

THE IMPACT OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE ON SAUDI WOMEN'S
ROLES AND IDENTITIES

by

Reema A Alsweel
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Committee:

Chair

Program Director

Dean, College of Education
and Human Development

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By

Reema A. Alsweel
Master of Arts
San Jose State University, 2006
Bachelor of Arts
Girls University of Arts Riyadh Saudi Arabia, 2001

Director: Marjorie Haley, Professor
College of Education and Human Development

Spring Semester 2013
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to Khalid, Ibrahim and Alya who understood I was not crazy; I was just researching, analyzing, and writing.

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First and foremost, I would like to thank God for blessing me with a curious mind and ample opportunities.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables	vii
List of Figures	viii
Abstract	ii
1. The Impact of English as a Second Language	4
on Saudi Women's Roles and Identities.....	4
Statement of Problem.....	6
Background	8
Rationale.....	8
Significance.....	9
Theoretical and Conceptual Framework.....	11
Personal background	11
Conceptual framework	13
Pilot study.....	14
Islamic Feminism	18
Definition of Terms.....	19
Research Design.....	20
Research Questions	23
Conclusion	23
2. Review of Related Literature	26
Background	27
Saudi Arabia.....	27
Women in Saudi Arabia	30
The ideal Saudi woman	38
Literature Review.....	41

Identity	42
Link between Identity and Culture	60
Culture.....	62
The Role of English	76
Islamic Feminism.....	79
Conclusion	83
3. Research Design and Methodology	85
Methods.....	87
Design	90
Participants.....	93
Setting	94
Researcher Perspective and Role	96
Data Sources	100
Data Collection Procedures.....	104
Data Analyses	105
Quality and Validity.....	111
Quality or Validity	114
Limitation and How Addressed	122
Conclusion	124
4. Research Findings	126
Participants.....	127
Findings.....	136
Importance of English	139
Culture.....	148
Change From Within.....	165
Strong Role Models.....	170
Islamic Feminism	171
Researcher Role	174
Conclusion	181

5. Summary of the Study	183
Overview	183
Research Questions	184
Review of Design	185
Conceptual Framework Revisited	186
Summary of major findings.....	189
Conclusion	192
Confidence ثقة 'Thiqa'	193
Borders حدود “hudood”	197
Cultured ثقافة “thaqafah”	202
Identity, Culture, and English in Relation to Change	205
Islamic feminism	210
Implications and Recommendations	212
Summary	216
Endnotes.....	218
Appendix.....	219
References	211

List of Tables

Table	Page
1. Participants' statistics.....	128

List of Figures

Figure	Page
1. Map of Saudi Arabia.....	27
2. Literature Review Outline.....	42
3. Bronfenbrenner's 'Ecological System Theory'.....	45
4. Tajfel and Turner 'Social Identity Theory'.....	47
5. Dynamics among data collection, management, and analysis.....	106
6. Representation of emergent theme of the importance of English.....	140
7. Representation of emergent theme of culture.....	150

Abstract

THE IMPACT OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE ON SAUDI WOMEN'S ROLES AND IDENTITIES

Reema A. Alsweel. PhD

George Mason University, 2012

Dissertation Director: Dr. Marjorie Haley

In Saudi Arabia, women's basic values and beliefs are changing in ways that affect their social, economic, psychological, gendered, and religious behaviors. These changes can be seen in the acceptance of many Saudi women of new roles and their participation in new fields, including education, work, government, and media. The purpose of this dissertation is to seek an understanding to these changes by looking at these women's perspectives on their roles, both within and outside the Saudi Arabian society, and the multiple identities that they create. This study also pays a particular focus to English as a second language as a tool in facilitating these changes. A qualitative study is employed using semi-structured, open-ended interviews with sixteen Saudi women attending English language programs in the United States. The emergent findings surround the themes of the importance of the English language as a tool which aids in changing these women's social capital, creating multiple identities, and empowering them. Yet, it is clear that these changes have to come from the Saudi women themselves through a

balancing of the modern and traditional roles and expanding, but not crossing, borders.

Thus, these women were empowered through an understanding and balancing of their history, religion, tradition, and multiple cultures they come into contact with.

1. The Impact of English as a Second Language on Saudi Women's Roles and Identities

Saudi Arabia, a young nation with deep historical, tradition, tribal, and religious roots, is one that has quickly morphed from an empty desert inhabited by Bedouins to a modern united society. With oil wealth and influx of technology, change began to take place. These changes include not only modern cityscapes, incorporation of new technologies, and improvements in health care and education, but also the overall improvement in its people's lifestyles. However, all these changes were taking place while still keeping the Islamic values and traditional roots that the nation was established on intact, creating a juxtaposition of the traditional and modern.

This struggle between the modern and the traditional is quite clear in the lifestyles of the young who have had more exposure to the modern while still being raised by the traditional and cultural beliefs of their parents. Yamani (2000) states in her study on Saudi Arabian youth that "the new generation, which has been exposed to much more than its parents through education, satellite television and travel, is aware of its capabilities, and this inevitably leads to the questioning of some norms and social rules" (p. 69).

In such a society that is familial and patriarchal, the struggle is even further exasperated by the women of Saudi Arabia, who thus portray the most traditional roles.

Their roles are in fact a part of the social and educational policy. As El-Sanabary (1994) discusses:

The main emphasis on women's domestic functions is contained in policy statements indicating that education must give girls a clear understanding of their responsibilities towards their children, their own home and society; and help the new generations of women to maintain a balance between the “changing patterns of today and the traditions of yesterday. (p. 141)

In Saudi Arabia, women portray certain roles prescribed to them by society. These roles are not necessarily religious, even though there is no separation between the state and its Muslim religious institutions. According to Yamani (2000) “although interpretations of “correct” Islamic behavior influence all sections of society, local customs, norms and tribal traditions actually dictate women’s roles and are enforced through familial structures” (p. 96). As Ertürk (1991) explains, it is "the interplay between religious, historical and social structural factors" (p. 310) that has created a dominant ideology on the role of women in society.

Sakr (2008) points out that those young societies undergoing rapid changes, such as Saudi Arabia, usually make women a national symbol, "these identifications, being selective reincarnations of particular visions of the past, are usually called traditions" (p. 388). Thus, it is clear that Saudi women are struggling with this juxtapositioning of the rapid changes brought on by modernity and the deep rooted traditional expectations which have led to, I believe, the creation of multiple, yet acceptable roles, accompanied by multiple identities incorporated to employ these roles.

One of the tools that has aided Saudi women in their portrayal of the “acceptable” and multiple roles and the identities accompanying them, is through the introduction of English as a second language (ESL) through the improvement in education, influx of technology, and ease of travel. However, in order to accomplish such “acceptable” roles, Saudi women have employed an Islamic feminism perspective, which calls for the reinterpretation of the Islamic teachings from multiple perspectives.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to give Saudi women a venue where their voices and stories are told, as there is a gap in the current literature; to empower them in becoming active members in the understanding and changing of their societal roles; to highlight the impact of the English language as a tool on their movements; and to look at these cultural and social roles and how they translate into different environments where they may be interacting with both Saudis and non-Saudis.

Statement of Problem

Although there is an abundant amount of work on Arab and Middle Eastern women, there remains a gap in the literature on Saudi women. Through my literature search, I was able to find a few studies on this topic, mostly conducted by non-Saudis; therefore, I believe they do not truly echo the voices of Saudi women. In addition, I found that research on Saudis in general and Saudi women in particular not only shed a negative light, but usually focused on issues that neglect these women's real concerns. Such studies often brought up issues such as driving or the veil as major issues of rights, which they may be; but to Saudi women, other more pressing matters, such as work,

education, and social rights, are at the forefront. Thus, I believe some of these studies have victimized these women without their consent and have drawn only a partial picture. There is a need for the voice of Saudi women, including mine, in the literature.

The negative images of Saudi Arabia were so strongly pictured in the literature that I found them influencing my own earlier work. What interested me was that very few articles were by Saudis, and even fewer were by Saudi women themselves, and the few that I did find (as applicable to my interests) were banned in Saudi Arabia. I believe that there is a need for their voice, as well as my own voice, that can be heard by all, and this was the core of my interests.

There have been studies on Saudi Arabia in relation to change, modernization, attitudes, and reform in education and the work field. Nonetheless, very few focus solely on women, whom I believe are hoisted as a national symbol; and therefore, their movement, in a country like Saudi Arabia, is very visible and debatable.

Women's movement and the call for change should and must be initiated by women themselves using their voices because they know and understand their own needs and conditions and what it takes to change them. Through my research, I found very few women writers on the issue of Saudi women, and even fewer Saudi women writers. Thus, there is a need for their voices in the literature, using their lenses, acknowledging their needs, and understanding their perspectives. That being said, I want to make it clear that I am in no manner belittling the Saudi women's past as well as current roles in society; I am simply interested in their movement, one that is currently taking place and

is very visible. I must also state that I am not taking a political or religious stance, and this is important to state as it can aid in making my study accessible to those who may benefit from it.

Background

Rationale

This study aimed at looking at how Saudi women were able to use the new tools available to them, whether through education, media, or travel, to create multiple, yet culturally acceptable identities and social roles. This study aimed at creating a venue where their voices could be heard; thus, it was the idea of change from the inside initiated by Saudi women themselves. This study aimed at examining how these women may have used the English language as a tool to expand the social roles prescribed to them by society and the cultural norms created from a combination of religion, tradition, and history. This study aimed at inquiring into how some of these women were expanding those cultural boundaries and social roles without stepping over them by using an Islamic feminist perspective.

With the changes brought upon by oil wealth, Saudi Arabia made great strides in the advance of education, healthcare, and technology and, therefore, has come a long way in advancing the rights and needs of its people. These rights and needs included new educational opportunities, new positions in the work field, and more contact with outside worlds. This has led to the introduction of Saudi Arabians, specifically women, to new cultures, ideas, and social roles.

This study also aimed at highlighting how those cultural and social roles were translated in a Western environment, specifically when Saudi women interacted with others. The multiple roles that these women employed and their accompanying identities became quite visible in their interaction with others outside the Saudi Arabian environment. The level of ease, comfort, frankness, and contact differed when interacting with Saudi versus non-Saudi men. I believe this was also due to the shared culture expectations between the Saudi Arabian members and the unspoken cultural boundaries that must remain intact.

In conclusion, I must state that for the purpose of this study, I used English as a tool or a medium that presents opportunities because it is the dominant language, not only in Saudi Arabia, but on a global level. There are two points that I must make clear. Firstly, the English language in its many forms has become a world language; and thus, I used it here as a tool, not necessarily as a Western influence, but as the language of education, business, and entertainment. Secondly, it is not an issue of the “East” versus the “West”, as I don’t place one culture over the other. That is why I believe that using our voices is not only a helpful and insightful method, but it will also allow my work to reach those who need it most, i.e. Saudi women.

Significance

There are changes that have been taking place over the last couple of years in Saudi Arabia, and an examination and understanding of the movement, direction, and goals is needed in order for success. For the purpose of this study, these changes focused

on Saudi women in multiple ways. First, it is a concern with them becoming an integral part of the Saudi society without being outcast or stigmatized. Second, it aimed at helping them gain their rights from both a humanitarian and an Islamic perspective. Finally, this study also aimed at giving a voice to a previously voiceless group in the literature. Most importantly, in this study I aimed at raising awareness to the roles and identities of Saudi women and the changes that are currently occurring and are yet still intact with the cultural and religious prescriptions, therefore, aiding in this movement of change that is not threatening to society or social order.

I believe that as a Saudi woman using other Saudi women's voices, we can accomplish such goals as better education, more opportunities in the work field, and the overall more involved roles in the social and economic atmosphere. This study shed light on Saudi women's rights given to them by Islam by using an Islamic feminist perspective. However, I must make it clear that the emphasis was not on change alone; it was on the negotiations of the boundaries within the cultural and social limits, so as to achieve such goals and become a more visible, yet an integral and respected, part of the Saudi society.

Although this might not be an easy change, the fact that it was initiated by Saudi women and within the religious guidelines may make it easier. Fatany (2007) has mentioned in her Arab News article:

We have to admit that the role of women is still a controversial issue in Saudi society. Hard-liners still insist that the woman's place is in the home. Tribal culture persists among many in society, and changing attitudes is not going to be

easy for men or women. For men, it means women's wishes must be considered and respected. It also will require the realization that women in the workplace are a necessary part of our human resource base, not a competitive force but a complementary one. For women, it means that they cannot remain restrained by cultural barriers or dare not speak out or avail themselves of the opportunities offered. The need to change is imperative, and women must realize that they are entitled to enjoy their rights in society (April, 16).

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Personal background

Central to this inquiry and the main motivation for my research topic was my personal experience as a Saudi woman who has lived significant amounts of time both in the United States and Saudi Arabia. Over the years, I have created and developed multiple identities that have helped me deal with the different roles I take on, and this has been my motivation in investigating this issue. Being a Saudi woman who was born and raised in the United States but lived a significant amount of time in Saudi Arabia, I feel truly blessed to have been able to assimilate both cultures, speak both languages fluently, and live the multiple roles required in the different contexts I find myself in. I often wondered how my exposure to both worlds has helped me become who I am today, how I was able to combine two different (and sometimes conflicting) worlds within myself, and how I was able to use my newly-defined self to create a better environment for myself and others.

Being exposed to the different contexts has helped me better myself by going to private schools, getting a job in what is considered a liberal environment (mixed hospital setting), and finally continuing my education in the United States, all while continuing to portray my Saudi-woman self. I was able to use my knowledge of both the Saudi culture and the Western world to create multiple roles and identities suitable for any environment I may find myself in. I am who I am because of my multiple selves that have permitted me to take on different social roles.

Through my interaction with other Saudi women who have lived in the United States and Saudi Arabia, I have come to the conclusion that the English language has made us different than others around us. However, I am not using the word “different” in a negative connotation; instead, I believe it is the kind of difference that has helped open up many opportunities for Saudi women in fields like science, education, and even politics because they were exposed to other worlds while, at the same time, maintaining the traditional values that are cherished by many Saudis. Therefore, I cannot help but wonder what this exposure to a second language and, consequently, a new culture means for a traditional country like Saudi Arabia, specifically for its female citizens who play the most traditional role. I was interested in Saudi women’s exposure to a second language, and how the English language played a role in contributing to the overall change in their roles in society.

Conceptual framework

As Patton (2002) explains, “the criteria you chose to emphasize in your work usually depends on the purpose of your inquiry, the values and perspectives of the audiences for your work, and your own philosophical and methodological orientation” (p. 551). What we know is because of who we are, where we are, where we were, who we learned it from and how, what we do with this information, and how we process it and give it meaning. Thus, I believe that our world is constantly being “constructed” as we grow, change, move, learn, develop, get exposed, etc.

I view the world as socially, politically, culturally, religiously, and psychologically constructed (Patton, 2002). It is the “self” and its understandings that are the core; “social constructivists”... findings and reports are explicitly informed by attention to praxis and reflexivity, that is, understanding how one’s own experiences and background affect what one understands and how one acts in the world, including acts of inquiry” (p. 546). In my case, my own background and multiple identities were the source of questioning.

The emphasis here was on “one’s” experiences and understandings; thus, multiple realities can coexist and must be honored. Part of the multiple realities was what Guba and Lincoln (1994) explained as the existence of “multiple knowledges,” usually due to the multiple interpretations of reality by those entrusted (i.e. parental, political, religious, etc. figures). These “multiple knowledges” “can coexist when equally competent

interpreters disagree, and/or depending on social, political, cultural economic, ethnic, and gender factors that differentiate the interpreters” (p. 113).

Thus, as a constructivist who views the world as a construction of the multiple knowledges and worlds that exists within the self, I agree with Patton (2002) in that as a constructivist, my aim became to "study multiple realities constructed by people and the implications of those constructions for their lives and interaction with others” (p. 96).

As a constructivist, my role became that of a “passionate participant” “actively engaged in facilitating the “multi-voice” reconstruction of his or her own construction as well as those of all other participants” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 115). Thus, I continuously grew and reconstructed my world along with my participants, resulting in “change [that] is facilitated as reconstructions are formed and individuals are stimulated to act on them” (p. 115). They further explained constructivists’ aim as the “understanding and reconstruction of the constructions that people (including the inquirer) initially hold, aiming toward consensus but still open to new interpretations as information and sophistication improve” (p. 113). I saw that my research aimed at understanding my own, as well as other Saudi women's multiple understandings.

Pilot study

The interest in the social roles of Saudi women and the impact of the English language on this role have been interests of mine from the very start of the PhD program; that is because it is a part of my life, as well as the lives of people I interact with. I began my research by conducting a preliminary study on friends (2009), many of whom have

been in contact with the English language and culture for many years. The purpose of this research was to really “test the water”. I sat with friends who knew me well, so I was able to ask for feedback and truly got an overall picture of what was ahead. The general outcomes of this preliminary study were as follows:

- The importance of the English language in Saudi Arabia, “prestige” was a keyword.
- The English language as access in Saudi Arabia.
- Culturally-prescribed roles for women in Saudi Arabia.
- Change in Saudi Arabia, which may have led to change in Saudi women’s role.

With this in hand, I thought I was well prepared for my pilot study (2010). I had my research questions, my interviews, and surveys all set out; I was ready to go.

However, upon meeting my potential participants, interacting with them, and becoming a part of their ESL classrooms, I became aware that people differed and that I must be prepared for the unexpected. My preliminary study only provided me with a background; however, as a constructivist, I was ready to build on that background with the help of those around me.

My pilot study introduced me to a group of young women who better fit my participant criteria. They were young, motivated, and entering a new phase of their life and language learning. They had not been as exposed to the language and cultures as my friends had been and thus, were beginning their journey. The pilot study helped me refine my research skills and research questions. It made me aware of important themes that emerged unexpectedly, as well as made me aware that my true aim was to let the

participants and their stories guide me. The themes that emerged from my pilot study included:

- The feelings of empowerment that these women discussed due to their knowledge of the English language;
- The importance of a male guardian's approval of their education in the United States;
- Defining the role of a woman in society;
- Discussions of technology and their approval of censorship.

The pilot study also prepared me for the dissertation by exposing me to the reality of my study and its needs. Being “native” in my study, I understand that there are many unsaid and understood cultural expectations. As I conducted my pilot study, I became aware of the power of observations as I struggled as a native and a researcher. As I sat in class and interacted with the participants, I began to notice things, not only in the participants’ actions, but in my own actions and reactions.

As I struggled in my role during the pilot study, the observations made me aware of my "Saudi woman-ness", if you will. The many cultural roles I had to play became very apparent, especially in the classroom with other Saudis (both male and female). Our talks and movements both inside and outside the classroom made me aware of the cultural borders we share and carry with us. I have never been more aware of my duality and my identity as a Saudi woman living in United States than during my research. I felt

an expectation to belong to a side and yet did not fit in either group according to its members. With the Westerners, I was a Saudi, an insider; I had the answers to the Saudi Arabian world. With the Saudi students and participants, I was a Westerner, yet I had to live by the Saudi Women's social expectations.

One major phenomenon of my Saudi woman-ness I experienced during my study was what I have come to call “the Cultural Dance” that took place between the Arabic-speaking males and myself. The way we synchronized our movement to avoid unnecessary contact was truly art. Having to sometime be a teacher's assistant during the study meant that I sometimes had to help students during class time. It was a strange feeling to walk towards a student as a teacher then begin to realize the cultural borders that bind us, thus we start to shift and move in an effort to control our spaces and observe our cultural norms. It was especially difficult in the computer classes when the control of the mouse became an issue. Even though we were in a different culture, that psyche still permeated. It was a part of our identity, and no matter where we were, our “communal culture” followed and dictated our activities in some way.

Thus, I became aware of my role as a researcher. For the aim of this study, I realized that I had to create a role that moved me away from only being “the researcher” to one that involved my multiple selves. I was the Saudi, the woman, the student, the friend, the one residing in the United States; and only after embracing those multiple roles was I able to get comfortable and get my participants comfortable. As I portrayed all those roles, we were able to share stories, to reflect, and to build friendships. Thus,

my pilot study also made me aware of my multiple selves that must be employed in order to succeed in my aim for this study.

Finally, my pilot study taught me that the best way to truly hear these women's stories was to use open-ended interviews in a comfortable environment. Although I obtained a great number of surveys during the study, I found that many did not understand the anonymity of it. They asked me to help them fill it out, write out their names, and even asked me to wait while they filled it out for me. After reflecting on the issue, I came to realize that research is cultural; that many of my participants have not been exposed to such things and those who completed the surveys did so to please me. Therefore, I decided to drop it as a method of data collection and converted those questions to open-ended interview questions.

Islamic Feminism

The aim of this study was to share the stories told by the participating Saudi women; and in order for this research to be accepted and heard by a wider audience within the Saudi society, an Islamic feminist perspective was employed. This was the reinterpretation of the Islamic teachings using different lenses and voices; and in this case, it was that of the participating Saudi women. It was the use of Islamic teachings to validate actions and reactions, as Islamic religion makes up a major aspect of the Saudi life, and there is no separation between the “church and state”.

Religion governs the day-to-day life; therefore, it makes sense to discuss religion in the case of Saudi women (Gallant, 2008). The Islamic religion "gives a place of great honor to the whole of humanity" (Pharaon, 2004, p. 353). However, due to the many

interpretations of the Islamic teachings, “the traditional Ulama [religious scholars] sometimes ignore the context and select certain verses from the Quran [Islamic text] to prove their point of view” (p. 354). She continued, “all sorts of pre-Islamic and non-Islamic influences had affected the thinking of Muslim jurists” (p. 354).

Therefore, I believe that using an Islamic feminist lens to view the impact of English on the Saudi women's roles and identities will facilitate this study's aims and goals. I discussed this perspective in more detail in Chapter Two.

Definition of Terms

To facilitate the review of the literature for this study, discussed in Chapter Two, there were a few terms I will define now as a preempt:

Religion. Although Islam makes up a very large portion of the Saudi Arabian culture, it is a mixture of the deep rooted histories, traditions, and culture, in addition to religion that prescribe Saudi women's social roles. I made this distinction clear from the very beginning, as it may lead to the acceptance of my research in the Saudi Arabian atmosphere and, thus, it has the potential of reaching those who can benefit from it the most.

Identity. The concept of identity is not one that can be easily defined; but as a constructionist, I viewed it as the way people develop and understand themselves over time, and through their surroundings, a social and constantly changing concept. For the purpose of this study I viewed identity as located within the self (Erikson, 1968), within the social surroundings (Mead, 1934; Tajfel, 1974), and maintained through language (Norton, 1997; Pavlenko; 2004).

Culture. For the purpose of this study, culture was viewed as a web of significant concepts and tools that are manmade. Like the concept of identity, culture is constructed from several sources. It is in the individual and his interactions with his social surroundings (Chang, 2008; Gergen, 1990). It is in the individuals learning and interpretation (D'Andrade, 1990; Pennycook, 1994). Culture is also a tool that provides the individual with power or limits it (Bourdieu, 1991; Ogbu, 1990; Pavlenko, 2001). Finally, through globalization, there has become a shared culture (Featherstone, 1990; Robertson, 1992). For the purpose of this study, I also claimed that there is a third culture (Huhtala & Lehti-Eklund, 2010), one that allows a safe space where one can explore the multiple sources and form a “self”.

The English Language. English was viewed as a tool that provides its user with multiple identities and cultures in which to explore and define the self. This was because I viewed English as a global language (Guo & Beckett, 2007; Phillipson, 2001; Yamani, 2000), a language that provides its user with opportunities in many domains, such as education, business, and entertainment. It is also in the case of Saudi women, a language that carries a particular worldview that differs from their own, therefore creating for most the need for reflection and re-interpretation (Su-Kim, 2003), as well as an outlet (Wetmore, 2008).

Research Design

As I have mentioned, this study aimed at hearing and sharing Saudi women's stories; through their stories, I believe I was able to, as Patton (2002) explained, “offer especially translucent windows into cultural and social meanings” (p. 116). As I looked

through these windows, both from the outside and the inside, I was able to, first as a researcher, make meaning out of the material; second, as a native, I was also able to develop my own voice as I helped raise the voices of others. Thus, multiple in-depth, face-to-face interviews were conducted with Saudi women who were temporarily residing in the United States with the purpose of obtaining an education. The interviews were conducted after meeting the participants in their ESL classrooms, in the setting of their choice, so as to achieve comfort and rapport. This was continued until saturation was reached.

Storytelling

The stories told, the way they are told, and the language used to tell them was the focus of this study. As the participants told their stories, they constructed a reality and created an identity to share (Riessman, 1993). Storytelling was also a way for me to construct, create, and share a self, not only with the participants, but with the reader. Thus, the use of stories fit the purpose and aimed on exploring the impact of English on Saudi women's social roles and identities.

Inductive/Emergent Design

Although I began my research with a specific purpose and research question, I believe that through storytelling, the data guided me. I wanted my participants to tell their stories, and as I listened, the findings and themes emerged from our stories (Schwandt, 2007). Although subjectivity played a major role in the study, from the topic choice to the way it was studied, using the voices of the participants created a study that

allowed both my voice as a researcher and that of my participants to be heard; my voice in the design, their voices in the findings.

Interviews

To share stories, semi-structured interviews were conducted. The questions served as an interview guide; “the interviewer remains free to build a conversation within a particular subject area, to word questions spontaneously, and establish a conversation within a particular subject that has been predetermined” (Patton, 2002, p. 343). To me, this was middle ground; I had an aim and flexibility.

As a “native” aware of the cultural and social environments, I created an interview guide that I believe served the purpose of sharing stories. As Chase (2005) explains:

Once a researcher has a sense of the broad parameters of the story that the narrator has to tell- of what is story-worthy given the narrator’s social location in his or her culture, community, and/or organizational setting- the researcher can prepare for narrative interviews by developing a broad question that will invite the other to tell his or her story. (p. 662)

Memos and Reflections

Who I am has played a major role in all my choices thus far, and will continue to be an important aspect. Therefore, I found memo writing and reflecting vital steps in my methods, as my voice and ideas became emergent through them. This gave me the

opportunity “for self-reflection, indeed critical self-reflection, and self- knowledge, and a willingness to consider how who one is affects what one is able to observe, hear, and understand in the field” (Patton, 2002, p. 299), and this was also reflected in my analysis, as Maxwell (2005) discussed “memos not only capture your analytic thinking about your data, but also *facilitate* such thinking, stimulating analytic insight” (p. 96).

Research Questions

1. What are Saudi women's views of their roles and identities in the Saudi Arabian culture and society?
2. What are Saudi women's views on using the English language, and its impact on their roles and identities in the Saudi Arabian culture and society?
3. How do Saudi women employ the different aspects of their multiple roles and identities?
4. How do Saudi women address changing self versus expected self?

Conclusion

This chapter was an introduction, as part of my graduate dissertation, which highlighted the aims, needs, and goals of the study and how I addressed them. As the study is to explore the impact of English as a second language on Saudi women's social roles and identities, a qualitative emergent study was employed. This chapter begins by giving a brief introduction of the study, including the theoretical and conceptual framework, the methodology, and defining important terminology.

In the next chapter, Chapter Two, a literature review of the relevant studies is conducted. This chapter gives a brief history of Saudi Arabia and the role of women within that culture. It continues by exploring the psychological terms of identity and culture, as well as discussing the role of English and its impact on all of Saudi Arabia, identity, and culture. Finally, it concludes by taking an Islamic feminist perspective.

Chapter Three focuses on the methods employed. Qualitative in-depth interviews with Saudi women currently residing in the U.S. were conducted. The study used storytelling as a method that allowed the findings to emerge from those stories. Analysis included open coding, categorizing, and connecting. Finally, the chapter will end by discussing quality as an aspect found throughout the study; and concludes with the limitations anticipated before the study was conducted, and how they were addressed.

