that "some students have the knowledge and are excellent in English but they suffer from shyness due to social concerns."

While Doha did not explain what those concerns were, her statement explains the importance of English knowledge as a motivator for students to speak up, and shyness as a barrier to their participation. In addition, Doha observed that other students basically refuse to speak in English and prefer to answer in Arabic: “So I ask them again in English in order that they answer me in English.” Students also insisted on her explaining the lesson in Arabic, as teachers used to do at school. In response to the students’ pressure to give the instructions in English and explain them in Arabic, Doha has started using translation, but notes that they then “make no effort to understand as they know that everything will be explained again in Arabic.” Alqahtani (2021) investigated the negative impact of inexperienced teachers on student performance with students from two Saudi schools. That study revealed that the majority of English teachers in Saudi schools speak Arabic to their students when teaching English. The study highlighted the negative impacts of using the mother tongue on students’ speaking skills. When Doha was asked what influences students’ participation, she noted that students’ attitudes to English differ:

Some of them like English, while others feel shy from making mistakes in front of their classmates. Some students are somewhat interested in English only because it’s a compulsory subject, yet they don’t really like it.

The practical benefits of engaging in speaking were covered by teacher Siham: “Speaking is the skill that benefits them the most.” She was confident that students should master speaking as it is “necessary in order to be able to deal with situations such as in hotels, the airport, planes, and so on.” Mutaira’s comments highlight the significance of oral English competence in a globalised setting, which is relevant to

SA, where students could use the language in real-life contexts outside of the classroom, such as when travelling or working. She noted that “although students have the desire to speak, learn, and participate and master the language, their personalities (such as feeling shy) sometimes prevent them from doing so.” Siham also noted that students “feel afraid that their classmates will make fun of them if they make mistakes in pronunciation,” saying that a fear of making mistakes, as well as being shy and lacking confidence, hinder students from speaking up.

Despite the lack of research that investigates English language teachers’ impressions of students’ reticence (Soo & Goh, 2017), some studies support the above findings. For instance, Donald (2010) examined resistance from the perspectives of teachers and students. The results of the study demonstrated that fear of making mistakes had a major impact on student hesitancy. Deniro (2019) noticed that students’ reticence in English classes is greatly impacted by a number of elements, including motivation, confidence, teacher behaviour, materials, and the learning environment. His research also demonstrated how teachers’ views towards teaching English to reticent school students reflect low self-esteem and a fear of making mistakes as the two main barriers to engagement.

Teacher Nahed, like other teachers, indicated that students are not very motivated to participate in class. She reported that students are shy and not confident in their speaking skills, and they do not have the willingness to speak up. Nahed said that students cannot understand the basics of English, indicating a lack of English knowledge. She insisted on the importance of students speaking up, as in her view this is what will make them fluent in English, and is the skill they need in all aspects of their life in the future. In her view, their lack of English knowledge, such as a lack of

vocabulary, and their lack of motivation are among the factors that prevent students from speaking up.

Teachers' Perspectives on Curriculum and Pedagogy

Teachers' opinions on the curriculum and pedagogy shed light on how these two elements influence the effectiveness of language teaching and student participation. Teacher Hana'a referred to the curriculum's limitations, saying, "It's not interesting," and "We can't improvise on our own." This aligns with Abahussain's (2016) claim that teachers in SA are not permitted to choose the material they teach; instead, they have to stick closely to the contents of the textbooks.

When teacher Ameenah was asked about the skill she focused on, she said vocabulary, "because grammar can easily be forgotten without practice, unlike vocabulary words that stick in their memory." This suggests that the curriculum emphasises grammar over vocabulary. The focus on grammar in English language in Saudi educational settings may restrict students' ability to use the language in everyday contexts, limiting their language acquisition to a largely non-communicative context (Alqarni, 2020). For teacher Siham, although she considers the curriculum is well organised and suitable for each student level, she reported that it is "too detailed to the point that [it] restricts the teacher," which may hinder teachers' flexibility and creativity in teaching. In order to reduce the rigidity of the curriculum, Siham suggested the "unlock" courses that are more in line with student interests and real-world situations, "where the students can watch videos and conversations similar to real life, and not only listen, such as in the current curriculum." This suggestion emphasises the need for a more engaging curriculum that involves students in relevant contexts. Likewise, Siham commented on how speaking exercises should be

incorporated into the curriculum to make sure students are active learners rather than merely passive consumers of knowledge.

Two of teacher Nahed's most notable criticisms of the curriculum were its rigidity and how it restricts teaching flexibility and creativity:

It's fairly simple. But it's very basic. There's not much to do because we have to follow the book. We have to follow the syllabus and we can't move an inch out of that ... It's not interesting... we can't improvise on our own ... many of the rules that we must abide by have been set up.

In relation to pedagogy, teacher Hana'a described her pedagogical approach emphasising the use of interactive activities to increase student engagement and learning: "I prefer a student-centred class ... we just don't give the lecture; we are concerned with what the students want because all students are not the same." This method enables her to modify her instruction to fit the varied requirements of her students. Hana'a uses a variety of techniques to create an active and engaged setting for learning. She explained how she makes classes more engaging and interesting by incorporating role-plays and real-life scenarios: "We can utilise items like purses and jewellery to set up a scene on the board." These techniques aim to improve the learning process's dynamic nature and their relevance to the experiences of the students. In language learning environments, it is crucial to give students real-world interaction experiences, as highlighted by Mulyani et al. (2023). They argue that supplying students with real-world, scenario-based language exercises increases their motivation and dramatically enhances their capacity to comprehend and apply language in authentic settings.

Teacher Ameenah employs diverse approaches to deal with the students' reticence. For example, she encourages the students by normalising the process of making mistakes and providing rewards: "I tell them that I had previously made mistakes in my answers." Chang (2011) also asserted that teachers should reassure students that making mistakes when learning a language is normal and acceptable because everyone makes mistakes. Additionally, Ameenah "also gives bonus marks to those who participate." This strategy aligns with her view that student participation can be positively impacted by encouragement and material rewards. Ameenah also said, "I use traditional methods, including translation, visual tools, or pictures, but I diversify them depending on the lesson itself."

Teacher Doha shed light on her pedagogical strategy. In order to increase student engagement, she talked about implementing strategies that require students' involvement: "I've begun using presentations and videos as teaching tools, which makes the class more engaging." In order to encourage students to speak up, she puts them in settings that are equivalent to real life: "I try to put them in a situation similar to real life so they can practise speaking in English." In addition, she involves students in conversations on subjects that interest them: "I call on the students who don't participate by name and discuss interesting topics with them." Doha stressed the value of active engagement and communication in her teaching, emphasising the importance of letting students express themselves. Her method is designed to raise student interest and develop a deeper comprehension of the language than simply grammatical accuracy.

Teacher Siham, discussed her teaching approach and how pedagogy can improve student engagement. She stressed how important it is to match curriculum information

to real-world situations in order to provide students with a more interesting learning experience. Siham emphasised the importance of student-centred learning and practical applications: “I link the curriculum with their life and future, which is called systematic sustainable education.” Siham uses group-based activities—“my method relies on groups”—to increase their engagement. . In addition, Siham offers creative strategies such as creating a virtual community for online discussion with foreign students who are studying in English institutes: “I hope the Saudi universities adopt such activity by allotting an hour in students’ schedule to join the virtual community in the UK.” According to Siham, these engagement strategies would enrich students’ learning experience by exposing them to a variety of cultures and viewpoints in addition to encouraging language practice. However, teacher Nahed highlighted the value of communicative language teaching (CLT), where the teacher is a facilitator rather than an instructor: “I am more into communicative language teaching, I want myself to be a facilitator rather than a teacher.” Nahed’s statement suggests that she wants to motivate students and involve them in comprehensive input, rather than simply transmitting knowledge to them. Both Alharbi (2020) and Al Asmari (2015) support a student-centred strategy that promotes the usage of the target language in a variety of circumstances. This approach enhances not just language proficiency but also comprehension of useful language use.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the data gathered from the students' and teachers' interviews. The findings show that students believe in the importance of oral participation in relation to learning the English language. In addition, the chapter outlined students' views about the barriers that cause their reticence. Findings showed that teachers play a significant role in determining how engaged students are in English classes, as students' motivation and participation are strongly impacted by student–teacher interactions and teaching pedagogies. Teachers' views about students' reticence were also revealed. The classroom environment, students' self-confidence, and students' English proficiency all play crucial roles in engagement in English lessons; the relationships between all of these factors were highlighted. Consequently, the factors described above are associated with students being demotivated to speak up and their tendency to become reticent in English lessons.

The information obtained from teacher interviews sheds light on the intricate relationship that exists between curriculum design, teaching pedagogies, and students' reluctance to speak up. Findings emphasise how important it is to use interactive teaching methods that can be tailored to each student's interests and how language skills may be used in real-world situations.

The results that have been presented here will be further explored in the next two chapters; the theoretical frameworks of Bourdieu (1984, 1990, 1991) and Foucault (1975) offer the basis for a thorough analysis and a solid theoretical framework for interpreting the study's findings. In Chapter 7, factors influencing oral participation among students will be discussed, highlighting the discrepancy between their understanding of the importance of oral engagement and their real participation in the

classroom. It examines how students perceive themselves, and how this influences their oral participation in the classroom. In Chapter 8, the influence of curriculum and pedagogical strategies on students' oral participation is examined, and the chapter analyses how teaching methods and curriculum affect students' participation as well as the complex relationships that exist between teaching methods, curriculum design, and student–teacher interactions, and how these relationships affect students' ability to participate orally.

Chapter Seven

Dispositions Towards English Language Learning

In order to answer the stated overarching research question, which aims to investigate the factors that influence students' oral participation in English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom in Saudi Arabia (SA), this chapter provides a discussion and analysis of the research findings from both the questionnaire and the interviews. In this chapter, I respond to the research sub-question focused on students' perceptions of oral engagement and how this influences their disposition towards participation. To explore the multiple elements that explain students' engagement in the English language classroom, the discussion focuses on the contradiction between students' beliefs about the importance of oral engagement and their reluctance to participate in the classroom. The first part of the chapter discusses students' perceptions, including positive and negative attitudes towards oral participation. The second section focuses on reluctance to participate, including the barriers that hinder students' oral participation. This includes students' perception of their English proficiency and their dispositions towards learning EFL. This section also discusses students' confidence and expressions of shyness and explores the role of Bourdieu's (1990) habitus in shaping their confidence and influencing their participation. Lastly, the chapter addresses the influence of gendered habitus on students' willingness to speak up in the classroom.

The discussion also connects the research findings with the theoretical frameworks of Bourdieu (1977, 1990, 1991) and Foucault (1977, 1980, 1984) to provide a thorough understanding of the students' experiences and perceptions and to identify potential ways to enhance oral participation in the English language classroom. The apparent discrepancy between students' perceptions of the value of oral participation and their

reticence to speak up in class is a significant part of the students' educational experience. This contradiction is explored using Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field, and capital, along with Foucault's theories of discourse, power, knowledge, subjectivity, and agency, to explain students' dispositions and actions in the classroom. An examination of students' lack of engagement is explored by analysing how habitus and capital operate in the field to influence students' English knowledge and confidence. Students' evolving habitus towards the use of English in the classroom is also examined. Within this context, Foucault's view of power relationships—in this case between students and their teachers—provides a crucial lens through which to view how power affects students' participation.

Students' Perspectives about Oral Participation

Students know that oral participation is the key to learning English. As mentioned in Chapter 5, most students have a positive attitude towards oral participation. Based on the questionnaire findings, 85% of participants agreed on the importance of oral participation as it helps in learning and acquiring the language. Likewise, in the interviews, all students confirmed the importance of oral participation, evident in the following quotes from student interviews: Worood believes that “improvement is impossible without oral participation,” Haya emphasised that “the students will never learn without practice speaking,” Jawaher considers that “oral participation helps students memorise the studied information,” and Ithar states that oral participation is “the most important thing in English because the only real-life benefit of learning English is the ability to speak.”

In the interviews, students agreed that oral disengagement hinders understanding of the lesson. This implies that engagement in the learning process and active

participation are necessary for understanding and internalising the material being taught. This is consistent with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which holds that social interactions and cultural environment have a significant impact on learning because learning is a social process (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Vygotsky, interaction with peers and teachers plays a critical role in cognitive development, and learning occurs within the zone of proximal development (ZPD), where guidance from more knowledgeable individuals enables learners to achieve higher understanding. When students actively participate in the discussion in class, ask questions, express their ideas, and engage with the topic, they are more likely to have a better understanding of the content and make meaningful connections (Prince, 2004). This active participation creates a learning environment where students construct knowledge collaboratively, which Vygotsky emphasized as essential for deeper learning. For instance, student Aldanah noted that “participation is necessary to understand the lesson ... it may help me understand the lesson more if there’s something I haven’t understood from the teacher”. This observation aligns with Vygotsky’s concept of scaffolding, where the teacher and peers support the student in moving from their current level of understanding to a more advanced one through social interaction. On the other hand, if students constantly remain passive, they can miss out on the advantages of active engagement, as Vygotsky suggests that such passivity limits the opportunities for cognitive growth through interaction.

Likewise, in the questionnaire, many students confirmed the importance of oral participation, identifying the benefits as opportunities to “learn new words and become familiar with words which motivate me to participate,” “learn different pronunciations,” “learn from those mistakes,” “speak the language fluently,” “understand the language and become confident,” “[improve] self-confidence and the

desire to speak more.” In questionnaire responses students also referred to the importance of oral participation in understanding English: “It helps improve the language, know words and vocabularies”. In addition, the students understood the positive relationship between the frequent use of English and an increase in language proficiency: “The more I speak up, the more I become confident and do not feel shy anymore”.

These comments highlight a number of key issues that emphasise the value of oral engagement for language learning (LL). The comments of the students highlight their perceptions that oral participation is important when learning new words. A study conducted by Nation and Nation (2001) highlights the importance of active engagement in class for effective learning; the study suggests it helps students to learn new terms and become familiar with them (Nation & Nation, 2001). Students get the chance to utilise new terms in context when they talk, which helps them understand and remember. Moreover, the students in my study believed that pronunciation can be helped by oral participation. This is consistent with studies showing that interaction can give language learners the input and feedback they need to improve their speaking skills (Derwing & Munro, 2005). Additionally, the students’ responses demonstrate the idea that learning occurs by making mistakes. This supports the idea that making mistakes can be an important aspect of learning a language because they help identify knowledge gaps and present opportunities for improvement (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Habitus and Language Proficiency

Furthermore, the students agreed that speaking in class helps them feel more comfortable with the language. It is well known that more confidence can encourage

more oral participation, which can lead to a beneficial association between participation and learning (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Lastly, various students have noted that the ability to speak fluently can develop over time, as higher production, interaction, and practice can improve language fluency (De Jong & Perfetti, 2011). Ghaida'a confirmed this: "The more we speak, the more we learn and become fluent." Additionally, the above student quotes highlight students' perceptions that when students use the language frequently through speaking up, they apply what they have learned. Thus, language proficiency is increased, since they use expressions, grammar, and vocabulary they have learned, and are exposed to new words and expressions at the same time. The students' comments confirm the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985), which claims that using language output plays an important role in LL. According to Swain, when students are forced to speak in front of others, they become aware of their knowledge gaps, which might encourage language development.

Based on Bourdieu's (1990) notion of structuring structure, we can more clearly understand this concept as an ongoing procedure operating through a circular interaction of the habitus and field, as discussed in Chapter 3. As discussed in that chapter, habitus in this context is more than simply a structural framework; it is a dynamic interplay of internalised dispositions and behaviours shaped by various external influences, including the social context or field in which individuals operate, such as previous experience with learning and speaking English, that help to form these behaviours and dispositions. These dispositions and behaviours not only form these structures but also reflect Bourdieu's idea that social practices are both constituted by and constitutive of the social realities they exist within. The field represents the social context within which these dispositions and behaviours are shaped, reflecting the relationships that govern a particular social context.

As students encounter English more frequently, their habitus changes, which has an impact on how they use the language in the future. Through the constant interaction between habitus and practice, a repeating cycle of practice and development results from subsequent engagement as this changed habitus continues to evolve. In other words, habitus is both a structured and structuring structure, according to Bourdieu (1990), and this constant interaction between habitus and practice is an example of this dynamic relationship. It is the result of historical and social influences, and it also shapes present and future attitudes and behaviours. The constantly changing habitus of students serves as an example of the dual nature of Bourdieu's idea because they both reflect and develop their language abilities in the second language acquisition (SLA) context.

This illustrates the ongoing interaction between the inside habitus and outside linguistic practices, which are represented by using the language in real-life situations. Furthermore, generating language can provide students with an opportunity to try out different language forms and get feedback. The students' language competency increases as a result of this exposure and practice, and as scholars such as Al Zoubi (2018), Ellis (2002), and Krashen (1982) have remarked, it indicates a clear correlation between language proficiency and active participation. Accordingly, the positive correlation between engagement and language proficiency highlights an important educational phenomenon. Increased proficiency facilitates both active engagements in class and language development, producing a positive process where each aspect supports and strengthens the other. This interaction provides a convincing foundation for comprehending how classroom participation and language proficiency reinforce one another, resulting in a more productive and adaptable learning environment.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p. 145) defined linguistic habitus as “a set of socially constituted dispositions that imply a propensity to speak in certain ways and to utter determinate things”. Linguistic habitus emphasises the notion that our social backgrounds and experiences have a significant impact on our language usage and preferences. In addition to giving students the chance to put their newly learned linguistic structures into practice, active engagement involves them in a variety of language contexts, increasing their exposure. As a result of this increased exposure, their linguistic knowledge and linguistic habitus grow (Danaher et al., 2001). Basically, their linguistic habitus continues to evolve the more they use and engage with the language. For example, Ghadah commented that “the more I master the speaking skill, the more I participate in the class.”

Students' Negative Feelings About Oral Participation

Although the majority of the students have positive attitudes towards oral participation and learning the English language, data also revealed some negative feelings towards oral participation, and a hesitation to speak up. This is due to students' perception that they have limited English proficiency, which appears to diminish their already low levels of confidence about their language ability. The difficulties they have in expressing their ideas clearly and answering questions cause them to be reticent in participating in oral discussions in the classroom. This reticence can be understood through the lens of Bourdieu's habitus. As discussed in Chapter 3, habitus refers to a set of dispositions that influence perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). In my study, avoidance of oral participation seems to produce in the students a habitus of reticence due to fear of criticism or failure which has an impact on their practices and experiences of speaking up in the classroom. This in turn influences their oral engagement.

However, habitus is not necessarily homogeneous. In this study, the students' views towards oral engagement appeared to be widely dependent upon their individual and particular circumstances. Some students may have a habitus of fear towards oral participation that prevents them from speaking up in class because they are afraid of failure or being judged; as Haya indicated, "Some students feel either afraid of being criticised or feel afraid of making mistakes." Similarly, in the questionnaire, a student commented, "I am afraid to make [a] mistake while reading." This type of behaviour may result from prior experiences in which failure had significant negative repercussions.

Feedback and Fear of Failure

This exposure to certain practices and experiences with English in turn shaped students' disposition towards oral participation. In making use of this notion in the context of learning a foreign language, it might be said that a student's reluctance to speak up may develop a habitus for fear of failure or criticism. These fear-based behaviours, along with the experiences and principles they promote, shape a particular linguistic habitus. Their behaviour will change following how frequently they interact with English, whether by overcoming their fear of speaking up or consistently avoiding it. The fear of failure has a significant impact on students' linguistic habitus. Students may limit their language use when they feel anxious about failing, which will prevent the development of their habitus. On the other hand, if they face and get over this fear, their habitus might change. Amal stated that she used to practise English with her friend; however, since her language has improved, she is now able to speak with her teacher.

Although students recognise the value of oral participation, their reluctance to speak up shows a discrepancy between their thoughts and their actions. This difference can be explained by the well-known educational phenomenon wherein students' perceptions of their learning lead to disengagement (Bao, 2022; Yoshida, 2013). The conflict between the students' reticence to speak up and their positive views about oral involvement appears to limit their capacity and willingness to participate in class discussions. When students believe that oral participation is important but decide to be reluctant, they miss out on opportunities to practise their language skills, which limits their ability to develop their English proficiency (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). The ability to apply what they have learned, practise language structures, and get feedback are all benefits of oral engagement that are essential for LL (Newton & Nation, 2020). They will be less able to comprehend and use the language well without this practice. Furthermore, this conflict may reduce their interest in participating. Students may experience emotional conflict as a result of their hesitation to participate despite comprehending the advantages of speaking up. As a result, this conflict not only limits students' ability to develop their language proficiency but also has an impact on their motivation, which further reduces their willingness to actively participate (Dörnyei, 2005; Habiburrahim et al., 2020; Shanti Manipuspika, 2018).

Analysis demonstrated that while students are aware of the importance of oral participation in English language acquisition, they do not participate orally, which reveals a contradiction between their beliefs and their reluctance to speak up. According to Bourdieu (as discussed in Chapter 3), the "field" is a formally organised social arena that serves as a battlefield where individuals or organisations take part in the competition and use their capital to further their interests. The field in this case is

an EFL classroom, where speaking up and engaging successfully is part of the classroom norms and habitus. These aspects might, in fact, contribute to what Bourdieu refers to as the field, a social setting in which individuals behave, interact, and compete for resources. The students' participation as learners is influenced by their habitus and the larger social frameworks in this situation, where the classroom is the playing field. The interaction among students in the classroom, how they view their own skills, and subsequently how their linguistic habitus develops are all influenced by the interaction between habitus, field, and capital. The fluctuations of habitus, field, and capital, therefore, highlight the complicated nature of language acquisition in social circumstances.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Bourdieu's (1990) notion of "the feel for the game" describes a person's capacity to effectively move through the structure of a social field without having a complete, conscious understanding of the entire field's rules. This practical sense, developed through habitus, enables people to adapt effectively to the changing conditions in their area and maximise their capital. In this study, as the field is the EFL classroom, the students have to activate their habitus and variable levels of linguistic capital in order to engage in EFL. Nevertheless, while being aware of the importance of oral engagement for LL, there is a discrepancy between the students' beliefs and their behaviour. This shows that even if students may understand the "rules of the game," such as speaking up when necessary as part of classroom requirements, they appear not to have fully acquired a "feel for the game." This could be caused by an absence of language capital, or a reticence habitus, or an intersection of both.

Linguistic Capital and Practice in the Field

Although students are aware of what is required for success, they do not always act in accordance with what is expected or required. These responses demonstrate a conflict between their habitus and the requirements of the field. For instance, a student may understand that speaking up is a necessity in the academic field that will help them improving their language skills. However, they may avoid participation because of fear of making mistakes. This conflict may restrict their class participation and inhibit their language acquisition, as there must be agreement between the students' habitus and the expectations of the classroom field in order to learn the language (Bourdieu, 1990). In this case, the relationship between habitus and capital is clear. Students' habitus shapes their perceptions of their linguistic capital, as evident in the following statements. For example, Ithar stated, "I am very good at reading and writing, excellent at listening, but I do not speak well." Similarly, Dai added, "I can read and translate but cannot speak well." Ghadah admitted, "I have some problems in some skills, including that I cannot speak English fluently, i.e., I do not master it perfectly." When students' habitus involves putting a high value on correctness and avoiding embarrassment, a negative self-perception of their linguistic capital can be formed; this perception can be exacerbated if they think they make a lot of mistakes. For example, Aldanah expressed her embarrassment when she makes mistakes, explaining that it makes her confused "to the point that it becomes impossible for me to participate."

In addition, when certain ways of being and doing are labelled as inappropriate, or perceived as risky, individuals may withdraw from the field (Bourdieu, 1974; Nash, 1990). To avoid risk, students withdraw from the field of participation, as evidenced by their reluctance and passivity in the English language classroom. Similarly, in this

study students' anxiety about speaking up and making a mistake made them disengage from the field. For example, Ghmood commented that "I'm afraid to pronounce the words incorrectly. In other words, I'm not confident in my English." Jawher also explained that students are reluctant to speak up because "the students feel stressed or afraid of making mistakes in front of the teacher or their classmates." This discrepancy between the students' experiences and the expectations of the field of the English classroom, which encourages active oral participation, reflects a conflict between the students' habitus shaped by previous experiences and society's views of English. Their attitudes about oral participation and their performance in the classroom differ, and they considered a lack of the required linguistic capital (English proficiency and speaking confidence) as prohibiting them from achieving these expectations.