Chapter Four discusses the emergent themes from the data collected through the conversations and stories shared. It begins by giving a brief overview of the sixteen participating women, as to make them more real and allow the reader to connect to their stories and hear their voices. Next, an analysis of the emergent data is attempted. As I came to discover, the themes are an entangled web of meanings and importance. As I tried to artificially separate the findings into neat themes and headings, I used the participating women's voices as much as possible as an invitation for multiple analysis and interpretation from the readers. For the purpose of this study, four major findings were the focus, each including multiple subthemes: the importance of the English Language, the major theme of culture and its different aspects, change and what it meant

to the participating women, the importance of strong role models, and finally, how Islamic feminism was used by the participating women.

Chapter Five, the final chapter, discusses the implications of the findings and brings this study to an end in and of itself. As I sifted through the web of themes and emergent findings, I was able to relate it to the web that is identity and culture, as discussed in Chapter Two. The chapter focuses on three Arabic words that emerged from the stories: confidence, boundaries, and being “cultured” and how they link to change, concluding with how Islamic feminism plays a role. The chapter ends with a discussion on limitations and future research.

2. Review of Related Literature

In Saudi Arabia, women's social roles are changing, and they are becoming more apparent within that society. This study looked at the changing and multiple social and personal roles and identities of Saudi Arabian women raised within the socio-cultural context of Saudi Arabia. It also examined the impact of ESL on said women's social roles and multiple identities. Having conducted the study in an environment where Saudi Arabian women interacted with both Saudi and non-Saudi Arabians also helped in understanding how the different selves played out in different contexts and with different people who may or may not be familiar with the cultural roles prescribed to these women.

In this chapter, I reviewed the literature, defined the terms, and constructed that make up the basis of this study, and answered the research concerns. I began by giving a short history of Saudi Arabia so as to lay a socio-cultural context for understanding the base and background within which to look at the role of women, as well as looking at the impact of education, employment, and contact with outside worlds on these women. I described ideal Saudi Muslim women within that context. I concluded by using the Saudi Arabian framework to look at and understand the psychological terminology of identity and culture, as well as understand the impact of English as a global language. Finally, I concluded by taking an Islamic feminist stance in creating a voice and aiding in the development and movement of Saudi Arabian women.

Background

Saudi Arabia

A vast desert peninsula located between Africa and Asia, it borders the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, and Yemen. Its capital city, Riyadh, is the largest with a population of 4.7 million--followed by Jeddah with 3.2 million and Mecca with 1.5 million--with about 68% of its population between the ages of 15 to 64. Arabic is the official language, although English is quite common in the business, education, diplomacy, and entertainment communities. One-hundred percent of its population declares Islam as their religion, and it is home to two Islamic holy shrines in the cities of Mecca and Medina (Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], 2011).



Figure 1. Map of Saudi Arabia

It is considered one of the most conservative and Orthodox Muslim societies in the world (Clarke, 2007), with a strong Arab culture and Islam shaping the character of its region. By Arab culture, I mean a country where its people identify with the Arabic language, as well as the interpretations and understandings of the various traditions and histories that make up that specific region. By Islam, I mean that the Saudi Arabian life is completely ingrained by the specific interpretations of the Islamic religion, as there is no separation between “church and state”. All Saudis declare themselves as Muslims, and they live their life by its sayings.

Shari’a¹ is the law and constitution of the land. The Sunna² regulates daily life. Al-Shahadah³ forms the Saudi Arabian flag. The King is the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. The two holiest cities in Islam, Mecca and Medina, are in Saudi Arabia, making the country the focal point for over one billion Muslims worldwide. All of these factors regulate and influence the daily lives of the people in Saudi Arabia and are expected to prevail in the future like no other Islamic country on earth. It is believed that Islam will continue to hold together the fabric of Saudi Society in the twenty-first century and beyond. (Pharaon, 2004, p. 349)

Looking back at the history of events that contributed to the making of Saudi Arabia into the state it is today, the first and foremost event was the discovery of oil and the wealth that accompanied it during the 1950's, quickly making Saudi Arabia one of the richest countries and increased its contact with the West, mostly foreign migrant laborers

who brought along their views and lifestyles (Lindsey, 2006). With “unprecedented social and economic development”, health care and education improved vastly.

However, the state was after modernization without secularization, which proved to be a difficult yet attainable challenge (Long, 1997); for example, the introduction of girls' education meant that special segregated schools, curriculum, and training needed to take place.

Due to the rapid movements of modernization and the influences of outside worlds, the 1980's brought in an era of religious revival with the war in Iran, the seizing of Mecca, and the Gulf War, the fear of moving away from Islamic teaching and an increase in materialism took a strong hold on the Saudi Arabian society, further adding to the restrictions on its people, especially women's development (Ochsenwald, 1981).

To summarize the situation in Saudi Arabia, I think Pharaon (2004) stated it best when describing the situation in the twenty-first century:

Present-day Saudi Arabia is one of the largest market economies in the Middle East. It is difficult for both Saudis and foreigners to stand back and realize the true extent of infrastructural development in the Kingdom over the last half a century. From virtually nothing, Saudi Arabia now has a world-class infrastructure network. The revenue from oil has been wisely invested into the modernization of the country in all sectors of the economy. However, Saudi Arabia is facing many challenges as it treads into the twenty-first century. The significant growth in its young population, a substantial decrease in its per capita

oil wealth, and its excessive reliance on foreign labor, all contribute to destabilize its impressive developmental path. Furthermore, with the sudden spotlight on Islam and Muslim societies, and in particular the plight of women, it is hardly surprising that the Saudi society is suddenly squirming under this close scrutiny and torn between admitting the desire to progress and emancipate its women and defending its failure to do so. (p.351)

To conclude, I must mention that changes are taking place and several important events have documented these changes; for example, women were issued independent identification cards in 2002; the first Saudi female pilot was hired by a private company in 2004; and in February of 2005, Saudi Arabia held its first elections ever to choose half of the new council members in Riyadh, while the other half continues to be appointed in keeping with the previous Saudi system. However, less than a third of eligible voters registered, showing that there is still some resistance to change. In addition, women were recently (2011) eligible to vote during the next council meeting; however, it is not clear when that will take place.

Women in Saudi Arabia

Men retain prerogatives in marriage, divorce, and child custody, and also in the Saudi Arabian society, which is very patriarchal with its male members as the head of the family, having total control on all the female members. Their powers are upheld by the Islamic beliefs, which have been totally incorporated into public policy. As discussed earlier, Shari'a laws dictate all aspects of life, including personal, and these laws have

remained unchanged. Doumato (1992) discussed the role of Saudi Arabian women and the practice of polygamy in that

Women are not allowed to travel without the permission of a Mahram,⁴ a policy which is enforced by the state at airline check-in counters, railway stations, and hotels, where women traveling alone may not register for a room. Further, women may not receive a commercial license unless a male manager has been hired, and certain courses, such as engineering, are only now opening up in female universities because it was the view that an employment in engineering is incompatible with sex-segregation (p. 34).

Thus, it is clear that the woman's role is dictated and prescribed by society and its interpretation of religion, mostly focusing on her role as a wife and mother (Mill-Rosser, Chapman, & Francis, 2006). Al- Marayati (1997) further explains that “a Muslim woman’s main function is to produce righteous Muslim children; she is the primary caretaker, in charge of the household and chief supporter of her husband. She is allowed to participate in other activities only to the extent that they do not detract from her primary duties.” (p. 22)

With today's economic needs and the effects of globalization, the picture is slightly different with many educated Saudi Arabian women working long hours outside the home, who are also sometimes the main source of income for their families. However, this does not come without resistance and discomfort of the unknown; for example, in their study, Mill-Rosser et al (2006) explained this phenomena by stating that

many conservative writers express the virtues of women who choose the traditional role: "They argue that the breakdown of Saudi family values is directly related to women's employment outside the home" (p. 6).

The struggle between the traditional ways and the modern world and its needs has created what Pharaon (2004) calls a "schizophrenic" approach, one "which both encourages women to join in the process of development as equal partners and holds them back in their place as secondary actors within the family context" (p. 353). Keddie (2004) believed through women's struggles, between the old and new, that change and "democratization" in Islamic states can take place.

As mentioned earlier, some of the factors that have advanced the Saudi Arabian women's positions to social and economic importance in society include the Gulf War in 1990, which created economic restructuring and increased the funding of women's education. However, this also created a large number of unemployed educated women who could not find "suitable" jobs after graduation. In addition, the end of the oil wealth era created a need for employment outside the house as a financial necessity for many.

In the following section, I discussed the impact of education on Saudi Arabian women due to its clear influence on the change of women's social role. With the transformation of Saudi Arabia from a relatively isolated, predominantly rural country into a wealthy, urbanized nation, there came a demand for a change in the role of women by the new exposed generation. "Education has been one of the major vehicles for the

transmission of external values and is bound to have an uneasy relationship with existing social and familial standards” (Yamani, 2000, p. 49).

Women’s education in Saudi Arabia. Public education for girls in Saudi Arabia has been available only since the 1960s, with only a few private institutes for the daughters of the privileged before then. The first private school for middle class girls was established in 1941 by immigrants from Indonesia and Malawi who came to Saudi Arabia for pilgrimage and decided to stay. Soon, private girls’ schools founded by Saudis began to appear in Mecca, Jeddah, and Riyadh in the late-1940s to mid-1950s. However, these schools were for the daughters of the middle and upper class, and not all members of society could participate.

The main mission for girls’ government-funded, public schools was prescribed in the speech given by King Saud while he addressed the nation on the subject in 1959:

Thanks be to god, we have decided to bring into effect the desire of the Ulama⁵ in Saudi Arabia, and to open schools to teach our girls the science of our religion from the Quran⁶, and belief and fuqaha⁷, and other sciences which are in harmony with our religious beliefs, such as home economics and child rearing, and anything of which the effect on their belief will not make us fear for the present or for the future. The schools will not have any negative effect on our belief or behavior or customs. To this end, we order that a committee be set up, its members being drawn from the

important Ulama, who we trust very much to organize this school, to decide on a program, and to see that it is carried out. (Al Rawaf & Simmons, 1991, p.288)

It is clear from the statement above that girls' education was a mere continuation of people's beliefs of a woman's role in the traditional society: the running of a household, becoming a wife, and child rearing. However, it must be pointed out that the basic education in literacy and numeracy for girls in Saudi was a big step forward.

Even with its limitations, girls' education excelled, the reasons believed to be linked to local gender notions:

Studying hard provides girls with an opportunity to conform to gender expectations while, at the same time, finding their own freedom and recognition therein. Observations in family surroundings showed that girls, from an early age, are trained in obedience, restricted movement, patience and diligence; behavior which they can later apply in their studies. Teachers said that girls are more likely to respond to school authority and discipline than boys; and they appreciate that girls are cooperative, attentive and communicative. Education also gives girls an acceptable "space of freedom" while conforming to gender norms. (Jansen, 2011, p. 28)

However, even with its basic mission, girls' education faced great resistance because people feared that it could destroy the foundation of the traditional extended family and ruin the moral values of those girls. This was reflected in the objectives of

“Dar Al-Hanan” (House of Tenderness), one of the first public schools for girls sponsored by the king’s wife, which were to produce better mothers and homemakers through Islamic-guided instruction (Yamani, 2005). Schools were used to create and maintain the socially acceptable barriers, "social reproduction theorists argue that power relations and domination underlie formal education systems. In this theoretical framework, schools serve to support existing power relations and to socialize young people to play their class and gender roles in these relations" (Adely, 2004, p. 354).

The desire to preserve women's roles in society is clear in a study conducted by Mill-Rosser et al. (2006) where they stated “funding for programs for educating women has been confined to those that prepare for occupations deemed culturally and religiously appropriate, such as teachers and school administrators” (p. 7). Benard (2006) goes a little further by stating that school systems in the Middle East are used as a tool to keep women in their place, “education has begun to lose its significant role as a means of achieving social advancement in Arab countries, turning instead into means of perpetuating social stratification and poverty” (p. 32).

Even with what some might view as shortcomings, the impact of education in helping the Saudi women’s cause is clear; as Bahgat (1999) stated, in spite of social and cultural barriers, the status of women has improved, and "certainly, education has played a pivotal role in promoting this change” (p. 134). Now women have the opportunity to earn an education and obtain a job outside of the home offering her "more resources to

change the nature of power relations in the family to her favor. She may question the norm of wife obedience and reject the institution of polygamy” (Moaddel, 2006, p. 94).

Pharaon (2004) continued this idea stating that it is education which seems to have an importance in changing the position of women; "education, while still limited, has been extended to many more Saudi women than has formal employment” (p. 365). Young women began to view education “as their best chance to escape the tedium and powerlessness of their traditional alternative: lifelong disenfranchisement” (Benard, 2006, p. 41). Yamani (1996) stated that:

Whilst older women remained imbued with the traditional social roles expected of them since they were socialized so as to accept a role as "housewife," the younger generation faces a disjunction between their educational preparation and the roles ascribed to them, which have not changed. This has resulted in younger women trying to take active roles in redefining their social identity. (p. 270)

Women's employment in Saudi Arabia. With more women getting an education, the problem of employment arose: “lack of foresight and planning in the education sector has left the country unprepared for increasing numbers of educated women” (Mill-Rosser et al., 2006, p. 7). Benard (2006) stated that this was due to a mismatch between the education they received and the skills necessary for employment. She believed the solution lied in an educational reform that “must tackle two objectives. First, it should focus energetically on socialization. Second, it should address forcefully the disconnect between the educational system and the economy” (p. 36).

Education, even though important, did not prepare women for the job market, and tradition did not extend much help. Due to the laws of public sex segregation, there were a few “appropriate” jobs available to women, where they could feel “comfortable and relaxed”, as they are used to occupying women-only spaces either for religious reasons, how they were educated, or due to family preferences (Renard, 2008). Vidyasagar and Rea (2004) extend this idea by stating that although literacy rates were higher among women, and there were some professional opportunities available: "the constitution prevents gender equality by restricting their freedom to travel, to education, and to work by requiring the agreement of a male relative" (p. 262).

In the context of education, employment, and the West. While multiple influences and changes were taking place in Saudi Arabia, I viewed education, employment, and contact with the West as most critical to women specifically and the Saudi youth in general. These three factors have allowed Saudi Arabians a view of multiple perspectives and the opportunity to try out multiple selves. With exposure comes questioning (Mezirow, 1997). Yamani (2000) stated that many of the young Saudis she interviewed believed that “a truly independent approach to knowledge, a questioning approach is gained through contact with outside influences such as travel or from foreign teachers” (p. 51). This showed that although great strides have been made in the educational systems in Saudi Arabia, contact with others, whether through employment or media, plays an important role in the overall cultural and social change in Saudi Arabia, especially in the role of women.

Yamani (2000) continued by stating that in Saudi Arabia, independent thinking was discouraged, focusing instead on rote memorization. However, with increased exposure to outside worlds, young people in Saudi Arabia began to "perceive that their education is not allowing them to interact on an equal basis with the rapidly changing wider world that they know exists beyond the borders of Saudi Arabia" (p. 66). Yamani (2005) indicated that education and the cultural exposure from interacting with others have given the younger generation the tools necessary for reflection and questioning of their roles. "The men of the new generation have to decide on their attitude toward the role of women. They are still dominant and have to choose either to continue to restrain the aspirations of their sisters and wives or encourage them to develop the aspirations that education has afforded them" (p. 409).

After having discussed the changes that have influenced the Saudi Arabian youth, I turn now to discuss the role of a Saudi Arabian woman, or what constitutes an ideal Saudi woman, based on personal experience and research.

The ideal Saudi woman

Due to the sex-segregation in Saudi Arabia, there is an image of the "Ideal" Muslim woman, a woman who is a homemaker, taking care of family, and her place is within that family. When at home, she educates the next generation and is the maintainer of tradition. This is the gender ideology promoted in the education and the opportunities for work provided. It is an ideology that first appeared in the fifties when the whole issue of the role of women became apparent with the move towards education. In fact, as mentioned above, this ideology is the cornerstone of the girls' educational policy which

stated that the purpose of educating girls was to prepare her to “perform her duty in life, be an ideal and successful housewife and a good mother, prepared her to do things which suit her nature, like teaching, nursing, and giving medical treatment” (Al-Zaid, 1981, p. 56).

Although other Muslim countries practice sex-segregation, the degree that it is practiced in Saudi Arabia is completely unknown to most other Muslim countries; thus, Saudi Arabia uses this image of the “ideal woman” as a national symbol. The reason this degree of segregation exists could be because Saudi Arabia never experienced colonialism; or that this belief has been incorporated into public policy, “Shari’a laws”. Yamani (2005) explained that the Saudi state uses the role of women as a symbolic gesture of its confirmation to the teaching of Islam, "for example enforcing the wearing of the veil, banning women from driving cars, limiting the choice young women have in education, and guarding the strict gender segregation in all public spheres" (p. 404).

Therefore, the slow change in the Saudi women’s roles is due largely to her symbolic status in society. Pharaon (2004) believed that Saudi women will continue to be manipulated as a symbolic representation of the culture, traditions, and religion of the country. He continued:

Women’s lives are situated in a complex web of influence that derive from personal and political developments, cultural and structural environments, and local, national, and international concerns. At any given time, this web of

influences determines for the individual women what is probable, possible, or out of bounds. (p. 364)

Research has indicated that the focus on women issues have increased with changes. Keddie (2005) stated that "differences in gender status in the Muslim world are greater in modern times than they were in the past" (p. 54); that is because the forces of modernization have increased the public roles of women, even with the growing power of Islam (Keddie, 2004). Smith (2004) noted that women's issues are closely intertwined with nationalism, with their issues used as symbolic of the culture. Deo (2006) continued that women are used as bearers of cultural, traditions, physical and metaphorical issues. Thus, "defining women would allow a nation to define itself...to question these roles became tantamount to questioning the nationalist liberation struggle. This slippage was achieved by the equation of women's roles with the cultural nation for which freedom was being demanded" (p. 106).

In conclusion, Saudi Arabia, although a young nation, has a deep religious history with strong traditional and cultural roots that prescribe both the personal and public roles, as well as playing an important role in creating the peoples' identities. By reviewing the history of Saudi Arabia, women's roles in that culture, and the impact of the changes that took place, I reviewed in the following section the literature on identity and culture using the context introduced above.

Literature Review

For the purpose of this study, the literature has been reviewed with a “Saudi Arabian” lens. I looked at the “terminology” and defined it from a perspective that I believed fitted the needs of Saudi society and its accompanying cultures. Specifically, I looked at these “terms” from Saudi women's perspectives to better accommodate and facilitate their voices.

This study began by categorizing “identity” as a socio-psychological term explained in the context of Saudi Arabia described above, specifically when looking at women. Next, I discussed the impact of language as a symbolic tool on identity in the context of Saudi Arabia, looking into bilingualism and its impact on identity. This section concluded by discussing gender identity and, what I term as, “Saudi Identity” to narrow the focus and make it more specific to my research needs and goals.

This was followed by a short review that discussed the link between identity and culture found in the literature, as they were artificially separated for the purpose of understanding this study. I then discussed “culture”, again, using the Saudi Arabian perspective described above, as a human, interactive, social, local, and global tool. I concluded this literature review by discussing the important role of English as one of different tools with an impact on both culture and identity.

Finally, I used an Islamic feminist stance to view the developments, multiple social and personal roles and identities, and the various cultural impacts on Saudi women. I chose to place this at the end, so as to defend their movement, voices, and needs within the Islamic teaching after having defined their stance. Thus, the “changes” are

considered culturally acceptable, even if not at first. I believe that the Saudi women are gaining a voice through Islamic feminism because it defends their movements, helps them bend the culturally prescribed roles without breaking them, and allows them a stronger voice within that society.

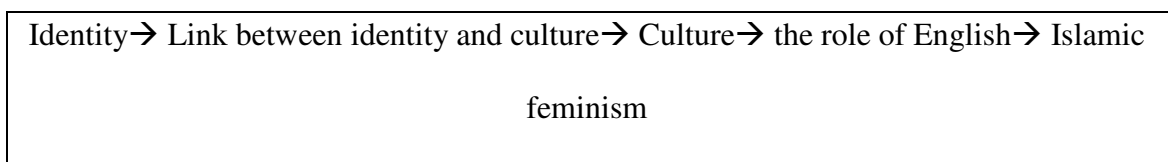


Figure 2. Literature review outline

Identity

I would first like to start by defining “identity” as I see it as a staple in my research. The term “identity” came into the social sciences vocabulary in the 1950’s and is still difficult to define today, as it is an elusive and vague term. This difficulty arises from the fact that identity, although located within the self, has been defined as a socially-constructed and dynamic aspect of that self (Mead, 1934; Norton Peirce, 1995; Tajfel, 1974; Weedon, 1987). Identity, as Erikson (1968) explained, is “a process “located” in the core of the individual, as well as in the core of his communal culture” (p. 22). In addition to being social in essence, identity is also constructed, maintained, and negotiated to a significant extent through language and discourse (Norton, 1997; Pavlenko, 2004).

The difficulty in defining identity also arises from the fact that it is not a free-standing word but a muddled, multifaceted human aspect encompassing the individual, gender, class, race, family, social status, education, vocational, cultural, and national aspects (Jan, 2006; Nespor, 1997; Toohey, 2000; Woodward, 2000). These different aspects are also manipulated, emphasized, and played out differently depending on the situations a self may be in (Yamani, 2000).

As I see it, "Who am I?" can be expressed by looking at those multiple webbed strands (Appendix A) including: the personal self, which includes the physical idiosyncratic attributes; the social context, which includes caste and class and can create and influence self-esteem; culture and tradition, which, along with the social context, create gender roles; and language(s), which creates, along with culture and traditions, the symbolic tools one possesses. As this web is interacting, the self is developing and growing. Through exposure, the self also begins to inquire and reevaluate the question of "Who am I?" As the appendix (A) attached shows, the "strands" that make up identity are entangled and difficult to separate, creating the muddled web mentioned earlier.

This section tackled the definition of identity that best fitted the needs and understandings of this research. Using the above-mentioned, multifaceted criteria, identity was explored by looking at theories in social identity, focusing on the influences of language and gender, as well as, for the purpose of this study, discussing bilingual identity, and finally concluding by discussing Saudi Arabian identity, which is unique to this study and its needs.

Social identity. Identity is not simply a self-construct, as one is never away from the surrounding influences. It is how one interacts with and then interprets the self within those larger social influences. Thus, how one perceives oneself is highly dependent on the environment, "the concept of identity carries the full weight of the need for a sense of who one is, together with an often overwhelming pace of change in surrounding social contexts" (Howard, 2000, p. 367).

In the discussion of the relationship between identity and the social environment, the literature showed that "social identity" has been defined as one's identity developed through contact with the surrounding social environment; thus, a social process (Erikson 1968; Mead, 1934; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This indicated that identity is not something one "has" per se, but something that continually develops as one grows and interacts.

In his "ecological systems theory", Bronfenbrenner (1979) stated that the self develops within multiple systems of relationships that form one's environment. This environment is made up of complex layers, each having an effect on one's development. These include biology (body and brain), family (emotions, language, health, and beliefs), community (schools, values, material resources, and context for relationships), and the social landscape (one's society and culture). He stated that in order to study one's development, there needs to be an effort at not only looking at the self and the immediate environment, but also a closer look at interactions of the larger surrounding environment as well (Figure 1). He noted that the environment is made up of "microsystems", the closest layer with direct contact; "exosystems", the larger social system from which one

does not function directly; and “macrosystems”, which is comprised of cultural values, customs, and laws. This final layer has a major influence on the interaction of all other layers.

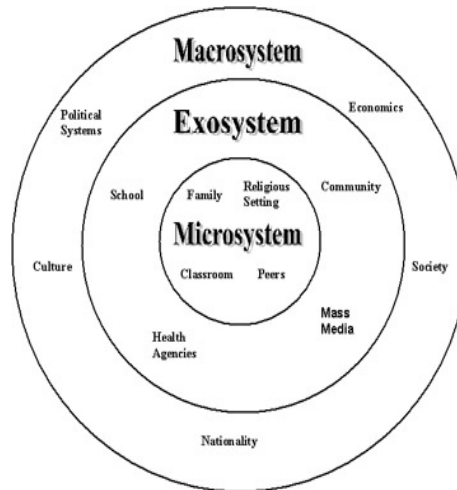


Figure 3. Bronfenbrenner's “Ecological System Theory”

Mezirow (1997), in his “frame of reference” theory, explained that one's experiences, concepts, values, and feelings that define one's world are primarily the result of cultural assimilation and influence of surroundings. One's frame of reference, a meaning structure, is two dimensional: meaning perspective and meaning scheme. In discussing the meaning perspective, Mezirow explained that it is a result of three sets of codes that shape sensation, perception, feelings, and cognition. Sociolinguistic codes include: social norms, language, and ideologies; psychological codes include: personality traits and parental influence; and epistemic codes include: learning styles. Meaning scheme was expressed as a more specific dimension of one's frame of reference--the

collection of one's concepts, beliefs, and feelings that shape interpretation. It is a manifestation of one's perspectives.

Within the social context of identity, “social identity theory” also focuses on the extent to which individuals identify themselves in terms of group membership(s) (the plural “s” indicates that an individual can belong to either one or multiple groups at a time) (Ennaji, 2011; Tajfel and Turner, 1986; Woodward, 2000). In addressing the multiple group memberships a self can belong to, Tajfel (1979) believed that a person may possess several “selves” that correspond with different group memberships triggered by different social contexts. Hogg and Vaughan (2002) also concurred that multiple social identities are driven by membership in different social groups. Thus, "Who I am?" is also based on the self and its relationship with group membership(s), "the central tenet of social identity theory is that individuals define their identities along two dimensions: social, defined by membership in various social groups; and personal, the idiosyncratic attributes that distinguish an individual from others" (Howard, 2000, p. 369).

Tajfel and Turner (1979) explained group membership(s) is composed of three mental processes used to understand where one belongs or does not belong in the social context. These are created by three steps. The first is social categorization where one categorizes people, including themselves, in order to understand the social environment, which helps define appropriate behavior, language use, roles, etc. These categories include race, ethnicity, religion, age, political affiliations, etc. Second, social identification takes place where one begins to identify with the categorized group to

which one belongs. The third and final step is social comparison, which involves one's comparisons between groups. This has a major effect on self-esteem; if the group one belongs to does not compare favorably, that can create low self-esteem and vice-versa. This can create prejudice, rivalry, and competition, not just for resources but favorable identities.

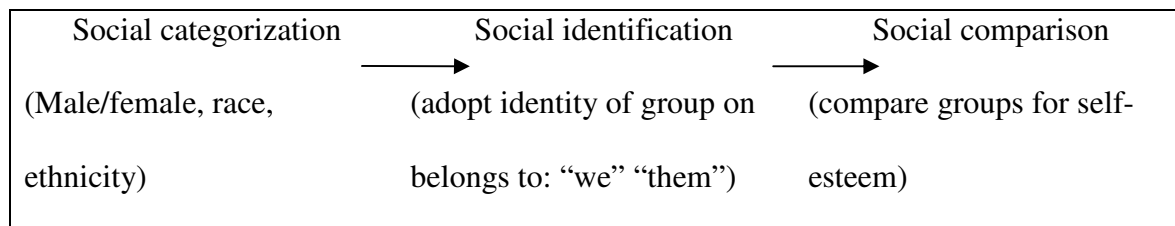


Figure 4. Tajfel and Turner (1979) “Social Identity Theory”

In conclusion, part of identity development involves the continuing interaction between one’s personal developments through their participation in society. This involves, beginning from a very young age, the internalizing of culture, understanding and using the different symbolic tools, being aware of the different statuses and relationships, and playing the different roles prescribed by that society. Its formation means an engagement to a way of being and trying to find a place for oneself. Because of its social construction, it is dynamic. It is also described as dynamic because a community's social values and attitudes may change over time, and individuals can belong to a variety of different communities throughout their lives. I agree with Norton's

(1997) and Bruner's (1986) explanation of identity-identity that it is the way people understand themselves across time and space; therefore, it is changing and growing. Thus, it allows one to continue to construct and create a relationship with the world.