Moreover, if students know what is expected of them to succeed, it might be assumed that they would be able to do what is required. The finding of my study, in contrast, suggests that students might be able to read the expectations of the field (i.e., they are aware of how they should behave and participate in order to be considered an engaged English student), but this does not necessarily manifest into performances that meet such expectations. Dai indicated that oral participation is significant, but that nevertheless students do not participate. Ghadah added, that "although students are aware of the importance of oral participation, they do not participate."

Students' Reticence to Participate: Barriers Towards Participation

This section looks into the obstacles that students encounter when they participate orally. It focuses on how they see their English language proficiency, how linguistic

capital and power dynamics affect them, and how gendered expectations and classroom participation interact.

Students' Perception of Their English Proficiency

Analysis suggests that in this study student' negative perceptions about oral participation are linked to their English proficiency. In the interviews, students were asked about their previous experiences with English and their perceptions of their own competence. Amal stated that students do not participate because they do not understand English due to their weakness in English and lack of English knowledge. Haya also confirmed that she did not participate when she was at school because she did not understand English. Results revealed that the habitus of the students, their pre-existing views, and previous educational experiences all shape this relationship and affect the students' perception of the value of oral engagement (Carlone et al., 2014). Their desire to actively participate in class discussions is frequently shaped by this habitus, which is brought on by factors such as past educational experiences and attitudes about the value of oral engagement. Based on the questionnaire and interviews, perceptions of low English competence are the first barrier that prevents students from actively participating in class, especially competence in vocabulary and grammar; for example, Worood stated, "I like English but not the grammar." Similarly, Ghaida'a expressed her mixed feeling concerning speaking up, "It's interesting but sometimes difficult and complex in terms of vocabulary and the pronunciation of words, where I don't know whether it's right or not." On the other hand, those who value oral participation and are more assured of their English proficiency are more likely to speak up. I asked Mona whether the students have a problem in participation if they master the pronunciation of words and know their meaning. She affirmed, "Yes, they will participate more confidently." Amal expressed

her own experience, stating that she was shy to participate but since she can speak English perfectly, she felt confident.

Linguistic Capital, Knowledge of English and Power Dynamics

According to the questionnaire results, half of respondents chose lack of English knowledge as the main cause of their reluctance to speak up in class. Similarly, 14 out of 20 students in the interviews agreed with this claim, confirming that weak English proficiency resulted in passive engagement and a reluctance to participate orally. In their interviews, three teachers also confirmed this finding. Foucault's theory of power can be used to analyse this study's findings. Power is a force that permeates society and affects all social interactions, not only those among people in positions of control (Foucault, 1984). Looking through the lens of Foucault's theory of power, students' motivation to speak up is significantly reduced by their inability to communicate in English. Power dynamics can appear in the English classroom in a variety of ways. Language competency is one of these dynamics; students who are more proficient in English might seem more influential and powerful in class discussions because they are able to convey their ideas more clearly. As a result, students with lower levels of English proficiency feel less motivated and less confident to contribute, which would explain their passive engagement.

Foucault assures us that where there is power, there is resistance, and that opposition to authority can result in a momentary shift of power. Power depends on what is done; it is a set of actions upon other actions, and with resistance, and this dialogue often takes place through actions rather than words (Foucault, 1984). Resistance, according to Foucault (1977, 1980), is a fundamental component of the exercise of power. Due to limitations in their language proficiency, students' reluctance to participate in this

situation might be viewed as a kind of resistance against the power structure in the classroom. Furthermore, this situation aligns with Foucault's notion that power both creates knowledge and is a product of knowledge. Students who are fluent in English are more likely to participate, giving them more influence in the dynamics of the classroom. As a result, neither knowledge nor power exists without the other. Students are less inclined to speak up in class when they lack the ability to communicate effectively in English.

Power relations operating in fields produce a habitus where some capitals are valued, and others are not (Bourdieu, 1991). In other words, power relations form students' habitus in the field of the EFL classroom and impact their behaviours and practices, such as oral participation. Power dynamics have a significant impact on the types of capital that are valued and those that are not in a field's habitus. Depending on the students' linguistic capital, the power dynamics in the classroom lead to the development of a habitus that either encourages or discourages students from oral participation. Students may feel more motivated to participate orally when they value English and feel they have more proficiency in it, thus, enhancing their linguistic capital. However, students with lower levels of proficiency could feel less motivated to speak up and might acquire a habitus of reluctance that promotes passive engagement. Thus, the idea of cultural capital can have a considerable impact on one's ability to speak English (Khodadady & Ashrafborji, 2016; Pishghadam et al., 2011; Salameh, 2012).

In order to address the anxiety issue, it is significant to define its function. Fear of pronouncing words incorrectly or making mistakes can cause anxiety in students. This anxiety might cause students to avoid speaking up, which would just serve to

reinforce their pattern of reluctance. According to Harker (1984), “Those with the appropriate cultural capital are reinforced with success while others are not” (p. 118). Findings from this study reveal that students may feel under pressure to conform to expectations in order to succeed in the field, and it can be argued that their habitus is shaped by the power dynamics in the English classroom, where proficiency of the language and familiarity with classroom discussion norms are highly valued. This pressure can influence their behaviour and practice, either encouraging them to actively participate in oral participation or discouraging them from doing so if they believe they lack the necessary cultural capital. Because of the power dynamics that exist in this field, some students may develop a habit that gives specific skills greater importance and considers them as more significant forms of cultural capital. This could therefore have an effect on their practices in the classroom, particularly how actively they orally participate.

Foucault (1980) stated that knowledge and power are interconnected. Lack of English proficiency affects students’ enthusiasm and capacity to participate orally in class since they are unable to fully exercise their position of power within the classroom interaction. Based on the data gathered in this study, there is an important connection between students’ perceptions about the significance of oral engagement and how much they participate in class discussions. Low English proficiency, particularly a lack of vocabulary and grammar knowledge, was the most frequent barrier to student participation. Engagement in class was more common among students who valued oral participation. However, those who believed they lacked adequate English proficiency frequently refused to participate orally. As one student observed, “I think half of them neither understood nor learned the basics of the language.” Similarly,

Ftoon said, “I’m keen on English, yet I do neither understand it well nor participate in the class because I have not mastered the foundations.” When the participants in the questionnaire were asked why they thought that those who participated were better than those who did not, the majority of the students said, “It is because they have a good knowledge of English.” Data analysis revealed that three of the interviewed students had taken English non-curriculum courses, while only 22% of the respondents to the questionnaire had taken such courses. However, the majority of the students stated that they use the language in restaurants, cafes, and hospitals since they have to speak English with non-native speakers they interact with in these settings.

Hence, the study highlights how students’ evolving habitus played a significant role in their oral engagement. The way the students perceived and experienced their English knowledge and skill affected how they naturally engaged in the English class. Their exposure to English practices also affected their disposition towards participating orally.

Dispositions Towards Learning EFL

The attitudes, convictions, and emotions that students bring to their English LL experiences are referred to as dispositions towards learning EFL. These dispositions have a significant impact on how students view learning, how involved they are in class, and how well they acquire languages (Dörnyei, 2001; Loh, & Sun, 2020). In the case of Saudi female students, a variety of circumstances may impact how they feel about learning EFL. These may include beliefs about English as a universal language, cultural norms and expectations around gender and language use, and attitudes towards Western culture in general. For instance, seeing English as a valuable

language that provides access to social and professional opportunities can encourage a positive disposition toward learning English. Research confirms these findings; Elyas and Picard (2010) examined how Saudi female university students perceived learning the English language and found they connected English competence to career opportunities, academic performance, and personal development. The students' positive attitudes about learning English were also strongly influenced by societal changes and the influence of global English.

Views About the Value of English

The analysis of the students' responses highlights their disposition towards learning English. The students perceive English as a global and significant language with benefits outside of the classroom. They link learning English to greater prospects for travel, employment, and entertainment, such as understanding movies without subtitles, gaining cultural knowledge and self-confidence, and enhancing global comprehension. These perceptions are revealed, for example, in the following remarks: "English shouldn't be only learned for travelling; it helps us become well-educated, knowledgeable, and able to read English novels or watch movies"; "It helps me to extend my culture and become able to watch movies without subtitles. English is used on the perfume packaging." The students' ambition and enthusiasm reflect a positive disposition towards EFL, confirming the view that a person's interest in and attitude towards a language have an important effect on language acquisition (Dörnyei, 2005; Getie, 2020). Expressions like "I love English so much," "I'm really excited about English," and "I've loved English for a long time" display an innate motivation and enthusiasm for the language, which can increase engagement and promote learning.

Students' responses also highlight some of the difficulties that come with EFL. Some students admitted that while they enjoy English, they are not skilled, as evident in the statement: "I like and understand English although I'm not that good at it." This suggests that, despite having a good attitude, there may still be obstacles preventing students from actively participating in oral discussions because of their perceived proficiency difficulties. This finding emphasises how crucial it is to develop students' linguistic skills in order for these to match their positive attitudes. Al-Seghayer (2014) emphasised that difficulties with pronunciation, grammar, and understanding English language use can have a negative impact on students' dispositions. This can cause them to lose some of their confidence and become reluctant or anxious to participate orally in English classroom lessons. Additionally, gender roles and cultural norms may have an impact on how Saudi female students feel about learning English. Women may not have as many opportunities to practise their English outside of the classroom, which may hinder their confidence and willingness to engage orally in the English classroom (Alhazmi & Nyland, 2013).

In Saudi Arabia, Arabic is a crucial component of cultural identity and is widely used in the country's educational, social, and religious contexts, creating significant linguistic capital. Arabic is the language of the Quran, as well as the language used in SA for religious ceremonies and speeches (Suleiman, 2002). Socially, Arabic is the native tongue of the people of SA and is the dominant language used in daily communication, the media, and the majority of local companies. Fluency in Arabic can be a sign of social standing, education, and even regional origin. It is a symbol of identity. The main language of instruction in Saudi schools is Arabic, which is utilised in literature and in formal settings. Success in SA's educational system requires

proficiency in Arabic, confirming the language's role as essential linguistic capital (Hamdan, 2005).

However, there is a conflict between keeping Arabic's essential position in Saudi society and meeting the needs of a globalised education and economy which has resulted in a growing emphasis on English language skills. Students' references to English as the "world language" show an awareness of the significance of English on a societal and international level. Their comments contradict the idea held by some that "mastering the language of the Quran" is enough and that English might not be of any benefit to them (Suleiman, 2013). The students' perceptions demonstrate how societal influences and individual ambition can influence their disposition towards EFL by emphasising the importance of English in today's society.

In SA, English is becoming more and more valued as linguistic capital, especially in the context of the educational system. This is because English is viewed as a global language and is significant in a variety of international settings. The significance of English language skills is highlighted by several changes to the Saudi Arabian educational system. For instance, English LL has been integrated into the educational system, starting in primary school and remaining an essential subject in secondary and higher education (Al-Seghayer, 2011). In universities, English is the primary language of instruction, particularly in science, business, and engineering; this reflects the importance placed on English proficiency in education (Alrabai, 2016a). This emphasis on learning English suggests a wider acceptance of English as an essential form of linguistic capital in SA. Furthermore, English proficiency has become a requirement for high-paying positions in the Saudi labour market, particularly in multinational companies and sectors like technology, medicine, and academia. When

it comes to internal interactions as well as interacting with overseas partners or clients, many businesses place a high value on staff who can speak fluently in English (Al-Seghayer, 2014; Mahboob & Elyas, 2014).

Linguistic Capital

The findings of this study demonstrate that students' oral participation in the EFL classroom is structured and influenced by their habitus. These students' positive attitudes and enthusiasm could be linked to their habitus; that is, the internalised dispositions that lead them to value English and recognise its significance in today's globalised world. Moreover, the fact that the students regard English as a world language and a crucial ability for their future careers shows that they are aware of the importance of English proficiency as a type of cultural capital. They consider learning English as an investment that will provide them with economic and social benefits in the future. In the field of the classroom, according to Bourdieu's theory of social and cultural capital, language as capital is crucial (Bourdieu, 1991). The challenge that some students encounter, as shown by the statement, "I like and understand English although I'm not that good at it," highlights the conflict between their positive habitus and their perceived lack of required linguistic capital, which can act as a barrier to speaking up. This conflict emphasises the essential role that the classroom field plays in assisting students in developing their English proficiency, hence enhancing their cultural capital and enabling them to participate orally. Therefore, their perceived lack of linguistic capital may restrict their engagement in the classroom's field and so hinder their ability to learn.

As a result, students' cultural capital and habitus may not match the norms of the English classroom, particularly in terms of what constitutes good participation. Their

passivity and reluctance to participate may be one way this discrepancy shows itself. However, students can effectively participate when they have cultural capital that includes good language knowledge and familiarity with classroom discussion standards. On the contrary, participation can be challenging when there is a mismatch between students' cultural capital and the demands of the classroom (Godec et al., 2018). Therefore, focusing on the field, or the academic and social context of the classroom, offers a useful framework for analysing the structural norms that establish what is considered acceptable oral participation (Bourdieu, 1991). Cultural norms about oral engagement may be very different in SA than they are in the average English-speaking classroom. As a result, Saudi students could struggle with a habitus that is not completely in line with the field of studying the English language. The value that Saudi society places on English, particularly in academic contexts, adds another layer to the field's dynamics. The linguistic capital that students have in terms of their English proficiency can have an impact on their willingness to speak up. The students' habitus may affect how they perceive their own language capital and how they participate. This could contribute to explaining the apparent discrepancy between students' perception about participation and their reluctance to speak up. In the context of this study, students with higher levels of English proficiency inherently have more linguistic capital, which makes them more confident to speak up. As a result, their willingness to participate in class increases. Mona explained, "I speak confidently when I understand the topic, I feel confident in my language." Haya also commented, "I feel confident when I'm sure that my answer is correct."

In this section, I have explored how female students' evolving habitus and their relationship to the field of EFL education shape their potential for power and agency. Drawing on Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field, and capital, the analysis reveals

that students' linguistic, cultural, and social capitals significantly influence their engagement in the classroom. These capitals are not static but evolve as students interact with the educational environment and the expectations placed upon them. This evolving habitus underscores the complex dynamics at play in EFL classrooms, where students must navigate power structures and cultural expectations. The interconnection between their dispositions and the educational field provides insights into their potential for agency, which will be further explored in the following section.

Agency and Participation in the EFL Classroom

Individual Agency

Additionally, the agency and power of students in classroom interactions frequently show as forms of resistance to the authoritative and highly regarded classroom discourse (Man, 2008). As discussed in Chapter 3, agency is the ability of individuals to act independently and freely to make independent decisions (Foucault, 1980). The influence of power and knowledge on students' decisions is revealed through applying the notion of agency to students' reluctance to speak up. The ability or inability of the students to participate orally in class reflects their lack of agency. English language proficiency is emphasised over other types of knowledge in the classroom, establishing a power dynamic. This creates a situation of agency where students who are proficient in English have greater linguistic capital and thus more power in the classroom field. However, less proficient students may feel this power imbalance and realise that their contributions might not be valued as much or that they might experience criticism or judgement because of their limited proficiency. As a result, students may experience a limited agency, and become reluctant to speak up in order to prevent any possible negative outcomes. For Amal, "students may not speak up as they fear that other students will judge them if their answer is incorrect." Her

statement shows an aspect of agency in which students consciously choose not to speak up due to their fear of criticism. In this case, students' reluctance to speak up is a type of agency; it is an intention to keep their academic reputation and sense of confidence. This demonstrates how agency may be conveyed both through engagement and disengagement.

Confidence and Expression of Shyness

As mentioned above, students can have negative reactions towards oral participation because of a lack of English knowledge. The second factor that negatively impacted the students' reactions to speaking English in the EFL classroom was a lack of confidence or shyness. According to the questionnaire's findings, shyness was chosen by 42% of participants as the second most important barrier to speaking up, following a lack of proficiency in the English language. Fifty-three percent of the participants indicated feeling shy and nervous when asked how they felt when speaking up. Although shyness may hinder the development of confidence, it is not a certain barrier to students learning English or participating orally in the EFL classroom. Even shy students can develop confidence in their language skills. For instance, consistent practice, encouraging feedback, and gradual exposure to speaking activities can gradually increase learners' confidence and help them in overcoming shyness (MacIntyre, & Gregersen, 2012). This finding on shyness was further supported by the interviews; when students were asked to talk about their personality, 13 of the 20 students admitted that their shyness prevented them from participating orally. Three students indicated described themselves as neither shy nor courageous and four students denied feeling shy. Supporting the students' responses, all four teachers considered that students' shyness was a barrier to students' oral engagement.

Saudi female students for whom English is not a first language may experience more difficulties when speaking English verbally. Aldanah's response serves as an illustration of a habitus influenced or shaped by a predisposition to shyness. She claimed that while being interested in the language, she avoids speaking it because she is shy. Similarly, Mona, suggested she was shy to speak up, but developed the confidence to do so as her English skills improved. The worry of making mistakes, giving incorrect responses, forgetting words, speaking phrases incorrectly, or otherwise embarrassing themselves might make students less confident to speak up. Mona, for instance, voiced her concern over pronouncing phrases incorrectly in front of her classmates and teacher because she feared making mistakes, and this contributed to her lack of confidence.

Mona's comments are an excellent example of how confidence and linguistic ability interact. Mona's developing skills in English could be considered an accumulation of linguistic capital; her confidence to participate in the field of the English language classroom increased as her linguistic capital grew. When it comes to oral engagement, a student's disposition to be shy or reticent may be reinforced if previous experiences have made them, like Mona, afraid of pronouncing words incorrectly or making mistakes. Even if they are aware of the benefits of engagement in learning a language, this fear may discourage them from speaking up. Students may refer to this concern as shyness, but it may actually be a lack of confidence brought on by an evolving habitus rather than a personality characteristic. For instance, what students refer to as shyness may be the result of a habitus that values accuracy over the curiosity to investigate and challenge understandings acquired via prior experiences.

The majority of the students who completed the questionnaire said they felt shy when asked to speak up; however, some students felt confident when they knew the answer to the question and understood it. Farah, who started learning English but was unable to speak up because of her shyness, had a personal experience with this. She stated that during her Preparatory Year, her proficiency increased, making her a more engaged and confident participant in oral engagement. Amal and Rehaam had similar experiences and agreed that they used to be too shy and nervous to speak up. However, as their English skills developed, they became more confident to speak up.

The exploration of habitus is helpful to explain students' reluctance to participate orally in the EFL classroom. As Saudi female students, the students bring their particular habitus into the classroom. Their habitus is influenced by their cultural, linguistic, and gendered experiences. The students' reluctance to participate in English-speaking contexts may be significantly influenced by the sociocultural environment of Saudi Arabia, where public speech expression, particularly for women, may be more constrained than in other countries (Alhazmi & Nyland, 2013). This understanding allows us to consider shyness as a disposition and comprehend it as a deeply embedded habitus. According to Bourdieu, a person develops a set of dispositions in reaction to the aspects and situations of their surroundings. This includes attitudes, behaviour, and interests (Bourdieu, 1990). In this sense, shyness can be viewed as a trait that has been influenced and shaped by a variety of social, cultural, and educational frameworks. For instance, someone's shyness could be ameliorated in a setting like a school where becoming active is highly valued, or it might be brought on by cultural values that place an emphasis on shyness or modesty.

Shyness as Resistance and a Form of Agency

On the other hand, Foucault emphasises how power relations shape attitudes and behaviour (Foucault, 1980). According to this perspective, being shy can be seen as a type of resistance and agency, an approach to managing the positions of authority that exist in the classroom. For example, shyness may be a kind of protection or a way for students who feel less confident with classroom norms or less competent in a language to keep a sense of independence in a setting where they may feel disempowered. Thus, the students' shyness might be viewed as a form of passive action, an attempt to maintain some of their autonomy and dignity in a situation when they could feel weak or disadvantaged. In these situations, shyness is a method of avoiding using more obvious or aggressive kinds of resistance while still dealing with the stresses and demands of the power dynamics in the classroom.

The idea of agency is directly related to power relations, since agency is frequently affected or constrained by different power structures (Foucault, 1980). The idea of shyness in my research can be connected to agency in a similar way. Being shy can potentially limit one's ability to exercise agency, since a shy student might not feel comfortable speaking out in class. However, my research suggests that shyness can also be a type of passive resistance. In this instance, students may be using their agency to reject the current power dynamics in the classroom by choosing not to actively participate in class discussions. Farah showed students' agency when she explained the reason students are reluctant to speak up: "My friends now cannot speak up, and if you ask them a question, they'll be shy to answer in front of the students although they know the answer. Some students know the language but they're reluctant while others don't understand it at all." Her statement shows students' passive agency. Although they know the language, they decided to be reticent to avoid being judged.

This section highlights the inseparable relationship between teacher and student data in understanding the phenomenon of oral participation in EFL classrooms. By analyzing both perspectives, it becomes clear that the dynamics of participation are co-constructed, with teachers' methods, attitudes, and interactions deeply influence students' participation and vice versa. This interconnectedness underscores the relevance of the chosen theoretical framework, as it illustrates how power, discourse, and agency operate together within the classroom. The analysis reinforces the idea that meaningful improvements in student participation cannot be fully understood or implemented without considering both the teacher's role and the students' evolving dispositions toward participation.

The Habitus of Confidence

Confidence is a key element that frequently impacts a learner's willingness and capacity to participate in oral activities when learning a language. Confidence might be defined as a learner's belief in their capacity to do a task; in this case, speaking up successfully (Dörnyei, 2005). As discussed in Chapter 3, Bourdieu's (1977) notion of habitus as a set of dispositions that lead individuals to act with confidence in particular circumstances can be applied to how the participants in this study approached participation in the EFL classroom through a "habitus of confidence." This confidence may be a result of an individual's belief in their own capacity and from understanding the "rules of the game" in a specific field, which helps a person in navigating the field successfully. This relates to Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, where having strong linguistic capital or being aware of the field norms may afford a feeling of comfort and confidence (Bourdieu, 1986). Moreover, linguistic capital also interacts with the students' habitus of confidence to enable them to speak up in the specific context of the English classroom. Amal stated that "some students

don't participate because they do not understand English, or lack self-confidence and underestimate themselves," and that "they compare themselves to others and disappoint themselves by wondering why they are not like their classmates who frequently participate." These statements are examples of how the students' lack of confidence in their English language proficiency and negative self-comparisons are revealed. Their habitus in this sense refers to the attitudes and beliefs they have about their language proficiency and engagement in class. Their behaviour is influenced by these attitudes and beliefs, which also have an impact on how engaged they are in class discussions. In contrast, Ameenah and Aseel had a strong habitus of confidence, which influenced how they behaved, as they both conveyed confidence when speaking English. These students had a habitus of actively participating in English because they had a strong sense of their linguistic capital. In contrast to students who have a less confident habitus, students like Aseel and Ameenah appear to move through the English language course with ease. This confirms that having successfully participated in the past, students' achievements may enable them to establish a habitus of confidence. This confidence, in turn, may encourage more engagement and extend the habitus of confidence in the field of the classroom (Bourdieu, 1977).

The idea of confidence in the classroom can be also explored by using Foucault's concept of power, as the concept of power dynamics is inherent to all social interactions (Foucault, 1980). While Foucault's theory does not specifically refer to a habitus of confidence, it does have implications for understanding how confidence is developed and used in various social circumstances because it examines the connections between power and knowledge. For instance, knowledge provides power. This power dynamic has a significant impact on students' confidence to speak up in class. For example, students who know the content may feel that this knowledge gives

them power and confidence to speak up. However, those who feel they have less proficiency may feel that they have no power and become less confident to participate. They may worry that their participation will not be valued or they might be criticised for their lack of proficiency. For instance, students who have a strong understanding of the content could perceive this understanding as empowering, enhancing their confidence to participate in conversations. On the other hand, people who believe they are less proficient can feel powerless, which would make them less confident in participating. They could worry that their contributions will not be appreciated or that they might receive negative feedback because of their perceived language barriers.

In line with this, Mona and Haya felt more empowered to participate in class and were less worried about making mistakes when they were confident in their understanding of a subject. Their confidence acts as an example of the power they gain from linguistic capital. Drawing on Foucault (1980), the degree of English language proficiency is a type of knowledge, and the classroom is a setting for power struggles. As a result, students like Bayader, who expressed that she “feels shy when pronouncing a word incorrectly in front of the teacher and classmates,” and Maha, who mentioned that she “doesn’t understand English” and struggles when the teacher asks something, face challenges that hinder their active participation in the classroom. Their lack of power may decrease their confidence and make them reluctant to participate. In contrast, students who are fluent in English, such as Aseel and Amal, may feel more in power and more confident, which is in line with Foucault’s theory that knowledge is power.