Identity and language. As discussed above, the self arises in and from social settings where social communication takes place. It is not easy to separate language from social settings (this is a part of the muddled definition of identity). It is through language that cultural expectations, ideologies, and social practices are reflected; thus, language becomes the medium through which one develops and negotiates their identity. Mead (1934) believed that within and through communication, one can learn the roles of the self and others and act accordingly, therefore, one's identity is constantly constructed and reconstructed (Norton, 1997).

As Norton Peirce (1995) explained, every utterance or instance of language use is bound by indexical cues of the social and cultural context; therefore, one summons up an image of their social identity through speech.

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. (p. 13)

Language can conjure up both social and ethnic identity. Gumperz (1982) believed that in order to understand the issues of identity and how they are affected by the

social, political, and ethnic contexts, a closer look at the communicative processes is needed, for "talk itself is constitutive of social reality" (p. 3).

Weedon (1987) explained that identity is language, experience, and social power and that it is through language constructions that the relationship between the individual and the social take place. In her theory of subjectivity, she summed up the relationship between language, social context, and the self by stating that "language is the place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and constructed. Yet, it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed" (p. 21).

Bilingual identity. Although research has been conducted on the impact of language on identity, studies stressing the importance of culture and linguistic forms on the shaping of one's expressions and experiences have usually focused on monocultural and monolingual settings, "people are assumed to be monolingual participants in a single culture and to have been socialized to display and embody the self of that single language and culture" (Koven, 1998, p. 411). As research on bilingualism and identity began to appear, the impact of multiple languages on identity construction and social functioning became clear (Norton, 1997; Norton Peirce, 1995; Ricento, 2005; Su Kim, 2003; Watson-Gegeo, 2004). If language is viewed as the locus of social organization, symbolic power, and individual consciousness, learning a second language can be viewed as the participation in new social organizations, social powers, and individual consciousness.

Thus, "because learning transforms who we are and what we can do, it is an experience of identity" (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007, p. 215).

In addition, if identity is situated in language, and language is used as a symbolic tool, bilinguals are then able to perform different identities in the different languages (Pavlenko, 2001, p. 121). Bilingual speakers themselves often recognize the impact and power of the multiple codes they possess on their identity construction. "Language learners are not only learning a linguistic system; they are learning a diverse set of sociocultural practices, often best understood in the context of wider relations of power" (Norton & Toohey, 2002, p. 115). In her findings, Skapoulli (2004) suggests that second language users, through their daily linguistic and cultural practices, are able to possess numerous vibrant and flexible identities. Bilingual speakers manipulate languages to accomplish particular interactions; each linguistic variety creates different pragmatic possibilities. "With this view of language, linguistic variability must have effects not just on how people refer to and explicitly categorize states of affairs but also on what social acts people accomplish through talk" (Koven, 1998, p. 412).

Huhtala and Lehti-Eklund (2010) conducted a study on identity formation using the narratives of 24 university-level, second-language-learning students. The students were encouraged to reflect on their motives, expectations, and goals for studying a second language. They found that what the students were doing through their narratives was to construct a language identity where they link the past, present, and future, and try to create a third place which links their native culture with the L2 culture in a way that

allows the creation of a unique identity. "In their L2 narratives, students try to construct selves that are possible, not only in relation to their studies and their future profession, but to their lives in general" (p. 274).

Second Language Learning and Identity. As discussed above, language plays an important role in creating and maintaining a social identity and allowing the speaker to gain symbolic tools that can be used for the purposes of continuing to grow, develop, and to try and answer "Who am I?" When looking at the learning of a second language, one begins to wonder what social identity motives drive the self to learning a second language. Research has shown that globalization, immigration, acculturation, and motivation play an important role in determining what language is "learned" and how well it is "learned". For the purpose of this study, I looked at adult second language learners and their motives. Below is a discussion of theories that fit the needs of Saudi women who are currently in the United States studying English as a second language. These theories include motivation in learning a second language and the theory of "investment" using the lens of the "self" instead of the traditional intrinsic/extrinsic motivations. The section will conclude by discussing Mezirow's (1997) theory of transformative learning.

Motivation, second language learning and the self. While looking at the questions of motivation in adult second language learning and the effects of globalization and technology that have made the world a smaller, more connected environment, a move towards theories of motivation with concepts of self and identity became necessary. It is

no longer simply looking at learning a second language from the perspective of acculturation or identification with an external reference group; instead it became widespread to look at motivation as an internal process of identification within the personal self (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2009). Motivation, like identity, is socially constructed, complex, and a site of struggle. Thus again, language is more than mere communication, and a second language becomes a part of the "individual's personal 'core,' forming an important part of one's identity" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 9).

Research on motivation and second language learning has shown a link between the self and its goals and expectations in learning a second language in a theory centered around “possible selves” (Carver et al., 1994; Dörnyei, 2005; Higgins et al., 1985; Markus & Nurius, 1986). “Possible selves” represent the individual's ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming. "In this sense, possible selves act as “future self guides”, reflecting a dynamic, forward-pointing conception that can explain how someone is moved from the present towards the future" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 11). Here, there is a link between cognition and motivation. In discussing his “L2 motivational self system” theory, Dörnyei (2005) explained that the success of learners moves beyond integration to a “superordinate vision” that keeps the learner motivated. In this theory, he discussed three components that make up a motivational self system: the ideal second language self, which houses the vision of oneself in the future; the ought-to self, focused on duties and obligations imposed by external authorities; and finally, the second language learning experience, which is the motivation inspired by prior experiences interacting with the present learning

environment. Thus, future hopes and visions of the self work as a motivational force for adult second language learners or a way of investing in the future possible self.

Language as investment in the self. In her research on motivation on adult second language acquisition, Norton (2006) became aware that the theories available did not capture the true complexity of the relationship between power, identity, and language learning. She stated that there needs to be an understanding of, first, the relationship between the learner and their native language and the target language and, then, an understanding of the desire to learn and practice said languages. Therefore, an “investment” in the target language, where the learner expects a good return of their investment in that language, is a better fit for adult learners.

She described “investment” in a language as a connection between second language acquisition and identity. She described investment as:

Language is more than a system of signs; it is social practice in which experiences are organized and identities negotiated ...If learners “invest” in the target language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital... the notion of investment conceives of the language learner as having a complex identity, changing across time and space, and reproduced in social interaction. An investment in the target language is best understood as an investment in the learner’s own identity. (p. 504)

Thus, when a learner speaks or chooses to be silent, they are not simply exchanging information, but they are also organizing and creating a self and how it might fit in the social environment(s). Many learners who find themselves either marginalized or lacking equality may resist marginalization and fight for equality in many different ways; however, what is of importance to second language learning and identity research is that “the very articulation of power, identity, and resistance is expressed in and through language” (p. 504).

Transformative learning. As mentioned above, Mezirow (1997) explained that every adult has a frame of reference (experiences, values, concepts, and feelings) that define their world and how one understands experiences; one's epistemology is primarily made up of cultural assimilation and the influence of caregivers. This frame of reference, he continue, is made up of two dimensions: “Habits of mind,” which are the broad, habitual ways of thinking, feeling, and acting influenced by a set of codes that may be cultural, social, educational, etc. The other is “point of view,” which is the group of beliefs, value judgments, attitudes, and feelings that shape one's interpretations.

He continued that in adults, although habits of mind are durable, it is one's point of view that is under continuous change, especially after reflections on assumptions, actions, and understandings that do not work as anticipated. Therefore, one's point of view is more accessible to everyday reality and different outside environments. Not only is critical reflection "emphasized by those cultures experiencing rapid social change in which old traditional authority structures have been weakened, and in which individuals

must be prepared to make many diverse decisions on their own" (1994, p. 222), it is also due to globalization, where it is now crucial to develop a critical world view. It is in this setting that transformative learning takes place, where through critical reflection on assumptions, one's frame of reference begins to transform.

He explained that his transformation theory is really constructivist in nature; where it is in the way one interprets then reinterprets experience that is central to making meaning and understandings. In his study, he identified 11 phases that the self passes through for significant learning and transformation to take place: 1) Disorienting dilemma; 2) Self-examination; 3) Critical assessment of assumptions; 4) Recognizing that others have had feelings of discontent and transformation; 5) Exploring new roles, relationships and actions; 6) Planning a course of action; 7) Acquiring the needed knowledge and skills; 8) Trying out new roles; 9) Negotiating and renegotiating relationships; 10) Becoming comfortable and confident in new roles; and 11) Reintegration based on new perspectives (Mezirow, 1994).

Therefore, for transformative learning theory, an adult must be faced with a situation or an understanding that does not fit the uncritically and unexamined assumptions one has grown with; and so, critical reflection takes place and changes in epistemology, identity, and roles begin to take place.

Gendered identity. I used a gender lens since I view gender roles and gender identity as a dominant human aspect in the Saudi Arabian social, cultural, and lingual realm. Through cultural and social interactions, one is exposed to the notion of gender,

including the meaning of female/male and appropriate behavior and language; thus, gender roles are prescribed by the environment one is present in. Bem (1981) argued that gender roles are acquired through exposure to the society's gender schema, which is the set of associations linked specifically to males and females. One's gender role identity is then formed as this gender schema becomes internalized and part of the self (Howard, 2000).

In their study on Saudi Arabian women doctors, Vidyasagar and Rea (2004) discussed how their participants faced and identified constraints, as well as opportunities, that are significantly different than those of other women around the world. Their participants indicated that these were frequently a result of gendered attributes within their culture, which they ascribe to Islam. However, they are quick to state that these doctors differed from each other in many ways and shared similar problems with women elsewhere, so as not to generalize.

Research has shown that "gender" is not simply one's sex, set of traits, or roles one occupies, but it is a human, social, and cultural product, one that indicates relations of power produced through interaction (Gal, 1991; Pavlenko, 2001). For research purposes, gender must be studied as "a system of social relations constructed and negotiated in discourse through naming, representation, and interaction practices, and... to investigate effects of gender as a system of social relations on individuals' access to linguistic resources and possibilities of expression" (Pavlenko, 2001, p. 124). Therefore,

it is through discourses that the construction of the socially and culturally powerful/powerless gendered self takes place.

Piller and Pavlenko (2001) extended this idea by arguing that a new language brings about different ideologies of gender which are inherently ingrained in the language. This provides new gendered discursive practices and understandings of gender identity to the speakers of a new language (Skapoulli, 2004); thus, "multilingual and multicultural contexts present a fertile site for investigation of the discourses, because especially visible and severe clashes of multiple ideologies of language and gender tend to occur in distinct linguistic and sociocultural environments" (Shi, 2006, p. 4). Through the use of the second language, one can develop new linguistic forms which create a new voice to express oneself. As a result, second language learning increases the possibilities of gendered self-expression. Specifically, female second language learners may respond to these new gender discourses by assimilating, resisting, or combining the different ideologies of gender in languages, creating a hybrid-gendered identity. This brings to light the reflexive nature of the relationship between language and identity, that is how one's linguistic choices construct a self, and at the same time, how one's perception of gender identity shapes their language.

I must conclude by stating that maleness or femaleness is not simply a binary case; however, for the purpose of this study, the term "gender" was looked at in isolation only for the purpose of understanding:

It is clear that neither is a homogeneous group and that within each category some identities are more powerful than others...the differences found are predicated on a number of factors, which include but are not limited to race, class, ethnicity, geographic region, culture, economic, and social status, occupation, sexuality, religious affiliation, (dis)ability, and age. (Pavlenko, 2001, p. 125)

Saudi Arabian identity. In this section, I defined what makes a Saudi Arabian identity. Although it is not simply one major identity to define per se, I generalized in order to draw a picture for the reader to understand some of the concepts of the Saudi Arabian parameters for identity of the self as a member of that society and culture. I must also add that in this case, I used this term in place of ethnic identity, as Saudi Arabia is largely homogeneous with the Saudi Arabian natives as the dominant majority, with the exception of small minority groups that tend to remain in the marginalized and minority religions that stay in hiding, due to prosecution.

The Saudi Arabian identity is influenced by two major factors: religion and family; religion dictated laws, and the family implements them. From an early age, Saudi Arabians are socialized to be a part of a family, as well as a member of a community, a piece of a whole. What one does can affect the whole; therefore, care is taken as not to pollute but to bring honor to the family and community.

For both genders, identity stems from patrilineal decent. Family name and honor go hand in hand and is carried on by the male members who take on the same tradition. Women are very aware of this influence and its social impacts on their identities, social

roles, economic contributions, as well as their legal dependency on their male guardians (male members of the immediate family, including fathers, brothers, uncles, and husbands).

In Saudi Arabia, the sexes are segregated from a very early age, with women occupying what might seem like invisible public spaces. However, they are currently very active with same-sex schools, banks, shopping malls, businesses, etc. It is believed that although the Saudi Arabian State never truly accepted the notion of equality between the sexes and believed that the role of a woman is to be a good wife and mother, there has been a fundamental change which allowed women the opportunity to participate in the above-mentioned arenas (Bahgat, 2011; Yamani, 2000). Modern education was one of the steps that moved women toward this change; ease of travel, globalization, and oil wealth aided, as well.

As this change is taking place in Saudi Arabia, there is a clash between the traditionally prescribed roles and modern ones. Pharaon (2004) believed that the Saudi women are seen as the “bearers of their culture’s authenticity and are made to serve as boundary makers” (p. 356). Thus, there is a clash between the new generational attitudes, modern necessities, and traditions; and it is the young generation that must understand and mediate these controversies and contradictions, and begin to define a new identity (Yamani, 2005).

Both genders are aware of the impact of change on their identity. Women are aware of the fine line and cultural limitations they must prescribe to, and the men, as

Yamani (2000) explained “have to decide on their attitude to the position and role of women. They are still dominant, and they choose either to continue to restrain or to encourage” (p. 102).

Link between Identity and Culture

It is clear that in the above, although I discussed and defined identity, culture was heavily involved in that discussion, part of the muddled aspect of both terms. In many of the research articles on identity, the aspect of cultural influence was discussed. Bronfenbrenner (1979), for example, discussed the cascading influence of the macrosystems (cultural values and customs) on all other layers of his “bioecological model” discussed above. He continued that cultural beliefs have power over all the other systems, since they become the basis for the sense of self and play a major role in identity formation.

In his “social development theory,” Vygotsky (1986) believed that consciousness is social in origin; that is because all human actions take place in a cultural context. Thus, when looking at human mental functions, one must consider the historical and ontogenetic development (i.e. the cultural development through the internalization of cultural artifacts and social relationships). It is through history, artifacts, and relationships that symbolic tools and signs are created, which are, in turn, used to create, mediate, and regulate relationships with others, ourselves, as well as a relationship between ourselves and the world and, thus, creating one's identity. These tools and signs used for identity formation are created by human culture over time, passed on from one generation to the

next, who then modify them as needed and continue to pass them on. Therefore, human development and individual views of the world are created through interaction with others and the use of the culturally-developed tools.

When the psychological workings of humans are viewed as part and parcel of the historical and symbolical cultural collections of the community and the interactions that take place within it, then the individual and his culture cannot be separated. However, culture alone is not an indicator of human development, but a part of the configurations of it; development takes place within this ongoing, dynamic environment (Mistry and Wu, 2010; Rogoff, 2003; Shweder et al., 2006).

Bruner (1990) believed that culture shapes the mind and provides the raw material to construct one's world and self-conception. Culture, he explained, plays a “constitutive role”, that is because the symbolic systems used to construct meaning are already in existence in a culture and language, which offer the user tools that reflect the community one is a part of. Therefore, he continued, "it is man's participation in culture and the realization of his mental powers through culture that make it impossible to construct a human psychology on the basis of the individual alone" (p. 12). Bruner continued to state that "it is culture that shapes human life and the human mind, [and] that gives meaning to action by situating its underlying intentional states in an interpretive system" (p. 34).

Geertz (1973) continued to show the connection between culture and identity by stating that culture is essentially the assumption that human thoughts are social and public, that thinking and knowing are results of “significant symbols” (words, gestures,

etc.) from one's environment and from which one creates an identity. He continued that the two rely on each other, for without culture, one's actions would be ungovernable, chaotic, and shapeless, "culture, the accumulated totality of such patterns, is not just an ornament of human existence but, the principal basis of its specificity, an essential condition for it" (p. 46).

To conclude, Geertz (1973) drew a picture of the complexity and individuality of the mingled web that is human psychology with all the different parts that interact to make up a unique "self", "one of the most significant facts about us may finally be that we all begin with the natural equipment to live a thousand kinds of lives but end in the end having lived only one" (p. 45).

This section made it clear that to try and divide the two socio-psychological terms is indeed a daunting and difficult task; however, for the purpose of understanding, I created two different sections to clarify to the reader my understanding of this notion and to address the needs of this study. In reality, the two sections I created are one, artificially separated.

Culture

The term "culture", another important part of this study, and another term that is entangled in multiple aspects creating a web of meanings, is made up of the "webs of significance man himself has spun" (Geertz, 1973, p. 5). Tylor (1974), one of the earliest anthropologist, explained that it is "that complex whole which includes knowledge,

belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man [sic] as a member of society" (p. 1).

Today, culture is reframed as a dynamic multi-factorial concept that highlights the many systems and factors that intersect, creating a “web” of diverse, loosely-coupled, and volatile network of symbols and relationships. In addition, every “*self*” *has a culture* that has been acquired from his or her own cultural group. However, each person carries their own individual culture that is a product of the many intersections they face through their lives, including home, school, people, peers, technology, life experiences, etc. All these intersections meet within a given person to create a unique culture that is constantly in movement (change) in response to the different social groups or situations one finds himself:

Culture provides the link between what men are intrinsically capable of becoming and what they actually, one by one, in fact become. Becoming human is becoming individual, and we become individual under guidance of cultural patterns, historically created systems of meaning in terms of which we give form, order, point, and direction to our lives. (Geertz, 1973, p. 52)

What is culture then? It is not part of an objective or tangible reality, but a symbolic stimulus that has roots in many aspects of human experience and psychology (Appendix B). For Goodenough (1957) "a society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members"

(discussed in Ennaji, 2011, p. 318). However, the complexity lies in trying to define what constitutes acceptable “manners” and who defines them.

Adding to the fact that culture is not a static concept further complicates the “term”. As Cohen (2000) stated, culture, as social systems, "not only prepare their succeeding generations to maintain their ways of life, but they also seek to prepare their members for new conditions of life, for new modes of acquiring a livelihood, and for new political realities when these undergo change" (p. 85).

Geertz (1973) added that culture is symbolic and manmade and that man is “suspended” in these webs of meaning: "I take culture to be those webs, and analysis of it to be, therefore, not an experimental science in search of law, but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (p. 5). Mazrui's (2002) definition further indicated the intermingling of the web of culture and its role in identity:

Culture has several functions: it influences people and how they perceive themselves and the world...culture allocates women and men in different roles. Culture also has a communicative function in the sense that it is largely transmitted by language (mother tongue or foreign language). Finally, culture is a basis of identity, as it distinguishes between the “us” and the “other”, and limits the borders of national solidarity. (Discussed in Ennaji, 2011, p. 319)

The following section discusses the different threads that make up the cultural web of this study. It is divided into eight subsections that work together to create the map

attached (Appendix B). I believe, from both the literature and experiences, that culture is a combination of the individual and his interaction with others, which creates social values and symbolic tools learned and constructed within a certain context. This knowledge can bestow its user with power, especially if this knowledge is on a global level. Although I discussed each idea in an individual section below, one must keep in mind that culture, and all its parts, is very difficult to separate; but for the purposes of understanding the study, I have divided culture into eight intermingling components.

Culture as individual, as interaction, and as social values. As discussed earlier, the individual is part of a whole, and the whole is made up of individuals; both rely on each other to exist. Therefore, it can be concluded that culture results from human interactions and relationships where information, symbols, and tools are exchanged. Cultural organization is essentially conditional; it needs individuals to make it up. At the same time, one can still find an individual understanding of culture "which is formed and informed through human interactions; thus, we don't exist as a self individual of culture and vice-versa, in fact we are very social beings" (Chang, 2008, p. 17).

Is culture outside or inside the individual? It is true that humans are bearers of their culture, but they are also active agents within it, who create, transmit, transform, and sometimes discard certain cultural traits, "that which holds the cultural system together--the basis of its viability--is located within the minds of the individuals" (Gergen, 1990, p. 574). In the same breath, the individual needs others to exist; however, they are not

prisoners within that existence, and they have minds that exercise autonomy; and, despite the diversity, there is still a level of shared-ness which binds people together.

Chang (2008) discussed that although the individual is an important aspect of culture, his interaction within that culture is even more important. He stated that an individual can interact with and belong to multiple social groups concurrently, each of which offers a different cultural contribution, which the individual can choose to adapt to or discard.

Thus, an individual shares values with the different social groups he is a member of, and these play a role in the individual's cognitive, emotional, and social functioning. There are also core cultural ideas that are reflected at a collective level affecting customs, norms, practices and institutions (Cooper & Denner, 1998; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1996), all of which are reflected in human behavior or social action (Geertz, 1973).

Gergen (1990) noted that relationships in these social organizations are not only important for physical needs and well-being (i.e. care, food, protection, etc.), but also all personal outcomes become dependent on the interactions within these relationships. Thus, one begins to understand what makes a success, a failure, goals, etc. "The character of the relationship depends, in turn, on the process of adjusting and readjusting actions" (p. 584).

Culture here is defined as creating and being created by the individual and his interaction with other individuals where information, tools, and symbols are exchanged. Each interaction offers the individual the opportunity to obtain or discard the information to create a cognitive, emotional, and social being, who then can contribute to culture.

Culture as socially situated. This section looks at culture from a socially-situated perspective, looking at the physical location of the individual, the relationships and group memberships, and how they are defined by the society. Looking back at Bronfenbrenner's (1979) "ecological system model" discussed in both identity and the link between identity and culture, we now turn to his theory's understanding of culture. He stated that through interaction between the individual and his environment, culture, or societal customs and values, lies within what he described as the "exosystem" (the larger social system from which one does not function directly, but one that has a direct impact on development). Here, the individual begins to create meaning through the relationships and interactions within this exosystem; thus becoming multiple sources of "culture."

These multiple sources become different contexts one finds himself in, and by looking at the interpretation of the different contexts and the interrelationships of individuals and contexts, we then can begin to address the diversity in the psychological processes of how one views himself and how he is viewed (Cooper & Denner, 1998). Geertz (1973) further stated that because of the interpretations and understandings of different situations, culture then becomes "not a power, something to which social events,

behaviors, institutions, or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly described" (p. 14).

When culture is looked at as a context, individual competence can then be defined within the cultural and historical contexts in which one develops. With this in mind, examining the differences in social positions in different social context and their impact on the individual can begin to take place. Thus, an individual who finds himself within a context that is defined as socially positive may find that he has more access to favorable social situations and needs; and those who find themselves in less positive contexts may find difficulty and inequality in access to those same things (Gibson & Ogbu, 1991; Ogbu, 1990).

Individuals in a context also try to understand their social situations by defining their context, categorizing, then re-categorizing others into "us" and "them" (Tajfel, 1986). The categories are usually based on "cultural knowledge and behavior found within the boundaries of particular families, peer groups, and schools... each world contains values and beliefs, expectations, actions, and emotional responses familiar to insiders" (Phelan et al., 1991, p. 53). Here, social identity, as discussed earlier, is constructed within their context and their attitude towards it. The social identity and self definition within a group and context can affect how the individual reacts and interacts with the world and vice versa (Berry, 1993; Brewer, 1991; Cooper & Denner, 1998).

Once an individual defines membership, then the navigating and negotiating of borders takes place. These borders are defined by the context and social membership of

the individual, and it is always a challenge when attempting to move across the multiple worlds; some worlds are accepting of the individual, while others are harder, all depending on the individual's association with his different social contexts (Cooper & Denner, 1998).

Thus, culture is understood here as socially situated and defined as the multiple contexts of an individual and how one moves in, out, and around, all while defining “the self” from the memberships and the ease or difficulty of access, and thus creating boundaries of “us” and “them”, as well as creating attitudes towards each group.

Learning culture. Leva and Wenger (1991) believed that to participate in social context, one must engage in a “community of practice”, that is not just technical knowledge or skills, but it is the involvement in relationships over time. In those relationships, communities begin to develop around things that matter to that context, giving its members a sense of identity. For this community of practice to function, the sharing of ideas, commitments, and memories must be appropriated then generated, as well as the development of resources, such as symbols, tools, and vocabulary (Wenger, 1998). Thus, as Geertz (1973) stated, culture is built on the socially established structures of meaning; in other words, it is what binds the community of practice through things that are shared. Here, it is clear how the context of an individual can bound/limit or work favorably.

D'Andrade (1990) explained "that a great deal of what people do is culturally shaped-- culturally shaped in the sense that both the goals and the means to the goals are

part of a learned and shared system of understandings about the appropriate things to do" (p. 66). Thus, in order to become a full participant in the community, an individual must engage in understanding the context or the socio-cultural environment of which they are a part. This process requires the learning of what is deemed necessary by its members (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Through increased participation, the individual's identity is also developed by learning to speak and act appropriately; the focus then becomes in viewing the learning of "culture" as something that "concerns the whole person acting in the world... [it] is an evolving, continuously renewed set of relations" (p. 50).

Pennycook (1994) discussed that "culture" is the way people negotiate their multiple identities by participating in everyday activities and relationships as members of a group, "namely, culture is 'people's way of making sense of their lives'" (p. 66). From this perspective, culture becomes the act of engaging, learning, and of doing, and not just being (Street, 1993). It becomes a construction and negotiation of the surrounding context based on relationships and learning from a collective disposition and history (Alsagoff, 2010).

Culture construction through human activity. As the individual begins to learn about culture through relationships, language, and symbols, culture then can be seen as a tool constructed to make meaningful adaptations of one's environments. Here, culture and the individual's psychological functions become mutually constitutive of each other (no culture without man and no man without culture) and are based on the belief that the individual's psychological functioning:

Is brought about by human activity mediated through the use of tools (physical tools and objects) and sign systems (language, writing, number systems). These actions then represent culture as symbolically mediated meaning systems shared by a group. The focus is on functions of human activity. (Mistry & Wu, 2010, p. 8)

For Geertz (1973), culture is a historically transmitted system of meanings by which an individual begins to understand their context and learn to "communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and their attitudes toward life" (p. 89). Ogbu (1990) continued that culture allows an individual to understand their own behavior; it also serves as a guide in aiding this understanding, as well as guiding expectations and actions. He stated that culture "can be learned or constructed from what members of a population say (their 'talk') as well as from what they actually do (their 'behavior' or 'action')" (p. 523).

Cultural knowledge as power. As mentioned above, culture is learned and constructed by the individual from the interaction with and the understanding of the surrounding environment. Culture, as capital, can then be viewed as a tool for power. Here, "capital" refers to the knowledge, credentials, and modes of thought that are characteristic of the different classes or groups, in relation to the surrounding context and environment (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Coleman, 1988). Thus, the social surroundings, interactions and understandings are cumulatively used for "institutional support...leads to benefits in the social world, can be converted into other forms of

capital, and can be reproduced in the same or expanded form" (Cooper & Denner, 1998, p. 574).