Gendered Habitus

Reay (2004b) states that since our habitus is gendered, our experiences as male or female have a major impact on our dispositions and behaviour. Gendered habitus includes the ways in which cultural norms and expectations regarding gender influence certain habits, abilities, and inclinations. For instance, Saudi culture's gendered norms and expectations can mean that women are discouraged from expressing their ideas in public, which might show up as reticence to speak in English classes.

Many students reported feeling uncomfortable or nervous when speaking in class due to cultural norms. Ghada noted, "I try to participate as much as possible, even in things I don't know. But I hesitate, especially in front of students who are more fluent." Ghada's hesitation to participate in front of more fluent students can be linked to the gendered expectation of modesty and restraint. The fact that she hesitates in these situations reflects a broader societal expectation that women should not speak out unless they are confident, knowledgeable, or perfect in what they say.

Reay also emphasises that habitus is an issue of class, gender, and race in addition to individuality. In other words, our habitus is an indication of our cultural and linguistic identities (Reay et al., 2005). Due to their gendered habitus and non-native English-speaking identities, Saudi female students may be reluctant to participate in class discussions. The experiences of Saudi female students in EFL classes are deeply embedded in their gendered habitus, which can make them reluctant to participate in class discussions. Mona commented on this when she said, "I feel shy and embarrassed if I make more than one mistake or pronounce a word incorrectly, especially if my classmates laugh at me." This highlights how cultural norms around

gender and public embarrassment can inhibit participation, particularly for female students.

It is crucial to keep in mind that habitus development is a dynamic and ongoing process. As students come into contact with different surroundings, events, and cultures, such as when Saudi female students connect with English-speaking academic settings, their habitus continues to change. With time, the students might adapt and develop new dispositions, including aspects from both their home culture and their new academic and linguistic setting, despite initial hesitation that may be demonstrated due to the inconsistency between their home habitus and the new academic and cultural environment (Bourdieu, 1990; Erel, 2010).

The process of adaptation, however, could be challenging. Saudi female students could experience internal conflict while learning English. On the one hand, they might have to conform to requirements from their native culture, which might include being reserved in speaking in public, especially in a second language. On the other hand, they might also be aware that in their new academic setting, active engagement in oral participation in English is frequently expected and acknowledged (Gu, 2015).

The EFL classroom in SA presents a unique environment where students may encounter academic norms and English language usage that differs from their native culture. These students may be able to develop new dispositions and establish a connection between their native cultures and the academic culture in English due to their new environment. Their home habitus and the new academic and cultural setting may initially cause them to hesitate to participate orally in classroom lessons. They could struggle to find a balance between keeping cultural expectations and norms, such as not always speaking up, and following the participation requirements in the

EFL classroom, which frequently encourages active engagement in English lessons (Bourdieu, 1990; Erel, 2010).

The students' confidence and willingness to participate in English oral participation may be affected by this conflict, which may further increase feelings of anxiety and lack of confidence. Consequently, the gendered habitus can provide a significant barrier to students' participation in the classroom, which may also have an impact on their overall learning outcomes. Shyness is not just a personal trait in the Saudi sociocultural setting; it is also deeply embedded in women's gender identities and forms an essential component of their expected performance and behaviour. According to this social perspective, shyness and respect play crucial roles in the development of the perfect woman, with timidity in girls being part of the ideal image of femininity (Norton & Pavlenko, 2004). These gendered identities are not formed in a vacuum; rather, certain sociocultural contexts have an important effect on them, resulting in a broad variety of cultural differences and complex norms that control female gender identification.

In contrast, discourses of masculinity constructed within Saudi Arabia's traditional gendered ideology encourage men to express their thoughts in public settings, while women are expected to display a more reserved attitude (Song, 2019). Consequently, Saudi women are often more hesitant to speak up, particularly in mixed or public settings. Ftoon commented, "I feel too shy...I don't have the courage to speak." This societal prescription of shyness and fear of criticism can inhibit students' participation in academic settings, reinforcing the gendered habitus that limits oral contributions. Through this societal prescription, a sense of shyness and fear of criticism are deeply embedded, and these traits eventually shape gender identities. Consequently, shyness

and fear of judgement become major, almost defining, aspects of Saudi women's identities as a result of their natural respect for society and the pressure from society to uphold this idealised portrayal of Saudi womanhood. These findings are further supported by studies by Al Nakhalah (2016) and Rhmani and Meziani (2023), which suggest that shyness hinders students' interest and capacity to learn and has an important effect on their ability to demonstrate their speaking skills. Several students discussed how shyness and lack of confidence prevent them from speaking up in class. For example, Mona mentioned, "I sometimes face difficulties in some words which makes me less motivated to participate or even suggest activities." Similarly, Ghmood admitted, "I get nervous whenever I speak. I know the answers, but I get stressed and answer incorrectly." These statements show how deeply ingrained gender norms can manifest as shyness, creating barriers to oral participation in English classes. This may have significant consequences when viewed from a gendered perspective, especially in the context of Saudi female students. Women historically were given responsibilities that were less visible to the public than those provided to men in SA. This cultural norm may cause females to have less confidence while speaking in front of groups, particularly when using a foreign language like English. However, as English language proficiency grows, so does the willingness to speak up (Alhazmi & Nyland, 2013; Ehrich, 2008).

Conclusion

In addressing the first sub-question, concerning students' perceptions of oral engagement and how this influences their disposition towards participation, I first addressed how students perceived oral engagement in English language classrooms. Analysis revealed students had both positive and negative perceptions of oral participation. I started by exploring the two opposing viewpoints that students held.

While some students had positive perceptions of oral participation, others had negative perceptions. The results revealed a contradiction: whereas students acknowledged the value of oral participation in English LL, most said they were reluctant to orally participate in the classroom. The key factors arising from the analysis revealed that students' low levels of English language proficiency and a lack of confidence influenced by a tendency to adopt gendered norms caused them to be reticent. Analysis also revealed the students' engagement in oral participation was significantly influenced by perceptions and possession of capital and their evolving habitus and relationship to the field. Even while they recognised the value of active engagement and showed a positive attitude towards it, considerable obstacles arose from their limited English proficiency and confidence. Undoubtedly, students who did not identify as shy or lacking confidence are more likely to participate actively in class. Therefore, it can be concluded that a lack of English proficiency and individual confidence have a significant influence on students' reticence to orally participate in the English classroom. Considering ways to increase students' confidence is an important consideration in this context.

The chapter also examined the complex factors that affect students' oral engagement in Saudi Arabian EFL classrooms. The analysis revealed a complex relationship between students' perceptions, dispositions, confidence, and reluctance, all of which are influenced by the sociocultural context; in Bourdieu's terms the habitus, field, and capital, and equally Foucault's theorisations of power, agency, and knowledge. These theoretical lenses provide new understandings about English LL learning in EFL higher education environments. The contradiction between students' awareness of the importance of oral interaction and their reluctance to engage provides important insights into the opportunities and challenges that promote good oral English

interaction in the classroom. It seems obvious that overcoming obstacles like shyness and poor self-confidence requires both language proficiency and a suitable, supportive environment.

The dynamics of gendered habitus in EFL classes in Saudi Arabia are complex and rooted in traditional gender theories as well as cultural norms. For Saudi female students, the conflict between these cultural expectations and the requirement for active oral participation in class presents a particular issue. There is potential for the growth of a transnational habitus—a merging of home and academic cultures—despite early reluctance. In order to create an educational climate that fosters progress in English proficiency and allows students, regardless of gender, to confidently express themselves, it is crucial to understand these intricate interrelationships and eliminate the barriers to participation.

Hence, students may have an opportunity to slowly form new dispositions through continued exposure to and engagement with the English language. Their dispositions may integrate features from both their Saudi culture and the English classroom. This can involve acquiring confidence in their ability to speak up and becoming used to the requirements of classroom participation. These issues will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 7. The relationship between students and teachers will be examined in the next chapter, with an emphasis on how this relationship can operate as a motivation for students to participate orally. The discussion will also centre on curriculum, the teachers' pedagogical approaches and teaching styles, and the influence of curriculum and pedagogy on oral participation. The larger social and cultural variables that influence the English classroom and how they can affect students' classroom practices will also be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Eight

The Influence of Curriculum and Pedagogy on Shaping Knowledge, Engagement, and Oral Participation

Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Oral Participation

This chapter provides a discussion and analysis of data from the questionnaire and the interviews relevant to the second research sub-question: What influence do curriculum and pedagogy have on students' oral participation? To explore the multiple factors that explain students' engagement in the English language classroom and the influence of curriculum and pedagogy, Foucault's theorisations (1977, 1980, 1982) of discourse, knowledge, power, subjectivity, and agency and Bourdieu's (1977, 1990, 1991) theory of practice, with attention to habitus, field, and capital, are used to analyse the data. The following discussion begins with a consideration of curriculum and the ways it shaped knowledge and engagement for both the students and the teachers in this study. This is followed by an analysis of the influence of pedagogical approaches used by the teachers, and the kinds of interactions between students and teachers taking place in the context of oral participation. The ways in which instructional delivery influences oral participation is also explored. The complex dimensions of curriculum and pedagogy are viewed through the aforementioned theoretical lenses to highlight the ways in which social and cultural capital and power influence and ultimately affect students' oral participation in the English as a foreign language (EFL) context.

Curriculum and Its Influence on Students' Oral Participation

Drawing on Graves (2008) and Apple (1993) as discussed earlier, the curriculum in this thesis is viewed as a socially contextual process, shaped by interactions between policymakers, teachers, and students. The English language curriculum in Saudi

Arabia, especially in the Preparatory Year Program (PYP), uses materials aimed at building a foundation in academic English and everyday communication. The textbook used is New Headway, which focus on grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, listening, and speaking skills. Topics range from social interactions (e.g., discussing hobbies, travel, and dining) to academic skills (e.g., writing essays and summarizing research articles). Supplementary materials, such as those provided through Blackboard, include quizzes, multimedia resources, and online discussion platforms to engage students interactively (Liton, 2012; Al-Seghayer, 2014). The textbook presents scenarios meant to simulate real-world communication. For example, New Headway includes dialogues about travel, work, and social events that expose students to common conversational structures. However, the academic focus on reading and writing tasks may overshadow opportunities for oral practice, creating potential disconnections when students are required to participate in speaking exercises that are less emphasized in the textbook content (Al-Saadi, 2020).

The structure and content of the curriculum can significantly impact students' willingness to engage orally. While the textbook is designed to encourage speaking through guided dialogues and role-play exercises, the emphasis on grammar and writing exercises often means that oral participation takes a secondary role in practice (Khan, 2011). Many students may feel more comfortable in passive activities such as reading or writing, leading to reluctance when called upon to engage in class discussions or oral exams. In interviews, some students express that the topics in the curriculum feel disconnected from their lived experiences, and this may inhibit their willingness to participate. For example, topics on Western cultural norms, such as dining out in European countries or discussions about weather patterns in the UK, might feel unfamiliar to Saudi students who haven't travelled abroad. This can create

a gap between the students' experiences and the textbook scenarios, thus limiting their engagement (Al-Seghayer, 2014).

There are elements in the curriculum that may be unpleasant and students who might find that the topics covered do not resonate with their everyday lives or cultural expectations. The textbook often includes themes that may not align with their cultural norms, such as conversations about international travel to Western countries, airport procedures, or travel experiences in cities like New York or London can create a sense of discomfort or detachment from the material particularly for those who may not have travelled abroad extensively or been exposed to Western norms. This sense of disconnection may also stem from the focus on Western-centric contexts, where students may struggle to relate to the scenarios presented. For example, while discussing weather patterns or Western holidays like Christmas, students might feel less inclined to participate because these topics are far removed from their realities (Al-Seghayer, 2014; Al-Harbi, 2020). These cultural mismatches can act as barriers to oral participation, as students may not feel confident or interested in engaging with material that feels irrelevant to their experiences.

Several aspects of the curriculum and materials used in Saudi Arabia's PYP may lead to decreased oral participation. Firstly, the heavy focus on grammar drills and written exercises means that students spend much of their time mastering language rules rather than practicing speaking. While reading and listening exercises are frequent, speaking opportunities may be limited to controlled dialogues that do not encourage spontaneous oral production (Al-Nofaie, 2020). Additionally, the reliance on written assessments, such as quizzes and exams, may also reduce the motivation for students to practice speaking in class, as oral participation is not always directly tied to their

grades. Students may feel more comfortable engaging with written tasks than speaking in a foreign language, especially if they fear making mistakes or being judged by their peers (Al-Hazmi & Nyland, 2013). The absence of culturally relevant material can further alienate students, reducing their motivation to engage with the content, as they do not see it as applicable to their everyday lives (Rahman, 2020).

Relevance and Authenticity of Curriculum

Concerning the question of whether curriculum has an impact on the students' oral participation, the majority of participants agreed that the curriculum plays a vital role in motivating the students to participate orally. Almost all participants in the interviews and most of the students in the questionnaire agreed that the curriculum is supportive of their active engagement and participation. In the questionnaire, students described it as: "easy", "top-notch", "helps to learn English", "interesting", "exciting", "useful", "perfect and diverse." The topics are "modern," "I feel they have been useful for me," "we have previously learned some topics but are currently learning them more extensively," and "It's really exciting." Students in the interviews agreed that the curriculum has a real effect on their ability to learn and their desire to participate in class. For instance, Ithar stated that the curriculum "does" affect student participation. This statement might be seen as a sign of the curriculum's trustworthiness. Trustworthiness in educational situations conveys a sense of efficacy and reliability that may successfully direct students on their educational path, assisting them in developing not only knowledge but also useful skills such as speaking. Barnett and Coate (2005) argue that students are more likely to be emotionally and academically engaged with a curriculum they trust, and they consequently become motivated to participate orally. Byader's remark that the curriculum "helps us learn to read English" highlights the crucial importance of skill development in the

curriculum, which in turn may promote more motivation to participate. As a result, students are likely to link their improvement to the curriculum as they see real advances in their skill and there is some link to their speaking up in class.

The students' varied responses in the questionnaires and interviews highlight Bourdieu's (1984) notion of habitus and the assertion that that is informed by specific life events, educational backgrounds, and objectives. As discussed in Chapter 3, habitus explains the disposition that influences perceptions and behaviour within different social fields. A perspective that emphasises a student-centred learning environment, emphasising individual interests and informal learning methods, is indicated, for example, by Aseel's preference for topics "suitable for our interests" above formal topics. Meanwhile, students such as Tarfah and Jawaher believe that the curriculum is pragmatic and skill-based. For example, Tarfah praised the curriculum's modernity and usefulness for her, claiming that it goes deeper into previously covered themes. This reveals a disposition that values particular knowledge categories, in this case, skills. This preference for skill-based learning highlights a tendency to favour content connected to practical experience and direct understanding. It is all about talents, as Tarfah says:

Things we know how to accomplish. Compared to high school curricula, it is more interesting and useful. This curriculum needs to have been introduced to us much earlier.

These comments highlight that the habitus of students is not permanent but rather can change in response to new situations and experiences. Habitus functions as a system of dispositions that direct action, perceptions, and thoughts at the conscious as well as the unconscious levels (Bourdieu, 1984). Although it has become deeply ingrained

due to life experiences and socialisation, it is subject to change and adaptation in response to new circumstances and social contexts (Bourdieu, 1984). Habitus is the internalisation of social structures, which later develops into an essential component of personal behaviours and perspectives. Hence, although habitus helps to maintain social behaviours over time, it can also change, especially when people experience situations that are very different from the ones that helped to establish their habitus (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). This theoretical view of habitus as a flexible and dynamic system of dispositions is supported by the data, which showed minor changes in student preferences. While some students moved towards information that is current and relevant, others showed a desire for an educational environment that prioritises their active participation.

Thus, when students learn about topics that are familiar to them, they frequently feel more motivated and confident to speak about things they already know and have done. Their comfort level motivates them to participate actively and speak up with more confidence. This confidence is not only shaped by individual interests and prior knowledge but also by the gendered habitus deeply embedded in the Saudi society. Reay (2004b) emphasizes that habitus is gendered, meaning that gender norms and expectations significantly influence students' dispositions. In Saudi Arabia, cultural expectations often require women to exhibit modesty and restraint in public, which translates into reticence in classroom settings, particularly during oral participation. For instance, Ghada's hesitation to speak in front of more fluent peers reflects the societal pressure on women to only speak when they are perceived as knowledgeable and competent (Reay, 2004b). The gendered habitus plays a pivotal role in shaping how female students engage with the curriculum, often making them more cautious or shy about speaking up, especially when the topics or the classroom environment feel

disconnected from their personal or cultural experiences. As discussed in Chapter 7, this gendered habitus is a component of a larger social framework that closely monitors and regulates women's duties and public expressions, which causes self-control and an increased fear of being judged (Bourdieu, 1990). The cultural norm of shyness and modesty is deeply embedded in Saudi women's identities, manifesting as a barrier to their participation in English language classrooms

Hence, when they can speak freely or when the discussion is open-ended, they are more willing to participate. This is in line with Bourdieu's (1990) notion of the "feel for the game," according to which the interaction between strategy and practical disposition shows how these dispositions operate in a social field. In other words, it is about how people unconsciously respond to the structures of the game they participate in (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 66). As discussed in Chapter 6, the rules of the educational field may impact students' agency. For example, students demonstrate higher degrees of agency in the form of oral engagement when the curriculum is in line with their habitus, such as when topics are known to them or align with their interests. Their habitus, shaped by previous experiences and education, operates with the field to produce a kind of accordance, enabling them to engage with more confidence within the field. Students' desire to participate orally demonstrates this agency, which could be considered a type of social and cultural capital in the academic setting. Therefore, the curriculum functions as a structural element of the educational setting and in turn has some influence on students' agency.

In contrast, a suggestion made by teacher Nahed emphasises the significance of practical relevance in learning a language: "They should learn general topics that are relevant to their lives." However, teacher Hana'a pointed out that the current

curriculum spends too much time teaching grammar rules, ignoring the equally crucial component of effective communication in real-world settings. This pedagogical choice once more emphasises the presence of a certain type of embodied cultural capital: knowledge of formal language that accidentally influences the degree and kind of classroom participation.

The flexibility of cultural capital within an educational setting is an important point. Bourdieu argues that cultural capital is a set of skills, knowledge, and behaviours that a person can use to demonstrate their social status and cultural competency (Bourdieu, 1986). The curriculum's power to influence ensures that this capital is consistently exchanged as students actively participate in lessons. The level of student engagement frequently depends on how authentic and relevant the curriculum is to their own experience. This is best exemplified by Albandari's willingness to talk about her weekend plans, expressing her preference for "topics where I can express myself fluently, such as when the teacher asks us to talk about what we've done on the weekend." In this instance, Albandari is familiar with this topic and can call on her own experiences; as such, she feels more confident to participate. Embodied cultural capital refers to the attitudes, abilities, and knowledge that people possess within themselves (Bourdieu, 1986). Students like Albandari, Aldanah, Amal, and Tarfah demonstrate this in an educational setting by expressing interest in sports, travel, and personal skills while drawing from their life experiences. Their engagement and confidence are increased as a result. Like Ftoon, who enjoys engaging in enjoyable educational activities such as football games, Farah also wishes for the curriculum to recognise a broader range of embodied cultural capital through her preferences for fashion and karaoke. Hoda's particular interest in extreme sports like skydiving is more evidence of this. The curriculum can greatly increase student engagement and

active participation by including a variety of embodied cultural capitals that represent students' interests and experiences.

Curriculum and Engagement

Finding a balance between structured development and pedagogical flexibility emerges as a frequent difficulty in the field of curriculum design for education (Shiyama, 2020). Teacher Siham offered perceptive comments on language learning, where this problem is very apparent: "The curriculum is too detailed to the point that it restricts the teacher, yet it's good that it's evaluated for various student levels." This comment highlights the conflict between the thoroughness of the curriculum and the limitations it places on the flexibility of pedagogy. Although the extent of information in the curriculum is useful for evaluating students at various levels, it frequently prevents teachers from utilising a variety of approaches or customising lessons to meet students' needs. Furthermore, Siham noted that the curriculum is "graded for students' levels," implying that this means the design takes into account the diverse competencies of the students, which is essential for progressive learning that matches student ability without putting excessive pressure on the students. Students participate more actively when the material is at the appropriate level, especially in language classes where the right vocabulary, grammar, and subjects can greatly improve oral participation and language proficiency. Siham has offered an "unlock course where the students can watch videos and conversations similar to real life, and not only listen such as in the current curriculum," in order to solve the weaknesses in students' speech skill development. Her strategy, which recognises the neglect of speaking activities in textbooks, is an excellent example of her creativity and adaptability, qualities that are essential for successful teaching within the structured limits of the curriculum.

The statement made by teacher Siham reflects a view of the curriculum as a tool that can be used to evaluate and comprehend real-world applications rather than just a collection of facts to be taught. She hopes to make education more memorable and meaningful by tying the curriculum to the lives and futures of the students, which could result in what she calls “systematic sustainable education.” In terms of relevance, the curriculum does relate to engagement because it describes a teaching method meant to increase students’ interest and participation by making the subject matter more applicable to their daily lives. It also has a connection to power, although a more indirect one, since it emphasises the teacher's agency in interpreting and presenting the curriculum in a way that might not correspond to its content, which is a form of pedagogical power (Bernstein, 2000).

Curriculum and Power

According to teacher Siham, the curriculum may be a powerful motivator when it is linked to students’ real-world experiences. This idea is consistent with Foucault’s theory of power and knowledge, which holds that power dynamics are shaped and reinforced by knowledge systems (Foucault, 1975).

This relationship relates not just to the transfer of knowledge but also how knowledge produces individuals and their agency. Tarfah’s view that the curriculum has a “big role” but that there have not been any negative comments “until now” suggests a subtly accepted view that is similar to Foucault’s concept of disciplinary power, which holds that power is embedded and diffused within educational practices rather than only being exercised by teachers or institutional rules. Power is both productive and repressive, forming persons via knowledge (Foucault, 1977). Students are given agency and are able to actively use their knowledge in the classroom when the

curriculum is relevant to their lives, as demonstrated by Siham's practice of connecting "the curriculum with their [students'] life and future." This aligns with Foucault's theory that power creates reality, action domains, and viable behaviours, which is empowering. On the other hand, Albandari's statement that students "won't participate that much if questions are stemmed from the book," is a sign of a curriculum that does not actively engage students, which has a disempowering effect.

As discussed in chapter one, the curriculum in SA influences students not just through its formal content but also through its hidden curriculum. Apple (1993) argues that the hidden curriculum reinforces societal power structures by promoting passive learning behaviours, such as memorization, overactive participation. This aligns with Bourdieu's concept of habitus, where education reproduces dominant cultural capital, limiting students' opportunities to acquire social capital through oral communication. Foucault's (1977) theory of power complements this by highlighting how the hidden curriculum shapes student behaviour by creating norms that reinforce passive engagement. Apple's insights show how the curriculum perpetuates social inequalities, echoing Bourdieu and Foucault's views on how education maintains power relations.

Influence of Curriculum on Legitimate Knowledge

The idea of habitus provides a critical lens through which we can see how educational systems not only provide knowledge but also shape dispositions and perspectives in the complex connection between curriculum design and student participation. Feelings of disconnection and less engagement might result when the curriculum significantly diverges from the real-life situations and backgrounds that shape students' habitus. Making connections between what they learn and the outside

world is a key component of relevance for them. For instance, a curriculum for English that includes current real-world situations gives students a contextual framework, making their learning experiences meaningful. Understanding the language's use in practical contexts is equally as important as language proficiency. A curriculum like this fits in perfectly with students' developing habitus, since it reflects all of realities that they encounter every day. Relevance and engagement are interconnected. Thus, the learning process becomes an interesting journey for students, and one which keeps them engaged. As students become more involved, their habitus changes to include an active approach to learning.

A curriculum's emphasis on a certain type of knowledge is a clear indication of the values and abilities it aims to provide. Every curriculum favours particular knowledge types, whether on purpose or by chance. Does it emphasise grammar over conversational abilities? Such choices indirectly influence students' habitus, and teach students how to focus on their objectives, what to look for, and how to engage with the field of the English classroom. For example, Albandari stated that she would not participate as much in discussions that are solely based on textbooks or are formal. When she was asked, "What if the questions stemmed from the book?" she said, "I won't participate that much." Her answer illustrates a mismatch between her personal dispositions and the standardised knowledge provided by the curriculum.

This finding aligns with the questionnaire responses, where students suggested topics that might motivate them to speak up. Here, Bourdieu's idea of cultural capital is relevant, since an effective curriculum may not only promote academic knowledge but also broader social skills that are important for success inside and outside the classroom. Students can practise communication, negotiation, or collaboration if the

curriculum includes scenarios that reflect real-life situations. If students believe the curriculum has given them the information and abilities consistent with accepted academic norms and practices, they are more willing to speak up in class discussions.

The curriculum in educational settings represents a controlled body of knowledge that is regarded as appropriate for academic inquiry, indicating the institution's power to validate some types of information over others (Foucault, 1977). Students' assessments of the curriculum as "good," "diverse," or "too easy" in the comments offer an insight into how this institutional construct of knowledge interacts with the students' personal views and objectives. Taif, for instance, questioned the quality of the knowledge being taught when she said the curriculum is "too easy," which calls into question the institution's power to determine what constitutes intellectual stimulation or challenge. Ghaid'a's comment on the curriculum being "so exciting, yet it includes a few new topics" exemplifies how the educational system chooses whatever knowledge is important enough to introduce or repeat. In this way, the inclusion or exclusion of specific topics acts as a control over students' access to knowledge, potentially influencing how they participate in class discussions based on how closely the curriculum corresponds to their areas of interest or competence. This demonstrates how the criteria for meaningful or relevant learning are always changing. It also highlights the subtle ways in which power is exercised through determining what is taught and what is omitted. These choices impact how the students interact with the content, which may hinder their ability to grow, critically and independently (Foucault, 1975).

Hoda's remark that the curriculum should include subjects that students are "interested in and good at" indicates a demand for embodied or practical knowledge

compared to the theoretical knowledge that academic institutions have traditionally preferred. Furthermore, the curriculum sets the limits for what is considered legitimate knowledge within the educational field, serving as more than just a neutral method for sharing knowledge (Apple & Apple, 2018). The curriculum actively shapes students' habitus by influencing their choices and interests, and habitus in turn is shaped by how students interact with the curriculum. The curriculum teaches students how to organise their learning, what knowledge is important, and what subjects they may think are deserving of discussion. The two are inseparably linked and constantly influencing one another. As a result, the curriculum can either affirm or exclude the many types of habitus and cultural capital present in the classroom. For instance, when a student's hobbies and the curriculum are well-aligned, such as athletics or personal skills, these students are in a better position to succeed in the educational field. They receive a sort of symbolic capital, which is a kind of recognition and legitimacy within a certain field by having their unique forms of embodied cultural capital recognised, and which promotes active oral participation. However, Albandari's unwillingness to join in discussions when these are based solely on a book illustrates how the curriculum effectively excludes students whose forms of cultural capital do not correspond with the curriculum's areas of focus. Her feelings correspond to a deeper concept: "I feel more connected when topics are relatable to my personal experiences, but when they are too abstract or distant, I find it harder to participate." Her comment explains how the curriculum has the power to favour particular forms of knowledge that can either include or exclude. Farah comments also support this claim:

The curriculum should include more questions and vocabulary.

Questions and answers help students to become competent and be

able to speak English. The preparatory curriculum mostly focuses on reading, yet it's better to include more vocabulary and questions because these are the things that test the students' performance.

Farah's statement highlights the curriculum's emphasis on reading skills while excluding other significant skills such as speaking. In this situation power is presented, as the curriculum has the power to determine what is considered necessary knowledge, therefore shaping students' learning experiences (Foucault, 1977). The relationship between knowledge production and power systems is significant in this context. The curriculum possesses some power since it specifies what knowledge and abilities are acceptable in an educational setting and how they are to be evaluated. This power gradually directs the learning process and shapes the experiences and results of students through the established discourses, practices, and norms of the educational institution.

Furthermore, Foucault (1977) argues that the curriculum can become an instrument of power. Not only do policymakers have power by determining what the curriculum should include; teachers and students also have the power to decide how it is taught and how students engage with it. The curriculum then turns into an arena where many forms of power have an impact, and interact with one another. Policymakers, teachers, and students participate in the continuous forming and reshaping of power dynamics inside the educational system as a result of this dynamic interplay, which creates a complicated network of social relationships (Foucault, 1982). An analysis of student interview data reveals how discourse functions as a controlling force in the educational setting. Discourse in this context refers to more than simply text; it also refers to a set of beliefs and practices that guide what is valued for classroom

discussion (Foucault, 1975). For instance, when students say they prefer “attractive and exciting topics” like sports or travel, they may be hinting at a gap between their own interests and the subjects the curriculum emphasises. Their interests imply that the dominant discourse of what is considered to be educationally valuable, such as political events, may be somewhat at conflict with what they find interesting or applicable to their lives.

Discourse and curriculum are closely related to one another. As students interact with the curriculum, they engage in discourse that reflects existing societal views about what students should learn and, in turn, reinforcing or challenging those beliefs. This shows that curriculum and discourse are connected. The curriculum transmits knowledge and incorporates cultural values and norms. Students either reinforce these embedded discourses through their curriculum navigation or help develop these narratives by challenging and criticising them. This interaction is an interactive process that shapes and reshapes the discourse surrounding learning by bringing together individual perspectives and societal values. For example, if the curriculum has a strong emphasis on the works of Shakespeare, students are exposed to a discourse that emphasises and values the English language’s literary function as a medium for certain historical and cultural settings. Their interpretations and class discussion would centre on the language and societal norms these works embody, and demonstrate a cultural respect for this specific literary tradition.

Thus, students are more likely to feel that speaking up in class is essential to their success if the dominant discourse in the EFL classroom legitimises oral participation as a main sign of student engagement and knowledge. The curriculum plays a significant role in determining what is important to study and discuss which shapes

classroom interactions and influence the popular discourse that suggests a good student is the one who participates actively in class discussion. This means that the curriculum carries underlying assumptions, values, and ideas that are conveyed to students, both explicitly and implicitly. It is not just a neutral or objective collection of facts and knowledge (Apple & Apple, 2018). When students like Aldanah say that they prefer “attractive and exciting topics,” they are operating within the limits of an existing discourse on what is considered to be interesting or useful. Similarly, when Farah suggests that themes on “make-up, apparel, and fashion,” should be included as topics, she is positioning herself in the dominant discourse of femininity through which the discursive practices associated with make-up and fashion are valued. By expressing their preferences for curriculum choices, Aldanah and Farah are positioning themselves in societal discourses that are connected to subjectivity. According to Foucault, discourse and power dynamics shape subjectivity (Foucault, 1982). Aldanah’s interest in “attractive and exciting topics” places her in a discourse that values relevance and participation. Likewise, Farah’s taste for topics like “make-up, apparel, and fashion” places her in line with the common discourse surrounding femininity, demonstrating how individual tastes can support social standards. Students actively negotiate and develop their subjectivity through these choices, which represent the intricate interactions between discourse, subjectivity and the educational curriculum.

Thus, the perspectives of the students and teachers show that while the curriculum serves as a significant motivator, its influence is mitigated by its relevance to the real world and the social and cultural capital it provides. These statements based on current classroom experiences, which include comments from teachers and students, reflect Bourdieu’s and Foucault’s concepts of educational structures. Educational

structures describe the established, frequently unspoken institutions, procedures, and hierarchies that make up education (Bourdieu, 1984). Through this perspective, the curriculum is shown as a complex interaction of power, knowledge, and social constructs rather than just as a set of topics, pedagogical guidelines, and teaching strategies. Apple (1993) also highlights how the curriculum legitimizes certain types of knowledge, like grammar and writing, while marginalizing oral communication, which is essential for language learning. This reflects Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital, where student success is tied to conforming to the dominant knowledge structures. By emphasizing formal knowledge over practical oral skills, the curriculum reinforces existing power dynamics, as Foucault (1977) notes, linking knowledge and power closely.

Pedagogy and Its Influence on the Students' Participation

Interactions Between Students and Teachers

A crucial element in the EFL setting is the interaction between students and teachers. This interaction is far more complex than it might appear and includes both explicit and implicit elements that influence the entire learning process (Cornelius-White, 2007). When analysing how pedagogy affects students' oral engagement, it is clear that teachers' teaching methods, or their pedagogy, are crucial. Additionally, how students react to these teaching methods influences how much oral participation they show in class. Therefore, a fundamental component of improving the learning process is to understand how pedagogy affects students' willingness and ability to engage orally (Cornelius-White & Harbaugh, 2009). Drawing on Bourdieu and Foucault, the interaction between students and teachers is seen as a complicated interplay of routine, authority, and expectations. The degree of students' participation in class is greatly influenced by teachers' pedagogy and how well the habitus of the students and

teachers matches or conflicts. Active engagement is more likely to be inspired by teachers who are aware of their students' habitus and who use teaching strategies that align with their expectations. The power relationships between teachers and students also influence the learning environment and can either promote or discourage participation. This study reveals the relationship among teachers' comprehension of students' habitus, the strategic application of this comprehension in teaching, and the distribution of authority within the classroom, all of which together impact students' willingness to participate orally.

A complex network of habitus and capital governs the interaction between students and teachers (Bourdieu, 1986). Student habitus is shaped and developed by early social, cultural, and educational experiences (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) and continues to evolve, influencing their educational expectations and motivations. Similar to this, teachers' educational habitus is shaped by their education, training, and experiences and frames their methods of teaching and their perspectives (Pajares, 1992). The dynamics of student–teacher interaction in the classroom are significantly influenced by the evolving habitus of both groups. The following comments from students show a range of expectations from their teachers and indicate multiple ways that habitus shapes the interaction between students and teachers. For example, Farah's claim that the curriculum is "excellent but needs more efforts from teachers" is an indication that she believes that teachers serve as the main knowledge facilitators in education. This signals a particular kind of habitus that places the primary responsibility for academic performance on the teacher rather than being shared by students and teachers. When Albandari responded to questions about whether she enjoyed learning English, her comment, "It depends on the teacher whether she makes us like to learn or merely performs her duty," highlights the teacher's role in

motivating students to learn. Valuing teachers who actively attempt to bridge the gap between their habitus and those of their students is important to Albandari: “We’ll get motivated if the teacher is kind and encourages us, and vice versa.” This approach highlights Albandari’s viewpoint on teachers who foster a positive atmosphere for learning.

When it comes to teachers, habitus has a big impact on how much participation students demonstrate in class. In this context, habitus refers to a teacher’s complex set of deeply established behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs evident in their pedagogical practices and which are influenced by their sociocultural background (Bourdieu, 1984). Each teacher has a fundamental set of attitudes and behaviours that are specific to them and that guide their style of teaching and interactions with students. This influences the degree and nature of student participation in learning activities (Reay, 2004a). For instance, a teacher who has been influenced by a system of education that emphasises memorisation may be less likely to encourage students to engage in oral participation, which could have an impact on the students’ engagement. On the other hand, a teacher who practises interaction and inclusivity may foster a learning environment where students are more motivated to participate orally.

Teachers are more likely to foster an environment that promotes engagement when they adopt a teaching style or disposition that is consistent with the expectations and habitus of their students. For example, Amal said, “My teacher always encourages us to read and speak, but I don’t know what her role actually is.” This remark suggests that an effective teacher–student interaction requires the teacher’s openness and their support for fostering an atmosphere where students feel at ease asking questions and actively participating. The uncertainty around a teacher’s function in educational

settings may have a variety of effects. Amal's reply demonstrates a lack of a clear pedagogical framework in the classroom, even though the teacher may encourage engagement through speaking and reading. Even if the teacher's aims and the students' perceptions are otherwise in line with encouraging active engagement, this lack of clarity may cause a gap between them. Amal's uncertainty may indicate that, while the teacher's habitus and pedagogical methods may be supportive, they are not always clear to the students. This uncertainty might prevent the development of a more solid educational interaction in which students actively participate. Even if the teacher is successful in fostering an atmosphere that supports fundamental kinds of engagement like reading and speaking, the absence of a distinct pedagogical function may mean that deeper forms of engagement and knowledge are not being achieved.

On the other hand, in the questionnaire some students described teachers as "rigid," "nervous," or "don't cooperate." These comments indicate that teachers may be stiff or inflexible. By establishing a sense of discipline or fear rather than encouraging discussion, these teachers may potentially restrict student participation by failing to create a welcoming and supportive environment. Teachers who are criticised for being inflexible or uncooperative offer a contrast to student expectations for an engaging, interactive learning experience. Teachers who promote a friendly learning atmosphere, encourage students to ask questions, and correct errors are more likely to stimulate engagement (Amerstorfer, & Freiin von Münster-Kistner, 2021; Xie & Derakhshan, 2021). Teachers who are passionate about their subject matter and show a commitment to their students tend to stimulate enthusiastic participation, as Ghadah commented, "We prefer the teacher whose explanation is so good and who is really passionate about her job."

Teachers as Communicators and Instructors

Teachers have a considerable influence on student engagement in addition to their role in selecting teaching methods, which is an example of the power dynamics that are naturally present in the teacher–student relationship, as defined by Foucault (1975). Even though curriculum and teaching methods are essential to the educational process, the influence of a teacher’s personality cannot be discounted. This is further developed in the examination of the power dynamics in education that follows, which places the teacher in the role of a facilitator of engagement and knowledge. This perspective is consistent with Foucault’s theory of power as a regulating force that both creates and regulates social connections. Albandari’s comment, “Although she is Indian, she was making efforts, and her explanation was good,” is a specific example of how a teacher’s interaction language skills or inability in the language can have significant effects on students’ participation. Albandari’s statement also draws attention to hidden assumptions regarding linguistic competence based on nationality. It highlights the societal biases that native English speakers are naturally superior in teaching the language. These biases ignore the variety of pedagogical knowledge, proficiency, and cultural awareness that non-native EFL instructors bring to the class. This situation is consistent with Foucault’s theory of power dynamics, which emphasises how social relations, including those in educational settings, shape and are shaped by power dynamics. In order to correct assumptions and promote a more inclusive view of successful language teaching that values teachers of various linguistic backgrounds, these biases must be addressed. This viewpoint aims to expose the hierarchies of power that wrongly support the norms of native speakers

and promotes an appreciation of the variety of skills teachers possess that can improve language acquisition.

The Impact of Teaching Methods on Learner Engagement

Many students suggested they had a desire to respond even when their answers were incorrect, implying that the teacher's approachable teaching style encouraged engagement. It is possible that the teacher's approachability reduced students' anxiety about facing consequences for giving incorrect answers. On the other hand, strict or rigid teachers may mistakenly discourage engagement by fostering a sense of control rather than open discussion. Aldanah pointed out that "it [her willingness to speak up] depends on her teaching style, whether she's rigid and demands the answer be identical to that in the book or she asks us to talk about something outside the book." This suggests that teachers who demand adherence to a particular viewpoint might hinder free-flowing conversation and active student engagement because the students may feel limited by the power relations operating within the discourse of teacher-centredness, which places a high value on the teacher as the main authority and source of knowledge in the classroom. Because of the emphasis placed on responding correctly and conforming to the teacher's opinions, students tend to be less engaged and active when using this strategy.

A teacher-centred discourse implies a teacher-forced set of values and academic requirements, which restricts students' ability to convey different opinions and prevents open discussion in the classroom. Student Aseel commented on rigid versus open-minded teachers: "Other teachers are rigid and accept only one answer, the same as the book's." This aligns with Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, in that students' interest in participation is limited by teachers who insist on single, textbook-

based answers. In this context, memorisation and adherence to norms and opinions are valued as cultural capital by the evaluating standards and criteria in the educational system. This capital is evaluated by the standards established by the educational system, which frequently gives priority to adherence to the material presented in textbooks. This method of instruction emphasises the power relationships that exist in the classroom by giving some types of knowledge a higher priority than others and modifying students' engagement and participation in the process. On the other hand, teachers who support a variety of answers promote the growth of more flexible answers, and are more likely to encourage student participation, which in turn produces a form of cultural capital. This approach is more appropriate for social settings where flexibility and creativity are valued, since it emphasises the ability for conversation with others who have different viewpoints.

Moreover, the habitus of both students and teachers interacts to influence whether or not an atmosphere is conducive to effective student engagement. This is consistent with Bourdieu's theories on how habitus and capital interact in social fields to produce particular effects (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986). The students' responses demonstrate complex relationships. For instance, Farah expressed a desire for a teaching style in which students are treated like "their [the teacher's] own kids," which could be consistent with the habitus she has formed as a result of her previous exposure to more parental and supportive learning environments. Maybe she has had teachers in the past who used a caring approach, and that has influenced her desire for someone who uses this approach. On the other hand, a teacher's approach and habitus have a vital influence on students' disengagement or engagement. Teachers who are said to be "rigid," or "nervous," or who "don't cooperate" obviously work from a professional habitus that is in conflict with what students expect from an engaging

and interactive learning experience. Use of this approach implies that such a teacher's pedagogical habitus is evolving to adhere to rules more than valuing or encouraging student engagement.

Furthermore, there is a connection between teachers' responsibilities and the promotion of motivation in English classrooms. This connection is created by teachers expressing their desires, anxieties, and experiences while putting together a tapestry of social behaviours that reflect broader sociocultural values. Beyond just conveying knowledge, the responsibilities of teachers also involve influencing the social and emotional atmosphere of the classroom, which has effects on student motivation. For example, a teacher who freely expresses a desire for all students to succeed may promote a more accepting and encouraging environment. On the other hand, a teacher who exhibits obvious anxiety or seems uninterested may demotivate students. Thus, the teacher's expressions, whether explicit or implicit, contribute to the learning environment and may have an impact on the motivation of the students (Jiang et al., 2021). Students' comments in the interviews emphasise the idea that teachers act as facilitators who can either encourage or hinder an atmosphere beneficial to participatory learning in terms of social capital. As Haya comments, "The teacher is the one who motivates me." Teachers who treat their students "like their sisters," as Dai describes it, foster a sense of mutual respect and a sense of community in the classroom, which facilitates the accumulation of social capital. Furthermore, students' perception that interacting with teachers who do not speak Arabic improves their language proficiency has a significant symbolic capital; Mona commented, "What helps me more is that my teacher doesn't speak Arabic, so I have to speak English with her which makes me discover my language is good." Symbolic capital refers to

the recognition, prestige, and status that come with being able to speak fluently in a foreign language (Heller, 2011).

In Chapter 3, symbolic capital was examined as a crucial resource that reflects the power and respect associated with language proficiency. This is similar to how teachers who create a community in the classroom develop social capital; it is also relevant to how students like Mona, who perceives that their interactions with teachers who do not speak Arabic have improved their language skills, gain significant symbolic capital. This situation is not just about the symbolic capital that comes with learning a language that is widely spoken around the world, such as English; it is also about the need to close the language gap, which forces students to put in more effort when communicating. In comparison, Mona's past educational experience was limited in that her teachers never spoke English at school. This issue is also shown in Haya's statement: "The fact that my teacher at university doesn't understand Arabic makes me push myself more to be able to communicate with her." Being able to communicate in English, particularly when it is the only language used, produces intellectual currency and may even lead to higher academic performance (Cummins, 2000). This highlights how language shapes classroom dynamics and student participation in a subtle way.

Error Correction

Students' responses from both interviews and the questionnaire indicate several critical pedagogical influences that are important for student participation and learning in the EFL context. Teaching styles are keys to influencing both students' engagement and learning. The way the teachers corrected the students was significant. The majority of students felt more comfortable receiving corrections after they had

completed speaking. The initial act of correction frequently resulted in confusion or feelings of embarrassment. For example, Tarfah explained that “correcting me while answering confuses me,” which appeared to interfere with the cognitive flow necessary for language learning. Likewise, Albandari explained that “I prefer that she corrects me after finishing the answer so that she doesn’t interrupt me.” Other students supported this approach, agreeing with Albandari’s preference for being corrected after completing the answer. Interrupting a student while they are speaking might disturb their thought processes and cause a sense of nervousness. This is consistent with the idea that comments should be useful and encouraging rather than destructive to the learner’s confidence and learning experience (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Albandari’s and Tarfah’s habitus may be influenced by their experiences in school, which favours continuous thinking and coherent expression. This is consistent with Bourdieu’s notion of habitus as an internalised system that forms behaviours and perceptions in various social fields (Bourdieu, 1990). Students’ tendency towards a reflective and uninterrupted way of speaking is an expression of their habitus, which affects their level of participation.

Similarly, Amal stated:

I prefer that she corrects me after finishing the answer so that she doesn’t interrupt me, confuses me, and confuses the students when she corrects their mistakes while they are reading. I prefer she corrects me [after] finishing the answer.

Amal’s statement explains that correcting mistakes during answering is a teacher habitus in the classroom. Such a method shows how confusion among students can result from quick correction. It also shows that although some teachers may have

good intentions when they correct in real time, the unintended result is frequent confusion, which can hinder understanding and remembering the corrected content.

However, the students' views on feedback and the appropriate times to provide it differed. Ithar preferred corrections while answering: "I prefer she corrects me while answering" However, as the discussion above makes clear, not all students shared this preference. Ithar, thus, may have a different habitus that is reflected in her preference for immediate correction during responses. This habitus may have been formed by educational settings that emphasised immediate correction as the standard. This demonstrates that she has internalised particular teaching strategies and norms.

Some students, such as Tarfah and Albandari, might believe that making revisions after completing their response enables them to completely express themselves and keep the flow of their ideas. Ithar, on the other hand, preferred revisions while she was submitting the answer, "so that everything ends by finishing the answer." This draws attention to the diversity of student preferences for feedback. Based on the quotes, the majority of students appear to favour corrections after they have finished speaking, since immediate correction frequently causes uncertainty and anxiety, as well as reticence to speak up. According to the theoretical perspectives on which this research draws, habitus shapes how students interpret and respond to feedback on their oral participation, which in turn shapes their preferences and learning dispositions within the framework of student–teacher relationships. The different preferences for when to receive feedback reflect the internalised attitudes and cultural standards that students bring into the classroom as a part of their habitus.

The method teachers use to correct students can prohibit or facilitate students' accumulation of cultural capital. Language proficiency, as enhanced or limited by corrective actions, is a major component of cultural capital in the classroom. Therefore, teachers' methods of providing feedback can either encourage or hinder students' acquisition of this capital by improving their language proficiency and confidence. In addition, as the classroom is a field where power relations between teachers and students often exist, teachers' methods of correction can also operate as acts of power. Students can be empowered by a teaching style that aligns with their learning style and habitus, creating an atmosphere that is favourable to the development of language and cultural capital. On the other hand, a mismatch might result in a field characterised by resistance and anxiety, which is produced through the interactions between cultural capital, habitus, and power in educational settings.

Silent Students

The issue of concentrating on students who do not participate was also highlighted in questionnaire and interview responses. Most of the students seemed to agree that trying to engage the more reticent students would increase class engagement; As Worood suggested: "She [the teacher] starts with the distinguished students and then those who don't participate." According to Foucault (1975), the classroom is a place where power dynamics take place and where knowledge is both produced and transmitted. When students believe that teachers not pay attention to students who do not usually participate, students are effectively exercising self-governance by controlling the flow of information and the distribution of power in the classroom. As discussed in Chapter 3, panopticism is a system of surveillance that enforces power through continuous observation; students are resisting this system by making suggestions (Foucault, 1975). The desire can be understood as a resistance against a

panoptic surveillance system. In such a system, non-participating students are called out and forced into participation. This is consistent with idea of the panopticon, where people change their behaviour because they believe they are constantly being watched, even when that surveillance is not actually happening (Foucault, 1975). On the other hand, focusing attention on reluctant students might serve as a type of control, which, depending on how it is applied, can either be empowering or limiting.

All students commented on how successful rewards are at motivating students. However, they can take many different forms, starting with more extrinsic ones, like prizes or certificates, to more intrinsic ones, like taking part in competitive group activities or peer-led classes. The preference for specific teaching approaches discussed above, such as letting students finish speaking before correcting them, or the method of focusing on non-participating students, shows power dynamics and governance. Allowing students to finish their thoughts before correcting them is an example of a less authoritarian form of governance that gives students some agency and promotes a more corresponding environment (Foucault, 1975). Additionally, teacher Asmaa's use of external rewards like extra points might be seen as a form of governmentality. Here, the external reward system motivates the students to self-regulate their engagement. They are led to become subjects who, given the framework teacher Ameenah has established, operate in their own best interests without necessarily confronting the power structures.