Using culture as a tool of power within the environment, language/linguistic resources can then be used as a tool for cultural capital because they can be converted into economic and social gain (Bourdieu, 1991; Pavlenko, 2001). As Geertz (1973) mentioned, "our capacity to speak is surely innate; our capacity to speak English is surely culture" (p. 50). Linguistic resources are valued and devalued as a source of capital, creating a "linguistic market place", "where linguistic capital can be converted into economic and social capital. The value of a particular linguistic variety derives from its ability to provide access to more prestigious forms of education, desired positions in the workforce or social mobility ladder" (Pavlenko, 2001, p. 122).

Globalized culture. Having discussed culture, as situated within a certain context, I turn now to a globalized culture and its specific role in creating a desired cultural and linguistic capital. With media and globalization making the world more connected and seemingly smaller, the world then becomes, in the global context, a somewhat singular place through a variety of historical, economic, and power-related trajectories, such as hegemony of a nation's power, economic trading, religious influences, international institutions, commercialization, communication, and technology (Featherstone, 1990; Robertson, 1992).

Lam (2006) discussed globalization as:

An umbrella term for what is taking place around the world in association with global integration of economics, rapid media and information flow facilitated by new communication technologies, international migration of labor, the rise of transnational and panregional organizations, and resultant cultural transformations challenging traditional social structures. (p. 214)

With media outlets, such as television programs, sports, music, and advertisement rapidly traveling the globe into different contexts, a conflict between the immediate context and this global one may take place. However, the individual who receives both the local and global context is not just a passive receiver, but one who digests and reflects on the information received (Featherstone, 1990). Thus, there is not one global culture, but cultures with a plural “s”, indicating that although information is rapidly spreading across the globe, it is understood and applied within different contexts for different reasons and purposes.

Globalization is also creating greater fluidity and multiplicity in the identity formation of the individual's psychological self (Arnett, 2002; Hermans & Kempen, 1998; Jensen, 2003; Suárez-Orozco, 2004). Media and popular cultures spread by globalization have become sites where young people especially, interact with diverse cultural materials and images and develop social affiliations. However, I must mention again that these individuals are not just recipients of the forces of globalization; they are actively playing a role in reshaping and recontextualizing the materials for use in their particular context (Featherstone, 1990; Lam, 2006).

Popular culture is an even stronger influence on the younger individual as "it is more widely disseminated and easily transportable; it is tied more directly to kids' core concerns and issues, such as gender, sexuality, race, violence, and power" (Nespor, 1997, p. 163). Pop culture is also a key factor in creating the young's identities; it is usually tied to their core concerns and interests, and it helps in shaping their identity. Individuals manipulate the many symbols in the media and pop culture to move in and out of their funds of knowledge to convey different identities and their belonging to different contexts as needed.

Third culture. With globalization bringing in different corners of the world and allowing the individual different identities and contexts to explore, a “third” culture becomes a safe place where one can experience and form identities based on the multiple contexts, languages, symbols, and tools available. This is a place where borderlines are drawn and crossed, creating a hybrid space "between the native language/culture and the target language/culture, but cannot be reduced to either of these. It is a transformative construction of the individual learners" (Huhtala & Lehti-Eklund, 2010, p. 279).

Culture and language. To conclude this section on culture, and as a transition to the next topic of the role of the English language, I turned to the symbolic power of language on both culture and identity. Language offers the individual not just a means of expression, but of understanding, doing, and becoming. Stepping back to look at the global culture and its global language, one witnesses the dominance of English. As discussed, a global culture is generated from within a particular time, place, and practice;

and today, it is within a Western setting "we are slowly becoming aware that the West is both a particular in itself and also constitutes the universal point of reference in relation to which others recognize themselves as particularities" (Featherstone, 1990, p. 12).

Although I agree that the West, as a culture and a language, is dominating, unlike others (Phillipson, 2001), I do not see Saudi Arabia as a country that struggles against the dominance and colonialism that comes with the global culture and language. One reason could be that Saudi Arabia has not been colonized by the West and, thus, does not feel like it is a minority culture or that it might be marginalized. It is true that English has become the “gateway” to education, employment, and financial means; thus, becoming a privilege to those who can gain it and a disadvantage to those who do not, may be mental colonization. However, in my experience, “linguistic imperialism” (Pennycook, 1995) has not taken place in Saudi Arabia. I don’t see it viewed as a language loss, but a gaining of a new perspective; and I don’t believe that the Arabic language will ever be in jeopardy, as it is important for religious purposes, which, as discussed earlier, has a strong influence on the culture and identity. I also believe that being bilingual is an asset and not a liability (Kubota, 2004; Li, 1999). As a bilingual speaker, the individual possesses the point of view of both an insider and outsider, critically examining and absorbing what both languages and cultures have to offer. What has become apparent is the need for research in the area of English language use and effects in Saudi Arabia.

What is taking place, I believe, is what Kraidy (2001) called “glocalization”, a global outlook adapted to local conditions. Glocalization emphasizes the interaction of

both global and local forces in specific socio-cultural contexts where local actors can claim their ownership of English and act as active agents to engage in different creative practices" (Guo & Beckett, 2007, p. 127). Therefore, the individual in Saudi Arabia is, I believe, taking the global and using it to benefit the local, especially in the case of Saudi women who use their global knowledge to advance their positions while, at the same time, remaining within the culturally-accepted roles.

The Role of English

For the purpose of this study, English was looked at as a tool that plays an important role in the movement of the Saudi Arabian society and the changing of women's roles and identity. English was chosen as one of the many tools, which include, but are not limited to, technology, improvement in education, economic needs, and population growth, etc. I chose to focus on English language for this study due to my personal experiences, educational background, and future goals of becoming an English educator to Saudi Arabian women. This section answers why I chose to focus on English as a tool aiding in the changing of women's roles and identities.

As discussed above, English is currently the global language, and "as a global language, English has become a requirement for decent employment, social statues, and financial security in various parts of the world" (Guo & Beckett, 2007, p. 121). The English language has such great power and high statues in almost all the world; in fact, it is an official language in 52 countries. There are about 350 million people who speak English as their second or foreign language, and about one-third of the world's population

understands and speaks it to some degree (Ethnologue, 2005; Ricento, 2005; Su-Kim, 2003). It is the international language of the world and has become the dominant global language of communication, entertainment, diplomacy, international politics, commerce and business, etc. (Guo & Beckett, 2007; Phillipson, 2001).

One must remember, however, that “all languages carry within them a particular worldview and a particular culture” (Su Kim, 2003, p. 156). This indicates that a language and its culture cannot be separated. Mentkowski et al. (2000) added that a “language cannot be separated from culture, so a change in language can both signal and prompt a change in culture” (as quoted in Al-Salem, 2005, p. 26). Thus, while teaching a foreign or second language, one must remember that it involves more than the mere knowledge of “teaching approaches and pedagogy. It requires, among other things, that teachers be aware of the students’ value and belief systems, as these aspects shape their attitudes towards the language” (Mohd-Asraf, 2005, p. 116).

With the introduction of new cultures through the English language, whether in the media or education, critical reflection begins to take place, even if it is simply the questioning, and this is most apparent in the changing roles and the creation of multiple selves in those who possess access to multiple languages, as discussed earlier.

In Saudi Arabia, specifically, an effort for modernization and urbanization meant a growth in English stature.

English is the language of instruction and of technical knowledge, and it is crucial for success in the secular fields of business, commerce, higher education and government. Therefore, proficiency in spoken and written English becomes a

status symbol, a marker for the ability to obtain private education and to travel abroad, and a sign of cosmopolitan life style. (Yamani, 2000, p. 58)

Jan (2006) extends this idea by stating that in Saudi Arabia, “English is taught not only as a specialty in itself as language and literature, but also as a medium for other specialties to enable the students to read books and research written in English in their fields” (p. 5).

Along with being the language of status and power in Saudi Arabia, I believe that English is also an outlet to many. It is used to bypass the censorship applied by the government, since many articles written in English are overlooked. Therefore, the Saudi Arabian public is able to get its hands on materials and ideas that they would not have been able to in Arabic and are able to somewhat express themselves without reprimands.

For example, in a study conducted by Wetmore (2008), he found that over 65% of the blogs maintained on <http://saudiblogs.blogspot.com/> are in English. It is clear from his interviews that “the English blogging community is perceived to be more liberal in general than the Arabic blogging community” (p. 4). English has become a powerful tool in expressing the Saudi self, as Wetmore stated “many believe blogs written in Arabic are likely more closely monitored than those written in English, for the main reason that many government officials cannot speak English” (p. 9).

However, in understanding the Saudi Arabian culture, Wetmore continued and warned that even here, there are certain “red lines that are not to be crossed... the denigration of specific figures in government or religious circles is considered taboo by many bloggers. Direct criticism of Islam is also very uncommon... but for the most part,

it seems bloggers say what they want to say” (p. 5). I believe that this gives a glimpse into the multiple identities a Saudi Arabian must create, and how to be controlled in a somewhat free environment?

Although the Arabic language is a large part of Saudi Arabian cultural identity, the English language is one of prestige and used by the elite. It is one of power and freedom, even if slight. Once only spoken by royalty and businessmen, English is now part of secondary school curriculum in public schools and from as early as daycare in private schools. People are realizing the importance of a second language, particularly English, for the education and employment of their young ones. However, more research needs to be conducted on the connection between the English language and the Saudi Arabian identity, part of which I tried to uncover in this study.

Islamic Feminism

Having introduced Saudi Arabia and the cultural, social, and historical role of women in that context, then turning to the literature to understand and define identity and culture as applicable to that context, and exploring the importance of the English language as a tool in aiding reflection and change, I turned to look at Islamic Feminism. For the purpose of this study, I used Islamic feminism as a stance to give voice and aid in the development and movement of Saudi Arabian women.

I began, however, by first stating that I do not use the word “feminism” in the Western context, which does not truly capture the struggles and needs of the Muslim women. In fact, many times issues, such as driving or the veil, are brought up as major

issues of human rights being violated. However, these are not issues to the Muslim women themselves who have other more pressing issues, such as work or social rights. Thus, the West has victimized these women without their consent and not in the proper picture (Ahmed, 1992; Haddad & Esposito, 1998; Jawad & Benn, 2003). In Gallant's (2008) discussion of feminism in the Arab world, she noted that the world "feminism" is usually associated with the Western world, and that any discussion of feminism in the Arab world must also consider religion.

Deo (2006) stated that Western feminism has frequently misunderstood Muslim women's rights, which have led to the "degradation of their status and curtailment of their rights" (p. 106). This unsolicited attention also neglects the more pressing concerns of Muslim women, who find that they have to fight long battles to distance themselves from that understanding of feminism and have become vulnerable to claims of in-authenticity (Deo, 2006).

Research indicates that Muslim women's issues are indeed a fascination as well as a cause for confusion, and the situation has not been helped by the western understanding of feminism (Karmi, 2005). Keddie (2004) continued:

Part of the problem is that the struggle for women's rights in the Muslim world, as in other non-Western regions, has often been attacked as a Western colonialist phenomenon... Associating women's right struggles with subservience to the West makes these struggles more difficult. It also helps account for intellectual

efforts in the Muslim world and elsewhere to demonstrate that Islam and the local culture were originally and fundamentally egalitarian. (p. 27)

Deo (2006), therefore, stated that "many groups outside the North reject the term feminist and instead call themselves “women-ist” or just women's groups. Therefore, I felt the need to remove myself from this term of western feminism to one I believed would be more accepted by my intended audience and for the need of my research, Islamic feminism.

Women groups in Muslim worlds began by focusing on improving women's roles in society, concentrating on issues, such as education, health and child care, and financial needs. It is clear, upon closer inspection, that although these issues are social in nature, they were very much political, as well, because they touched on those realms usually controlled by those in power, i.e. Ulema and elites (Keddie, 2008). However, these women groups knew that "the only weapon they can use to fight for human rights in general, and women's rights in particular, in those countries where religion is not separate from the state, is to base political claims on religious history" (Mernissi, 2005, p. 37).

Research has shown that human rights are not contradictory to Islamic teachings (Afkhani, 1995; Mir-Hosseini, 1999); some show that it is the religious institutions that are patriarchal (Afshar, 1998). Yamani (2005) continued that the fact that Muslim women's current challenges “seem” to have a foundation in an Islamic discourse, means it has an impact on a larger number of women, "irrespective of their social background.

It also means that the demands for greater equality are made with reference to Islam garner legitimacy within wider Saudi society" (p. 404).

Women's issues are a central and integral part of Islamic discourses; Islamic feminism is, thus, the rereading and reinterpretation of the old Islamic text from multiple perspectives in search for answers and solutions, i.e. "Islamic alternatives", to the modern problem of the changing Muslim woman status and the need to accommodate their needs and aspirations (Mir-Hosseini, 1996). Therefore, Muslim women rely on the teachings of Islamic discourses as a source of human rights, freedom, and equality. The Quran has always granted women economic and social rights; for example, Muslim women had inheritance, property, and wealth rights "in their own names even after marriage, without obligation to contribute that wealth to their husband or their family" (Vidyasagar & Rea, 2004, p. 262).

Yamani (2005) stated that when looking at women's rights in Islamic countries, one must disregard the Western definitions, instead focusing on the Islamic social and cultural ones. Although there are many conservative interpretations which assert the patriarchal and familial roles used to protect a woman's honor, educated women in Saudi Arabia are aware of the Islamic laws that recognize the "financial and civil rights of women in relation to men, thus allowing women a measure of independence" (p. 403).

In Saudi Arabia, Yamani (1996) continues:

The current social circumstances of the country have caused an identifiable strand of Saudi women to make Islam the vehicle for expression of feminist tendencies. They have, in an alluring way, sought their sense of power, their sense of identity, their freedom, and their equality with men through the basic precepts of Islam. (p. 263)

In their study conducted with Saudi women doctors, Vidyasagar and Rea (2004) identified Islamic feminism as the achievement of a space for and by Muslim women, a space of autonomy "and a career in a society that inconsistently forbids and permits professional autonomy and women's caring role" (p. 265). They explained that society is caught between the need for a balance of the ancient culture and the power of globalization, where social changes are both controlled yet encouraged.

This paradox of the ancient and modern has created a need for Saudi women to understand and define their experiences and "search for an authentic identity coherent with traditional Muslim culture, yet consistent with women's goal of increased opportunities" (Yamani, 2005, p. 405). Thus, I chose to view the changes using the Islamic feminist stance to aid in creating a balance in this paradox between the modern and the cultural.

Conclusion

This chapter examined and defined the socio-cultural context of Saudi Arabia by giving a short history and background. This led to trying to define the role of women in that context and the impact of the changes that have taken place, such as the oil wealth,

education, employment, etc. After creating a foundation, this chapter highlighted the psychological terminology of identity and culture and how they can be defined and understood in such context. The impact of English as a global language and how it may affect the social roles, identities, and perspectives of Saudi Arabian women, as well as, the stance of that culture on women, is discussed next. Finally, this chapter took the stance of Islamic feminism so as to allow the voice of the study's participants to be heard and accepted, to help in bending the culturally prescribed roles without breaking them, and to reach a large number of audiences.

In the following chapter, Chapter three, I discuss the methodology. The methods employ a qualitative in-depth interview with Saudi women currently residing in the United States. I believe that by using these women's stories and allowing their voices to be heard, it aided in what I understood and gained as perspective of this study, which is the impact of English as a second or foreign language on the Saudi woman's roles and identities. It must be stated that no generalization was made, as it was clear from the literature review that the concepts used, both identity and culture, are dynamic, shifting, individual, and collective; thus, the goal was to use these women's voices and allow the findings to emerge from them.

3. Research Design and Methodology

As discussed in the previous chapters, women in Saudi Arabia are exposed to different opportunities that were not available, or particularly acceptable, to generations before them. With the influx of technology, oil wealth, and the accompanying development and growth of the country, as well as the individual economic needs, Saudi women are finding that they must expand their culturally-accepted roles and create newer ones in order to adapt to those needs. In addition, and in order to accomplish such goals, I believe that Saudi women have had to create and employ multiple identities to coincide with the multiple roles. One of the tools, which has given these women an opportunity to expand, blend, and create their roles and identities, is English as a second or foreign language.

In this chapter, I discussed the methodology employed. A qualitative, in-depth, interview-focused study was conducted with the aim of giving voice to and gaining insight into the multiple social roles and identities of Saudi women. This study was designed to examine the changes taking place in the roles and identities of Saudi women, who have become exposed to ESL, and who have, therefore, expanded their participation and role in the Saudi Arabian society. This study investigated the relationship between language and the creation of multiple identities and roles of Saudi women currently studying in ESL classes in the United States, with the goal of returning

to Saudi Arabia once they obtain a college degree (either graduate and/or undergraduate). I also explored the concept of fluidity of multiple identities and social roles, along with the notion of change and what that means to young Saudi women and what it might look like from their perspective.

In order to give voice and gain insight into the multiple social roles and identities of Saudi women, the following research questions were discussed:

1. What are Saudi women's views of their roles and identities in the Saudi Arabian culture and society?
2. What are Saudi women's views on using the English language, and its impact on their roles and identities, in the Saudi Arabian culture and society?
3. How do Saudi women employ the different aspects of their multiple roles and identities?
4. How do Saudi women address changing self versus expected-self?

In light of the research questions, Question one aimed at trying to come to an agreed upon understanding (between myself and the participants) of the different roles Saudi women portray within the Saudi Arabian society, as well as, discussing the different identities that are employed in order to accomplish said roles. I wanted to gain insight into how Saudi women view themselves and their roles within the Saudi Arabian society. I also wanted to examine my own understandings, along with the participants', of societies' expectations of Saudi women, i.e. the culturally-prescribed roles and selves.

In Question two, my aim was to learn about the different reasons these women were learning English. Getting a glimpse at why they were learning English at

the time of research, and how they might have used it, and for what purposes, helped me understand the different perspectives and roles they engaged in. For example, when and how did the participating women discuss using English and for what purposes? Tapping into these different roles helped me understand how and why they used English, and what it meant to their culturally-prescribed roles and identities.

With Question three, aimed to understand the boundaries of those multiple roles and identities, as well as, how they may be employed in different contexts. It also focused on understanding when and where these multiple roles and identities may be applicable; that is, what are their limits or exceptions to the understanding of Saudi women's roles? Also, it addressed, to a lesser degree, how these women interacted with others from different parts of the world, who may or may not be familiar with their social and cultural roles.

Finally, Question four emerged from the data in discussions of change and gender roles, and how the participating women played and employed multiple roles. These roles were due to a combination of new discoveries of the self and the expected roles of the self. This research question aimed at understanding how the participating women comprehended, addressed, and carried out multiple roles in Saudi Arabia.

Methods

This section addressed my reasons for conducting an in-depth qualitative study of Saudi women, attending an ESL program in the United States with the hopes of attending an American university, then returning to Saudi Arabia once their studies were completed, to achieve my purpose.

First, this study was kindled by personal background and reflections. Looking back at who I am and how I got here, I became aware of the role English played in my identity as a Saudi woman and the different roles I was able to create and employ, within and outside the Saudi Arabian society. Through my literature search, I became aware that there was little research on this topic, and as a result, I began looking at myself and my identity as a Saudi woman, why I believed what I believe, and why I chose to examine this topic. I was in a constant state of reflection, self-negotiation, and exploration.

Second, this study was designed to look at others, like myself, hearing their stories, and making our perspectives and voices heard. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) discussed that qualitative research is composed of the use of multiple empirical materials, including personal experiences, life stories, interviews, cultural and historical products, observations, and interactions, all of which described meanings to individuals hoping to get a better understanding.

Although my participants were others like myself, I tried to give voice and share perspectives with others. Schram (2006) discussed that capturing the individuals' points of view, unique perspectives, and the use of the different subjective lenses of all those involved, is part of the context of qualitative findings. By bringing the participants stories to view, I wanted to “bridge inter-subjectivity” (Weiss, 1994). This aids the readers in grasping a situation from the inside and in seeing things from the perspective of those involved: "quotations from interview material can help the reader identify with

the respondent ...by presenting events as the respondent experienced them, in the respondent's words, with the respondents' imagery" (p. 10). Thus, this study was exploratory in that I let the data "speak for itself" (Glesne, 2006) to represent all the different voices and lenses of the study. My study, therefore, became an inductive, emergent one, where I learned more about myself and my study through the data and data collection.

Finally, and after having mentioned the above, I believe that the world can be defined in many ways using different lenses and that no one way of knowing is right. Therefore, it may not be easy to understand one's way of thinking, as there can be many, even sometimes conflicting, versions of "truth". As human beings, we are constantly in a state of constructing and making sense of the world around us using our histories, languages, socio-cultures, and shared understandings that are passed from one generation to the next (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Glesne, 2006; Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Schwandt, 2007). Thus, I feel I shared the constructivist perspectives in that the world, and its meanings differ from one individual to another, and it is in a constant state of change. My aim, as a researcher, was to try and understand those different complex and constructed realities, "how people view an object or event and the meaning that they attribute to it is what is important" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 27). However, this was presented through my "own construction of other people's constructions of what they... are up to" (Geertz as discussed in Schram, 2006, p. 45).

Design

Having stated my reasons for conducting a qualitative study, I discussed what I viewed to be a natural fit for my research needs, design, and goals.

Storytelling. With the aim of wanting to hear the voices of my participants, as well as my own, telling and listening to stories was an important aspect of my study. Having participants share their perspectives and views, language became very important because it was the tool used to create and share the different lenses, "language is understood as deeply constitutive of reality, not simply a technical device for establishing meaning. Informants' stories do not mirror a world "out there." They are constructed, creatively authored, rhetorical, replete with assumptions, and interpretive" (Riessman, 1993, p. 5). Through the construction of realities, I believe that storytellers were also claiming an identity and a way of being, as well as a way of being heard and viewed; therefore, the stories are "suited to studies of subjectivity and identity" (p. 5).

My identity, created through my own stories, also became an integral part of my study. This made interviews a venue for the exchange of views. It was a very personal activity, and I agree here with Krieger (1985) who saw her interviews as "intimacy situations" because it required proof of herself. She explained "I wanted, during the interview sessions, not only to know each of my interviewees, but also for them to know and care about me. I reacted as if it were a denial of myself when an interviewee did not seem to care" (p. 315); therefore, the whole process for me was one of personal and emotional investment. "I decided that my feelings concerning this were so strong because of the fact that I shared an intimate identity stake with all the women I

interviewed" (p. 316). She was part of the community she studied, just as I was a part of mine, and, thus, we must engage with this community and act according to its rules, both inside and outside our research, therefore, creating this desire to be accepted and understood.

Because storytelling was used for meaning- making, sharing views, and creating identities, it "must be preserved, not fractured, by investigators, who must respect respondents' ways of constructing meaning and analyze how it is accomplished" (Riessman, 1993, p. 4); thus, having an emergent design allowed me, as both the researcher and a member of that community, to share the different voices and perspectives with others.

Inductive/emergent design. As stated above, storytelling is an integral part of my research. Wanting to create a venue for my participants to share their voices and perspectives, I let the data (i.e. stories) speak for themselves. I began my research with a specific purpose and aim, and I looked for that in those stories. As Gergen, (1990) discussed, "the search for understanding itself proceeds on assumptions that ultimately shape or delimit the conclusions that may be drawn about others' conceptions of the person" (p. 570).

However, I still believe that I let the data guide me. As Schwandt (2007) explained:

The fieldworker seeks to portray and understand some problem, event, or issue and should have given careful thought in advance of undertaking the fieldwork

how that understanding can best be developed and how claims made about the meaning, cause, or accomplishment of human action can be warranted. (p. 80)

Thus, I went into the field with my beliefs and understandings, and what was emergent then was my analysis of the stories told and not my design; and therefore, I afforded subjectivity in my design, while I allowed the analysis to be emergent.

Glesne (2006) discussed the importance of subjectivity in qualitative research: “subjectivity is always a part of research from deciding on the research topic to selecting frames of interpretation” (p. 119). However, he warned that there needs to be awareness of one’s subjectivity, which can “shape, skew, distort, construe, and misconstrue what you make of what you see and hear” (p. 123). This is what Maxwell (2005) called “bias”, “something whose influences needs to be eliminated from design” (p. 37). I took into consideration the issues of bias verses subjectivity, and although I knew the importance of subjectivity, for I am “the instrument of the research” (p. 38), I tried to eliminate bias by reviewing my interview questions, trying to make them neutral of persuasion, using follow-up questions, conducting a preliminary study (as well as a pilot study), and soliciting feedback whenever possible, all while reflecting and noting the reasons for bias, “because the human being is the instrument, [this] requires that the investigator carefully reflect on, deal with, and report potential sources of bias and error” (Patton, 2002, p. 51).

Participants

For my research, I decided to use purposeful selection. I wanted to know more about a certain group, a group I belonged to, and so, I created a flexible criterion. Glesne (2006) noted “qualitative researchers tend to select each of their cases purposefully” (p. 34); he explained that that is done in order to select “information-rich cases” that can lead to important issues to the research. Weiss (1994) discussed two categories for potential respondents in qualitative studies: those that are experts in an area, and those who, when taken together, can adequately display what happens within a population affected by a situation or event. For my study I used the latter, described as “a sample of representatives”.

My criteria were young Saudi women (between the ages of 18-35), because it is this generation that experienced the current situation, made choices, and contributed to changes. They were from middle class backgrounds, which may have meant that they attended private schools and, thus, had some exposure to English at a younger age and access to media outlets and travel. My participants were also learning ESL at an American institute at the time of the interviews with the hopes of gaining acceptance to an American university for either graduate or undergraduate degrees, and then planning on returning to Saudi Arabia once they obtained their degrees.

The reason for these choices was because I felt that the younger Saudi woman was at a place in her life where she was making choices that could affect her future, such as education, work, marriage, etc. My participants were also in the process of learning

English and, because I believe that every language is embedded with a culture, I was interested in how the U.S. culture reacted with their own cultural background, and how that affected their identities and created new roles. I was also interested in their perspectives and hearing their stories of how they were living and going through the process of defining their new roles and identities. I chose English as a medium or tool for change, as it was a globalized language that offered many different world perspectives and opportunities, as well as being the Western language most often learned by Saudi Arabians, particularly those studying abroad. In the choice of an American environment, my participants were able to employ both the new and old roles and identities in their interaction with both Saudis and non-Saudis.

I met all of the participants at an English language program in the northeastern part of the U.S., one that I have been involved with in the past, both through work and by having friends and family enrolled there. I then expanded this circle by meeting others through snowball sampling, as needed. I interviewed sixteen participants, and although I could have interviewed more, I felt that for the purpose and needs of this study, saturation was achieved. This was important because my selection of participants led to my final design, that is, my research questions emerged and were defined by those who shared their stories with me.

Setting

I began by introducing myself to some participants in their ESL programs as an observer/class assistant, and met others outside of classrooms as a Saudi PhD student

interested in conducting research. The interviews, however, all took place in more casual settings of the participants' choices and preferences. We met a minimum of one to a maximum of four times, anywhere from a 30-minute to 45-minute interview, depending on the participants' willingness and availability. All interviews were audiotaped. Follow-up interviews were also conducted with most participants when clarification or elaboration was needed, or if the participant wanted to meet again.

In the choice of this ESL program in the northeastern part of the U.S, I looked at my participants within a certain context. In this context, I believe that the participants have been introduced to new environments that offered the opportunity to step outside the cultural limits and expanded their understandings of culture and its boundaries. Yet, it was one in which they interacted with many other Saudis who carried that culture as well, and negotiated the new environment, and created new cultural limits, because this program was made up of over 75% Saudi Arabian student population (based on statistics posted by the program).

The large number of Saudi Arabian students in this particular program can be ascribed to many factors, including the location of the Saudi Arabian embassy and cultural mission, the availability of a direct flight from Saudi Arabia to this location, as well as the recommendation of friends and family. This program offered me, as the researcher, deep insider knowledge, as I was involved with the program both personally and professionally, thus, gaining access, as well as information, regarding the multiple

roles Saudi Arabian women employed in an environment that provided contact with both Saudis and non-Saudis.

Researcher Perspective and Role

I entered this research as a Saudi woman who spoke English, who has lived significant parts of her life in both Saudi Arabia and the United States. My interest has been identity and its development in Saudi women who were facing challenges defining their identity due to their immersion in two different, and somewhat conflicting, worlds. In particular, Saudi women remain the symbol of Islamic culture because of the sex-segregation and the veiling of women, which are still the only truly visible and easily controlled symbols of domination and conformity in Saudi Arabia. However, it must be made clear that it is not religion that prescribes these roles to Saudi women; it is culture that draws these boundaries. Therefore, the gender role identities prescribed to women in these two worlds are very different and sometimes felt as complete opposites from one another; and thus, the roles that they take on in these two different cultures may also be very different.

This study was kindled by my own personal story as a Saudi woman who played the different roles and created accompanying identities in my multiple cultures. Therefore, I came into the study as a participant, fitting my criteria. Reflecting on this, I came to believe that being a part of the study was a kind of double-edged sword, for I was both an insider and an outsider, an observer, and a native.

One of the most positive aspects of being a part of my research was the ability to create rapport. I believe that there was a common ground between myself and my participants that we always referred to a “comfort zone” perhaps that gained me immediate access. Glesne (2006) discussed the role of rapport as "a distance-reducing, anxiety-quieting, trust-building mechanism that primary serves the interest of the researcher...it encourages informants to talk about their culture" (p. 110).

Going a step further, I found that through rapport, I began to even build friendships, which was a method that I believe enhanced quality. Building friendships created trust, comfort, understanding, compassion and led to “honest” voices, “through authentic engagement, the lines between researcher and researched blur, permitting each to explore the complex humanity of both self and other. Instead of ‘speaking for’ or even ‘giving voice,’ researchers *get to know* others in meaningful and sustained ways” (Tillmann-Healy, 2003, p. 733). It was not my main goal to create these friendships, but as a native and one who fit my criteria, I believe that this was bound to happen through the sharing of stories and experiences, and as Glesne (2006) mentioned, "your work is apt to be more rewarding for all parties if mutual liking occurs" (p. 110).

I always began by presenting myself as a Saudi student studying in the U.S. with the hopes of returning to Saudi Arabia. It was my story and part of my identity, and I believe this helped the participants associate with me, ask me questions, and generally get comfortable with me. As Rubin and Rubin (2005) discussed:

To establish acceptable roles, the researcher must present themselves as who they are in ways the participants can accept ...being an insider can make you seem less threatening, in part because you know the rules and are as bound by them as the interviewees are. Also, locating yourself in the social space that the interviewees know and can control may be helpful...trust increases as people see that you share a common background with them. (p. 92)

However, DeAndrade (2000) discussed how sometimes the insider role can become a hindrance in the study. She discussed how her identity as an insider became central in her interview discussions. She noted that the participants' readings of her identity became central to their conversations and, thus, "the process of negotiating my identity became a consistent and important theme in the research process. The participants took cues about my interpretation of...racial and ethnic identity from my self-presentation and they reacted to these cues" (p. 277). Glesne (2006) also discussed another aspect of being an insider where the "research participants over identify with the researchers. In doing so, they may begin to act in ways that they perceive the researchers want them to act or in ways to impress them" (p. 117).

Another important aspect I took notice of was the struggle that DeAndrade (2000) had with the participants' reactions to, and/or interpretations of, her physical appearance, which had created both a bonding moment and, to others, a reluctance or barrier to the interview. I believe the same issue took place with my physical appearance and dress

(head cover, long modest clothing, make-up, etc.), which can either symbolize open-mindedness and acceptance or more liberal and Westernized views.

Therefore, the insider/outsider identity was constantly negotiated, as it was a fluid process that I was constantly aware of. Naples (1996) continued this thought, "as ethnographers, we are never fully outside or inside the "community"; our relationship to the community is never expressed in general terms but is constantly being negotiated and renegotiated in particular, everyday interactions" (p. 84). Merton (1972) defined insider/outsider as social structures; thus, we as human beings are both insiders and outsiders, members of some groups and not others; as human beings, we do not have a single status but a "status set: a complement of variously interrelated statuses which interact to affect both their behavior and perspectives...yet sociologically, there is nothing fixed about the boundaries separating insiders from outsiders" (p. 22).

I took on my role as both an insider and an outsider and was always aware of how I might have been perceived, how I introduced myself, and of the different roles I took on and with whom. Memo writing and continuous reflection were ways to keep the negotiations of role and perspectives in mind, "the interviewer has to be self-aware, examining his or her own biases and expectations that might influence the interviewee...researchers need to continually examine their own understandings and reactions" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 31).

Data Sources

Interview Questions. Based on the research purpose and needs, I decided to conduct in-depth, semi-structured interviews as a method of data collection. Having the aim of sharing personal stories and gaining voices, interview protocols were designed to allow for maximum flexibility during the interview process; as Rubin and Rubin (2005) stated, "each conversation is unique, as researchers match their questions to what each interviewee knows and is willing to share" (p. 4). I found that the use of semi-structured, open-ended interview questions allowed for the flexibility of listening to the participant and going with their flow during the interviews.

Rubin and Rubin (2005) called this "conversational guide" a kind of checklist that gives guidance but does not restrict. However, they continued, it is up to the researcher to customize the questions to their participant to elicit stories and voices comfortably. "Asking everyone the same questions makes little sense in qualitative interviewing. An interview is a window on a time and social world that is experienced one person at a time, one incident at a time" (p. 14). By using open-ended questions in face-to-face, personal interviews, the participants were given the chance to tell their stories.

Here I agree with Elsadda (2001) in that personal storytelling is one of the best methods to represent the Arab women:

One way of constructing alternate representations of Arab women is through focusing on women's experiences and life narratives as manifested in autobiographical/biographical writings. ...The challenge is to construct alternate

representations of Arab women without falling into the essentialist trap of claiming to speak for the “real” Arab woman or recovering her “authentic” cultural identity suppressed in male discourses. (p. 39)

There was a need to tell personal stories to create an identity, and a stronger need to listen to these women tell their own stories in their voice in order to paint a proper picture. Through the use of interviews, Yamani (2000) set out to give a voice to those she believed to be the most important, yet overlooked, members of Saudi Arabia--its youth. She explained, "it is hoped that this approach will assist in building a more nuanced understanding of Saudi Arabia with greater awareness of the everyday concerns and opinions of its young population" (p. 150). My goals were an echo of Yamani's, with the focus directed on the Saudi women.

The initial questions of the interview were formulated as concretely as possible, in order to avoid directing the interviewee's responses; they then gradually focused on the more abstract issues of identity. The interview began with opening questions, such as biographical and background information, followed by questions about language, attitudes and perception of their native and second languages. Other questions addressed work, socialization, friendship, and education, as well as some questions that focused on the personal domain, which were designed to elicit responses on the impact of English on the participants' identities. Main questions, probes, and follow-ups were employed to achieve richness and depth, and to expand on what the participants had to say.

By using open-ended questions, I extended my flexibility, allowing participants to take me where they wanted to. I also believe that in having shared experiences, language, rapport, and using many probes and follow-up questions, the interviews conducted moved along as conversations with friends. Rubin and Rubin (2005) called this “responsive interviewing”, where “the specific focus of a study emerges from the interaction between researcher and conversational partner. Qualitative research is not simply learning about a topic, but also learning what is important to those being studied” (p. 15).

What are the determinants of the questions we asked? According to Weiss (1994), first, I thought about the “problem” and how to get to it through questions. Next, I got “a sense of the breadth and density of the material I wanted to collect”. Then I created a kind of “repertoire of understandings based on previous work, study awareness of literature, and experience in living.” Finally, having had conducted a pilot study helped me get a better grasp of my research questions. This led to asking questions that, not only could be answered by respondents, but that could also give substance to the study.

I began determining my interview questions by first doing what Maxwell (2005) called “organizational categories”; i.e., using the “broad areas or issues that you establish prior to your interviews or observations, or that could usually be anticipated” (p. 97) as a guide. These were created early on and were used as a means to create the interview questions, as well as being a part of my literature review. They included: Saudi women

social roles, identities, education and work, English as a second language, and living in a Western environment.

I also created my interview questions after looking through similar studies conducted on women and their different opinions and identities. I used Lee's (2006) study on Hmong women and identity, and by looking through the appendix, I was able to find the semi-structured interviews used, in addition to reading about how the participants responded. I also looked through Moaddel's (2006) study on Saudi Arabia, although he used a quantitative survey, I was able to formulate questions and to get some ideas from the questions posed and the responses. And finally, I went through Al-Salem's (2005) study on the impact of the internet on Saudi women. Although his study was conducted via email, it was still helpful to read through his questions and read the participants' responses.

By conducting a preliminary and pilot study, I was able to review the interview questions, as well as solicit feedback from peers, professors, advisors, conference attendees, and participants of those studies. As Weiss (1994) explained "one good reason for doing pilot interviews is to clarify the aims and frame of the study before interviewing primary respondents...the boundaries of the study's frame are likely to shift as more is learned" (p. 16). Looking through my interview transcripts and my own reflection/memos, I was able to get a better feel for what questions worked well, which ones fell flat, and how I moved around them. I knew that this did not mean I would ever

have a final list of questions per se, but it helped me rethink my own biases, my own formulation of questions, and how people responded and why.

Memos and reflections. Through memo writing, which for this study took place immediately after each interview and before analysis, I found that deep reflection occurred. I asked myself why I did what I did, what affect it had, and I generally became more aware of my own thought process (which included biases, if and when I asked leading questions, and why). Many times I found that just writing about my experiences helped me clear my thoughts, and I could then begin analysis without over-thinking and over-analyzing the spoken words and just let them speak for themselves. Thus, I was able to let go of my own preconceived notions. Keeping notes also helped me become aware of subjectivity and how that may have influenced questions and interpretations, "the interviewer has to be self-aware, examining his or her own biases and expectations that might influence the interviewee.... researcher needs to continually examine their own understandings and reactions" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 31). And as mentioned above, I was not against subjectivity, since I was a major aspect of my research, but memo writing helped me keep track, become more aware, and avoid biases.

Data Collection Procedures

First, careful review of both the preliminary study (2009) and a pilot study (2010) procedures and results were conducted, followed by presenting the findings at multiple conferences and gaining feedback and comments, which were then incorporated into this study. These suggestions were from peers, participants, professors, advisors, etc.

Second, creating and carefully reviewing the instruments for the study and incorporating the feedback mentioned above were conducted. The instruments included a script for oral recruitment in both English and Arabic (Appendix C), a consent form in both Arabic and English (Appendix D), and a “conversation guide” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) for the semi-structured, open-ended interview questions (Appendix E).

Finally, permission and approval from George Mason University Human Subjects Review Board was obtained, as well as permission from the participants. Participants met with the researcher, and a short explanation clarified the research aim and method. Participants were given two copies of a consent form to be read and signed; one copy to return to the researcher and the other to keep for their records.

Data Analyses

Maxwell (2005) stated “any qualitative study requires decisions about how the analysis will be done, and these decisions should inform, and be informed by, the rest of the design” (p.95); thus, my research design, collection, and analyses were intertwined and were continually changing according to the data and the research needs. As Chang (2008) explained, research steps are overlapping, where one step may inform and modify the other, thus creating a dynamic relationship between data collection, management, and analysis (Figure 4). It was also not a linear process, but one that occurred concurrently, “analysis is not a one-time task, but an ongoing process” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 16).

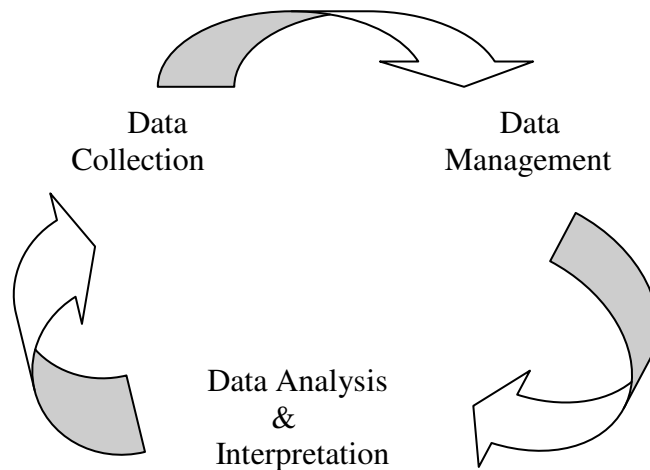


Figure 5. Dynamics among data collection, management, and analysis (Chang, 2008)

Weiss (1994) extended this idea by stating that "although analysis and writing can be separated from data gathering, they cannot be separated from each other" (p. 152). Therefore, I was in a continuous state of data analysis and writing while gathering data.

Immediately after each interview with the participants, transcription took place, as everything was still fresh in my mind (events, feelings of all involved, pauses, jokes, etc.). This was what Glesne (2006) described as rudimentary coding schemes, "you should not keep collecting data for devouring later" (p. 150). I also hand wrote all the transcriptions, because I felt that brought me closer to the data, as I became aware of the words, pauses, and got a general feeling; also a great amount of code switching from both myself and the participants took place, which made typing a little chaotic and time consuming.

As I began to transcribe, I coded everything, from stories to particular words, pauses, code switching, etc. and kept large, white Post-its® to write my thoughts, follow-up questions, and to take notes as Glesne (2006) stated, "data analysis done simultaneously with data collection enables you to focus and shape the study as it proceeds"(p. 148). Rubin and Rubin (2005) also believed that analysis occurs through the research, where the researcher examines each interview after it is completed to see what they have learned and what still needs to be asked. Therefore, I was able to modify questions, prepare follow-ups, and pursue emerging ideas.

The data were analyzed individually first, where coding was carried out for each participant, which led to the identification of different themes. I wrote memos about my general feelings and gave myself some space from the data to think about the whole process. I then returned to the data with a pencil and started to break up every paragraph and give it a title or a theme, even if it did not fit into any of the categories mentioned above. I believe this is what Maxwell (2005) called substantive categories, "primarily descriptive, in a broad sense" (p. 97); or Glesne's (2006) "description", where I let the data "speak for themselves" (p. 164).

Next, the data from all participants was carefully scrutinized to look for commonalties, and several dominant themes emerged (categorizing). This is what Glesne (2006) called "analysis"; "it entails identifying essential features and the ways in which the features interact" (p. 164). Thus, an emic model was employed. I continued to do this with all my interviews; and as I began to see commonalities, I began to make

connections and use convergence, trying to figure out what things fit together (Patton, 2002). Therefore, as themes emerged, I used different color Post-its® for the different themes, giving me a colorful representation of my findings. What I did is what Maxwell (2005) called connecting strategies, which is understanding the data in context, looking for “relationships that connect statement and events within a context into a coherent whole” (p. 98).

Finally, I put all the transcripts in front of me and began to “connect” themes and ideas. Here I used the broader meaning of “connecting”, as defined by Maxwell (2005), “the identification of connections among different categories and themes can also be seen as a connecting step in analysis, but it is a broader one that works with the results of a prior categorizing analysis” (p. 98). I then moved to the stage of "analysis", where I began “identifying essential features and the ways in which the features interact” (Glesne, 2006, p. 164). With that step, I began to make connections and have emergent broad themes.

I did what Weiss (1994) called “issue-focused analysis,” which is "to describe what has been learned from all respondents about people in their situation" (p. 153). Here the analytic process involved, first, coding or "link[ing] what the respondent says in his or her interview to the concepts and categories that will appear in the report...how we code it depends on our theoretical assumptions and research interests we bring to the project" (p. 155), again, our subjectivity which is a big part of this research. Thus, I created coding categories that both my participants and I had brought with us in our

“readiness to interpret,” which came from training, readings, experiences, and understandings. These coding categories became more defined through my interaction with the data.

Weiss (1994) continued with “sorting,” which is the sorting of data into topical units. This is followed by “local integration,” where the contents of each unit is interpreted, summarized, and organized. This also includes looking at data that might not fit into a unit and try to understand, explain, and, if needed, come up with a more inclusive unit. Finally, “inclusive integration” is where all the units are organized into a coherent sequence and “knits into a single coherent story” (p. 160), or, as Rubin and Rubin (2005) called it, “final synthesis,” which is “combining the concepts to suggest how the overall culture operates” (p. 208).

It was clear that the issue of subjectivity was present throughout my entire study. As I struggled with this concept, Krieger's (1985) words resonated with me:

As I began to review my notes, seeking concepts appropriate for categorizing and “making sense,” I found that I was drawing on my understanding of myself with far greater facility than on anything else that came to hand. The task then reformulated itself as one in which I would seek to determine if and how my interviewees shared versions of the problems I had identified in myself. (p. 318)

Therefore, even in my analysis, the researcher “I” was still present. As Geertz (1973) stated, “we begin with our own interpretations of what our informants are up to, or think they are up to, and then systematize those” (p. 15).

As my purpose was to give a venue where Saudi women can be heard, to raise awareness, and to understand a change, an “emic” analysis, where I let the data guide me, was the natural fit. Listening to the stories became a process of “discovering patterns, themes, and categories in one’s data. Findings emerge out of the data through the analyst’s interactions with the data” (Patton, 2002, p. 453). Again, I struggled with the subjective nature of the thematic analysis described above and continuously worried about my projections and interpretations.

After great debate within myself, I came to realize that as Charmaz (2005) explained, “no analysis is neutral...we do not come to our studies uninitiated. What we know shapes, but does not necessarily determine, what we find” (p. 510). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) continued, "all research is interpretive, it is guided by the researcher's set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied" (p. 22). Every study begins with a purpose and goal, and as we collect data, we try to address these things; however, that does not mean I am not willing to listen, learn, and find my research questions and themes. "Your presence, manifested through talking, listening, looking, reading, and reflecting in greater or lesser degrees of engagement with study participants, filters, and affects what counts as meaningful knowledge for your inquiry" (Schram, 2006, p. 9).

On a final note, through my reading, I came to a powerful statement by Chang (2008), which I believe addresses the issue of subjectivity and letting the data speak for itself. To me, it created a kind of middle ground where both my data and I can speak.

When vignettes and excerpts from the data are adopted into the final text, their edges are trimmed and blended into the picture as whole so that they can tightly hang together within the overall structure of cultural analysis and interpretation of self. Therefore, the cliché "let the data speak for themselves" does not tell the full truth of the ethnographic process. You need data, but you should be the one who gives a culturally meaningful account for data. Data are there to support and illustrate your arguments, but not to stand alone to tell the story. You are expected to review, fracture, categorize, rearrange, probe, select, deselect, and sometimes simply gaze at collected data in order to comprehend how ideas, behaviors, material objects, and experiences from the data interrelate and what they really mean to actors and their environments. (p. 127)

Quality and Validity

Platt (1966) explained, "our trouble is that when we make a single hypothesis we become attached to it...There springs up also unwittingly a pressing of the theory to make it fit the facts and a pressing of the facts to make them fit the theory" (p. 211). Trying to fit pieces of initial theories and emerging data together can be both frustrating and blinding. One of the strategies to resolve this quality threat was using a preliminary and pilot study, which included member checks and peer reviews. By conducting, first, a preliminary study using peers, followed by a small pilot study on my intended population, I prepared myself for my role as a researcher, my theories, and most importantly, asking the "right" questions.

My continuous struggle with subjectivity and a need for a checklist made it very scary to go into something and not having a fully defined plan; but I believe that no matter how much planning is done, it is never finalized and never objective. I found what Maxwell (2005) said to be an eye opener, “The validity of your results is not guaranteed by following some prescribed procedure” (p. 105). By letting research questions emerge from data (emic model) and allowing my interpretation to interact with the data as well, I found that it lessened the hold a theory had on my research and, more importantly, on myself. Also, by asking open-ended questions and allowing the participants to speak freely and openly, letting them take me where they wanted to, led to what Maxwell called “Rich Data”, “data that are detailed and varied enough that they provide a full and revealing picture of what is going on” (p. 110). The immediate analysis of *all* data, as it is obtained, helped in understanding my general theory and creating new research questions and alternative theories, as well as generating a better understanding of the phenomenon being researched. By looking at all data, I also addressed what Maxwell (2004) called “discrepant evidence and negative cases”; “identifying and analyzing discrepant data and negative cases as a key part of assessing a proposed conclusion” (p. 21).

Another pressing, possible quality threat is my being a “native”; I was studying a group of people like myself. By being a part of the participant criteria, was I blinded by my insider knowledge? This could have led to issues in the participants’ reactivity, willingness to participate, interpretation, question formulation, analysis, and bias, as Maxwell (2005) stated it “is important to understand how you are influencing what the

informant says, and how this affects the validity of the inferences you can draw from the interview” (p. 109). However, it could have also been an advantage, as mentioned above, as it gave me an understanding of things a non-native might have missed. Being aware of my role as both a researcher and a native, and what influences I had on the conduct and conclusions of the study, was a task that was part and partial to my proposal (Maxwell, 2005). Being a native also created rapport and trustworthiness, which Glesne (2006) described as values that can be applied to this paradigm.

Getting others perspectives on my research was another strategy. Member checking and peer review lent a different lens and gave support to my interpretations. “Respondent validations,” which was described by Maxwell (2005) as, “systematically soliciting feedback about your data and conclusions from the people you are studying” (p. 111). By having multiple face-to-face interviews, asking clarifying questions, giving the participant the opportunity to speak and express themselves freely, and trying to schedule our meetings at a time when neither one of us had other engagements, so as not to have to end at a certain time, helped in assuring the quality of my findings. I also tried to create a comfortable environment by allowing the participants to pick the setting and having food and refreshments, as is the tradition in Saudi Arabia. In addition to asking questions during the interviews, I asked follow-up questions that came up during transcriptions in the next meeting. Thus, I made sure not to meet with the participants unless I had gone through their data at least once to ensure that all was clear.

The use of memos, which helped create reflection and reflexivity, the constant analysis of my data, and the use of my own researcher identity, helped me clarify some of my biases in both my preliminary and pilot study, as well as in this research. Glesne (2006) explained that this “reflection upon your own subjectivity and how you will use and monitor it in your research” (p. 37) is a “verification procedure,” one can use to assess quality issues. Having to write memos, whether about myself or my process, allowed me the opportunity to sit and think about my own perceptions and biases. It also allowed me the opportunity to use thick, rich descriptions, which Geertz (1973) explained as the “intellectual effort” that defines the enterprise, allowing the reader, as well as myself, to grasp the context and to vividly be, instead of just simply re-quoting.

Finally, peer review was used. It was summarized by Glesne (2006) as “external reflection and input on your work” (p. 37). I found that discussing my work with a peer was a great way to get feedback and critique without worrying about a grade; it was also a great way to clear up ideas, listen to questions you had not thought of, and, most importantly, shed light on what you were thinking, but did not necessarily write.

Quality or Validity

Validity was described by many as a process and not a product (Cho & Trent, 2006; Maxwell, 2005). It is something present from the very beginning and continues throughout one's work. However, I felt that the term “validity” was very quantitative in nature, as I got the feeling that I must validate my work with some kind of checklist or formula. Thus, I found comfort in moving from the term “validity” to “quality,” as I saw

it as part and partial to qualitative research. I must state that I was not against validity per se, but I was not in favor of using the word in my own research because I felt that “quality” was a term that better encompassed my aims and research needs.

I saw “quality” as something that encompassed validity, but also the essence of research; it emerged out of the research because it was in all aspects of it. Morse et al. (2002) explained that:

By focusing on strategies to establish trustworthiness at the end of the study, rather than focusing on process of verification during the study, the investigator runs the risk of missing serious threats to the reliability and validity until it is too late to correct them. (p. 4)

The word “validity” is used here; however, my point from this quote is that thinking of trustworthiness and reliability should not come at the end of a study, but it is something that is part of the proposal and is continuously negotiated and thought of during the whole process of research.

Creswell and Miller (2000) explained that part of the process of validity comes from one’s lens and described it as governed by the lens researchers choose to validate their studies and researchers’ paradigm assumptions. Thus, they introduce three lenses in any research; that of the researcher, the participants, and the reader. Although they included some discussions of methods, they did not discuss it directly. To this, I added methodological choices as a different lens, and this moved it from validity to quality for me. It was in the essence of the research, in every aspect of it, that gave it quality.

Quality in qualitative research. It is not easy to deconstruct quality into a checklist of sort; all aspects are intermingled and influence and affect one another; again, this is part of qualitative research which is a human, social science. For the purpose of my writing, I created a description of each part of what I believed was encompassed in quality, although many aspects ran together.

The researcher. The researcher is an integral part of any study, the main instrument, and thus must be addressed in any discussion on quality. I saw quality in the researcher through being reflexive, celebrating becoming a native, and both an insider and an outsider in a study.

Reflexivity. As I mentioned above, the researcher is the main instrument of any study. Thus, my identity and beliefs played a vital role in my study, from my research interest, to my methods; all were based on my epistemology (my worldview as a constructivist), which had a profound influence on research. Part of quality, I believe, is to be open and accepting of this fact, to understand that the study itself is very subjective, and that any search for objectivity can, in fact, interfere with quality. As Maxwell (2005) explained “understanding how a particular researcher’s values and expectations influence the conduct and conclusions of the study...explaining your possible biases and how you will deal with these is a key task of your research proposal” (p. 108). Therefore, from the very beginning, the researcher should be made clear and present.

In any study, it is important that, for the sake of quality, the researcher make himself very present by “discussing one’s predispositions, making biases explicit, to the

extent possible” (Patton, 2002, p. 553). I used “self-discloser,” where I expressed my beliefs myself throughout the paper, to allow the reader to “see” my perspective and understand my stance. As Creswell and Miller (2000) conferred, “it is particularly important for researchers to acknowledge and describe their entering beliefs and biases early in the research process, to allow readers to understand their positions, and then to bracket or suspend those research biases as the study proceeds” (p. 127).

Being reflexive also allowed me to understand my influence on the study, on my participants, and on my findings. For quality purposes, it is important to “understand how you are influencing what the informant says, and how this affects the validity of the inferences you can draw from the interview” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 109), and this was discussed in more detail below.

Being native. Thus far, being native, seemed like a four letter word; it was something to struggle with, as it “blurred the truth.” However, through readings, I was allowed a sigh of relief, as I was native and could not get out of it. Part of reflexivity for quality is to know that “eliminating the actual influence of the researcher is impossible, and the goal in a qualitative study is not to eliminate this influence, but to understand it and to use it productively” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 109).

Fine (1994) discussed working the hyphen between the self and other; she explained how a researcher must come to terms with the multiple relationships that exist between the self and the other. Although I agree with Fine that there are multiple relationships that exist between those involved (researcher and participant, friends, etc.), I

found that the whole idea of a hyphen gets in the way, and the “self-other” dichotomy in research can be overcome by being “native.” Actually, the labeling of “self” and “other” in research can constrain relationships, even if just for the researcher who might start to draw that hyphen for him/herself. However, as Tajfel and Turner (1986) discussed, we are all insiders and outsiders, “us” and “them” to some extent, and that is why I believe that this hyphen is only blurred in aspects of researcher and “other.”