Engagement Strategies

Students might prefer teaching strategies that reduce their chances of receiving criticism if they find it difficult to explain themselves clearly in a classroom setting. Students suggested: "We really like the Little Teacher activity" and "Wheel of

Names activity helps all students to concentrate and participate in the class.” These methods motivated students to speak up, showing that students’ engagement in classroom activities can be just as beneficial for language acquisition as a traditional teacher–student interaction. Methods such as these not only break up the everyday teaching method but also give students greater agency, improving the educational setting. The selection of activities like the “Little Teacher activity” and the “Wheel of Names activity” highlights how crucial student autonomy and self-direction are in language learning. These activities promote a sense of having authority by encouraging students to actively participate orally. Students are given an opportunity to make decisions, express their opinions, and participate in discussions throughout these activities. By giving students more control over the issues that are discussed, how discussions go, and when they participate, this increased agency empowers students. These activities thus contribute to an atmosphere in the classroom where student voices are valued alongside the teacher’s by encouraging all students to speak up and engage in a more equal learning environment. In order to understand the students’ comfort or discomfort in speaking English, Bourdieu’s concept of habitus is important. Habitus—a collection of attitudes influenced by one’s social environment—significantly impacts a student’s willingness to participate. Students who prefer the “Little Teacher” activity, for instance, may have an evolving habitus that is more in line with active participation. As a result, they may feel empowered and in control of their learning through this pedagogical approach.

Different Pedagogical Methods: Teachers’ Viewpoints

From the perspective of the teachers, pedagogies have a significant impact on students’ engagement in the classroom. The five teachers—Hana’a, Doha, Nahed, Siham, and Ameenah—seem to have different viewpoints and approaches to teaching

languages. For instance, Hana'a prefers a student-centred approach to teaching over traditional pedagogy. She regrets the injustice done to students when one approach is used, particularly in light of her students' varied language proficiency. To address this, she modifies her teaching approach and even uses multimedia tools like PowerPoint slides, audio, and video to better meet the needs of her students: "Some students like audio, but I prefer video and PowerPoint so I use these different tools." Furthermore, given the virtual nature of her classroom, she understands the value of developing a strong emotional and intellectual connection with her students. To make her classes more engaging, teacher Hana'a focuses on what each student needs and incorporates tools like videos. This helps students who may not have had an advantage before and gives the classroom a more equitable atmosphere.

Teacher Hana'a's approach to teaching, which is centred on the needs of each individual student and promotes opportunities for equitable participation, challenges traditional approaches to learning. Her approach recognises a range of learning obstacles, in contrast to one-size-fits-all approaches that may reinforce inequality by giving priority to students who fit into traditional teaching paradigms. For example, she stated:

I prefer a student-centred class. Because in the traditional method, we just give the lecture. We do not concern with the students and what they want though not all students are the same. And so I prefer what the students demand from me.

By guaranteeing that every student has an equal opportunity to participate and achieve, this strategy helps level the playing field and addresses the innate inequalities in traditional educational institutions. Resistance, in this case, refers to the way in

which Hana'a's strategy opposes or challenges the traditional educational approaches that frequently support social inequity. Hana'a's methodology attempts to create a more equitable learning environment where all students, regardless of their initial advantages or limitations, have an equal opportunity to speak up and succeed (Hyde, 2017); she does this by concentrating on each student's needs and providing tools like videos. Students who already have cultural capital, which refers here to their English knowledge, often benefit from a teacher-centred approach. This is because this type of pedagogy enables an exchange process to occur, a concept essential to understanding how the exchange or accumulation of capital operates. Students with a strong foundation in English language and culture can use their current cultural capital to succeed in traditional classrooms. In other words, in traditional classes, students with prior English language ability and cultural familiarity are able to actively participate in discussions, engage with the curriculum, and understand the language.

Teacher Hana'a enables a more equal conversion of students' personal interests to cultural capital by switching to a student-centred approach. In addition, Hana'a's emphasis on intellectual and emotional connection, as well as her use of multimedia resources, can be regarded as a type of decentralised power. The following statement, however, highlights a different viewpoint on educational practice:

They have their course content and we have the time period to finish it so we do not follow the students' feelings and emotions just give them the lecture and as I just said I have no concern with the student. So this is the injustice with the students.

The teacher typically controls most of the knowledge and power in a traditional classroom, which Foucault would refer to as a power/knowledge relationship. By

distributing this concentrated kind of power more equally among her students, Hana's methods offer a distribution of power. This technique may help improve language learning and promote intrinsic motivation. Moreover, in the quote above Hana expressly stresses the importance of paying attention to students' feelings and emotions, which is especially interesting since it brings the affective domain into the discussion. Conversely, she also emphasises skill activities and attempts to build applied language skills: "I use some skill activities such as performing a drama in front of the class." These activities range from making brief dramas to simulations involving particular circumstances, such as a restaurant visit. Using such activities improves the possibility of real-world language application. As part of her teaching method to make English less boring and more useful in daily life, she emphasises the relevance of vocabulary in situations like coffee shops and restaurants. For example, Hana said, "We [the classroom] have a lesson in a restaurant. So I make one like this to give them the scene or create a scene and then practise and use the restaurant's English words." Her approaches and viewpoints provide insightful information for modern language pedagogy that aims to be both efficient and sympathetic.

Teacher Doha appears to be pushing students to gain new kinds of linguistic capital, which are valuable in the global field, by encouraging them to independently discover the rules of English grammar: "I avoid the old grammar method, but I rather deduce the rules and meanings of words from the students, and they try to come up with the information themselves." She does this by creating a balance between the need to acquire new forms of capital and protecting existing capital. The viewpoint from teacher Nahed adds yet another level of complexity. She criticises the rigid structure of the curriculum that restricts her creative freedom. When she was asked about her teaching experience, she said, "It's not interesting because we can't improve on our

own. We have to follow a lot of things that I've already said so there is no way for creativity." She realises the need to pay attention to students who are reluctant to participate. "Sometimes I would threaten them that I will not give you good mark if you do not want to speak." Teacher Nahed, like teacher Doha, favours a communicative strategy, saying, "I am [teacher Nahed] more into communicative language teaching." Nahed is making EFL practical and applicable to everyday life. She said, "I'm not so well versed in Arabic. For me drawing picture or drawing something or with my actions [it] is easier to communicate and make them understand." Despite not speaking Arabic fluently, she finds this approach to be effective, overcoming the constraint with the help of visual aids and body language.

Teacher Nahed's direct method interacts directly with Foucault's idea of discourse and power because it does not rely on a common language. Without Arabic as a common language, she uses visual aids and body language as tools of authority to gently focus the attention of the students. However, by making the learning process personal, her methodology also changes traditional power dynamics, leading to new regimes of truth. Likewise, Nahed puts considerable emphasis on conversational abilities that students can use right away in practical communicative contexts, including speaking with a doctor: "They should know how to talk with people. They should know how to talk to a doctor because that is something that they must have been taught." Nahed stresses the need to equip students with the skills to engage in everyday conversation, in addition to academic or cultural knowledge. Her emphasis on practical language abilities may be understood as a means of enabling the conversion of cultural capital for her students, so that it can be instantly transformed into applicable and practical skills in social interactions. Her methods aim to enable

students to participate in social fields that are directly relevant to them, rather than relying on more abstract and less accessible types of knowledge.

When compared to her peers, teacher Ameenah's viewpoint is unique because it takes a different approach and has a different focus. Ameenah follows more conventional teaching practices, such as translation and the use of visual aids. She does, however, make a conscious effort to change these methods according to the subject matter of the class, adding a little customisation to the traditional structure. She said, "I use traditional methods, including translation, visual tools, or pictures, but I diversify them depending on the lesson itself." Ameenah integrates traditional teaching methods with motivational strategies to face challenges of students engagement. Her preference for vocabulary above grammar is a type of control over what is regarded as important knowledge: "I focus on vocabulary because grammar can easily be forgotten without practice, unlike vocabulary words that stick in their memory." As discussed in Chapter 3, a regime of truth is a form of discourse that provides legitimacy to certain types of knowledge over others. Hence, teacher Ameenah, by adjusting the discourse to fit with what she believes to be a strong kind of knowledge—that is, emphasising language above grammar—she creates a regime of truth. By constructing a "regime of truth" around what is regarded as worthy of attention in the classroom, she also practises power.

Teacher Ameenah also uses rewards in a way that is consistent with Foucault's notion of governmentality (see Chapter 3), which holds that authority is exercised through disciplinary measures that encourage self-control in students. For example, she noted that "students need to feel motivated by gifts, rewards, and bonus marks since traditional methods don't work." Teacher Ameenah takes an empathic approach to

motivating students. She cultivates an environment where mistakes are not punished but rather recognised as a natural part of the learning process by being candid with her students about her own past mistakes in the learning process: “I tell them that I had previously made mistakes in my answers—the same as them.” Ameenah makes the learning process more relatable by freely discussing her own prior errors. As a teaching tool, this method successfully reduces students’ fear of making mistakes and promotes more active engagement and open communication. This degree of intimate connection reduces the classroom’s affective filter and encourages more engaged involvement. In doing this, her approach supports Bourdieu’s (1984) assertion that education is a setting for competing for various forms of capital, making it simpler for all students to acquire new skills.

Teaching Methods and Students’ Needs

Learning vocabulary and flashcards, according to teacher Ameenah, are two highly interesting teaching methods. This is consistent with her general preference for words over grammar. Teacher Siham appears to value student agency and individualised learning in her teaching methods. She explained that she learnt this strategy (the Canadian democratic classroom strategy) while she was doing her master’s degree in Canada. She explained that the strategy represents an important change from the traditional teaching method, creating a more empowering setting:

My teaching method relies on student groups. The method I’ve learned the most in Canada was “the democratic class.” It means involving students in choosing what they will learn. As a result, mutual discussion in the classroom helps us agree on a certain point of view.

Siham's classroom offers opportunities for discussion, mutual growth, and democratic practice, in addition to serving as a place for teaching (hooks, 2014). Learning is collaborative and responsive to current events, as she lets students select themes that are relevant to their lives, like the experience of the pandemic:

They've written essays about the coronavirus during the quarantine, and they all have agreed that it was a great chance to spend a great time with their families and get to know them more although they live in the same home.

This systematic, sustainable education is a paradigm that connects the classroom to the outside world to improve knowledge retention and application. Additionally, to encourage active learning and participation, teacher Siham uses group-based methods and encourages competition within these groups: "I divide them into groups and give them a topic to discuss. In reading comprehension, I don't stick to the questions in the textbook." This reveals that Siham does not consider the textbook to be the ultimate authority. Siham emphasised speaking above writing when it comes to language proficiency:

I focus on speaking because it's the skill that benefits them the most. Writing won't be useful for the students, except for simple things such as filling a form. Yet, English speaking is required even inside Saudi Arabia in hotels, the airport, planes, and so on. Thus, mastering speaking is necessary in order to be able to deal with such situations.

Speaking English is becoming increasingly important in global situations, including in Saudi Arabia in places like hotels and airports; therefore this focus is justified based on practical considerations. This is perhaps consistent with teacher Siham's general idea of connecting education to students' present and future needs: "I link the curriculum with their life and future." This teaching approach rejects traditional teaching methods by emphasising democratic principles and student agency. It tends to act as resistance against oppressive structures. The teacher's democratic classroom aims to equitably distribute educational capital, and allows each student to convert their individual cultural capital into useful skills and knowledge.

In this section, the role of curriculum and pedagogy in fostering or limiting oral participation was examined. The analysis reveals that curriculum relevance is key to encouraging engagement, with students more likely to participate when the content reflects real-world applicability and cultural relevance. Pedagogical strategies that emphasize collaborative learning, scaffolded support, and communicative approaches were also found to positively impact participation. This section underscores the importance of aligning curriculum design and teaching practices with the specific needs and experiences of students in EFL contexts. This section also explored how specific pedagogical practices can enhance student agency and oral participation in the classroom. By creating a supportive and interactive learning environment, teachers can empower students to take ownership of their learning and engage more actively in discussions. The analysis shows that when teachers use strategies such as peer collaboration, and contextualized learning, students are more confident and willing to participate. This section reinforces the idea that agency is not fixed but can be cultivated through thoughtful pedagogical interventions.

The findings in this chapter demonstrate that the curriculum plays a central role in shaping students' oral participation. However, the analysis reveals that the curriculum, as implemented in the classroom, often reflects only its intended design, focusing heavily on grammar and written assessments, while neglecting oral communicative competence. This discrepancy between the intended and enacted curriculum aligns with Graves' (2008) argument that curriculum should be understood as a socially contextual process, influenced by the broader educational environment and the interactions between teachers and students.

Furthermore, the hidden curriculum (Apple, 1993) in the Saudi EFL context—where teachers' pedagogical practices prioritize memorization and exam preparation—reinforces passive student behaviour, further limiting opportunities for oral participation. As discussed earlier in Chapter 1, the curriculum in Saudi Arabia tends to reflect policymakers' perceptions rather than addressing students' lived experiences, goals, and needs (Alqarni, 2020). This chapter builds on that discussion by examining how these curriculum limitations manifest in the classroom, where both teachers and students navigate structural constraints that hinder effective oral engagement.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed how the curriculum, as a specific component within the educational context, can have an important impact on students' oral engagement. The curriculum can engage students to participate actively when it is in line with their interests and is presented in an interesting way. The curriculum may, however, make students less engaged if it is extremely prescriptive or disengaged from their daily lives. The chapter also discussed the importance of student–teacher interaction on the students' oral participation. It showed the students' perceptions of the power

relationships between teachers and themselves and how this might affect their willingness to participate in class. While rigid or inflexible teachers may unintentionally hinder free discussion, approachable and encouraging teachers are more likely to foster an environment that encourages active participation. The teacher's role in the EFL classroom, as reflected through the lenses of Bourdieu and Foucault, is multifaceted. Teachers serve as cultural mediators, knowledge facilitators, influencers of students' habitus, and enablers of the accumulation of cultural capital. Their teaching style and behaviour significantly impact students' motivation and willingness to participate, underscoring the power dynamics and knowledge systems at play in the educational environment.

The chapter highlighted the relevance of power relations, agency, and cultural and linguistic capital while also highlighting the complex interplay between teaching methods and student participation within the EFL setting. Focusing on pedagogical approaches, findings revealed the necessity for teachers to critically understand the various factors that influence students' learning experiences and to modify pedagogical strategies accordingly to maximise participation and language acquisition. By negotiating the challenging settings and dynamics of power, cultural capital, and learner diversity, teachers shed light on the diverse nature of modern language pedagogy. By doing this, they emphasise how varied and dynamic language education is, and how many factors interact and have an impact on both teaching and learning and student participation. Teachers' and students' reflections on pedagogical practice highlighted the need for a more complex, flexible method of teaching that respects the identities of individual students while educating them for a society that is increasingly interconnected on a global level. The various viewpoints revealed that although both teachers and students respect a comprehensive, flexible method of

teaching that combines old and contemporary pedagogical techniques, they both struggle with teaching time and curricular requirements.

The next chapter provides a critical discussion of the study's key findings. It offers insights into the study's limitations and its implications, as well as recommendations for future research. It provides a comprehensive understanding of the research journey, and my new learnings about becoming a researcher.

Chapter Nine

Introduction

This thesis aimed to investigate reasons for Saudi female students' reticence in oral participation in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom. It examined students' perspectives, beliefs, and prior experiences with reticence in the EFL classroom. The study also examined how teaching strategies and curriculum design impact female EFL students at a Saudi Arabian university. The study examined the relationship between educational pedagogy and curriculum and students' understandings, views, and experiences of oral engagement. While previous research has looked closely at language proficiency and classroom dynamics, it has frequently ignored the complex ways that sociocultural and educational factors influence oral participation among Saudi EFL students. By concentrating on the distinct experiences and difficulties faced by Saudi female students, this study aimed to close this gap and provide insight into sociocultural factors that affect their oral participation. By investigating the intersections of cultural habitus, gender dynamics, pedagogical practices, and curriculum, this thesis sheds significant light on how these components interact to influence the oral participation of female Saudi students in EFL classes. It has also highlighted the need for pedagogically and culturally relevant teaching methods that can increase students' engagement and participation in the Saudi context.

This study is important because it highlights the complexities involved in oral engagement in English, particularly in relation to students' beliefs, teacher practices, and the classroom setting. This research draws attention to the particular opportunities and problems within the Saudi Arabian educational setting, where English is

becoming more and more crucial for global communication and personal growth, and compares these findings with previous studies. In order to create a more encouraging, and successful language learning environment that meets learners' affective demands, an examination of present teaching approaches and curriculum design is needed.

This chapter offers a summary of the major findings, bringing together an analysis of student questionnaires and teacher and student interviews in responding to the study's two sub-questions and the overarching research question of this thesis. Informed by this analysis, a discussion of the study's key propositions is presented that provides critical insights into the research literature and theoretical foundations pertaining to Bourdieu's theory of social practice (1977, 1990, 1991) drawing on his concepts of habitus, capital, and field, along with Foucault's (1975) theories on power, discourse, agency, and subjectivity. The study's theoretical discoveries are explored, opening the door for further investigations into language learning in EFL settings.

Also discussed is the methodology that underpins this study, offering critical reflections on the research process. Recommendations for stakeholders in the Saudi Arabian education sector are provided, taking into account the implications of the findings for curriculum design, instructional practices, and educational policy. Finally, the implications for future research and suggestions for improving EFL teaching and learning practices for Saudi educational stakeholders are provided and the limitations of the study are highlighted.

Summary of Chapters

In this section, the Saudi EFL environment is concisely described with particular attention to personal and scholarly reflections on the difficulties female Saudi students encounter when participating orally. It draws attention to the ways in which social, educational, and gender-specific variables interact to shape students' reluctance in Saudi context.

Chapter 1 provided an overview of the complexity of teaching the English language in Saudi Arabia. It looked critically at several topics, including the education system, the particular difficulties in teaching and learning English, and the wider sociocultural elements affecting students' reticence to participate orally. The aim of the study was to define and understand the root causes of reticence, and the influence of curriculum and pedagogy on students' oral participation. The chapter discussed the globalisation of English, including the implications for politics, culture, and the economy, and how such factors have affected the perception of English and its use around the world. It also looked at how English is used as a lingua franca in a variety of professions and how important it is in Saudi Arabia, especially in light of Vision 2030 and the government's emphasis on improving English language proficiency to increase job opportunities and competitiveness in the global market. The chapter explored the problem of students' reticence in EFL classrooms, emphasising the value of students' participation in the classroom for language learning and academic success. The significance of the research was underlined, along with its possible advantages for many stakeholders involved in Saudi Arabian education, such as EFL students, educators, and universities. A final discussion of the women's movement and gender equity in the context of this study shed light on how Arab societies, including Saudi Arabia, have been impacted by the feminist movement.

In Chapter 2, the research literature was critically examined, with an emphasis on how it directly relates to and helps to comprehend the issue of students' reticence. The chapter evaluated the English language curriculum in Saudi Arabia, and reviewed studies that have explored oral proficiency and communicative competence practices and methodologies. This chapter discussed the notion of communicative competence, focusing on how students should acquire sociolinguistic, grammatical, discourse, and strategic competencies in addition to language proficiency. It drew attention to the differences between communicative language teaching objectives and traditional teaching approaches that concentrate on memorisation and grammar. The review then explored second language acquisition (SLA), focusing on its sociolinguistic and cognitive components as well as the value of communicative tasks in improving students' oral proficiency and verbal communication. The literature review also included studies that centred on common critical factors affecting students' oral participation; these included anxiety, motivation, confidence, and communication willingness. The chapter explained that traditional teaching methodologies prioritise grammar over practising the language, which limits students' ability to use the language proficiently in everyday scenarios. This is the main reason why efforts aimed at improving communicative competence in Saudi Arabia have not been successful. A disparity exists between the curriculum's emphasis on communicative language teaching (CLT) approaches and the traditional methods that teachers most frequently use in the classroom. In addition, the chapter examined how gender affects language learning, concentrating on female students in the Saudi Arabian setting. It highlighted the particular difficulties experienced by Saudi female students as a result of cultural and societal expectations, and it explored how gender norms and roles affect language learning and oral engagement.

Chapter 3 examined the theoretical foundations of the study, combining the theories of Bourdieu (1977, 1990, 1991) and Foucault (1975). These frameworks provided a comprehensive understanding and a lens through which to view the cultural and social factors affecting student participation. The key concepts of Bourdieu's theory of social practice, with attention to habitus, field, and capital, were deeply discussed in this chapter. Students' cumulative cultural, social, and linguistic capital affects their oral participation. The chapter also looked into how habitus contributes to the exchange of different kinds of capitals, exploring how interactions and experiences in the classroom shape students' habitus, which in turn affects their engagement and participation. Cultural capital affects students' engagement and achievement by bridging the gap between the educational field and established values, attitudes, and competencies. Linguistic capital is especially important in the setting of EFL classes, where language proficiency is crucial.

Foucault's (1975) theory offered insights into the ways in which discourse, power, knowledge, subjectivity, and agency affect individual subjectivities and social realities in relation to reticence and oral participation. Examining how power dynamics in the classroom impact student participation requires a critical eye. Foucault's theory was applied to examine how educational systems and teachers' power can either promote or hinder students' engagement, and to illustrating how interactions between teachers and students influence their oral participation. Understanding the behaviour of these students in the classroom required an awareness and application of Foucault's concept of subjectivity to understand how discourses and societal conventions operate in educational settings to shape female Saudi students' reluctance to participate in the EFL classroom. This went beyond an examination of simple personal preference to profoundly examining student identity.

Participants' societal expectations, which control their expressions and interactions, have a major effect on their reticence; evidence suggests this is embedded in their identities and hinders their oral participation. Their subjectivity, which is always shaped by the power-knowledge relations in their educational and sociocultural context, has a significant impact on how they participate in class. Understanding agency adds another level of insight. It draws attention to the ways in which students' cultural norms affect their decisions and behaviours in the classroom. In the examination of gender equity in the Saudi context, a lens through which to view the complex dynamics at play in educational settings was offered. Findings revealed how women's experiences and opportunities are shaped by societal systems that are predicated on gendered norms and assumptions. This lens offered a critical viewpoint on the obstacles that Saudi female students encounter in the EFL learning context.

In Chapter 4, the research methods and design were discussed, and the chapter described how a mixed-methods approach was used in the study to combine quantitative and qualitative methodologies (questionnaires and interviews). This method enabled a deeper comprehension of the complicated phenomenon of students' reticence. The interpretive/constructivist paradigm that the research is framed within emphasised the subjective nature of reality as experienced by the students. This chapter explained how the questionnaire data were analysed using descriptive statistics and chi-square tests, as well as how thematic analysis, informed by Clarke and Braun (2006), was used to analyse the data from the open-ended questions in the questionnaire and the interview questions. Lastly, the chapter discussed ethical issues, assuring participant confidentiality and conformity to ethical standards. The reflexivity of the researcher was also highlighted in order to emphasise the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity in the research process.

Chapter 5 examined the data gathered through the student questionnaire in order to answer the first research sub-question, which investigated how students in Saudi Arabian EFL classrooms perceive oral participation and how these perceptions affect their disposition towards their participation. The analysis considered the influences that impact on students' oral participation, offering understandings of the participants' opinions regarding their oral engagement. The chapter focused on two primary areas: the students' attitudes towards oral participation, and barriers to oral participation. The chapter highlighted the contradiction between students' beliefs about the importance of oral participation and their actual engagement in the English classroom. The chapter also proposed that although students understood the importance of oral participation in their English language learning, a number of factors, such as low language proficiency, a lack of confidence, teachers' practices, curriculum topics, and a fear of making mistakes, have a substantial impact on their oral participation.

Chapter 6 focused on the findings from the interviews with students and teachers to address the second research sub-question about the influence of the curriculum and pedagogy on students' oral participation. The chapter presented the students' and teachers' reflections on the impact of pedagogy and curriculum on oral participation. The chapter also focused on students' attitudes towards oral participation and the multiple barriers influencing their oral engagement, and how curriculum, pedagogies, and classroom dynamics have a substantial impact on students' oral participation. It is important to note that findings in this chapter also revealed that teachers have a significant influence on whether or not students participate. The chapter also presented findings about the relationship between curriculum design, teaching pedagogies, and students' reticence. Evidence suggests that when students' specific

interests are acknowledged and they are able to use language in real-world contexts, oral engagement is enhanced.