Thus, I found great comfort in Heshusius’ (1994) article on participatory mode of consciousness, which she explained as an “awareness of a deeper level of kinship between the knower and the known. An inner desire to let go of the perceived boundaries that constitute “self,” and that construct the perception of distance between self and other” (p. 16). Therefore, as a researcher, I tried not to put up those boundaries, but instead tried to break them down through my study. I understood that I was not looking for truth, as that is an evasive concept, but for stories and voices that needed to be heard, including my own; “reality is no longer understood as truth to be interpreted but as mutually evolving” (p. 18).

The participants. After having discussed the important role of the researcher in quality, I move now to discussing the participants as playing an equally important role. Participants make up an important part of any research, as they provide the all elusive “truth” that many researchers seek. In fact, it is the participants that guide an emergent study, taking it in many different and new directions. Accordingly, quality is enhanced when participants and their roles are understood. For this section, I focused on the use of

member checking as a fundamental part of quality, to ensure that what was said was heard and understood.

Systematically taking the data back to its source, to shed light on my own interpretations and biases, to truly understand and include all voices in the research, is what member checking means to me. It is a simple, yet important way, of enhancing quality by ruling out misinterpretations (notice that the word “interpretation” is still used, as research is very subjective). “With the lens focused on participants, the researchers systematically check the data and the narrative account...the participants add credibility to the qualitative study by having a chance to react to both the data and the final narrative” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 127).

I see the purpose of research not to find truth, but to look through a window of personal reality; it is to tell a story. By involving participants from the very beginning in interpretations, they become “engaged in making sure their realities correspond with the interpretations brought forth by the researchers” (Cho & Trent, 2006, p. 322), and their voices are heard. There becomes a kind of empathic connection “which can help participants feel heard, known, and understood” (Tillmann-Healy, 2003, p. 737).

However, this is done systematically; as I have mentioned earlier, quality is a process and not something to be achieved at the end. Therefore, after every transcription, the participants need to be involved in making sure their voices were heard, whether it be through reinterpretation or follow-up questions. This emphasizes that the hyphen

between self and other is sometimes blurry, and there is a strong mutual bond that works together towards a voice.

The audience. The audience makes up yet another important pillar in enhancing quality, “issues of quality and credibility intersect with audience” (Patton, 2002, p. 542). It was important for me as a researcher to know who my audiences were, what they were looking for, and what they expected from research, so I knew how to defend, explain, and argue my stance as needed.

One way of addressing my audiences’ expectations was the use of persuasive arguments, to “lead readers through a progression of evidence and explanations of why other interpretations are not as adequate as the present interpretative claims” (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 477). Thus, I had a conversation with my audience as to why or why not I did what I did. I tried to answer their questions before they asked them by explaining myself and taking an argumentative stance (Maxwell, 2005). Thus, I had to have a clear understanding of all aspects of my research needs and goals in order to clearly explain and answer my audiences' queries.

To achieve the above, an important step was to use peer review, which “provides support, plays devil’s advocate, challenges the researchers’ assumptions, pushes the researchers to the next step methodologically, and asks hard questions about methods and interpretations” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 129). This was also something that needed to be done systematically, whether it be a professor or a peer, having someone read your work through its different stages can give you a different perspective.

The methods. This aspect of quality, I believe, brings all the human aspects together; it involves the researcher, the participants and the audience. I divided this section into first, thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973; Maxwell, 2005), which were for both the audience's and the researcher's sake; secondly, I discussed friendship as a method, which was for the participant and the researcher relationship; and finally, emergent design, which involved all three lenses in a journey of discovery.

Thick descriptions. Using thick descriptions in my research to express ideas, write my observations, and share my thoughts provided what Maxwell (2005) and Geertz (1973) called "rich data". Discussing the different and emerging aspects of research with the audience, as well as the implications that it may have had on the study, can enhance quality as it "creates verisimilitude, statements that produce for the readers the feeling that they have experienced, or could experience, the events being described in a study" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 129). Thick descriptions can satisfy those who search for "truth" by presenting a section of reality.

Friendship as a method. As mentioned earlier, I found that building friendship is a method that enhances quality. As a participant, I began to build friendships with other participants; as an insider, I tried to build trust, comfort, and understanding; and as a researcher, I inquired and listened. Conducting member checks with participants whenever possible not only ensured accuracy, but also created honesty and trust, as well as opportunities for conversations and the sharing of opinions and ideas.

When using the term “friendship,” this also created a feeling of reciprocity, the mutual exchange of trust, vulnerability of humanness and truth, again, blurring the hyphen between the self and other. As my participants shared their stories, I listened and shared mine. Again, being a native who was experiencing the same events helped in creating and sharing friendships.

Emergent design. Listening to the data and allowing the participants to tell their story, I believe, enhanced quality, as it allowed it to be natural and “honest.” Part of being emergent means that there is a need on the part of the researcher to be flexible and reflexive (again an aspect of quality), going back and forth between all the different aspects of research and working with the data, instead of having it work for you by cutting it and making it fit into the wrong puzzle slots, is part of qualitative research which is human in nature. “Qualitative research is iterative rather than linear, so that a good qualitative researcher moves back and forth between design and implication to ensure congruence among question formulation, literature, recruitment, data collection strategies, and analysis” (Morse et al, 2002, p. 10).

Limitation and How Addressed

I believe that although my work had shed light on the subject of Saudi women and their social and cultural roles and identity, it had only shown a small percentage; and, thus, there was a generalization of findings from the findings. However, I do believe that my research and findings will help in creating the needed motivation for the

understanding of the role of women in our society, and has shed light on those who have already begun to take the first steps.

Weiss (1994) discussed the problem with generalization from a small group and explained that insofar as the dynamics of the group and the constraints they are subjected to can decide their behavior, it becomes a “theory independent of qualifiers.” “We might acknowledge that our sample is not representative but argue that there is no reason for the theory to be limited to the sample from which it was developed” (p. 28). In addition, Maxwell (2005) discussed “internal generalization” or “face generalizability” (p. 116), where the conclusion could be generalized within the specifics of the study, and where the development of a theory can be applied and extended to other cases. Geertz (1973) also discussed that “the essential task of theory building here is not to codify abstract regularities, but to make thick description possible, not to generalize across cases, but to generalize within them” (p. 26).

My goal was to represent a group of people like myself and tell our story. Patton (2002) spoke directly to me in this case when he stated “while one cannot generalize from single cases or very small samples, one can learn from them-and learn a great deal, often opening up new territory for further research” (p. 46). Thus, the purposeful selection of the participants did create a limitation to this study. However, this was an open invitation for a replication and extension of my study, as Geertz (1973) explained, “cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete... [it] is a science whose progress is marked less by perfection of consensus than by a refinement of debate” (p. 29).

As a constructivist, I see reality as personally constructed; therefore, there were multiple truths represented, and yet limited to only those involved. However, the results were valid to those involved.

All forms of representation of experience are limited portraits... we are interpreting and creating texts at every juncture, letting symbols stand for or take the place of the primary experience, to which we have no direct access. Meaning is ambiguous because it arises out of a process of interaction between people: self, teller, listener and recorder, analyst, and reader. Although the goal may be to tell the whole truth, our narratives about others' narratives are our worldly creations... Meaning is fluid and contextual, not fixed and universal. All we have is talk and texts that represent reality partially, selectively, and imperfectly. (Riessman, 1993, p. 15)

Conclusion

This chapter was a discussion of the methodology I employed for the purpose of the research and its needs. The chapter began with a discussion on why I chose to conduct a qualitative study, which included my personal background, the aim of capturing Saudi women's voices by listening and sharing their stories, and finally, discussing my own epistemological views as a constructivist.

This was followed by an in-depth discussion of the methods, including the inductive/emergent design, the participants, and the setting. I then delved into

my role as both a researcher and Saudi woman, thus, gaining a perspective as both an insider and outsider. Next, I discussed my data sources, which included in-depth interview questions and utilizing memo-writing to create “thick descriptions.” Data analysis was discussed next as an ongoing process that requires the movement between data collection, management, and interpretation. I then moved on to a discussion of my stance on quality in qualitative study. Finally, I discussed the limitations of this study and how I addressed them.

The next chapter, Chapter four, discussed the emergent findings from the stories and interactions that took place between the participating women and me. It began by giving a small introduction to the participating women, whose stories made up the study. Next, a discussion of the emergent findings and themes were discussed: the importance of English, the theme of culture, the theme of change, the use of strong examples as role models, and finally, Islamic feminism. I concluded the chapter by discussing my role as a Saudi Arabian researcher and my use of friendship as a method.

4. Research Findings

The goal of this study was to create a venue where Saudi women could tell their stories of the multiple roles and identities created and employed. It also aimed at empowering them in becoming active members in understanding and the changing of their cultural and societal roles by looking at these roles as they translate into the different environments they find themselves in. Finally, it aimed at highlighting the impact of the English language as one of many tools on these movements.

Sixteen Saudi women participated in the study over a period of two months. However, interaction began two months prior when I introduced myself and met some participants during the ESL program's orientation. I also participated in classrooms and frequented common areas around campus. Interviews usually lasted between 30-60 minutes, depending on the willingness and comfort of the participants, which helped create casual conversations among friends. The interviews were transcribed by hand, as most participants chose to speak in Arabic, and a great deal of code switching took place as well. Participants were asked the questions approved by the HSRB; however, follow-up questions and general interest questions were asked to allow for a true emergent study and for the participants to tell their own story and take the study where they wanted.

Using an emergent design, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What are Saudi Arabian women's views of their roles and identities in the Saudi Arabian culture and society?
2. What are Saudi Arabian women's views on using the English language and its impact on their roles and identities in the Saudi Arabian culture and society?
3. How do Saudi Arabian women employ the different aspects of their multiple roles and identities?
4. How do Saudi Arabian women address changing self versus expected self?

This chapter began with an introduction to the participating women's stories and voices. This was followed by a discussion of the emergent findings and themes, which revolved around five major themes that are divided and connected by multiple subthemes: the importance of English, culture, change, the use of strong examples as role models, and finally, Islamic feminism. I then discussed my role as a Saudi Arabian researcher, thus, both an insider and outsider. I also discussed my use of friendship as a method and how that impacted my researcher role. The chapter concluded with a summary and discussion of the next chapter.

Participants

As this was a narrative study, a venue for voices, the stories of the voices need to be told. In this section I provided a brief biography of the participants (approved by them), so as to make the stories stronger and the voices louder. For the sake and protection of the participating women, I have used pseudonyms; however, the names I chose here represent strong women in my own life; family, friends, and peers who have had a deep impact on my identities and cultural understandings. I also believe that by

using the pseudonyms, the stories come to life, the findings are less artificial and ridged, and the reader can connect to the participating women.

Although I didn't generalize about Saudi Arabian women population, as these women did not mirror the society as a whole, there were similarities among them and a case to be made to the roles and identities of these Saudi Arabian women.

Table 1. Participants' statistics

Participant	Age	Marital status	Province	Desired field of study
May	32	Married	Central	Anthropology
Monerah	18	Single	Western	Business
Farah	18	Single	Eastern	Bio Medical
Amal	18	Single	Western	Engineering
Amirah	34	Married	Central	Graphic design
Mona	30	Single	Western	Education
Maha	25	Single	Central	Business
Fay	33	Divorced	Western	Undecided
Ruba	32	Married	Western	Biology
Alya	29	Married	Western	Math
Manal	28	Married	Eastern	Social work
Sarah	25	Single	Central	Business
Arwa	25	Single	Western	Graphic design
Noor	19	Single	Central	English language
Ghadah	23	Single	Western	Undecided
Hanan	32	Married	Eastern	Architecture
				Library information

May. She always had a large smile on her face and was always willing to talk and share; I genuinely felt she wanted to be friends. We met first in a common area on campus, then multiple times in classrooms. A mother of three, and the eldest of eight,

she was very social and kind. As a child, she lived a part of her life in the United States and the United Kingdom, as her father obtained a degree. She attended private schools in Saudi Arabia then continued to study psychology. She wanted to get her master's in anthropology, to return and teach at a university in Saudi Arabia. The interview took place very casually and unscheduled, which made for great storytelling and allowed her voice to come through. She was very aware of women's roles in Saudi Arabia and wavered between understanding the difficulty of change and “enjoying her life,” knowing she could as a privileged woman.

Monerah. One of the youngest to participate at 18 years old, I met Monerah in one of the ESL classrooms I attended. She sat with a large group of Saudi women on one side of the room, while the other side was occupied by males and non-Saudi females. She was dressed in jeans and long cardigans and wore the head scarf in a more modern style, wrapped around the head like a bandana. She was a little reserved and shy but answered questions confidently and directly; and I noticed that she was the same way in class, taking lead, but remaining quiet otherwise. Her mannerisms and answers indicated that she was an empowered young woman who had no restrictions on what she wanted to be and do. She was here with her family in hopes of obtaining a bachelor's degree in business. She was one of the participants who felt that the issues I was discussing were things not of her generation but of those before her, like her mother.

Farah. Another young participant at 18 years old, Farah was here to study biomedical engineering after she finished the ESL program. She informed me that she

was her on her own and hoped to make her parents proud. She wore modern, conservative clothing, like loose jeans, long button-down shirts, and a head scarf but was very interactive and talkative. I meet her in an ESL classroom where she sat with a group of Saudi women on a different side of the room than the men. However, she was very outgoing, talkative, and always laughing. She was very empowered and determined to graduate and return to Saudi Arabia with an American degree, which she believed would present her with many opportunities. Again, she discussed the topic of research as something her older cousins had to deal with and not her personally.

Amal. Another 18-year-old participant I met in the ESL classroom sat with a Brazilian female student so as to only speak English and get to know a different culture. She wore modern clothing and always had her dark, curly hair wild and parted to the right. She was also empowered but seemed bored and uninterested most of the time. Many times she replied by nodding or shaking her head; however, she volunteered for the study. She was here with her family in the hopes of obtaining a bachelor's degree in graphic design.

Amirah. A very kind and strong woman whom I felt very comfortable with, I was able to relate to her the most. Although I met her in the classroom, she really wanted to help me out and took time out of her busy schedule to meet with me multiple times. We always met over coffee and would talk until the time would run out. We shared stories of our struggles and mischievous children. I looked forward to my meetings with her, as it felt more like meetings with an old friend, and we are still in contact through

text messages and phone calls. Amirah was a young mother of four who got married right after high school. She studied biology in college and then worked as a teacher before getting a scholarship to come to United States to get her master's degree in education. She aspired to continue her education and obtain a PhD.

Mona. She was a quiet, strong, and independent woman with a warm smile on her face. She informed me that she was here on her own to obtain a master's degree but started off living with her sister. She was the only one to meet me in the quiet library and not a busy common area, which was very telling of her studious and quiet nature. We hit it off as friends and continued to text each other, even after the research was conducted; she has offered to watch my children while I work, but I could not do that to her, as I knew she was also busy. She was motivated, serious, and very studious. Born to Saudi father and an Egyptian mother, she lived in different parts of the world. Her mother and older sisters have quite an influence and impact on her life and are discussed as role models.

Maha. She was very friendly with a smile on her face. We met multiple times in large groups and classrooms before she contacted me to be a part of my study. She explained that because she was single and needed a guardian, there was a delay in her coming to the United States to study but was now here with her younger brother. She obtained her bachelor's degree in fine arts from Saudi Arabia. She was focusing on English only and had not decided on further studies. Our interview moved along as more of a conversation between friends, but I also felt she gave a lot of thought to her answers,

because she emailed me after to tell me she wanted to clarify a point. When we met for a follow-up, she was busy making arrangements for her brother's travels, checking every detail because she apologetically told me that he, her guardian, wouldn't be able to handle it. She dressed in sweats and jeans with hoodies and had long, curly brown hair that she usually swept away from her face.

Fay. I never really got the chance to make friends with Fay, although I would have liked to. We did say “hi” and chatted a bit in the hall but usually about school, so I never really got to know her. However, she was the most persistent and showed great enthusiasm in being a part of the study. She was a strong, very determined, and independent single mother of 3, who fought hard and worked even harder to get here and, yet, didn't want anyone to know she was divorced. She studied biology in college then worked as a TA until she achieved her scholarship. She planned on continuing to a PhD. She wore a long, light-colored, closed coat that covered her body and a head scarf wrapped tight around her head and neck. When not talking about the study, she would ask questions about elementary schools and general child care; she seemed very concerned about her children and their education.

Ruba. I met Ruba in her ESL classroom where, again, she sat with a large group of Saudi women. However, she was strong and outspoken but skeptical. She discussed change for Saudi women, really hoping for it; however, she only focused on the educational issues, like bettering curriculum and changing teachers. She was very polite, and I noticed that although she disagreed with many of her friends, she listened quietly

then made her points (we had many discussions “off record” with her group of friends in the common area, as they were very interested in the topic). She was young, married, and had two boys. She wore floral head scarves that helped add to her inviting personality.

Alya. I met Alya while she sat with her friends in the cafeteria; she smiled at me, and I walked up to her to ask if we had met because she looked so familiar and her smile was warm. She informed me that she has seen me around, but we never formally met. We hit it off right away. A confident, strong woman, who was very social and talkative, she was here for two reasons: fertility treatment and to become a social worker. Alya was very social, strong and desired change, which she believed would come from women. She was also very wise and loved to give helpful advice; she was like therapy for me for many times I found myself sitting across from her teary eyed and mouth open, as I had “ah-hah” moments and was touched by her words. We are still in close contact.

Hanan. A quiet woman, who didn’t share too much of her opinion, I believe participated in the study because her friends did. She was married with children and was trying to finish her ESL requirements to get a master’s degree in library information. Many times I found she just nodded or shook her head and had a few words to say. However, she had wide eyes traced with thick, black Arabic kohl (eyeliner) that made her eyes piercing and inviting. She looked directly at me and made me feel like I was the only one there and what I had to say was very important; that is why I didn’t realize her few words until transcription.

Manal. ,This particular participant came to me in class and told me she had heard a lot about me and would be proud to help out a Saudi Arabian woman. A married mother of one, she informed me she was here alone to obtain her master's degree, but continued to say that her father was here for a long time helping her out. She majored in chemistry in Saudi Arabia and worked as a teacher right after graduation before moving on to banking, which allowed her to travel within Saudi Arabia. Her father was an airline pilot, which allowed her to travel the world and reside for at least 3 to 4 months in different locations. Her father's influence was clear. As she spoke of his character and his advice, it was clear he was her inspiration and support system. Manal wore a knitted hat that covered her hair and the back of her neck instead of a head scarf, with long beautiful coats and jeans. She also was one of the few who spoke a mixture of Arabic and English in every sentence, very much like me.

Sarah. I met Sarah multiple times, and it was clear she was not interested in the study as much as she was in becoming friends; thus, I never pushed her to participate. However, upon her noticing me being visibly hurt by being brushed off by a girl who had done this before, she volunteered and insisted that she really wanted to help me out. Sarah was very friendly and loved to joke and laugh. She called me Dr. Skinny because she knew I was on a diet. She was here with her brother; however, she was recently engaged and was not sure of what she would do next. She wore colorful head scarves that she wrapped around her head, exposing her neck and ears, which she decorated with beautiful earrings. She studied art in Saudi Arabia and wanted to obtain a master's degree in graphic design.

Arwa. I met Arwa many times with her group of friends in common areas around campus, but it was clear that she was also not interested in the study. However, on the same day mentioned above, she saw me frustrated and nearly in tears, as I had been brushed off by that girl. She, too, volunteered, along with Sarah. Arwa was single and here on her own, which she explained to me was great because she was learning so much about herself. She studied English language and literature in Saudi Arabia and wanted to continue her master's degree in the same major. She was the eldest of four, the only girl living with her single mother; therefore, she witnessed the struggles and the strengths of her single mother in Saudi Arabia. She always wore leggings and hoodies with her hair short and neat, and chose to speak mainly in English, even if it meant that it might take her awhile to articulate her thoughts.

Noor. A very sweet and always smiling nineteen-year-old, I met Noor in class, as she turned to me as soon as I walked in and asked where I was from. When I told her Saudi Arabia she replied "cool." She was very strong and took the lead in the classroom and the interview. She asked many questions and wanted to understand the "why" and not just the "what" or "how" of things. She was here with her family, but spoke of her father a great deal, because he was someone she looked up to, someone she admired, and this was very clear throughout her interview. I also noticed that although she spoke mainly in English, she was one that used a lot of code switching. She wore skinny jeans and long shirts with light-colored head scarves that she wrapped tightly around her head, so that it became a part of her outfit.

Ghadah. Friendly, strong, and determined, Ghadah had a presence that intimidated me sometimes, not only because she was strong, but because she was sharp and smart. We still keep in contact, but mostly through text messages. She wore her long, curly, black hair in a way that looked both tamed, yet wild; she was very modern and fashionable with her clothes. We met multiple times but always talked about the study, as she showed great interest and concern in women's roles. She was one of two women to discuss the issues of guardianship in Saudi Arabia; she was single and couldn't come to the United States alone, so she had to wait for her brother to finish high school. She studied in private schools then continued to architecture in a private college in Saudi Arabia (a field not available to all women) and was quite aware of those privileges. She was also aware of women's roles and needs and, therefore, started her own architecture business for women in Saudi Arabia when she found it hard to be taken seriously in a “man's field” as she called it. She was one of the few participants who spoke mainly in English.

Findings

In this section, I introduced the emergent themes from the stories of the participants. I found that it is an interrelated web of themes reflecting the web that is human life, culture, identities, social selves, etc. Not one theme can stand alone, as it is impacted by and reflected in the others. As I artificially separated the themes for the purpose of this study, I also looked at the major intersections and how they emerged and played out.

To begin, I wanted to illustrate the interconnectedness and ebb and flow of the web through addressing the self and the identities created and how things are impacting each other. Attached (Appendix F), is a visual illustration to allow the readers to not only see the whole picture, but to see the many individual threads that make up that picture.

Trying to stay true to the emergent themes, it became increasingly difficult to separate and box the participants' voices. Creating a web eased this process; however, to try and separate them for the purpose of this dissertation also created blurry artificial lines. I tried my best to discuss each subtheme as if it stood alone, but there were times and voices that blend, and that was the beauty and murkiness of letting the data and participants voices come through and guide this study.

Following that, I addressed the research questions as they arose in the findings and not in any particular order. I did have the research questions in a certain order in my outline and discussion, because that was what made logical sense to me and my train of thought. However, that was not how they arose in the findings. Thus, the research questions were discussed as they were addressed, in and as they arose from the data.

I also used the participants' own voices so as to invite the readers into the stories to make their own interpretation and to create a dialogue. As I was aware of my own subjectivity, this was a way to allow other voices to be heard and different interpretations to be made.

This section was, thus, laid out as follows: the importance of English was discussed first, as English was a topic that brought us together and one that most of our

conversations revolved around. Although the topic of English and its impact touched on all other emergent themes, this particular topic was divided into six subthemes: the essentialness of English; English for educational, economical, and social purposes; gaining a feeling of exposure to the world; gaining a feeling of being cultured; gaining confidence; and concluding with the feeling of empowerment.

The theme of culture was discussed next and was divided into four subthemes, although many of its subthemes did intermingle with the theme of English, as well as other themes that follow. I began the theme of culture and empowerment, which was further divided into: empowerment due to important roles played, empowerment gained by ambition and drive, and empowerment from the new environment (i.e. the United States). I then discussed the theme of change and its implications, which included a want and desire for change, change that is currently taking place, trying to create change, and trying to adapt to the different cultures. This was followed by a discussion on gender roles, both traditional and currently-changing roles. Finally, participating women discussed the creation of borders, but not limits, to their cultural roles.

The following section discussed change, which was discussed above; however, here it was discussed in terms of a feeling of obligation and connection to Saudi Arabia and the need for change by women for women. I discussed change as a sub-theme first, then as a theme, because it was an important issue brought up by the participating women. It was clear from our discussions that change was a concept that they desired, a concept they were after; but it was also clear that they had trouble grasping it and

defining it from a Saudi women's perspective. Although the idea of change was discussed in multiple ways by the participating women, it was clear that it was a goal many were after.

This led into the next theme of emulating strong role models and concluded with the final emergent theme of Islamic feminism as an answer and validation to the current situation that many of the participating women find themselves in. Again, these emergent themes are intermingled, as was clear from the above description and only artificially separated for the purpose of this study. Also, the voices of the participating women were used when possible to allow their stories to be heard, to create a dialogue, and to allow for multiple interpretations.

Importance of English

Our conversations revolved around English, whether it was where I learned my English or what it was like studying in an all-English college; it was clear that English brought us together here, that English was my interest as an educator and theirs as ESL students. Thus, one of the main themes that emerged from the study was the impact and importance of the English language. This theme directly addressed the second research question of “what are Saudi Arabian women's views on using the English language and its impact on their roles and identities in the Saudi Arabian culture and society?”

English was discussed as an essential aspect of life nowadays, whether for better job opportunities or to become more worldly; whether to connect with the younger generation or the outside world. It was also discussed as a language of empowerment, a

language that instilled confidence and a feeling of independence, and a language that opened a window to the world around and the different ways of thinking and being.

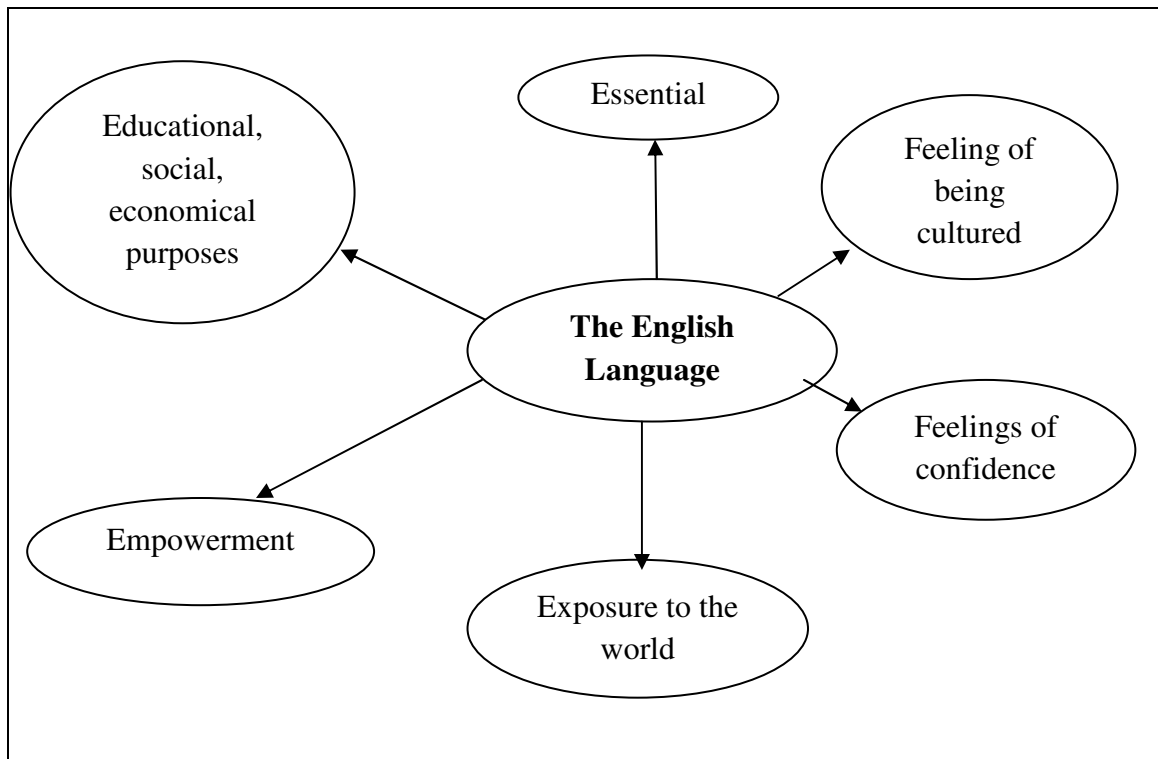


Figure 6. Representation of the emergent theme of the importance of English

As I sifted through the data and got caught up in the web of emergent themes, I began to separate threads to try and grasp the true impact of the language, to try and

present it to the readers, and to make our voices clear. This section focused on the discussions of the importance of English to these participants.

Essential. The English language was discussed as an essential part of today's life, and as an essential part of living as part of the world. Participants used wording that stressed the importance of English as a second language, drawing images of development and survival; they discussed the importance of it as a major aspect of life. It was expressed using terms such as "my destiny," without it "one cannot move forward", "life will go on without me", all "because it is a global language".

I chose to begin with this theme to illustrate the participants' views on the language; how this language and its essentiality played into the other themes; how this language and its importance impacted their self and their roles. As Arwa explained, "English is the language of the world; if you have English you can succeed anywhere."

One of the main reasons the English language was discussed as essential was due to the educational, economical, and social privileges it entailed. It was a cycle: good schools provided English early on; a good school provided a better education, which leads to better job opportunities, and, therefore, a better social status, and those in higher statuses could afford good schools, and so on. English was the base of all this and, as one participant discussed, "I feel that those who didn't study English, didn't study at all, I don't know why." And as May explained:

I don't mean to characterize, but they would say "we feel like we are low class," I said, "No. Low class has nothing to do with it," but it's a must, everything has

the English. Okay. It is something to boast about, but leave the boasting, not as “we are high class,” and those who don’t speak it are “low class.” It’s a reason to boast because it benefits my life, it eases my affairs. It is an essential language of education, jobs, and life.

Educational, economical, and social purposes. As explained above, the English language was discussed as an essential aspect of today, and one of the basic reasons for this, as the participants voiced, was the educational, economical, and social opportunities that came with that specific language in Saudi Arabia. It was a chance at and an indication of good education, which also indicated a well-off social class, because they could afford travel and better education. Finally, due to a better education, more job opportunities were present and, therefore, were better paid.

Ruba: "I'm sure it will help me with opportunities because the language (English) is the basis of jobs everywhere...as a means of education for me and getting a degree. It’s a means of getting a better job."

Alya: "In general, English is very beneficial for job purposes, and when I go back (to Saudi Arabia), there will be a lot of job opportunities."

Hanan: "It’s a job or a position; it’s a requirement, more than the degree."

Manal: "We saw how in the work you have, a second language gives you a high rank; it gives you priority."

Exposure to the world. As an essential global language and a language believed to provide a better education, economic, and social status, English was viewed as a window to the world. Travel, media, contact with others, etc. were all available to the participants through the English language. This presented the opportunity to meet and view others, to observe and understand how they lived, to learn from the worlds around them, and not be confined to their own world.

This language, participants believed, allowed them exposure to the world, whether it was in the simplest form: "You go to the airport; you travel on your own" (May); or to the deeper, self-reflective, analytical form: "They must see the world around them, so that their thinking is not only confined to our country...because it is a way to connect and communicate with the world, you can convey your message" (Mona).

Others discussed how this language allowed them the understanding of others, the opportunity to learn.

I stay on campus until night because I want to see college life here in America, and I see different cultures here...and the language that has brought them together is English. So I feel English has become--no not has become--*is* international.
(Mona)

This theme was impacted and impacts many of the themes presented in this discussion on the findings from empowerment, confidence, and the feeling of being cultured. As I had mentioned, they were boxed as neat themes for the purpose of this

study, but their intermingled-ness was clear in every section, one of which was, with exposure, the participants felt “cultured.”

Feeling of being cultured ثقافة 'thaqafah'. Having stated that English was essential and allowed the participants to be exposed to the world outside of Saudi Arabia, I moved to the emerging theme of being cultured. Participants began to discuss how it gave them the opportunity to be cultured, whether in world news or pop culture, it presented a window to the world, a chance to experience and to connect and communicate with others, "an opportunity to nourish my mind with something clean" (May).

Amal: "When someone lives in another country, they gain experience. I mean, not just educational experiences, but general experiences in one's life; even in knowledge not just education, from books, from anything here. Here I am more cultured--it's an experience in life--in the end, we will return, but it is an experience."

Fay: "I think it is an advantage affect. I gained more culture, especially here in America there is 'multi-culture'. [laughs] So, I feel I have gained a more cultural outlook and learned more...I feel more pressure now, not to only focus on language learning, but the culture as well. Culture is in everything, and this requires I change a lot in my life. I want my cultural awareness to be higher than this."

Ghadah: "I believe that learning languages, it's a culture. And if you want this high-status culture, knowing about others, you have to learn their languages; otherwise, you won't be able to adapt with the surrounding."

Alya: "The Saudi Arabian woman needs a lot of development, which includes English, because the English language allows her to read the rest of the world--of women around the world--how they are living, how they are solving their problems...We are the people of 'read' (from the Quran)...It's nice to gain experiences from new cultures; I even learn how others think of me and how I think of others. My main goal remains learning English, so I can return to Saudi Arabia and change." [laughs]

Confidence, ثقة 'Thiqa'. As I listened to the participants speak of the English language and how it made them feel, the Arabic word ثقة and related synonyms were used. Learning and using the English language made the participants feel confidence and pride. As I listened to participants speak and poured over the interviews, the Arabic word meaning "confidence" was used, and as I realized this was a key word, I smiled secretly when it was uttered.

May: "Confidence. I mean, I feel confident, like a feeling of confidence and assurance. I don't know."

Amirah: "Confidence...I really feel that my self-confidence is greater, not just here, but in Saudi Arabia now as well; wherever you go, hospitals, the nurses, the-

-you need it, helping your kids in school work. The motivation in front of me now is that English is a must. You need it."

Mona: "I feel confident. I feel confidence. I feel I can communicate and connect with anyone because anyone else must know English, so this gives me a lot of confidence in myself."

Fay: "Of course I will feel more confident in myself and be more proud of myself, as well."

Manal: "When one is armed with a second language, it gives him confidence."

Sarah: "More confident."

Arwa: "Unique." [laughs]

Noor: "I think it's cool. I think, yah, it makes me proud."

Ghadah: "Confidence, because you can understand the others."

The intertwined themes are clear here, as well. The essentialness of the language, the exposure it creates, and mostly the empowerment that is gained is present in the stories told and the voices heard. The use of the wording "to be armed with a second language" by Manal clearly indicates the strong effect of the language.

Empowerment. With confidence and pride came this feeling of empowerment. How empowerment was defined was different from one participant to the other, but it was generally a feeling of being able to do something new, to be independent, and to gain

a new sense of responsibility (i.e., a new role). For the purpose of this study, I looked at empowerment as related to learning English in this section; however, empowerment was a bigger subtheme that branched out and was a part of many other themes in this study. As I have mentioned earlier, this was part of the artificialness of separating for the purpose of understanding. Thus, this theme was discussed in more detail as needed throughout the paper.

May: "I feel the English is something very, very, important, as important as women getting a degree."

Amirah: "You can handle things; I mean, for Saudi Arabians, there are some limits, but here you feel, 'No, I can do it all myself. I can do it! I am not forced to rely on him for everything... I am not bound to him to do things for me.'"

Mona: "Yes, a woman must learn. English, like I said, will help her with a lot of things, especially that now that she has started to develop, so in order to aid this development, she must learn this second language."

Manal: "There are things you can only find in English... so if one has the language, it will help her understand. Or if she buys something, she can find out how to use it, not relies on someone else. It gives you the ability to bypass any 'I don't know'... Wouldn't it be nice for you to deal with issues by your own? English helps you speared the idea; give you a voice."

Alya: "When I first came here, I held onto my husband for the first three months saying 'talk, ask, I want that size,' so I really became dependent on him. But now after I learned and am able to take care of myself, he is dependent on me for things for the home: 'Go get and go do because now you know'... but it's nice that we are equal."

Again, the intertwinement of the themes is felt here, specifically, gender roles and how they are developing. The feeling of depending on one's self was discussed as a new role for these women and a source of empowerment and confidence. Throughout the discussion on the English language, issues of gender roles in Saudi Arabia were discussed, whether it be discussing the traditional roles or touching upon the changes currently taking place. Thus, there was also a discussion on culture, which was addressed in more detail below as an emergent theme of this study with multiple intertwined sub-themes.

Culture

The term "culture" is very vague, and I used it as a theme title to illustrate the muddled, tangled state of this theme. The participants each painted with their words their cultures and their worlds, and how new colors and new aspects were being added, old ones reexamined, new identities created, and new roles taken on. I used the term "culture" here to try and bring all the different aspects that create one's culture to light.

The participants in this study represented a wide variety of people, younger and older, married and single, and from different provinces of Saudi Arabia. The different

social cultural angles they brought about shared common threads of empowerment, discussions of change, and how boundaries were negotiated then renegotiated.

The theme of empowerment, which threads throughout all the major themes in this study, was also found here: whether it was discussed as achieved through better education or in the important role women play in society; whether it was achieved through ambition or created in a new environment. Participants also discussed change-- in hoping for change, discussing the changes currently taking place, or blending and adapting to her new worlds, and working with and challenging the old ways to create change.

The culturally-dictated gender roles were also discussed here; how they play out in the United States and in Saudi Arabia. How these women were changing, adapting, and blending. It was clear how there was a negotiation on boundaries and limits; how this new environment, language, culture, people, etc., were helping reshape those bounds; and how the old cultures, traditions, identities were also reexamined while shaping the new self and boundaries. These women agreed on what was acceptable in terms of the new boundaries, even though many didn't know each other. Yet, the traditional gender roles were discussed greatly, as if expected from them or known (matter of fact).

Thus, the complicated emergent theme of culture addresses three research questions, focusing on roles, identities, and change. The first, "What are Saudi Arabian women's views of their roles and identities in the Saudi Arabian culture and society?" was discussed in conversations on gender roles, change and issue of empowerment.

Another research question that had also emerged from those discussions was “How do Saudi Arabian women address changing self vs. expected self?” The other research question discussed here, “How do Saudi Arabian women employ the different aspects of their multiple roles and identities?” was exemplified in the theme as a whole, and particularly in the drawing of borders by the participating women.

As discussed above, it was difficult to separate this theme as a separate entity and then try to subdivide it into smaller themes; however, for the purpose of discussion and understanding of this paper, this was created. Here, I tried to shift from the theme of empowerment to change to gender roles and finally discussions of boundaries. As the participants felt empowerment, they discussed change, whether it was happening or not, and part of that change was in gender roles, which required a renegotiation of boundaries, but not the limits and potentials of these participants.

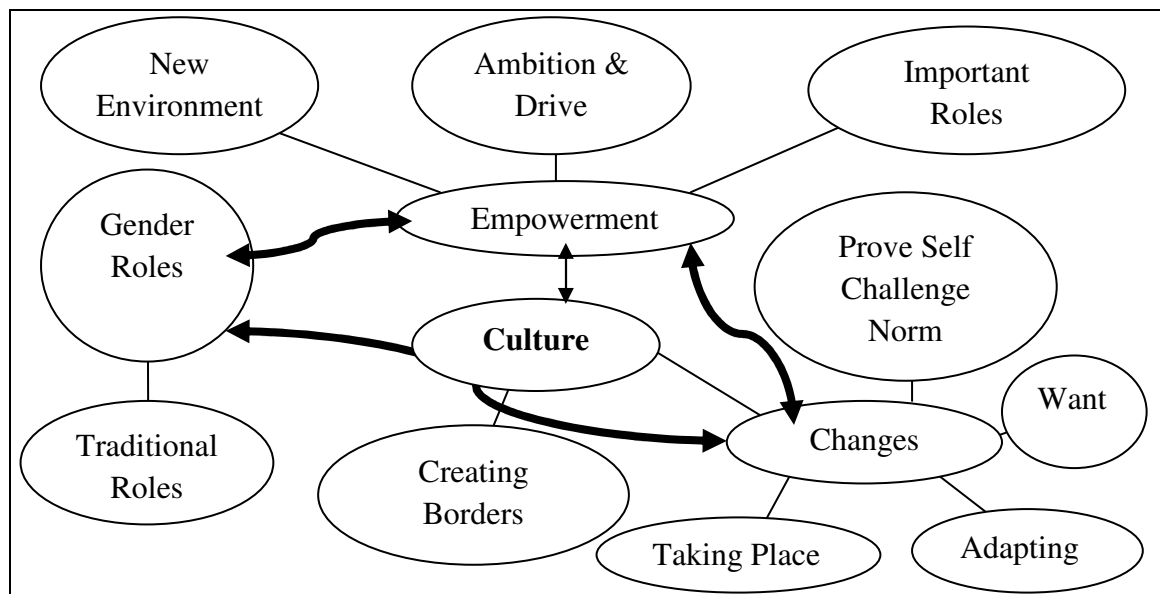


Figure 7. Representation of the emergent theme of culture.

Empowerment. For the theme of culture, empowerment was viewed from multiple aspects. As discussed above, empowerment is felt in multiple ways, and for the purpose of this study, empowerment, here, was viewed from a cultural perspective. Thus, empowerment was felt through the roles these women play: empowerment achieved by ambition and drive that moved the women through their multiple roles, and the empowerment gained from the new environment, which might challenge their old roles and aid in the creation of new ones in order to adapt to their current situations.

Important gendered roles. Many of the participants discussed the important role Saudi Arabian women play in society. What was interesting to note was the use of the word “suppose,” and the participants focused on the woman's educational roles, i.e., that of a mother figure, the caretaker of the next generation. This was an indication of the traditional roles many Saudi Arabian women take on, but it was also interesting to note the magnitude of importance these participants gave to those traditional roles.

Amirah: "I feel she is the basis of certain things, she is supposed to be the basis, to be present."

Mona: "Which role? You have educational, economical—uh, first I feel her educational role is very important to me, because she raises the new generations."

Fay: "Her role is great, whether in education or raising children, not just my own children, also others."

Alya: "It is known that the woman is half of society, she raises, she educates, she gives a lot, whether for her husband or family or kids or even her own kind."

Manal: "I am not going to say that we depend on the man 100%,--we do depend on him--but we have our own strength in managing our homes, managing our work. We manage our children, we manage it all; and I am sorry to say but sometimes the man thinks that he is just a helping hand in raising the kids or a helping hand in financially supporting her, but she carries most of the burden, and this makes her very strong."

Sarah: "I swear her role is big in the society; of course, she is the basis, I mean, I don't know, but one hand can't clap as they say."

Ambition and drive. Many of the participants discussed how ambition was a driving force that helped them feel empowered by stepping out of the norm, taking on new roles, and expanding their horizons. They believed that ambition aided them in taking on new roles, as well as keeping the original ones.

Farah: "We have ambition, us women, I mean before we might have had ambitions, but we accepted reality, but us now know we want our ambitions to become a reality."

Amirah: "She must be ambitious-ambitious to want; there are some who carve stones to succeed, even if she has kids and responsibilities."

Ruba: "Honestly, I consider the woman in Saudi Arabia a fighter, I mean she has to be a fighter with ambition and work on self-development... they all proved themselves, they are fighters... a fighter and very motivated, honestly that's the Saudi Arabian woman."

Manal: "But I was ambitious, I wanted more than being a TA; I wanted to learn; I want to study; I want to live a new environment."

Arwa: "My vision, my goal, is to work in the ministry of education and, yes, the sky is the limit."

New environment. As many of the women described ambition as a driving force, they explained that it was one of the reasons they chose to come to the United States. However, what they didn't expect was the effect of this new environment and the introduction to new worlds, and what that might mean to their roles and to their self was something many women were surprised, yet glad, to have experienced. As Amirah explained:

I mean, for Saudi Arabians, there are some limits; but here, you feel, "No, I can do it all myself. I can do it. I am not forced to rely on him for everything... I am not bound to him to do things for me."

For this section, I focused on three women who truly depicted the transformation and blending of the new and roles they must take on now in the new environment.

May: "I feel I am improving, also I feel that my life has a goal. My life has value, full of things; true I am facing pressures and fatigue, I mean, a home, three kids, a husband, a big house, and I was in a situation in Riyadh where I had two maids and here no one; but I respect myself every night when I am going to sleep. There is respect that was not there before for myself in Riyadh. You know, there, its luxury, spoiled with maids and workers. Here, everything I am doing, I'm the driver, I'm the maid, I'm the mother, I'm the friend, I'm the sister, I'm the wife, everything in the home... I don't know these all gave me respect for myself you know?"

Maha: "Look at the effect on my life. Yes, it's a very good experience; a lot of things I never did in my life on my own, I now do. I *am* responsible; I pay my bills, clean my apartment. In Riyadh, I never did any of those things, and especially here with my brother, who's the English is still very low, so he is depended on me in everything, so he is not here with me as my guardian; I *am* his guardian. [laughs] Ah, I feel it's good to depend on one's self, and it's nice to see and learn about new cultures--it's nice. I feel it's very beneficial, I mean."

Fay: "After I worked hard on my own and got my Visa and came here alone, I live here alone with two of my kids only. After that, I feel I became ten times stronger in life [laughs]... In Saudi Arabia, I was very dependent on my family

and my brothers. When I came here, my life changed a lot; I became dependent only on myself. Here, I can depend on myself; in my country I couldn't do that. In my country, I had to depend on others. I need someone else a lot, especially a man, like my brothers. But here, thanks to Allah, I feel I need no one."

Change. Although the theme of change was one of the main emergent themes of this study, it was also used as a subtheme in this bigger theme of culture. This section focused on how some of the women in the study viewed change as important to their culture. It was divided into the desire for change because it is needed, how in some aspects it is taking place, how many of these women are trying to create change, and finally, it covers discussions of adapting the many cultural aspects of their worlds into a coherent working new culture they have created from all the different aspects of their self, experiences, and cultures.

Wants change. "I have the choice not to return to Saudi Arabia... but I feel, no, if I learn and become very good, I want my country, I want to improve my country" (Mona). Some women discussed the need for change in women's roles in Saudi Arabian society; they described their desire for change because they believe the situation has reached a dire point. As May explained:

When the environment around you doesn't encourage you to feel that you can give or change anything... I tried but I was turned down...but this is the reality, it frustrates you and you give up... not just for the mentally challenged, for example, for a widow, inheritance, regrettably many things, are obstacles.

Without connections, she would have nothing, for someone who has no power, with no degrees, enough! Too many things made one (female) depressed sometimes.

Fay also explained that those set roles have been met, and new roles needed to be taken on for the good of society.

When these girls graduate, how will they benefit the society? This is in biology, so they will become teachers? Some will work in hospitals or labs or as TA? Okay, teachers we have enough [laughs]. I want to help girls graduate with goals, other than becoming a teacher. I mean the main focus was on producing teachers. Okay, a lot did graduate and can't find jobs now. So they have to change the curriculum [laughs], the fields, and majors as well, so they can benefit the society in Saudi Arabia.

Change is currently taking place. "Thankfully, we are a society that has started to develop; it started to look at women in a different way" (Mona). As a few participants expressed their desire for change, a few pointed out the changes are currently taking place in the roles and expectations of women in a Saudi Arabian society. Although many could not pinpoint these changes, they did note that it is taking place and has an impact on them, their choices and their roles.

May: "I feel these past few years, women's situations have been developing and changing, and they are beginning to feel her value and that she is able to handle many responsibilities."

Amal: "They felt that maybe the old way was wrong... no, it's the opposite now; it's nice and normal when the man sees his wife as educated and part of the work force... That's it, the world is more opened, and there are more jobs for women; it's normal, not like before. I mean, I don't know how or what they thought before, but I personally don't think of them if they approve or not. No, I feel it's a necessity, I mean, what am I supposed to do?... She can do what she pleases; I mean for me personally I can work. There is no 'no, it's not necessary'. No, it's just like if a boy wants that job--I want that job, okay, and it's available to me now, it's no big deal."

Farah: "I see the difference before when my mom studied interior design. She could not get a job, except as a teacher... I feel like if long ago, I studied biomedical engineering, I would become a biology teacher! But now, no, I can work in a hospital, I can operate the machines."

Prove self and challenge the norm. While discussing changes in their roles, many participants discussed how, with the current changes, many women had to expand on what was considered the norm and prove that a balance between the expected and the new could be made using the challenge of expectation as a motivation to move on and expand or, as discussed above, as a drive. Thus, these women were creating change while dealing with change.

May: "I don't know where they invented that a woman has no presence, no voice or anything; and now they, women, are trying to prove themselves that she can."

There are live examples today, that a woman can be a model mother and hold a certain position to the fullest. And I feel what helped her was the challenge that was facing her from the society, especially the men, who can do these things. In the end, the Saudi Arabian woman is very strong... women are able to live without men, to take care of themselves, earn money, take care of a household."

Amirah: "Here is when I made it a challenge... it became an issue of resilience, [laughs] they said it to my face, even four or five days before I left, 'you have time to back away; why are you doing this; you have your job; you are stable in your home and your husband is stable'. I want my children to benefit... I want to benefit and learn. It was shattering [laughs], and I can't tell you how many nights I cried." [laughs]

Adapting. The term "adapting" means taking the multiple selves and multiple learnings and molding them to fit into the present environment, thus, a blend of everything new with all the originals. Here, the sense of balancing is extended; a balancing of roles and social expectations.

May: "I admire the woman who, no matter how high she climbs and no matter how great she becomes, if she understands and is with the people, she makes them also feel great... its nice when she can blend with the society as a whole."

Alya: "I mean with language, one can learn new ways in many fields, to gain experiences from around the world, and take what is a fit with our customs, traditions, and religion... Also it would be nice to take what I learn here in social

work, and in a certain way apply it--take what's beneficial and works for Muslim teachings and apply it."

Gender Roles. Gender roles and gender expectations are a part of culture; how and what society views as appropriate of each gender differs from one culture to the next; and as discussed earlier, there are multiple cultures that coexist within the world one finds themselves in. Here, the women discussed the multiple gender roles they found themselves in. Although I divided this theme into smaller subthemes, we found that the same participants had spoken to these multiple themes, showing not only how intermingled the emergent themes were, but the multiple roles these participants shared within themselves.

Traditional roles. Many of the women interviewed discussed change and taking on new roles, and within the same breath, discussed traditional roles of male dominance. It was interesting to note that some participants who were passionate about change were also aware of these roles and discussed them as either a part of life that they would continue with, or something to change and adapt to the new roles they wished to take on.

May: "Because we are always--even women are under the shadow of the man no matter what... even we want the man to be better/higher, so that when he wants to tell you something, you respect it."

Maha: "I mean, it's not nice to travel with your husband, and he is just standing there waiting for you to order or talk. I mean it's always better that he is better than you; I especially feel it makes him manlier to speak English."

Ruba: "I was scared before because my language didn't go far, and he didn't know either; and it was hard because no matter what, the man in our Eastern culture is the one we depend on and our support and security."

Sarah: "Of course, I want him to be better than me. [laughs] He must... I mean, if he is better than me, I feel more confident, and honestly, I will respect him more. I mean, I will feel I can rely on him. I don't want to have qualities that surpass him; we are either close or he is better, of course."

Arwa: "I lived with my mother because she got divorced, and she is a mother and a father at the same time; so, I saw her struggle a lot to just get her rights. She can't get a driver, unless she have a man; she can't have a maid, unless she have a man; she can't go outside the country, unless she have a paper; a lot of things, I mean, and there is no answer for that."

Ghadah: "Our land is for men... I have a problem; I told you that I couldn't work because, you know, working with a man field, it's a big problem to me, none about mixing and these stupid stuff. It's about they don't give you the chance. 'You are woman; you don't know how to do it. Who said it? Who said? Because of this university? No, no, no'. What does it mean that? Like these stuffs that they tell us."

Some women discussed the reason behind this, and many agreed that it was traditional expectations of gender roles. Below is a segment from a conversation that took place between Ruba and Alya who spoke about change in their roles. They then turned to

a discussion on why these roles are present; it was what the cultures around them have embedded.

Alya: "At the same time, it is customs and traditions that guide us, unfortunately, and some of them are depressing. I don't blame men, there are good ones; the problem is that they are accustomed to this... it all goes back to the fact that the woman does not understand her rights unfortunately."

Ruba: "We understand our rights, but we give them up."

Alya: "Because we were raised to give up, that giving up should come from the woman; and if she doesn't, then she gets divorced. But if all got up and stood up for their rights, not all can get divorced, so there will be a new cultural understanding."

Finally to conclude this section, I used the words of the younger participant Ghadah, who had problems with the issues of her life choices, from her field of study, job choices, to coming to the United States. She explained, eloquently, the reason behind these difficulties was not religion, but the cultural environment that mixes different elements.

First of all, your being a female in Saudi Arabia, it's like being a warrior in a middle of a war, especially Alhamdulillah. We have supportive families that support us and give us all what we need. I am talking about the women that they have no any supportive, other than Allah. Poor thing, she is facing many

difficulties, because of the guardian issues, because you are a female, because they mixed traditions with religion.

Changing roles. The theme of change was discussed throughout the paper, and could be seen that it was caused by multiple influences; however, the greatest impact could be felt in the roles that these women were taking on, specifically, gender roles or cultural expectations of gender roles. As Amal explained, "the situation is not like before, I mean, before they used to say that the male is the stable, he is the base, but it changed." How it has changed was discussed differently; however, they all agreed that the change was in their roles.

The theme of change was discussed, in more detail below, as a major emergent theme; however, I wanted to point it out here, as it was an important component of one's culture, and the important role it played to the participants in this study, as could be gathered and heard from the voices quoted above.

Setting borders, not limits, حدود 'hudood'. This theme is truly an emergent one in the sense that it came about naturally, whereas the other themes came up within a context of questions that hinted at or touched on those topics and were even part of the larger study. This theme was never asked or hinted at, but came about when these women were asked about their new ESL classrooms.

What is even more interesting to note was the use of the Arabic word حدود, meaning "border." The participants carried their cultures within them wherever they went, all while creating and recreating the borders of it, expanding it, reeling it in, as

needed. These borders continually being created are a part of the flexibility and pliability of one's culture. However, these participants never limited themselves, as was clear in their ambition and drive, in experiencing new environments and taking on different roles.

Below, I used the participating women's voices to show what these borders are and how they were created. All participants discussed this theme of borders, except for two participants, who generally agreed with their group and were more reserved in their interviews.

May: "We all came for the purpose of education, to study and to give our best. I never felt a problem. It's the guys that feel it's a problem, and I think this broke as soon as they saw how serious we were, how we want to study and learn, and how we want to prove ourselves. Each one of us is able to draw lines and prove to those in front of her 'I am respectful' and force them to respect her."

Farah: "The Saudi Arabian woman is like any other woman, except maybe her thinking is based on her customs traditions... there are boundaries for the Saudi Arabian women, she moves within them."

Amal: "I will do my things within bounds. For example my customs and traditions say I need to wear a head scarf, so I will move on. I will work. I will live but in my head scarf, this way I don't pass those boundaries."

Amirah: "At first it was hard because we were not used to being with male students, and we are sitting together, and sometimes we have to have discussions

and sit with them for these discussions; but after, I feel it become normal for me. If I put boundaries between us, I don't have a problem. There are some men who are very strict and believe they shouldn't talk to women, even here, but if I have placed boundaries between me and you, what's the problem? I am here to discuss just this topic with you. There is no opportunity to laugh, and I am like anyone [changes anyone from female to male pronoun] you meet out in the street or public place".

Mona: "Not because he is male: 'No, I can't do this or get close.' No, I can sit close to him and talk to him and joke with him, within borders of course. I would have placed them for myself, and that's fine".