In Chapter 7, the overarching research question was addressed, exploring the variables affecting students' oral engagement in EFL classes. Particular attention was paid to how students view speaking in class and the influence of sociocultural elements such as gender norms. The chapter examined how linguistic habitus, the linguistic market, and capitals such as linguistic, social, and cultural capital influence students' desire to engage orally. Emphasis was placed on students' positive attitude towards the importance of oral participation and students' negative feelings about their own oral participation, and the evident barriers to participation, including students' perception of their English proficiency. The analysis revealed a discrepancy between students' opinions of the value of oral participation and their actual engagement in the classroom, emphasising the impact of gendered norms, confidence, and perceptions of English competence.

Chapter 8 discussed findings pertaining to the impact of curriculum and pedagogy on students' oral participation. Findings were presented through the frames of Bourdieu's theory of social practice (1977, 1990, 1991), further focusing on the concepts of habitus, field, and different forms of capital, Foucault's theoretical frameworks (1975) on discourse, knowledge, and power were also applied. Analysis revealed the complex relationship between curriculum and pedagogy and how this affected students' oral participation. Findings revealed the significance of curriculum relevance, the role of teachers as communicators and facilitators, and the effect of pedagogical practices on student engagement. How these components influence the

dynamics of power, knowledge, and participation in the classroom were also highlighted through the theoretical lenses of Foucault and Bourdieu.

Key Propositions in the Study

In this final conclusion chapter, the overarching questions driving this study and the subsequent study findings about the elements that affect students' oral participation in Saudi Arabian EFL classrooms are presented. The main propositions derived from this research are divided into five important categories: 1) the influence of linguistic capital and habitus; 2) the significance of gender and cultural norms; 3) the effect of curriculum and pedagogy on oral participation; 4) the impact of student–teacher interactions; and 5) the sociocultural influences on learning a language. Each proposition will be presented below. The chapter concludes with recommendations and directions for future research.

Linguistic Capital and Habitus

The study highlights the important role of linguistic capital and habitus in students' oral participation in EFL classes in Saudi Arabia. The study indicates that linguistic capital directly impacts students' capacity and willingness to speak up. The findings revealed that students with high levels of linguistic capital, as identified by previous knowledge or study of English, expressed more confidence and were more positive about oral participation. Moreover, a major finding of this study is that students' attitudes regarding oral engagement reflect their habitus, which has a significant impact on their participation and on their dispositions towards oral engagement. The study showed that, depending on perception of the value of English, cultural norms, and previous experiences, students' habitus may enhance or hinder their oral engagement. The questionnaire findings revealed that English is valued as a major

means for international communication as well as a way to advance academically and socially, which encourages students to further improve the linguistic capital they possess. Linguistic capital is accumulated, as students understand the symbolic capital of English as a global language. In order to make English learning more relevant and meaningful to students' personal and cultural contexts, an approach that also concentrates on informing and possibly influences students' habitus by integrating their sociocultural identities, such as personal experiences, with the learning process is important. This requires taking into account the varied backgrounds of Saudi students—for example, their educational experiences and different levels of English exposure—and putting culturally relevant teaching methods into practice in order to positively affect students' attitudes and dispositions towards learning English.

The Significance of Gender and Cultural Norms

In Saudi Arabian EFL classes, gender and cultural norms are significant. Gendered habitus and embedded cultural norms play a major role in influencing students' participation and engagement. This study sheds light on how Saudi society's norms and typical gender roles affect female students' confidence and willingness to speak up. It revealed that sociocultural restrictions tend to cause a lack of confidence in female students and make them more reluctant to participate orally. The patriarchal foundations of Saudi society encourage a gendered habitus that tends to be passive, quiet, shy, and reticent, and this has a significant impact on how female students interact with one another in the classroom. This reflects Saudi society's patriarchal system, which encourages female students to be reserved and modest when speaking in public, and which in turn affects their participation and engagement in the classroom. Thus, their learning and engagement relations are impacted by the adopted view that being reserved is a virtue, which affects their desire to participate orally.

This situation emphasises the necessity for instructional practices that actively seek to remove these obstacles in addition to recognising their existence, creating an atmosphere where female students feel empowered to speak freely and confidently.

Reforms in education that support gender equality and cultural awareness are therefore necessary, and they can be incorporated into curriculum design and teaching practices to enhance students' engagement and learning outcomes in Saudi EFL classes. By highlighting the relationship between sociocultural influences, policy, and practice, highlights the importance of the proposition that gender and cultural norms are significant for EFL learning. Therefore, culturally responsive pedagogies that take into account gender equity offer new perspectives on the EFL field in Saudi Arabia (SA). This proposition highlights the crucial need for gender- and culture-responsive pedagogies in SA's EFL field. It serves as an example of how societal and cultural norms can be understood and used in teaching strategies to improve the learning experiences of students. By bringing educational techniques into line with students' sociocultural realities, this method fosters a more efficient and fair language learning process.

The Effect of Curriculum and Pedagogy on Oral Participation

Pedagogical approaches and curriculum used in EFL classrooms in SA have a major impact on students' oral participation. When the curriculum is adapted to the interests and language proficiency levels of the students, engagement and motivation are significantly increased. Adopting innovative teaching strategies that differ from traditional approaches by combining interactive, communicative techniques is essential to increase students' language proficiency and level of engagement. These approaches show how to use English in real-world situations, which aligns with Saudi

educational objectives that emphasise the need to modify teaching to meet students' requirements. These pedagogical and curriculum changes highlight the significant influence of societal values on language teaching and learning and offer new perspectives on the EFL educational environment in Saudi Arabia. Such changes emphasise the importance of having procedures and regulations that take into account the particular social and cultural context of Saudi students. The results of this study's questionnaire and interviews suggest that, in order to reflect students' sociocultural identities in curriculum design and pedagogical approaches, it is necessary to include real-life situations specific to the Saudi experience in the EFL learning environment. This method promotes the inclusion of examples and content that are authentic and culturally relevant to the Saudi context and correspond with the experiences of the students. This will increase student engagement and promote an increased awareness of language and culture.

Student–Teacher Interactions

The study highlights the critical role that strong teacher–student interactions have in EFL classrooms in SA, highlighting the ways in which these interactions have a major impact on oral participation. The study explains the complex relations that exist between teachers and students, showing how these interactions, which are shaped by the teachers' social, cultural, and educational backgrounds, directly impact students' oral participation. The relationship between oral participation effectiveness and the nature of student–teacher interactions is a significant finding from this study. Findings showed that when students' confidence increased they were more motivated to actively participate. This, combined with positive and helpful interactions characterised by open communication, encouragement, and constructive feedback, also facilitated actual participation. These types of interactions are likely to mitigate

students' reticence linked to interactions characterised by a lack of support, constructive criticism, and dismissive teacher attitudes towards mistakes.

The study also emphasises the need for teachers to use a variety of pedagogical strategies to encourage students' participation. It revealed that pedagogies that encourage students to participate enhance students' willingness to speak up. In addition, activities like the "Little Teacher Activity" and "Wheel of Names," discussed previously encourage students' autonomy as well as provide the basis for a method that promotes meaningful post-response correction. Based on the students' comments, such approaches create more inclusive and engaging learning environment. Teachers insisted on the importance of methods that use multimedia tools, and encouraging discussions, integrating real-world experiences into curriculum content, and implementing student-centred teaching approaches that place a priority on the practical application of language skills for raising student participation and engagement. These teaching strategies not only involve students in the learning process but also foster a more inclusive learning environment that is representative of the linguistic and cultural variety of the student population. Analysis of the students' and teachers' perspectives revealed that employing more sympathetic, culturally aware, and adaptable teaching practices is necessary to promote successful student-teacher relationships. The goal of these approaches should be to establish a supportive classroom where students' distinctive perspectives are recognised and encouraged and mistakes are viewed as teaching opportunities.

Sociocultural Influences on Learning a Language

Finally, the study highlights how important it is for Saudi SLA teachers to use culturally responsive teaching strategies. Such an approach empowers students to take

an active role in their education by taking into account their various educational experiences, linguistic proficiency, and sense of agency. The study emphasises the significant and complex influence of sociocultural factors on language learning. It showed that the curriculum and pedagogies that align with students' experiences, interests, and sociocultural backgrounds have an important effect on their oral participation. A curriculum that includes authentic and relevant content that is in line with students' habitus improves motivation and promotes deeper engagement in language learning.

Each of these propositions enhances the understanding of the complicated interactions among educational, social, and other factors that affect students' oral participation in EFL classes in Saudi Arabia. They provide insightful information for researchers, EFL teachers, and policymakers seeking to improve language learning experiences. This is discussed in greater detail in the later section of this chapter exploring the implications of this study.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this study is the nature of the participant sample. The research sample included a particular group of students in a particular context and region, which may restrict the generalisability of the results as it does not reflect the varied experiences of all students in EFL classes. Moreover, the number of teachers included (only five) is considered a small sample size. This restriction is significant, since the study's conclusions would have been enhanced by a more balanced sampling of teachers and students. More teachers may have provided a wider range of pedagogical experiences and ideas, perhaps resulting in a deeper knowledge of the reticence phenomenon in relation to teaching practices. Another limitation of the

study is its design. Perhaps more evenly matching data collection by using a questionnaire and interviews for both teachers and students would have strengthened the information gathered.

The lack of classroom observation is another limitation of this study. The inclusion of observational data would have offered rich insights into the actual environment of the classroom, including nonverbal signals, and interactions between teachers and students. A more comprehensive knowledge of how curriculum and pedagogy appear in practice and how they directly affect students' oral participation might been achieved by the use of classroom observations to examine these issues more extensively.

Another limitation was that there was limited time for data collection. The study involved students in the preparatory year, which is short timeframe; it may not have taken into consideration long-term changes in the attitudes, confidence, and language proficiency of the participants over the course of their university studies. A longitudinal study could offer a more thorough picture of how changes in educational efforts affect oral engagement over time. In addition, data collection could have included a range of students at different levels of their university studies. This would have enabled some insights into changing student perspectives on oral engagement as they progress through their EFL studies.

Finally, the study was limited in its focus on female students and teachers; the experiences and viewpoints of male teachers and students in EFL classes were not included due to the segregation required in Saudi classrooms. Although the cultural background of segregated education is acknowledged, this exclusion limits the comprehension of gender dynamics in language learning. . Because of this

segregation, there is little opportunity to collect gender-specific data which restrict understanding of the complex relationships within women only classes. Future studies should investigate how to incorporate male viewpoints within the limitations imposed by culture, providing a more thorough understanding of across gender EFL teaching in Saudi Arabia. Although results from the gender-specific approach used in this study might be more appropriate to the experiences of women, they might not accurately reflect the variety of factors that would arise in a classroom with more gender-diverse students. Including male perspectives could improve the comprehension of EFL teaching and learning strategies in gender-diverse contexts.

Implications of the Study

The results of this study shed light on how to improve EFL teaching in Saudi Arabia looking forward, especially in meeting the special needs of female students in regard to factors such as English proficiency, confidence, shyness, and curriculum topic relevance. These insights provide the framework for identifying focused implications in three important fields: policy, curriculum, and pedagogy and practice. All of these areas are essential to creating an EFL learning environment that is more effective and that is in line with Saudi Arabia's broader educational changes and objectives.

Implications for Policy

In order to improve oral participation in EFL classrooms among Saudi students, policymakers should prioritise the development of educational frameworks that support cultural and gender diversity and linguistic variety. Educational policies should require an integration of CLT methodologies across the curriculum in order to promote oral participation. Policies might recommend creating norms and regulations that ensure that classrooms have the resources and settings needed to

encourage speaking opportunities. Additionally, policies could support assessment methods that recognise and promote oral engagement, motivating teachers to give priority to speaking exercises in their pedagogies, and recognising that more professional learning for teachers is needed.

Promoting a curriculum that is not only adaptable but also aware of the cultural and gender backgrounds, interests, and real-world applications of language learning is part of a comprehensive strategy. Making professional development courses for teachers a priority is essential to this effort. The aim of these programs should be to give teachers the resources they need to engage students in gender-appropriate and culturally appropriate methods while taking into account the particular sociocultural dynamics of the Saudi educational environment. Furthermore, it is crucial to emphasise oral language proficiency as a crucial aspect of language competence. Policies should emphasise the value of oral proficiency and support teaching strategies that provide students with the confidence and motivation to participate orally in their language learning process. The aim is to change Saudi Arabia's EFL learners' educational experience into one that is more inclusive, interesting, and supportive of both linguistic and personal development through such coordinated policy efforts.

Implications for Curriculum

Saudi EFL universities' curriculum needs to change from operating as a traditional framework for teaching languages to working as an essential instrument for connecting students' gender and personal experiences to their academic goals. This demands the inclusion of interesting conversations, resources that are appropriate for the students' everyday experiences and activities that strengthen the students'

connection to the English language while also reflecting their interests. A student-centred curriculum that acknowledges and values gender among Saudi EFL students improves the learning process. Students' engagement is restricted when the curriculum focuses only on academic English topics that do not also consider everyday English literacies. However, open, and inclusive topics would allow students to express and explore their viewpoints and think critically within a global context. By making connections between students' language learning and their experiences, this type of program would actively engage students. The goal is to provide a dynamic, inclusive curriculum that helps students realise the importance of their own experiences in their language learning journey and that develops a sense of the language acquisition process having personal significance. This type of curriculum reform emphasises the need to create a learning environment that is aware of the various backgrounds of students, and which includes culturally relevant and authentic literature, ensuring that each individual feels inspired to achieve English language proficiency because it is purposeful. Lastly, the curriculum should be created with an understanding of the gap that currently exists between the activities that are required for oral participation and how they are applied, to give teachers clear guidance on how to create a classroom atmosphere that values students' interests and language abilities. Giving students and teachers the freedom to choose their own curriculum means incorporating their objectives, experiences, and interests into the teaching process, thus making the material more interesting and relevant and purposeful to them.

Implications for Pedagogy and Practice

The implications of this study for pedagogy and practice for EFL classrooms in Saudi Arabia centre on the use of a teaching technique that are student-centred,

transformative, and culturally responsive. This pedagogy would enhance a critical analysis of societal norms, including gender roles, and would utilise English as a medium for exploring worldwide viewpoints. It would create an environment in the classroom where learning a language involves more than just being fluent; it involves understanding and challenging the world, leading to a deeper, more meaningful educational experience that is adapted to the sociocultural realities of Saudi students. Such a change in perspective would require teachers to replace traditional, academic teaching methods with more dynamic, interactive approaches that promote student engagement and oral participation. It is suggested that teachers recognise their roles as learning facilitators and that they support students in conversations, role-plays, and group projects that are authentic and culturally relevant for the Saudi context. The study's findings show that teaching pedagogies that enhance language competence and confidence are needed. Such strategies emphasise the value of early foundational language learning and a supportive learning environment in promoting active engagement. The implications for pedagogy and practice include the need for teachers to have access to training sessions and programs that provide them with the technologies, resources and tools they need to deal with students' reticence and create an atmosphere that encourages oral engagement. Teacher preparation programs must place a high priority on cultural sensitivity, gender-inclusive pedagogies, and the incorporation of poststructural and critical theories into teaching strategies in order to address Saudi Arabia's specific sociocultural context.

Implications for Future Research

The findings of this study indicate several gaps in the current research on Saudi female students' oral participation in English as Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms.

These gaps suggest areas for future exploration, particularly in relation to the intersection of gender, culture, and education in Saudi Arabia.

There is a need for more in-depth research that focuses specifically on the experiences of female Saudi students in EFL contexts. Future studies should explore how cultural norms, societal expectations, and gender roles influence their willingness and ability to participate orally in the classroom. Such research could provide a more nuanced understanding of how these factors shape female students' experiences compared to their male counterparts or the general student population. It would be valuable to investigate how gender segregation in Saudi classrooms affects female students' oral participation. This research should specifically examine how gendered constraints, such as societal norms surrounding modesty, reserve, and public speaking, impact engagement in language learning. Findings could inform educational reforms that aim to address these gendered barriers in language classrooms.

A second area of research would be an exploration of how cultural habitus, as outlined by Bourdieu, interacts with oral participation in the EFL context. Studies could investigate how deeply ingrained cultural practices around gender, communication, and modesty influence Saudi women's participation in classroom discussions and language use. This would offer valuable insights into how gendered experiences impact learning behaviours and language acquisition.

There is also a need for longitudinal studies on gender and oral participation. A longer-term study could monitor changes in confidence, language ability, and social attitudes as well as how oral participation varies over time for female Saudi students. This would provide deeper insights into the ways that social and educational reforms affect female students' participation in language learning.

This study alludes to the crucial need to explore how pedagogical approaches, particularly in Saudi EFL contexts, can better account for the intersection of gender, culture, and language learning habitus. Further research could examine how habitus evolves in learners with repeated exposure to interactive and communicative teaching methods, such as CLT, and how this evolution impacts oral proficiency over time. Moreover, understanding the role of gendered habitus in shaping language learning experiences could provide valuable insights for creating more inclusive and responsive educational environments.

Research should also focus on how gendered habitus and sociocultural factors influence the adaptation of CLT in Saudi classrooms, offering insights into better aligning pedagogical approaches with students' realities. Recommendations include teaching teachers how to deal with the complexity of habitus in varied classroom contexts and supporting the gradual incorporation of communicative methods that adhere to current cultural norms. In practice, the study encourages an innovative teaching strategy that combines CLT with traditional methods to build students' oral participation confidence while acknowledging the sociocultural obstacles they encounter.

For future research and publications, it is important to consider the cultural, social, and religious dynamics that uniquely shape the experiences of Saudi female students. While the interview findings effectively highlight key enablers and barriers to oral participation, a richer understanding could be gained by integrating broader sociological factors that influence these students' participation, particularly within the context of gender in Saudi Arabia. This approach would offer a more nuanced and

culturally informed interpretation of the data, allowing for a deeper understanding of the barriers and motivations behind female students' oral participation in EFL classrooms.

Recommendations

It is advised that teachers in Saudi Arabia engage in thorough training in CLT and other pedagogies that emphasise oral proficiency and student engagement in order to improve oral participation in EFL settings. The goal of this type of training should be to provide teachers with the means to create classes that are rich in speaking exercises, using real-world resources to imitate discussions that they may experience in the real world.

Additionally, educational institutions need to be encouraged to develop extracurricular programs like language courses on public speaking, and cross-cultural exchanges. By providing opportunities for students to enhance their oral English skills outside of the traditional classroom, these programs aim to promote a more comprehensive approach to language learning. Furthermore, promoting a collaborative culture between teachers and students during the curriculum creation phase can greatly improve the learning material's relevance and engagement. This cooperative approach aims to push students to participate more confidently and actively in their language learning process by combining innovative evaluation techniques that enhance oral participation. Students may be involved in creating and developing these evaluative techniques. Lastly, there is a need for curriculum designers, teachers, and policymakers to work together to create classroom environments that prioritise students' development as confident, culturally responsive people, in addition to developing language proficiency. Acknowledging and

addressing the particular difficulties Saudi female EFL students confront with such planned and well-informed approaches promises to change their learning into a more empowering experience that will enhance their oral engagement and lead to more extensive academic success.

Future studies and publications:

In the context of my future publications, I intend to explore specific aspects of the Saudi EFL classroom, focusing on gender, culture, and oral participation. These directions will address gaps in the current literature and refine existing findings from this study. Here are several areas I plan to explore:

Future publications will delve deeper into how gender-specific barriers, such as segregation and cultural expectations, shape the oral participation of female students in Saudi EFL classrooms. This includes examining how societal norms around modesty and public speaking affect engagement and how educational reforms can help reduce these barriers.

I will continue to investigate how culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) and communicative language teaching (CLT) can be adapted to Saudi classrooms by incorporating local cultural contexts and addressing students' real-life experiences. CRP aligns the curriculum with Saudi students' sociocultural realities, making the content more relatable, which encourages engagement and oral participation. This method acknowledges gender norms and provides a supportive environment, particularly for female students who may feel hesitant to speak. CLT, focusing on real-world communication, can help overcome traditional rote-learning approaches still common in Saudi classrooms. Teachers can incorporate group work, discussions, and real-life scenarios into lessons, providing students opportunities for meaningful

communication. Finally, integrating student interests into lessons aligns with CRP, motivating students to actively engage. This, along with CLT's focus on practical language use, fosters more effective English learning in Saudi Arabia.

While this thesis did not focus on gender equity, more studies need to be done around the equity of gender issue and cultural awareness in relationship to the curriculum and pedagogy in the Saudi EFL context. This includes investigating how these elements can influence students' oral participation, addressing societal and gender norms that impact engagement. More studies that investigate the application of culturally responsive pedagogical approaches will inform policy and practice and lead to the creation of inclusive, equitable and engaging learning environments for all students. This focus can help shape a more modernized and adaptable EFL curriculum aligned with global educational standards. Gender equity and cultural awareness can be integrated into curriculum design. This would involve examining how gendered constraints on participation are reflected in current curriculum and how adjustments can be made to create a more inclusive and engaging learning environment.

I aim to contribute to discussions on how CLT can be adapted to better meet the cultural and educational needs of Saudi students, especially female learners. Future publications will focus on how to blend CLT with other pedagogical approaches that are more suited to local realities. This will include identifying strategies to encourage oral participation in a manner that respects and incorporates the sociocultural norms of Saudi classrooms.

The current structure of the thesis presents the findings within well-defined themes, for future publications, I will consider refining the use of subheadings to emphasize key findings more explicitly and enhance the overall readability of the results.

While this study recommends that teachers in SA undergo thorough training in CLT, it is important to recognize the critiques and limitations of this approach, as discussed in chapter 2. CLT may not always align with the cultural and educational contexts of Saudi EFL classrooms. The prescriptive nature of CLT can sometimes overlook structural and cultural barriers, such as gender norms and rigid curriculum, which are prominent in the Saudi educational setting. Therefore, teachers must be equipped with critical pedagogical strategies that go beyond the traditional CLT framework. This involves adapting CLT in ways that address local challenges, such as integrating more culturally responsive pedagogies and practices that acknowledge the unique needs of Saudi students, particularly female learners. Furthermore, future research and teacher development should aim to explore how CLT can be modified or supplemented with other approaches to better support oral participation, confidence, and overall language proficiency in culturally sensitive ways.

In summary, my future studies will focus on expanding upon the findings of this research by addressing the intersections of gender, culture, and pedagogy. These studies aim to provide insights into how Saudi EFL classrooms can be adapted to support greater oral participation and engagement from female students, particularly within the context of culturally responsive and inclusive pedagogies.

Reflections on Becoming a Researcher

Reflecting on my experience as a novice researcher, I can say that I experienced many obstacles, all of which had a significant impact on how I understood and conducted the research. The process of conducting the research was extremely complex. As I worked on this thesis, I had difficulty in representing participants' different viewpoints and experiences appropriately. This was a challenging task since it required finding a balance between the consistency of the study's main themes and the richness of each participant's comments. My involvement in this academic study forced me into an area of complex understanding, demanding the development of a more sophisticated analytical skill set. As a result of this study, I have been able to critically evaluate educational phenomena and apply findings in real-world contexts within the EFL environment. This has helped me to develop as a researcher. My capacity to apply rigorous methodological standards and engage in deep critical thinking, two crucial skills, has improved greatly as a result of this experience.

A major challenge in becoming a researcher was dealing with my subjectivity and reflexivity within the context of the theoretical framework that informed this study. In my role as a researcher, I had to continually evaluate my personal assumptions and biases against the requirement to preserve the accuracy of the data and the reliability of the participant viewpoints. The participants' unique experiences created a tapestry of data, which required me to locate my subjectivity as a researcher and critically reflect on my role as a researcher in approaching my participants with care and respect. Moreover, during the research process, language and representation became significant topics. Another level of complication was introduced by working bilingually, particularly when transferring data while maintaining its language integrity. The necessity for sophisticated research techniques that can cross

linguistic barriers while preserving the meaning of the participants' stories was highlighted by this bilingual aspect of the study.

The research also broadened the theoretical frameworks related to EFL, particularly in the Saudi context, which not only challenged me but also improved my understanding of the complex sociocultural variables affecting language acquisition. It revealed previously undiscovered facets of the sociocultural dynamics relevant to EFL in Saudi Arabia, such as the significance of gender roles, cultural norms, and educational practices, and how complex language acquisition is in Saudi Arabia and how it affects the development of EFL curriculum and policies.

My identity as a researcher has been shaped by this research journey, which was transformational. It sharpened my ability to navigate the complexity that comes with educational research, especially in the area of EFL, and enhanced my awareness of the multiple dimensions of educational phenomena. This experience, with all of its highs and lows, has permanently changed the way I approach research and how I perceive the state of education, giving me a greater understanding of the complex opportunities and challenges that characterise the field of EFL education.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has offered an investigation of the factors affecting Saudi students' oral participation in EFL classrooms. By combining the experiences of students and teachers, and applying theoretical insights from Bourdieu and Foucault, this research has exposed the complicated interaction of dispositions, language proficiency, gender dynamics, and classroom practices.

According to this study, students' oral participation is significantly influenced by a number of obstacles, such as their perceptions of their own language proficiency, confidence and shyness, student–teacher interaction, and classroom dynamics, all of these factors frequently prevent them from actively participating. By examining how sociocultural elements like gender norms and classroom dynamics affect students' willingness towards and capacity for oral participation, this study fills the gaps in the literature on language learning in EFL situations, particularly in the Saudi Arabian context where there is a significant lack of research in this field. The study emphasises how important habitus, field, and capital are in determining EFL experiences and outcomes in Saudi Arabia. These factors are further enhanced by an awareness of power, gender, subjectivity, and agency. Given the absence of research conducted in Saudi Arabia, this sophisticated analysis is especially important, highlighting the study's importance in advancing the understanding of how sociocultural factors impact Saudi EFL classes.

The study offers insights into the experiences of Saudi teachers and students at local higher education institutions and suggests useful areas for future research and it provides practical suggestions for improving language teaching in Saudi Arabia, in the fields of policy, curriculum, and pedagogy and practice. It emphasises the necessity of teaching methods that recognise and address the complex relationships between sociocultural components, offering recommendations for enhancing EFL instruction in environments like Saudi Arabia.

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Appendices



Appendix A

Flyer Invitation (Dean)

**Invitation for participating in a research project in Saudi Female Students'
Reticence to Participate Orally in the English Classroom**

Dear Dr. Alsarrani,

This is a study conducted by Faten Alabasi, PhD candidate under the supervision of Dr. Christine Jones Diaz and Dr. Jacqueline D'Warte in the School of Education at Western Sydney University in Australia. I am requesting your permission to collect the data from the Preparatory year at the university. The study will include participation from both lecturers and students. This research project will explore causes and barriers that confront Saudi female students in the English classroom and the influence of curriculum, pedagogical practice and students' oral participation in the classroom.

Lecturers and students are invited to participate in a questionnaire, classroom observations and individual interviews designed to understand the barriers that may affect the English language learning process. The questionnaire explores the causes of students' reticence to engage in L2 classroom discussions and students' perceptions of the importance of oral participation. The observations of the both the students and teachers will be take place after the completion of the questionnaire; it aims to observe them during regular lessons. Individual interviews will be conducted with lecturers and students to investigate perceptions of learning and teaching approaches that may enhance communicative interaction in the English classroom and examine the impact of practice and pedagogy on students' oral participation and engagement.

Your permission for me to conduct this research at Taibah University will provide valuable insights and will be used to support the Saudi Ministry of Education in their plans to improve English language learning and teaching through the provision of pedagogical recommendations that foster the learning process for the English

language and overcome issues and barriers related to students' passivity and oral participation. It will also add valuable knowledge to the field of teaching English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia.

Kind Regards,

Faten Alabasi

19227492@student.westernsydney.edu.au



Appendix B

Flyer Invitation (Students)

Invitation for participating in a research project in Saudi Female Students' Reticence to Participate Orally in the English Classroom

Dear Students,

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Faten Alabasi, PhD candidate under the supervision of Dr. Christine Jones Diaz and Dr. Jacqueline D'Warte in the School of Education at Western Sydney University in Australia. This research project will explore causes and barriers that confront Saudi female students in English classroom and the influence of curriculum, lecturers practice and pedagogy on students' oral participation. The study is beneficial to students learning English a foreign language and the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia.

As a student learning English as a foreign language, you are invited to participate in questionnaire, classroom observations and individual interviews designed to understand barriers that may affect the English language learning process and consider approaches to overcome these barriers based on students' perspectives. The questionnaire explores the causes of students' reticence to engage in L2 classroom discussions and students' perceptions of the importance of oral participation. The observations will be take place after the questionnaire; it aims to observe students during regular lessons. Individual interviews will be conducted to investigate perceptions of learning and teaching approaches that may enhance communicative interaction in the English classroom and examine the impact of practice and pedagogy on students' oral participation and engagement.

Your participation will provide valuable insights to my research and will be used to support the Saudi Ministry of Education in their plans to improve English language learning and teaching through the provision of pedagogical recommendations that foster the learning process for the English language and overcome issues and barriers

related to students' passivity and oral participation. It will also add valuable knowledge to the field of teaching English as a foreign language.

If you are interested, please read the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form for further information.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss the research further before deciding whether or not to participate do not hesitate to ask me please.

Kind Regards,

Faten Alabasi

19227492@student.westernsydney.edu.au



Appendix C

Flyer Invitation (Teachers)

Invitation for participating in a research project in Saudi Female Students' Reticence to Participate Orally in the English Classroom

Dear Teachers,

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Faten Alabasi, PhD candidate under the supervision of Dr. Christine Jones Diaz and Dr. Jacqueline D'Warte in the School of Education at Western Sydney University in Australia. This research project will explore causes and barriers that confront Saudi female students in English classroom and the influence of curriculum, lecturers practice and pedagogy on students' oral participation. The study is beneficial to students learning English a foreign language and the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia.

As a lecturer teaching English as a foreign language, you are invited to participate in the study. There will be classroom observations and individual interviews designed to understand barriers that may affect the English language learning process and consider approaches to overcome these barriers based on lecturers' perspectives. The observations will be take place during regular lessons. Individual interviews will be conducted to investigate perceptions of learning and teaching approaches that may enhance communicative interaction in the English classroom and examine the impact of practice and pedagogy on students' oral participation and engagement.

Your participation will provide valuable insights to my research and will be used to support the Saudi Ministry of Education in their plans to improve English language learning and teaching through the provision of pedagogical recommendations that foster the learning process for the English language and overcome issues and barriers related to students' passivity and oral participation. It will also add valuable knowledge to the field of teaching English as a foreign language.

If you are interested, please read the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form for further information.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss the research further before deciding whether or not to participate do not hesitate to ask me please.

Kind Regards,

Faten Alabasi

19227492@student.westernsydney.edu.au



Appendix D

Participant Information Sheet – General (Extended)

(Students – Questionnaire)

Project Title: Saudi Female Students' Reticence to Participate Orally in the English Classroom

Project Summary: You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Faten Alabasi (PhD candidate) in the School of Education at Western Sydney University under the Supervision of Dr. Christine Jones Diaz and Jacqueline D'Warte. The research aims to investigate how curriculum and pedagogy influences female students disposition of passivity and reticence, through the examination of lecturers' and students' engagement in the English language classroom; and how classroom pedagogy and practice influence students' oral participation. Saudi female students and lecturers will participate in this study. The researcher methods will involve questionnaire and interviews.

How is the study being paid for? This study is sponsored by Northern Borders University in Saudi Arabia which has provided funding for a PhD scholarship.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to participate in this study through completing a questionnaire. You will be asked to complete questions based on demographic information, perspectives, motivation and your experience of speaking in the English learning classroom. You will be asked about the causes of students' reticence in participating in English language discussions. The questionnaire there will not be any assessment or grades for participating in the study and they are not judged or evaluated by the researcher, nor by their lecturer. will include open-ended questions divided into four sections: demographic information, self-assessment questions seek to evaluate the your knowledge of English and rate your proficiency level in the English skills, factors that affect your participation and strategies that could help overcoming reluctance and passivity.

How much of my time will I need to give?

The questionnaire, will take about 10-15 minutes.

What benefits will I, and/or the broader community, receive for participating?

The study is beneficial to English as a foreign language learners and the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia. The research findings aim to offer new knowledge about barriers that may affect the English language learning process and consider approaches to overcome these barriers based on students' and lecturers' perspectives. The findings will uncover the issue and barriers to oral participation in this context and this may inform second language learning education sector and offer pedagogical recommendations for English language learning.

Will the study involve any risk or discomfort for me? If so, what will be done to rectify it?

This study will unlikely involve any risk or discomfort for you. The researcher will refrain from discussing any sensitive or cultural topics that may cause any discomfort during the questionnaire and the interview. There will not be any assessment or grades for participating in the study and you are not judged or evaluated by the researcher, nor by their lecturer. However, if you do start to feel uncomfortable at any stage of the study, you will be free to take a break or terminate the interview without any consequences or you will be referred to Western Sydney University counselling service or Counselling services at your current university.

How do you intend to publish or disseminate the results?

The results of this research project will be published and/or presented in a variety of forums. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that the participant cannot be identified, except with your permission. No identifiable information concerning you will be made public in any way. All your personal details will be kept confidential and your anonymity will be protected.

Will the data and information that I have provided be disposed of?

Please be assured that only the researchers will have access to the raw data you provide. However, your data may be used in other related projects such as, disciplinary journals or books, including non-refereed publications, web pages, and other media and digital repositories, for an extended period of time but no information about you will be used in anyway that reveals your identity. All collected data will be solely used for the research purpose and deleted after the end of the study. The participants' personal information will not be disclosed or used as part of the analysis or results of the study. The names will be coded throughout the analysis section of the study.

Can I withdraw from the study?

Participation is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged to be involved. If you do participate you can withdraw at any time without giving reason and without any negative consequences. If you do choose to withdraw, any information that you have supplied will be deleted and discarded immediately and will not be included in any

subsequent analysis. Please note that participation or non-participation in this study will have no bearing on your marks or grades for any courses you are enrolled in.

What if I require further information?

For any further information and if you wish to discuss the research further before deciding whether or not to participate do not hesitate to call Faten Alabasi at this mobile number +966504367331 or email her at:
19227492@student.westernsydney.edu.au

OR You can contact the supervisors of this project Dr Christine Jones Diaz at c.jonesdiaz@westernsydney.edu.au or phone: +61 29772 6431, or Dr Jacqueline D'Warte at j.d'warte@westernsydney.edu.au or phone: +6129772 6454

What if I have a complaint?

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form. The information sheet is for you to keep and the consent form is retained by the researcher.



Appendix E

Participant Information Sheet – General (Extended)

(Students – Interviews)

Project Title: Saudi Female Students' Reticence to Participate Orally in the English Classroom

Project Summary: You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Faten Alabasi (PhD candidate) in the School of Education at Western Sydney University under the Supervision of Dr. Christine Jones Diaz and Jacqueline D'Warte. The research aims to investigate how curriculum and pedagogy influences female students disposition of passivity and reticence, through the examination of lecturers' and students' engagement in the English language classroom; and how classroom pedagogy and practice influence students' oral participation. Saudi female students and lecturers will participate in this study. The researcher methods will involve questionnaire and interviews.

How is the study being paid for? This study is sponsored by Northern Borders University in Saudi Arabia which has provided funding for a PhD scholarship.

What will I be asked to do?

You will also be asked to participate in this study through audio-recorded interviews to answer some questions related to students' reticence and participating in English language learning classroom. Interview questions will be divided into five sections, with each having a particular focus. Open-ended questions will be asked to explore your opinion, perception and view; your personality and suggestions or recommendations to improve oral participation in the classroom.

How much of my time will I need to give?

The interview will have duration of 30-40 minutes.

What benefits will I, and/or the broader community, receive for participating?

The study is beneficial to English as a foreign language learners and the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia. The research findings aim to offer new knowledge about barriers that may affect the English language learning process and consider approaches to overcome these barriers based on students' and lecturers' perspectives. The findings will uncover the issue and barriers to oral participation in this context

and this may inform second language learning education sector and offer pedagogical recommendations for English language learning.

Will the study involve any risk or discomfort for me? If so, what will be done to rectify it?

This study will unlikely involve any risk or discomfort for you. The researcher will refrain from discussing any sensitive or cultural topics that may cause any discomfort during the questionnaire and the interview. There will not be any assessment or grades for participating in the study and you are not judged or evaluated by the researcher, nor by their lecturer. However, if you do start to feel uncomfortable at any stage of the study, you will be free to take a break or terminate the interview without any consequences or you will be referred to Western Sydney University counselling service or Counselling services at your current university.

How do you intend to publish or disseminate the results?

The results of this research project will be published and/or presented in a variety of forums. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that the participant cannot be identified, except with your permission. No identifiable information concerning you will be made public in any way. All your personal details will be kept confidential and your anonymity will be protected.

Will the data and information that I have provided be disposed of?

Please be assured that only the researchers will have access to the raw data you provide. However, your data may be used in other related projects such as, disciplinary journals or books, including non-refereed publications, web pages, and other media and digital repositories, for an extended period of time but no information about you will be used in anyway that reveals your identity. All collected data will be solely used for the research purpose and deleted after the end of the study. The participants' personal information will not be disclosed or used as part of the analysis or results of the study. The names will be coded throughout the analysis section of the study.

Can I withdraw from the study?

Participation is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged to be involved. If you do participate you can withdraw at any time without giving reason and without any negative consequences. If you do choose to withdraw, any information that you have supplied will be deleted and discarded immediately and will not be included in any subsequent analysis. Please note that participation or non-participation in this study will have no bearing on your marks or grades for any courses you are enrolled in.

What if I require further information?

For any further information and if you wish to discuss the research further before deciding whether or not to participate do not hesitate to call Faten Alabasi at this

mobile number +966504367331 or email her at:
19227492@student.westernsydney.edu.au

OR You can contact the supervisors of this project Dr Christine Jones Diaz at c.jonesdiaz@westernsydney.edu.au or phone: +61 29772 6431, or Dr Jacqueline D'Warte at j.d'warte@westernsydney.edu.au or phone: +6129772 6454

What if I have a complaint?

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form. The information sheet is for you to keep and the consent form is retained by the researcher.



Appendix F

Participant Information Sheet – General (Extended)

(Teachers – Interview)

Project Title: Saudi Female Students' Reticence to Participate Orally in the English Classroom

Project Summary: You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Faten Alabasi (PhD candidate) in the School of Education at Western Sydney University under the Supervision of Dr. Christine Jones Diaz and Dr Jacqueline D'Warte. The research aims to investigate how curriculum and pedagogy influences female students disposition of passivity and reticence, through the examination of lecturers' and students' engagement in the English language classroom; and how classroom pedagogy and practice influence students' oral participation. Saudi female students and lecturers will participate in this study. The research methods will involve questionnaire and interviews.

How is the study being paid for? This study is sponsored by Northern Borders University in Saudi Arabia which has provided funding for a PhD scholarship.

What will I be asked to do?

You will also be asked to participate in this study through audio-recorded interviews to answer some questions related to students' reticence and participation in the English language-learning classroom. You will be asked to participate in interviews that comprise different sections including your perception and view of students' willingness to speak up and participate, your view about communicative competencies and the teaching strategies you use or would like to use in the classroom, the limitations and constraints that you face, how you manage students' reticence and lack of oral engagement in the classroom. You will also be asked about your strategies that help you to teach; and factors that could influence students' reticence and methods or strategies that you use to encourage them to speak up.

How much of my time will I need to give?

The interview process will take approximately 30-40 minutes.

What benefits will I, and/or the broader community, receive for participating?

The study is beneficial to English as a foreign language learners and the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia. The research findings aim to offer new knowledge about barriers that may affect the English language learning process and consider approaches to overcome these barriers based on students' and lecturers' perspectives. The findings will uncover the issue and barriers to oral participation in this context and this may inform second language learning education sector and offer pedagogical recommendations for English language learning.

Will the study involve any risk or discomfort for me? If so, what will be done to rectify it?

This study will unlikely involve any risk or discomfort for you. The researcher will refrain from discussing any sensitive or cultural topics that may cause any discomfort during the interview. However, if you do start to feel uncomfortable at any stage of the study, you will be free to take a break or terminate the interview without any consequences or you will be referred to Western Sydney University counselling service or Counselling services at your current university.

How do you intend to publish or disseminate the results?

The results of this research project will be published and/or presented in a variety of forums. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that the participant cannot be identified, except with your permission. No identifiable information concerning you will be made public in any way. All your personal details will be kept confidential and your anonymity will be protected.

Will the data and information that I have provided be disposed of?

Please be assured that only the researchers will have access to the raw data you provide. However, your data may be used in other related projects such as, disciplinary journals or books, including non-refereed publications, web pages, and other media and digital repositories, for an extended period of time but no information about you will be used in anyway that reveals your identity. All collected data will be solely used for the research purpose and deleted after the end of the study. The participants' personal information will not be disclosed or used as part of the analysis or results of the study. The names will be coded throughout the analysis section of the study.

Can I withdraw from the study?

Participation is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged to be involved. If you do participate you can withdraw at any time without giving reason and without any negative consequences. If you do choose to withdraw during or after the interview, any information that you have supplied will be deleted and discarded immediately and will not be included in any subsequent analysis.

What if I require further information?

For any further information and if you wish to discuss the research further before deciding whether or not to participate do not hesitate to call Faten Alabasi at this mobile number +966504367331 or email her at: 19227492@student.westernsydney.edu.au

OR You can contact the supervisors of this project Dr Christine Jones Diaz at c.jonesdiaz@westernsydney.edu.au or phone: +61 29772 6431, or Dr Jacqueline D'Warte at j.d'warte@westernsydney.edu.au or phone: +6129772 6454

What if I have a complaint?

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form. The information sheet is for you to keep and the consent form is retained by the researcher.

This study has been approved by the Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is H[enter approval number once the project has been approved].



Appendix G

Consent Form – General (Extended) – (*Students*)

Project Title: Saudi Female Students' Reticence to Participate Orally in the English Classroom

I hereby consent to participate in the above named research project.

I acknowledge that:

- I have read the participant information sheet (or where appropriate, have had it read to me) and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s
- The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.
- I am able to contact the researcher if I would like to know more about the research outcomes and findings.

I consent to:

- Participating in a questionnaire*
- Participate in an interview (only audio data will be retained)*
- Having my information audio recorded*

I consent for my data and information provided to be used in this project and other related projects for an extended period of time.

I understand that my involvement is confidential and that the information gained during the study may be published and stored for other research use but no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without affecting my relationship with the researcher/s, and any organisations involved, now or in the future.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

What if I have a complaint?

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.



Appendix H

Consent Form – General (Extended) – (Teachers)

Project Title: Saudi Female Students' Reticence to Participate Orally in the English Classroom

I hereby consent to participate in the above named research project.

I acknowledge that:

- I have read the participant information sheet (or where appropriate, have had it read to me) and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s
- The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.
- I am able to contact the researcher if I would like to know more about the research outcomes and findings.

I consent to:

Participating in an interview (only audio data will be retained)

Having my information audio recorded

I consent for my data and information provided to be used in this project and other related projects for an extended period of time.

I understand that my involvement is confidential and that the information gained during the study may be published and stored for other research use but no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without affecting my relationship with the researcher/s, and any organisations involved, now or in the future.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

What if I have a complaint?

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix I

نموذج موافقة المشارك/محاضرات

عنوان المشروع: احجام الطالبات عن المشاركة الشفهية في فصول اللغة الانجليزية

أوافق أنا على المشاركة في المشروع البحثي المذكور أعلاه وأقر بالتالي:
لقد قرأت المعلومات العامة للمشاركين في البحث ولقد أعطيت الفرصة لمناقشة هذه المعلومات وكذلك مشاركتي
في هذا المشروع مع الباحثة بما في ذلك المقابلة الصوتية المسجلة.

لقد تم شرح الاجراءات اللازمة للمشروع والوقت الذي يتطلب لإجراء المقابلة، ولقد تمت الإجابة على جميع
الأسئلة التي قمت بطرحها عن البحث بشكل مرضي وأوافق على التالي:

المشاركة في المقابلات على برنامج زووم
الموافقة على تسجيل المقابلات صوتيا

أوافق على المشاركة في هذه المقابلة المسجلة صوتيا ووافق ايضا على استخدام البيانات والمعلومات المقدمة
من قبلي في هذا المشروع وفي مشاريع اخرى ذات صلة سواء في مؤتمرات أو كتب علمية أو مجلات لمدة
لائقل عن خمس سنوات بعد إنجاز المشروع.

أفهم أن مشاركتي في هذا البحث سرية وأن بالأمكان نشر المعلومات المكتسبة من هذا البحث ولكن لن يتم
استخدام أي من معلوماتي الشخصية بأي حال من الأحوال ولن يتم الكشف عن هويتي، وأفهم أيضا أنني أستطيع
الانسحاب منه في أي وقت أشاء، دون أن يؤثر ذلك على علاقتي مع البحث سواء الان او في المستقبل.

التوقيع:

الاسم:

التاريخ:

ماذا لو كان لدي شكوى؟

إذا كان لديك شكوى او تحفظ على اخلاقيات سير هذا البحث، يمكنك الاتصال على لجنة الاخلاقيات من خلال
مكتب خدمات البحوث على هاتف:

0061247362493

أو على البريد الالكتروني:

Humanethics@uws.edu.au

سيتم التعامل مع القضايا المثارة بكامل السرية والمهنية وسيتم التحقق منها بالكامل وسيتمك ابلاغك بنتائج
التحقيق.



Appendix J

نموذج موافقة المشارك/الطالبات

عنوان المشروع: احجام الطالبات عن المشاركة الشفهية في فصول اللغة الانجليزية

أوافق أنا على المشاركة في المشروع البحثي المذكور أعلاه وأقر بالتالي:
لقد قرأت المعلومات العامة للمشاركين في البحث ولقد أعطيت الفرصة لمناقشة هذه المعلومات وكذلك مشاركتي
في هذا المشروع مع الباحثة بما في ذلك المقابلة الصوتية المسجلة.

لقد تم شرح الاجراءات اللازمة للمشروع والوقت الذي يتطلب لإجراء المقابلة، ولقد تمت الإجابة على جميع
الأسئلة التي قمت بطرحها عن البحث بشكل مرضي وأوافق على التالي:

المشاركة في الاستبيان
المشاركة في المقابلات على برنامج زووم
الموافقة على تسجيل المقابلات صوتيا

وافق على المشاركة في تعبئة الاستبيان واجراء المقابلة المسجلة صوتيا ووافق ايضا على استخدام البيانات
والمعلومات المقدمة من قبلي في هذا المشروع وفي مشاريع اخرى ذات صلة سواء في مؤتمرات أو كتب
علمية أو مجلات لمدة لا تقل عن خمس سنوات بعد إنجاز المشروع.

أفهم أن مشاركتي في هذا البحث سرية وأن بالأمكان نشر المعلومات المكتسبة من هذا البحث ولكن لن يتم
استخدام أيا من معلوماتي الشخصية بأي حال من الأحوال ولن يتم الكشف عن هويتي، وأفهم أيضا أنني أستطيع
الانسحاب منه في أي وقت أشاء، دون أن يؤثر ذلك على علاقتي مع البحث سواء الان او في المستقبل.

التوقيع:

الاسم:

التاريخ:

ماذا لو كان لدي شكوى؟

إذا كان لديك شكوى أو تحفظ على اخلاقيات سير هذا البحث، يمكنك الاتصال على لجنة الاخلاقيات من خلال
مكتب خدمات البحوث على هاتف:

0061247362493

أو على البريد الالكتروني:

Humanethics@uws.edu.au

سيتم التعامل مع القضايا المثارة بكامل السرية والمهنية وسيتم التحقق منها بالكامل وسيتمك ابلاغك بنتائج التحقيق.



Appendix K

معلومات عامة للمشاركين في البحث / محاضرات

عنوان مشروع الدراسة: إجمام الطالبات السعوديات عن المشاركة الشفهية في فصول اللغة الانجليزية

ما هو هدف هذه الدراسة؟

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى قياس الأسباب والعوامل التي تواجه الطالبات في فصول تعلم اللغة الانجليزية وتأثير وتأثير طرق التدريس والمناهج على عملية المشاركة.

انت مدعوه للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة التي سنقوم بإجرائها الباحثة طالبة الدكتوراه فائز العباسي بكلية التربية في جامعة غرب سيدني تحت إشراف الدكتورة كريس جونز والدكتورة جاكلين ديوارت.

كيف يتم تمويل هذه الدراسة ماديا؟

يتم تمويل هذه الدراسة عن طريق بعثة دراسية من قبل جامعة الحدود الشمالية في المملكة العربية السعودية.

ما هو المطلوب مني؟

سوف يطلب منك المشاركة في مقابلات تكون مسجلة صوتيا للحصول على انطباعك حول اسباب إجمام الطالبات عن المشاركة الشفهية في دروس اللغة الانجليزية ومدى تأثير طرق التدريس على هذه الظاهرة.

كيف سيتم إجراء المقابلات؟

سيتم عمل المقابلة على برنامج زووم.

كم من الوقت ستستغرق هذه الدراسة؟

مدة المقابلة ستكون بين 30-40دقيقة.

ماهي الفوائد التي ستعود علي وعلى المجتمع بشكل اوسع لقاء مشاركتي في هذه الدراسة؟

صممت هذه الدراسة لإضافة مشاركة ذات قيمة واسهامات معرفية ذات العلاقة بالبحث في المملكة العربية السعودية من خلال معرفة الأسباب والعوامل التي تؤثر على مشاركة الطالبات والتي من خلالها ستستفيد وزارة التعليم في وضع المناهج الدراسية للغة الإنجليزية واعتماد طرق التدريس التي تعزز من المشاركة الشفهية لدى الطالبات.

هل سينتج عن الدراسة وجود مخاطر أو مضايقات قد تلحق بي كمشاركة في هذه الدراسة؟ إذا كان الأمر كذلك، مالذي ينبغي القيام به لتدارك ذلك؟

سيكون من المستبعد أن ينتج عن الدراسة وجود مخاطر أو مضايقات قد تلحق بك وسيمتنع الباحث عن مناقشة أي موضوعات حساسة أو ثقافية قد تسبب أي ازعاج أثناء المقابلة. ولكن إذا شعرت بعدم الأريحية في إكمال الدراسة في أي مرحلة من المراحل فيإمكانك أخذ قسط من الراحة أو إنهاء المقابلة من دون أي عواقب.

كيف سيتم عرض ونشر هذه النتائج؟

تعد السرية والخصوصية عنصر مهم في كل خطوة من خطوات هذه الدراسة جميع المعلومات التي سيحصل عليها الباحث من المقابلات ستبقى معلومات سرية مع العلم أنه سيتم استخدام أسماء مستعارة للمشاركين لحماية هوياتهم والتحفظ عليها وسوف يتم نشر نتائج هذه الدراسة في رسالة الدكتوراه كمتطلب أساسي ويمكن أيضا نشر هذه النتائج في مؤتمرات وندوات ومجلات وكتب علمية.

هل سيتم التخلص من هذه البيانات التي سأقدمها؟

يرجى التأكد من أن الباحث فقط هو من سيحصل على بيانات هذه الدراسة ومن الممكن استخدام هذه البيانات الخاصة في مشاريع أخرى ذات صلة لفترة طويلة من الزمن.

هل بالإمكان الانسحاب من الدراسة؟

ان المشاركة طوعية تماما فانت غير ملزمة بالمشاركة ولكن في حال أنك شاركت في الدراسة ورأيت بعد ذلك الانسحاب فيمكنك ذلك في أي وقت تشاء دون أي سبب ودون أي عواقب. في حال انسحابك سيتم التخلص فورا من جميع المعلومات التي زودتني بها ولن يتم استخدامها في أي تحليل لاحق.

كيف بالإمكان الحصول على مزيد من المعلومات؟

لمزيد من المعلومات يرجى عدم التردد في التواصل مع الباحثة فتن العباسي عن طريق وسائل التواصل التالية:

رقم الجوال: +966504367331

البريد الإلكتروني:

19227492@student.westernsydney.edu.au

الدكتوراه كرييس جونز

تلفون: +61297726431

c.jonesdiaz@westernsydney.edu.au

الدكتوراه جاكلين ديوارت

تلفون: +61297726454

البريد الإلكتروني:

j.d'warte@westernsydney.edu.au

ماذا لو كان لديك شكوى؟

إذا كان لديك أي شكوك أو تحفظات على أخلاقيات سير هذا البحث، يمكنك الاتصال على لجنة الأخلاقيات من خلال مكتب خدمات البحث على هاتف +61247360229 أو على البريد الإلكتروني:

Humanethics@uws.edu.au

سيتم التعامل مع القضايا المثارة بكامل السرية والمهنية وسيتم التحقق فيها بالكامل، وسيتم إبلاغك بالنتائج إذا وافقت على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة قد يطلب منك التوقيع على نموذج موافقة للمشاركة في البحث. ورقة المعلومات العامة هذه ستبقى معك أما نموذج الموافقة سيحتفظ به الباحث.

Appendix L

معلومات عامة للمشاركين في البحث / طالبات

عنوان مشروع الدراسة: إحصام الطالبات السعوديات عن المشاركة الشفهية في فصول اللغة الانجليزية

ما هو هدف هذه الدراسة؟

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى قياس الأسباب والعوامل التي تواجه الطالبات في فصول تعلم اللغة الانجليزية وتأثير وتأثير طرق التدريس والمناهج على عملية المشاركة.

انت مدعو للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة التي ستقوم بإجرائها الباحثة طالبة الدكتوراه فانتن العباسي بكلية التربية في جامعة غرب سيدني تحت إشراف الدكتورة كريس جونز والدكتورة جاكلين ديوارت.

كيف يتم تمويل هذه الدراسة ماديا؟

يتم تمويل هذه الدراسة عن طريق بعثة دراسية من قبل جامعة الحدود الشمالية في المملكة العربية السعودية.

ما هو المطلوب مني؟

سوف يطلب منك المشاركة في تعبئة استبيان واجراء مقابلات تكون مسجلة صوتيا للحصول على انطباعك حول اسباب إحصام الطالبات عن المشاركة الشفهية في دروس اللغة الانجليزية ومدى تأثير طرق التدريس على هذه الظاهرة.

كيف سيتم إجراء الاستبيان؟

سيطلب منك تعبئة الاستبيان المتضمن لبعض الاسئلة التيستساعد في الاجابة على اسئلة البحث.

كيف سيتم إجراء المقابلات؟

سيتم عمل المقابلة على برنامج زووم.

كم من الوقت ستستغرق هذه الدراسة؟

مدة المقابلة ستكون بين 30-40دقيقة.

ماهي الفوائد التي ستعود علي وعلى المجتمع بشكل اوسع لقاء مشاركتي في هذه الدراسة؟

صممت هذه الدراسة لإضافة مشاركة ذات قيمة واسهامات معرفية ذات العلاقة بالبحث في المملكة العربية السعودية من خلال معرفة الأسباب والعوامل التي تؤثر على مشاركة الطالبات والتي من خلالها ستستفيد وزارة التعليم في وضع المناهج الدراسية للغة الإنجليزية واعتماد طرق التدريس التي تعزز من المشاركة الشفهية لدى الطالبات.

هل سينتج عن الدراسة وجود مخاطر أو مضايقات قد تلحق بي كمشاركة في هذه الدراسة؟ إذا كان الأمر كذلك، مالذي ينبغي القيام به لتدارك ذلك؟

سيكون من المستبعد أن ينتج عن الدراسة وجود مخاطر أو مضايقات قد تلحق بك وسيمتنع الباحث عن مناقشة أي موضوعات حساسة أو ثقافية قد تسبب أي ازعاج أثناء تعبئة الاستبيان أو اجراء المقابلة. ولكن إذا شعرت بعدم الأريحية في إكمال الدراسة في أي مرحلة من المراحل فبإمكانك أخذ قسط من الراحة أو انتهاء المقابلة من دون أي عواقب.

كيف سيتم عرض ونشر هذه النتائج؟

تعد السرية والخصوصية عنصر مهم في كل خطوة من خطوات هذه الدراسة جميع المعلومات التي سيحصل عليها الباحث من الاستبيان والمقابلات ستبقى معلومات سرية مع العلم أنه سيتم استخدام أسماء مستعارة للمشاركين لحماية هوياتهم والتحفظ عليها وسوف يتم نشر نتائج هذه الدراسة في رسالة الدكتوراه كمتطلب أساسي ويمكن أيضا نشر هذه النتائج في مؤتمرات وندوات ومجلات وكتب علمية.

هل سيتم التخلص من هذه البيانات التي سأقدمها؟

يرجى التأكد من أن الباحث فقط هو من سيحصل على بيانات هذه الدراسة ومن الممكن استخدام هذه البيانات الخاصة في مشاريع أخرى ذات صلة لفترة طويلة من الزمن.

هل بالإمكان الانسحاب من الدراسة؟

ان المشاركة طوعية تماما فانت غير ملزمة بالمشاركة ولكن في حال أنك شاركت في الدراسة ورأيت بعد ذلك الانسحاب فيمكنك ذلك في أي وقت تشاء دون أي سبب ودون أي عواقب. في حال انسحابك سيتم التخلص فورا من جميع المعلومات التي زودتني بها ولن يتم استخدامها في أي تحليل لاحق.

كيف بالإمكان الحصول على مزيد من المعلومات؟

لمزيد من المعلومات يرجى عدم التردد في التواصل مع الباحثة فاتن العباسي عن طريق وسائل التواصل التالية:

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ماذا لو كان لديك شكوى؟

إذا كان لديك أي شكوك أو تحفظات على أخلاقيات سير هذا البحث، يمكنك الاتصال على لجنة الأخلاقيات من خلال مكتب خدمات البحوث على هاتف +61247360229 أو على البريد الإلكتروني:

Humanethics@uws.edu.au

سيتم التعامل مع القضايا المثارة بكامل السرية والمهنية وسيتم التحقق فيها بالكامل، وسيتم إبلاغك بالنتائج إذا وافقت على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة قد يطلب منك التوقيع على نموذج موافقة للمشاركة في البحث. ورقة المعلومات العامة هذه ستبقى معك أما نموذج الموافقة سيحتفظ به الباحث.

Appendix M
Questionnaire Questions

1- How old are you?

- a- 18 - 20
- b- 21 - 23
- c- 24 - 26
- d- 27 -29
- other

2- What is your parents' level of education?

- a- Non formal education
- b- Primary
- c- Intermediate
- d- Secondary
- e- Bachelor
- f- Master
- g- Doctorate

3-What is your last GPA?

4- Have you attended any English courses outside of the English classroom?

5- Evaluate your knowledge of English and rate your proficiency level in each of the following English language skills:

Writing excellent very good good poor

Reading

Listening

Speaking

6- How much do you participate in the English classroom?

- a- Always

- b- Sometimes
- c- Usually

7- If you do receive criticism about your English language how does it impact your oral participation in a class?

- a- Encouraged me to do more study
- b- Not to speak
- c- To prove them wrong
- d- To abandon my English study

8- Do you think listening to English is important for English oral participation?

- a- Strongly agree
- b- Agree
- c- Neither agree nor disagree
- d- Somewhat disagree
- e- Disagree
- f- Strongly disagree

9- How does the relationship between a student and a teacher influence student's oral participation inside the English classroom?

- a- It encourages students to speak up
- b- It does not encourage students to speak up
- c- It does not have any effect
- d- I do not know

10- How do you feel when you speak in English in the classroom?

11- How does oral participation help you improving your understanding of English language?

12- Evaluate the importance of oral participation in the English classroom?, and explain why.

- a- Extremely important

- b- Very important
- c- Moderately important
- d- Slightly important
- e- Not important

13- Do you continue speaking in English even when you make mistakes in the English classroom?

- a- Yes
- b- No

14-What kinds of topics in the English curriculum may encourage you to participate?

15-What do you do to improve your English language? (explain and examples)

16-What are the barriers to participate orally in the English classroom? You can choose more than one answer?

- a- Lack of motivation to have a go
- b- Disinterest in the activities
- c- Feelings of embarrassment in front of other students

17-What do you feel when the teacher corrects your English-speaking mistakes?

18-Do you agree or not with the comment "those who participate are better than you?" and "Why"

19-Suggest strategies that you think may encourage students to participate orally in the English classroom.

20- Would you be willing to participate in a confidential 30-45 minutes interview?

If yes, please provide your email or phone number.

- a- Yes_____
- b- No

Appendix N
Students' Interview

1. How important do you think English is?
2. Do you enjoy learning English? Why? If not, why not?
3. Are there any classes that impressed you the most? Or are there any classes that made you so disappointed?
4. How do you evaluate your own English ability?
5. How would you describe your personality?
6. How do you think your personality affect your speaking?
7. Have you ever been abroad?
8. How do you feel when you speak English in class?
9. Do you feel embarrassed when you make mistakes?
10. How do you feel when your teacher asks you some questions?
11. Do you ask your teacher some questions when you do not understand something in class?
12. What do you feel when your teacher corrects your English?
13. What do you feel when your teacher is watching you while you are speaking?
14. In what situation would you speak most, between speaking in pairs or speaking in groups?
15. What reasons do you think that make students don't want to speak English in class?

Appendix O

Teachers' Interview

1. How long have you taught here?
2. What is your qualification?
3. Can you please tell me about your area of education?
4. Can you tell me about how you feel about teaching this subject?
5. How many classes do you teach for this subject?
6. What do you think about the speaking performance of students?
7. What do you think about their willingness to speak?
8. If they are not willing to speak, how do you attempt to encourage them to speak up?
9. What are the teaching approaches that you normally use?
What make you feel interested in using them?
How do you believe they would encourage the students to speak up?
10. What do you think is the most important aspect of the classroom lesson which you normally put an emphasis on? Why do you think it is important?
11. What factors do you think impact the students' oral participation?

Before we finish, would you like to add any more comments that we haven't covered in the interview?

Appendix P

Translation Examples for Trustworthiness

Example 1:

Original Arabic Text:

"أشعر بالتوتر عندما أضطر إلى التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية أمام الجميع، لأنني أخشى أن أخطئ."

Translation into English:

"I feel nervous when I have to speak English in front of everyone because I am afraid of making mistakes."

Back Translation into Arabic:

"أشعر بالتوتر عندما يجب علي التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية أمام الجميع لأنني أخشى أن أرتكب أخطاء"

Example 2:

Original Arabic Text:

"الطلاب الذين يشاركون في الصف غالباً ما يكون لديهم ثقة أكبر في مهاراتهم في اللغة الإنجليزية"

Translation into English:

"Students who participate in class often have more confidence in their English language skills."

Back Translation into Arabic:

"الطلاب الذين يشاركون في الصف غالباً ما يمتلكون ثقة أكبر في مهاراتهم باللغة الإنجليزية"

Example 3:

Original Arabic Text:

"أعتقد أن استخدام التكنولوجيا في دروس اللغة الإنجليزية يمكن أن يساعد الطلاب على تحسين قدراتهم على التحدث."

Translation into English:

"I believe that using technology in English lessons can help students improve their speaking abilities."

Back Translation into Arabic:

أعتقد أن استخدام التكنولوجيا في دروس اللغة الإنجليزية يمكن أن يساعد الطلاب على تحسين مهاراتهم في " التحدث."

Appendix P

Questionnaire Descriptive Analysis

Close-ended questions:

1- How old are you?

Value	Frequency
18-20	79
21-23	8
24-26	1
27-29	0
Other	2
Total	90

2- What is your last term GPA?

Value	Frequency
100-90	73
89-80	10
79-70	3
69-60	14
Total	100

3-What is your parents' level of education?

Value	Frequency
Non formal education	13
Primary	21
Intermediate	13
Secondary	17
Bachelor	22
Master	4
PhD	0
Total	90

4- Have you attended any English courses outside of the English classroom?

Value	Frequency
Yes	27
No	73
Total	100

5- Evaluate your knowledge of English and rate your proficiency level in each of the following English language skills:

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Poor
level of writing	9	29	49	13
level of speaking	10	40	33	17
level of reading	15	49	29	7
level of listening	29	36	27	8

6- How much do you participate in the English classroom?

Value	Frequency
Always	32
Sometimes	54
Never	4
Total	90

7- If you receive criticism, how does it impact your participation?

Value	Frequency
Motivate me to study more	42
I do not speak	14
No impact	34
Total	90

8- Do you think that listening to the English language is important for oral participation?

Value	Frequency
Strongly agree	39
Agree	25
Do not know	22
Disagree	1
Strongly disagree	3
Total	90

9- How does the relationship between a student and a teacher influence student's oral participation inside the English classroom?

Value	Frequency
Encourage a student to speak up	76
Does not encourage student to speak up	1
No impact	6
Do not know	7
Total	90

10- Evaluate the importance of oral participation in the English classroom

Value	Frequency
Extremely important	29
Very important	15
Moderately important	24
Slightly important	17
Not important	5
Total	90

11-How do you feel when you speak English in the class?

Value	Frequency
Negative feeling(nervous, shyness)	64
Positive feeling (proud, happy)	25
Total	89

12- Do you continue speaking in English even when you make mistake in the English classroom?

value	Frequency
Yes	76
No	14
Total	90

13- Do you agree or not with the comment "those who participate are better than you"?

Value	Frequency
Yes	47
No	43
Total	90

14- What are the barriers to participate orally in the English classroom?

		Responses
		Frequency
the main	No motivation to	9

barrier	speak	
	Disinterested in English activities	9
	No English knowledge	33
	Feeling shy when speaking	32
	Fear of criticism	10
	other	7
Total		100

Open-ended questions:

15- How may oral participation help you develop your understanding of the English language?

Value	Frequency
Improving the language (learning new words, sentences, improve reading skill, sentence structure, correct pronunciation, learn different pronunciation)	28
Practicing English	14
Improve speaking skill	6
Do not know	15
Total	63

16- How do you feel when you speak English in the class?

Value	Frequency
Negative feeling(nervous, shyness)	64
Positive feeling (proud, happy)	25

Total	89
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17-What kinds of topics in the English curriculum may encourage students to participate?

Value	Frequency
Any topic	8
No specific topics	13
Interesting topics	9
Simple topics from the book (easy, understandable, reading comprehension)	13
(easy, understandable, reading comprehension)	11
Free topics (own life, free choice)	34
Do not know	12
Total	100

18- What do you do to improve you English explain (explain and examples)

	Frequency
Reading English books, magazines, stories and memorising words	19
Listening to English songs, programs, YouTube and movies to improve their English	36
prepare the English lessons, take English courses	12
Speaking with others (friends and family), contact people on the social media	6
Do not know	18
Total	90

19- What do you feel when the teacher corrects you?

Value	Frequency
Nothing	20
Negative feeling (shy, nervous, embarrassed)	26
Positive feeling (learn from my mistakes, learn the information)	44
Total	90

20- Suggest curriculum strategies to improve the students' oral participation

Value	Frequency
Activities (competitions, games, conversations and discussion)	17
nothing	16
Teacher (kind, give marks, encourage, accept all answers)	12
Others (easy and interesting topics; famous character, weekend)	13
Total	58

Chi-Square Test

1- The relationship between “How much do you participate in English classroom and Parents' level of education.”

			Parents' level of education						Total	Pearson Chi-Square	P.value	Contingency Coefficient
			Non educated	Primary	Intermediate	Secondary	Bachelor	Master				
How much do you participate in English classroom	Always	Count	5	6	6	7	5	3	32	8.325 ^a	0.597	0.277
		%	15.6%	18.8%	18.8%	21.9%	15.6%	9.4%	100.0%			
	Sometimes	Count	8	18	11	10	16	1	64			
		%	12.5%	28.1%	17.2%	15.6%	25.0%	1.6%	100.0%			
	Never	Count	0	1	0	1	2	0	4			
		%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%			

2- The relationship between “How much do you participate in the English classroom and “Have you attended any English courses outside of the English classroom”

			Have you got any English course		Total	Pearson Chi-Square	P.value	Contingency Coefficient
			Yes	No				
How much do you participate in English classroom	Always	Count	15	17	32	10.103 ^a	0.006	0.303
		%	46.9%	53.1%	100.0%			
	Sometimes	Count	12	52	64			
		%	18.8%	81.3%	100.0%			

	Never	Count	0	4	4		
		%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

3- The relationship between “How much do you participate in the English classroom and “the importance of oral participation”.

			The importance of oral participation					Total	Pearson Chi-Square	P.v alue	Contingen cy Coefficient
			Extr emel y imp orta nt	Ver y imp orta nt	Mod erate ly imp orta nt	Slig htly imp orta nt	Not imp orta nt				
How much do you participat e in English classroom	Alw ays	Co un t	20	5	6	0	1	32	43.166 ^a	0.0 00	0.549
		%	62.5%	15.6%	18.8%	0.0%	3.1%	100.0%			
	Som etim es	Co un t	13	17	19	13	2	64			
		%	20.3%	26.6%	29.7%	20.3%	3.1%	100.0%			
	Neve r	Co un t	0	0	0	2	2	4			
		%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%			

4-The relationship between “How old are you” and “Last GPA”

			Q2.GPA				Total	Pears on Chi-Square	P.val ue	Continge ncy Coefficie nt
			(100-90)	(89-80)	(79-70)	(69-60)				
Q1.How old are you	(18-20)	Count	59	7	3	10	79	7.615 ^a	0.573	0.279
		%	74.7%	8.9%	3.8%	12.7%	100.0%			
	(21-23)	Count	5	0	1	2	8			
		%	62.5%	0.0%	12.5%	25.0%	100.0%			
	(24-26)	Count	1	0	0	0	1			
		%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%			
	(other)	Count	1	1	0	0	2			
		%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%			

5- The relationship between “How old are you” and “How much do you participate in English classroom”

			Q6.How much do you participate in English classroom			Total	Pearso n Chi-Square	P.valu e	Contingen cy Coefficien t
			always	sometim es	never				
Q1.How old are you	(18-20)	Count	27	49	3	79	3.533 ^a	0.740	0.194
		%	34.2%	62.0%	3.8%	100.0%			
	(21-	Count	3	4	1	8			

23)	t				
	%	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%	100.0%
(24-26)	Count	1	0	0	1
	%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
(other)	Count	1	1	0	2
	%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%

6- The relationship between “How do you feel when you speak English in the class” and “Do you continue speaking in English even when you make mistakes in the English classroom”

			Q15. do you speak when you make mistakes		Total	Pearson Chi-Square	P.value	Contingency Coefficient
			Yes	No				
Q13. how do you feel when you speak Eng. in the class	negative feeling	Count	50	14	64	6.735 ^a	0.034	0.264
		%	78.1%	21.9%	100.0%			
	positive feeling	Count	21	0	21			
		%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%			
	Nothing	Count	5	0	5			
		%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%			

7- The relationship between “How do you feel when you speak English in the class” and “do you agree or not "those who participate are better than you”

			Q19: do you agree or not those who participate are better than you		Total	Pearson Chi-Square	P.value	Contingency Coefficient
			Yes	No				
Q13. how do you feel when you speak Eng. in the class	negative feelings	Count	21	12	33	1.012a	0.603	0.147
		%	63.6%	36.4%	100.0%			
	positive feeling	Count	9	3	12			
		%	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%			
	Nothing	Count	1	0	1			
		%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%			

8- The relationship between “Do you speak when you make mistakes” and “Do you agree or not to the statement “Those who participate are better than you”

			Q19: do you agree or not those who participate are better than you		Total	Pearson Chi-Square	P.value	Contingency Coefficient
			Yes	No				
Q15. do you speak when you make mistakes	Yes	Count	26	11	37	.713 ^a	0.398	0.124
		%	70.3%	29.7%	100.0%			
	No	Count	5	4	9			

		%	55.6%	44.4%	100.0%			
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9- The relationship between “How do you feel when you speak English in the class” and “Do you continue speaking in English even when you make mistakes in the English classroom and “Do you agree or not “those who participate are better than you”

Q19: do you agree or not those who participate are better than you			Q15. do you speak when you make mistakes			Total	Pearson Chi-Square	P.value	Contingency Coefficient
			Yes	No					
Yes	Q13. how do you feel when you speak Eng in the class	negative feelings	Count	16	5	21	2.839 ^b	0.242	0.290
			%	76.2%	23.8%	100.0%			
		positive feelings	Count	9	0	9			
			%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%			
		nothing	Count	1	0	1			
			%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%			
No	Q13. how do you feel when you speak Eng in the class	negative feelings	Count	8	4	12	4.408 ^a	0.110	0.289
			%	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%			
		positive feelings	Count	3	0	3			
			%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%			

10- The relationship between “What do you feel when the teacher corrects you” and “Do you continue speaking in English even when you make mistakes in the English classroom”

			Q15. do you speak when you make mistakes		Total	Pearson Chi-Square	P.value	Contingency Coefficient
			Yes	No				
Q21: what do you feel when the teacher corrects you	Nothing	Count	44	2	46	15.055 _a	0.001	0.379
		%	95.7%	4.3%	100.0%			
	Negative feeling	Count	16	10	26			
		%	61.5%	38.5%	100.0%			
	Positive feeling	Count	16	2	18			
		%	88.9%	11.1%	100.0%			