Maha: "I never felt that mixing (sexes) is wrong or something, as long as there are boundaries of respect... Even though for me it's no big deal, and I am open-minded, but especially with the males, I don't like to give and take just question and answer. I don't like long conversations and things like that, boundaries you know".

Fay: "I mean, it became normal to speak to a man, within boundaries of course; at first, maybe I was scared or shy to talk to them (men), but we are in a classroom studying the same things; we are learning together."

Ruba: "I dealt with them all in the same manner, within the bounds of the class, in the borders of what is asked of us... I came to study. I am taking this opportunity,

and whether you are a male or a female, it doesn't matter. We are here to complete our work together and after that, each on his own way".

Alya: "Now I feel that I have accepted studying with males, it's normal. I mean mixing with males, if one is respectful of themselves, respectful of the rules".

Manal: "I learned that there are red lines, you and me, and he's my neighbor; and he's like my brother, and I am like your sister... Okay, so what? He smiled at you, is a smile? Don't interpret it as something else."

Sarah: "She is ambitious, and does all she wants within the borders of always remembering that she is Arab and Muslim, I mean, because people sometimes believe that success is openness."

Arwa: "I have a chance to speak to a man one on one, and in a really comfortable environment, and it's a classroom".

Noor: "It's okay, it's okay; it's the classroom. It's classmates; it's fine to talk and discuss, say no, say yes, whatever, you know, but outside of the classroom, the college... it's not... it's just a group thing."

Ghadah: "I found out that it's okay one he can put a red lines that talking with them normally is fine, it's not the big issue, so I am trying to adapt normally".

Change From Within

Although the theme of change threaded throughout the conversation and the findings, there was a general feeling that true change would take place if it's from within;

from those who understand the current situation and how it came to be; from those who have lived it and who see all aspects of it, both the positive and the negative. Thus, this emergent theme gave rise to the research question 'How do Saudi Arabian women address changing self vs. expected self'?

This theme of change was found in the above discussions, as it was a part of the reconstruction of self and of the cultural understanding and boundaries that these women were creating and recreating; a self that is growing and widening, but continuously going around, connected though obligations and connections to their culture and tradition, as well as religion. Thus, through an understanding of their own background, their needs, their worlds, these women understood what was needed--what *change* was needed. It was through creating and balancing their roles, looking to others, or even setting examples and proving themselves as Saudi Arabian women who were capable, truly change can take place. "True" in the sense that it fitted these women and their needs and helped them expand and balance the multiple roles.

As the theme of change was dominant throughout the study, and had been woven in and out of the other themes, its strong presence was clear, whether it was a desire for, the thrive towards, or the actual involvement and participation in. Here, as not to be redundant, I chose to focus on how these women tried to balance the multiple roles currently available to them, due to feelings of obligation and connection to their country; and finally, the importance of change coming from within, by them for them.

Obligation and connection to Saudi Arabia. Throughout our discussions, there was a general consensus that change had become an obligation, a duty felt due to being a part of that culture. They felt that they are tied to this land, a part of it, and, thus, must be a part of its development. I believe that this feeling of belonging and duty brought this study into a complete circle, in that, as these women expanded and created new roles and boundaries, they continued to return and reevaluate themselves, creating the intermingled web, all due to a sense of belonging and expanding. I found that it was this expansion and return that was the general theme discussed throughout this study, therefore, creating this intermingled web of identities, roles, and cultural understandings.

May: "But at least you think that I belong to this country, and I am trying to give to it. In the end, it's good to return to your roots... try to see the light and positive side... I am tied to this by my family, morals, and religion."

Mona: "I have the choice not to return to Saudi Arabia... but I feel, no, if I learn and become very good, I want my country. I want to improve and develop my country."

Alya: "Our ways, our life, our customs and traditions; there are customs that we dislike as women, but we are forced to stand, because they come from our fathers, brothers, or husbands and because I love him, I don't want to lose him, I give in. Saudi Arabia is my country, and I love it and wish to be buried in its sands, but like any other country, it has its hardships and faults; but they will not be solved except by its people. They are the ones to improve it."

Change from women for women. Many participants discussed the need for change to come from women themselves. That was because these women understood their need and their history, as explained by Maha: "I mean, we don't want sudden freedom or change, but our mentalities are not like our parents when they were our age; I mean, we are more open." Also, as Noor discussed:

To me, really I think, like she has like, supposed to, she has to get up and talk about herself, I mean I feel, the women they have ideas, they are not stupid you know, they are not just sitting there you know, bowing down and I don't know what... no, I think it's um, I think women for world very important it's not just men's ideas and stuff.

Having an understanding of the past, the history, and the present allows for change to be gradual and accepted. At the same time, these women understood the difficulty that could arise from change from within; having an understanding of the history, social roles and present needs could also create a barrier. As some participants explained, it is easier to play into the social expectations, customs, and traditions on gender roles than to move away and grow:

Amirah: "I feel the bigger problem comes from the woman herself... they want everything easy and simple, he has to work and I stay at home, he should make money and spend it on us.... We should have the motives to study; I don't think he can completely refuse when he sees that you are motivated.... And I think this is due to the fact that they still think that the man should spend, he should bear all

the responsibilities and he should provide everything for me, why should I tire myself? I feel sometimes that women's roles will perish because of the hindrances from women themselves."

Alya: "Okay, there are hardships, and there are many obstacles for a Saudi Arabian woman, but I still believe that the main cause or reason is in the woman's reluctance she steps down. You can step down at certain times or situations... So, if we want change, my goal is women first, because they teach traditions and customs, so since the mother is the one who rises, she should be the goal of change".

Again, the solution was discussed as change from women for women, a change from within. In the above quotes it was clear that the women had to move away from this fear of change, which required strength and drive, a quality many discussed earlier as "ambition." To conclude on this section, I want to quote Alya, who believes that true change comes from those who understand the needs, history, and roles, i.e. women, and most importantly, it needs time. She explained:

Change requires strength, whether in specialist, in scholars, religious men, as well as past experiences; and we need to unite our efforts... Why do they always say three-quarters of change comes from the woman? Because she is the one raising and doing. So, change should be in her education, in preparing her for marriage, for college; from childhood, she needs to know her rights, her duties, and her nature...they say 'a lot of hammering will break the link', so change in Saudi

Arabia needs a lot of time and must be continuous; it must be continuous, change after change, while still looking at what we have. It's a circle; we must live within it.

Strong Role Models

As discussed above, change was slowed down or hindered by fear of the unknown and unfamiliar. However, many of the participating women looked to someone they admired, someone in their life who has set an example, who has proven that it can be done, or someone who has encouraged and empowered them. Thus, this theme addressed the research question 'How do Saudi Arabian women address changing self vs. expected self'?

Most participants mentioned a strong woman role model in their life: a mother, sister, or friend who had set an example or gave great advice and support. A few mentioned a husband or father as a strong man who encouraged them, supported them, and helped them expand and blend their roles. These men were also looked upon as examples of success that some of the participants admired and wanted to emulate, all of which exemplified the expanding of roles and the empowerment of the participants.

Farah: "I see a lot of women who have business other than their job, other than their kids, other than her husband, other than her family; she has combined them all together successfully, and this really encourages me that nothing can stop me".

Amirah: "One of my relatives had a lot of responsibilities, but she did it... she was able to fuel herself with 'yes, I can'."

Alya: "There was one professor who was the main reason in my change, honestly, to the point where, really, from that moment, I began to wish for not just change, but to really work on my self-development by learning English and to come here and learn new ways."

Although this theme was significant in and of its self, what was more interesting was that in a pilot study conducted two years prior, all participants mentioned the strong support and acceptance of the men or guardians in their life without being asked or prompted, as compared to this study where a strong supporting, accepting woman role model was mentioned. This could be an indication of changes currently taking place in women's social and gender roles in Saudi Arabia, or what is now viewed as more acceptable of women. It was an indication of how change for women by women was the motive and drive of a true change, true in the sense that it worked for those involved.

Islamic Feminism

Throughout the interviews, discussions, and stories shared, there was a strong presence of religious influences, in words like "Insha Allah" (God willing), "Alhamdulillah" (thanks to God), etc...However, these words are more a part of the slang than an indication of religion. Yet, there was a general, underlying theme of religion, in that it was a part of that culture--a part of the self these women presented.

Although Islamic religion guides life in Saudi Arabia and has prescribed the roles of women, women here used it as an answer to and validation of what they are doing. These women understood the true meaning and message behind Islamic teachings and,

thus, used it in their stories. As explained earlier, Islamic feminism is the reinterpretation of the Quran and Islamic teachings in a way that benefits women, a way that allows them to expand and extend their cultural understandings. Therefore, this emergent theme addressed two of the research questions: “How do Saudi Arabian women employ the different aspects of their multiple roles and identities?” and “How do Saudi Arabian women address changing self vs. expected self?”

This section was divided into looking at Islamic teachings for answers and looking at Islamic teaching as a validation to these women's current and changing selves. By looking to Islamic teachings, the participating women were validating their multiple roles and identities created, as well as easing into the needed changes. Islamic teaches, I believe, have created here a comfortably familiar, yet pliable, element of roles and cultures.

Looking to Islamic teachings for answers. Many of the participants interviewed did not understand why women in Saudi Arabia embodied some of the roles they do. "Our religion guides our life, so I don't understand why these issues and obstacles are still present." (May) Looking at Islam was one way of indicating that this is not ridged and can be changed. As Ghadah explained, sometimes women only have religion as support and must use it. "I am talking about the women that they have no any supportive other than Allah. Poor thing, she is facing many difficulties because of the guardian issues, because you are a female; because they mixed traditions with religion."

However, this mixing of religion and tradition was very much a strong influence on these women's lives; yet, there was a general understanding that a move can be made within this mix. As Sarah explained, a Saudi Arabian woman should continue to understand and use her religious teachings, as they will help her move within the Saudi Arabian overall culture:

She is ambitious, and do all she wants within the borders of always remembering that she is Arab and Muslim; I mean, because people sometimes believe that success is openness... actually, the more you hold on to your religion, you want when one succeeds that she really, *really* holds on to her religion. I mean, interest in religion and to be really religious, so that she can represent us in a nice way.

Looking to Islamic teachings as validation. As discussions on the choices that brought these women to me, Islamic teachings were used as validation. Islam was used as a way to justify where they were and what they are doing. This indicated the influence and control the Saudi Arabian culture has, but it also indicated the fluctuation of that culture, and how it can be molded and expanded but only by those who understand its roots, Islam.

"It's true, if your relationship with Allah is good, there are limits, but they don't stop you." (Maha) Throughout our conversations, many of the participating women explained how Islam encourages education: "We are the people of 'read' (from the Quran)" Alya exclaimed, meaning we must continue to educate and expand our

knowledge. Others explained that learning a second language was part and parcel to Islam; and, therefore, by being here, they were adhering to those teachings.

Amirah: "It's a good experience to come and see their ways, their lives, their thinking, their culture... 'those who understand the language of a people can feel secure'."

Manal: "Like the hadeeth (prophet sayings) says 'learn the language of a people and you are protected from their evils'. Learning a second language is very old, from the days of the prophet... so it's something good not bad."

Researcher Role

Being a Saudi Arabian woman meant that I was involved with others like myself, questioning things I was aware of, but wanted to know more on, and generally being a major part of the study. As I poured through literature, as to the best way to approach this, I came to realize that building rapport and using friendship as a method (Tillmann-Healy, 2003) to create comfort, honest and candid conversations was the best approach. Establishing rapport, as Glesne (2006) explained, was a selfish act on my part in that it was used by me as a "distance-reducing, anxiety-quieting, trust-building mechanism that primarily serves the interest of the researcher" (p. 110).

I began by being vulnerable, by stepping out of my comfort zone and stepping into the spot light. I stood in front of large groups in classrooms and common areas and introduced myself as a Saudi Arabian PhD student. It was my story using my voice, which was what I wanted the participating women to do. I wondered what others thought

of me, as I stood there in western clothes, speaking fluent English; and as that thought crossed my mind, I began to wonder why it did, and why I cared so much. Thus, I kept memos and wrote reflections to help me understand the different emotions and schizophrenic roles I went through, as both an insider and outsider.

In this section I discussed the multiple emotions I, as a researcher, who was both an insider and outsider, went through. I divided these emotions into four general headings and discussed why I felt each. I began with fear, which I attributed to nerves, as well as to understanding the culture and what is expected of me as a Saudi Arabian woman. Next, I discussed the uncomfortable feeling of exposure: how I felt naked and in the spot light at first. I then moved to discuss surprise, which was what I felt when I realized the acceptance from many, and the overall involvement of the participating women. Finally, I discussed two ends of what I believe to be a part of one spectrum: joy and pain-the joy of conversation and the pain of being rejected. I ended this section on a discussion of why it was worth it to me, and why I chose to use friendship as a method, and that was the conversations held and the stories told.

Fear. The most vivid feeling I had was that of fear; fear of rejection, fear of exposure, and fear of unwanted talk. I understood what I was doing and what it meant to others like me. I was moving away from my comfort zone of being a quiet, observant Saudi Arabian woman, to standing in front of large groups of people, a lot of who were Saudis, and telling my story. I was moving away from quietly studying in the United States, to having to explain what I was doing here, why I spoke English, and why I dressed the way I did.

First and foremost, I feared rejection, as this research was personal to me, in that I was trying to understand and reflect on the impact of English, not only on myself, but others like me.

I also feared giving or asking for too much personal information, and by “personal,” I mean emails and phone numbers. It is not the norm for a Saudi Arabian woman to give personal information out, and that is why one finds a lot of made up user names in emails and social networks; however, this is not meant to generalize, as many Saudi Arabian women do nowadays. I still had to be cautious, because I wasn’t sure yet how I was perceived; and this caution backfired the first time I tried it. After introducing myself to a large group of people, I met five perspective participants and gave them my email only, instead of asking for their information or giving them my phone number, and to this day, none have contacted me. I learned two lessons that day: always take their information and wait until some rapport has been created; thus, I decided to attend classes and frequent common areas and not worry about how it will be perceived.

I also feared unwanted talk, rumors. How will I be perceived in a large community of Saudis? Will I be accepted as is, or would I have to change? As I let some of those fears guide my actions (in the way I dressed, how close I stood by people, and how I interacted with the teachers in front of the students), I let go of others (worrying about talking too much, smiling, and interacting with any student with questions whether male or female). I began to create a balance for myself and a role as both an authoritative figure and a student.

Exposure. The feeling of being vulnerable and exposed was one of the most crippling fears I felt, and that was why I chose to discuss it on its own. I feared exposure of both my physical self and my inner self to strangers. With the physical, I became aware of my body and how I moved and how others moved around me. With my inner self, I had to come to an understanding of who I was and how I wanted to present myself.

As discussed above, I had a fear in how I dressed; and although I did not wear the head scarf, I always wondered what it meant to others, would I have gotten more participants if I had worn one? I had to leave those doubts and fears behind and move on. Although I did get one comment on my missing head scarf, and it stung, the amount of support and acceptance was overwhelming.

As I painstakingly poured time into what I was wearing, so as to reach a balance between traditional and modern, I always feared what reactions I would get. I first had to get my husband's approval on the outfit of the day, not because he was a traditionalist in any sense, but because he understood the culture. I also found that I sometimes asked my participants, "How do I look? Is it Okay?" Here, I believe I feared rejection for not dressing like a Saudi Arabian women, and I feared not being "cool" enough. It was truly a schizophrenic roller coaster.

I also became aware of my physical presence in the classroom; my arms flailing as I talked, my hips and the space they occupied as I walked between the desks in the classroom, my whole body and where it was located. I felt large and everywhere, thus, went on a strict diet to feel smaller. I also noticed how we Saudi Arabian women clustered in one side of the room; how we leaned on each other and whispered to each

other; and how in the presence of Saudi Arabian males, we kept lines and distances, no matter what the conversations was. I noticed how we moved in a coordinated manner, like a dance to keep those lines intact.

As I presented myself, I was exposing the inner me; who I was, what I was doing here, and why. I was worried about how I would be preserved, and if I would be accepted; and so, in those classrooms, I tried to be as professional as possible, only speaking in English, and constantly on my computer or taking notes. However, as soon as we split into groups, and I sat with a Saudi Arabian woman, I eased up and let go of the fears. We talked candidly, shared stories in both languages before turning to the work. We usually ended up exchanging emails, and I would walk with them to a common area after class, where I met their friends. I believe that the classroom was where I struggled the most with my schizophrenic roles of both an insider and outsider.

Surprise. As my inner struggle was eating at me, I felt true surprise at those women who came up to me, who wanted to chat and ask questions, who invited me to meet their friends, who took time to help me. I was surprised by how much was shared from both sides, the stories told, laughter shared, and trust that was built. The participating women told me things they haven't really shared with anyone else, thoughts, feelings, beliefs; but the one that surprised me the most was Fay. She was a strong, independent woman who did things on her own; however, at the end of the interview, she explained to me that she did not want any of the students to know that she was divorced. I was surprised, not because she was a divorced woman, but because she had to hide it, that this strong, confident woman felt ashamed to be a divorced Saudi Arabian woman.

I was also surprised at how important my story was. At every interview I somehow became the interviewee; it was an interchange between myself and my participant. I did not mind sharing my story, I was prepared for it and expected it, in fact, for it created what Glazer (1982) called “reciprocity”, "the building of a sense of mutual identification and feeling of community" (as quoted in Glesne, 2006, p. 142). However, I was surprised at how many times I was asked, and by the number of participants that asked. I was surprised at how eager the participants were to hear my story, their smiles, and nods of agreement, their follow-up questions, and great insight. I was mostly surprised at how my stories and willingness to share them was the root of rapport, my stories created friendship.

Joy and pain. As I listened to the stories, including my own, I felt true joy and true pain. These two opposite feelings were the result of true involvement and commitment. I was involved in the study because it was a personal subject for me. Thus, I was also committed to, not only the needs of my research, but those of my participants. We worked on homework, texted each other late at night for advice, and shared food received from home (mostly dates and Arabic coffee).

I felt true joy at being called a role model. I never placed myself in that position, but as more and more participants stated their reason for participating was because they thought of me as role model and wanted to know more about me, I was elated. I felt joy at the stories of success and accomplishments, of overcoming obstacles, and the connections made. I also felt joy in transcribing my interviews, as I re-listened and

relived the stories and began to see themes emerge, connections made, and a qualitative study coming together.

I felt pain at being rejected. One student, in particular, scheduled a meeting with me three times, and when I showed up, she was not there or had to go. I took it personally, for as I have mentioned, it was a personal study for me. However, out of this pain, I learned that true friendships were established, for when I was rejected, both Sarah and Arwa jumped up to help. I also felt pain at the stories told. As the participating women told me of struggles and hurt, I struggled and hurt with them; again, I attributed that to involvement and commitment.

Candid discussions. Through all the feelings experienced and discussed above, true candid discussions took place. Those true raw emotions I felt were translated into the conversations, the meetings, my role as both a researcher and an insider. As I exposed myself to these women, they sensed my vulnerability, my fears, my wants and needs for the study. They saw that I was like them, scared and out of my comfort zone, and welcomed me with open arms.

We discussed our married lives and our roles as Saudi Arabian wives, our children and raising them in two cultures, studying in a new, unfamiliar environment. I was invited to parties and get-togethers outside of college. My diet and weight loss was discussed, and due to my vulnerability with this issue, candid discussions of self-esteem and how it impacts relationships were discussed by participants and non-participants. With these candid, honest discussions, everyone benefited, and rapport was achieved, both because of and due to these conversations. As Glesne (2006) explained, "rapport is

more easily achieved if both parties get something out of the interaction," and I believe we did simply based on the emotions and stories shared.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the emergent themes from the conversations that took place between the participating women and me. The findings were used to better understand the roles and identities of Saudi Arabian women currently living in a Western environment with the aim of returning to Saudi Arabia. After four months of interaction with the participants, the emergent themes indicated that all the women interviewed were very empowered and used Islamic teachings to move forward. They understood the culture and lived within it, taking what they were learning to adapt and apply to their social roles and cultural expectations. They used their experiences and learnings as a way to connect, grow, and be exposed; not to abandon and neglect.

The impact of English as a second language is clear in these women's stories. As a global language, it had presented opportunities, not only for education and work, but for change and growth. As they moved and adapted, these women placed boundaries, but not limits, to their potentials and abilities. They believed change comes from within, a movement for women by women, and for the future generations of women. They still value their culture, traditions, and religion and use those to expand and create social roles in the new era. They used the cultural backgrounds, traditional history, and religious teachings to carve an identity for themselves in this new globalized era.

In the following chapter, implications of the emergent themes will be discussed in relation to the literature discussed in a previous chapter. Therefore, the discussion will revolve around issues of multiple identities and changing roles, the shifts made in culture, and the impact of learning English as a second language on those topics, as relating to the participating women and the stories shared. The chapter also included how Islam was used as a tool to empower these participating women, hence the issue of Islamic feminism. It concluded with a summary of the study as a whole, bringing it to a close.

5. Summary of the Study

Overview

Through the stories of the participating women, this study aimed at examining Saudi Arabian women's changing social and cultural roles and the multiple identities created. This study focused specifically on the impact of English as a second language and how it played a role in changing these women's social capital, helped them in creating multiple identities, empowered them through reform in education and work, and contributed to the overall change in their roles in society. The study was conducted in an environment where the participating women interacted with both Saudi and non-Saudi Arabians, thus helping in understanding how the different selves played out in different contexts and with different people who may or may not be familiar with the cultural roles prescribed to these women.

Through the stories told, and with the themes and subthemes that emerged, this study also examined how Saudi Arabian women were able to use the new tools available to them, whether through education, media, or travel, to create multiple, yet culturally acceptable, identities and social roles. Finally, this study also aimed at creating a venue where their voices could be heard; thus, it was the idea of change from the inside initiated by Saudi Arabian women themselves.

Research Questions

As the themes emerged, this study focused on four research questions:

1. What are Saudi women's views of their roles and identities in the Saudi Arabian culture and society?
2. What are Saudi women's views on using the English language and its impact on their roles and identities in the Saudi Arabian culture and society?
3. How do Saudi women employ the different aspects of their multiple roles and identities?
4. How do Saudi women address changing self versus expected self?

The first research question aimed at trying to come to an agreed upon understanding of the current Saudi Arabian woman's roles portrayed within Saudi Arabia. This question rose from the participating women's discussions on how they viewed themselves and their roles in Saudi Arabia. Although these women portrayed different roles, there was an overarching understanding and agreement on what roles were socially prescribed and culturally expected of Saudi Arabian women.

The second research question specifically focused on the use of English as a second language, as a tool by the participating women. As discussions on how and when these women used English and for what purposes took place, it became clear that English was used as an essential tool in today's globalized world, as well as a tool that offered empowerment and change that is specific to the needs of Saudi Arabian women. Thus, it

covered discussions on impact of this tool on the participating women's multiple roles and identities in Saudi Arabia.

The third research question focused on discussions of the self and its dynamics in multiple settings with multiple expectations. As women discussed their actions and reactions in Saudi Arabia, the United States, and the ESL classroom, borders were drawn, but not limits. The participating women were clear on having multiple roles and were aware of when and how to employ them.

The fourth research question emerged from the data during analysis. It covered the participating women's discussions on change in the Saudi Arabian culture and how these women were addressing it. The discussion revolved around a multitude of attitudes towards dealing with change, from desiring it to setting examples, from acting on the expected gender roles to moving the borders of those expectations. But what stood out was that change is a must, and it must also come from the women who live it, know it, and understand its boundaries, so as to move and expand those borders in a culturally and socially acceptable manner.

Review of Design

A qualitative in-depth interview was used for the purpose of this study and its needs. The aim was to give voice to and gain insight into the multiple social roles and identities of Saudi Arabian women attending an ESL program in the United States. Through the use of storytelling, an inductive emergent design, open-ended interviews,

and the use of reflections and memos, the aim of voice and insight were achieved for the purpose of this study.

Storytelling, as venue, was used for meaning-making, sharing views, and creating identities, not only between myself and the participants, but with the readers as well. Thus, it "must be preserved, not fractured, by investigators, who must respect respondents' ways of constructing meaning and analyze how it is accomplished" (Riessman, 1993, p. 4). Therefore, I used the participating women's voices whenever possible to allow for dialogue and multiple interpretations.

With the use of semi-structured interviews, the stories were allowed flexibility, yet as a researcher, I had aim. The participating women were given the freedom to take the study where they pleased but were aware of the research topic. As the stories were told, they were used as a guide to the study's findings. Using the voices of the participants helped create a study that allowed both my voice as a researcher and that of my participants' to be heard--my voice in the design, their voices in the findings and themes.

Conceptual Framework Revisited

As discussed earlier, this research topic grew from personal experience. As a Saudi Arabian woman who has spent a significant amount of time in both Saudi Arabia and the United States, I have come to create and develop multiple identities to deal with the multiple roles in which I find myself in. I have also come to realize the opportunities

that English as a second language has presented to me: from education to the work field to even social status.

Through my interaction with other women like myself, I have come to realize that English as a second language has aided us in expanding our options and roles. However, I also noticed that we maintained the social expectations and traditional values cherished by many Saudis. Thus, I became interested in what the exposure to a second language and, consequently, a second culture meant for a traditional country like Saudi Arabia, focusing specifically on its women who portray the most traditional roles.

Growing up in two different worlds, I have come to “construct” my world. Who I am and what I know is because of where I have been, what I have learned, and how I digest and use that information. Therefore, my world view was socially, culturally, politically, religiously, and psychologically constructed (Patton, 2002). I am a constructivist, and the emphasis for my study, therefore, became the self and its personal experiences and understandings; and with multiple selves there were multiple realities with stories to tell. As a constructivist, storytelling became a vessel through which the participating women constructed and shared their worlds and identities with both myself and the reader.

As stated earlier, my interest in Saudi Arabian women's roles and identities and the impact of English has been an interest of mine since the beginning of my PhD program in 2006. That is because it is my life, as well as of many of those around me. As part of constructing my understanding of this topic, I conducted a preliminary study

(2009) and a pilot study (2010) to get a better understanding of the needs and goals of this research topic. What I came to know was that it was the participants and their stories that made and guided the study. However, my role and influence were very much felt throughout the study, from the very personal reason of topic choice to the understanding of the subjectivity that takes place in interpretation. I also came to an understanding of my role as both an insider and outsider and how that impacted my study.

As I listened to the stories and invited the readers to join, and with the aim of getting these stories heard by as wide an audience as possible, I came to realize that taking an Islamic feminist perspective would be the best fit. Islamic feminism is the reinterpretation of Islamic teachings using different lenses and voices. It is using Islamic teachings as a guide and validation of what one is doing, and because Saudi Arabia does not separate between “church and state,” I found that this perspective permitted the participating women's voices to be heard where needed.

Finally, through my search for a better understanding of this topic, I came to find a gap in the literature. The literature I did find on this topic was mostly conducted by non-Saudis or by Saudi Arabian males and consequently did not paint a proper picture. Thus, I believe there was a need for their voices, mine as well, in the literature. There was a need for our stories using our lenses and told from our perspectives.

One final note, I wanted to make it clear that although it is apparent that throughout my dissertation I struggled with subjectivity and moving away from bias, here I declared complete subjectivity. While I tried to move away from total subjectivity in

the previous chapter by letting the data and words guide me, my input, choices, and interpretations were clear and present. I tried to combat that by inviting the reader to listen, experience, and share their thoughts by using the participating women's voices as much as possible. Yet, here I was completely aware and embraced my subjectivity. Even though I chose the words of my participants as guides, I also chose only three words to represent them here, I chose how to divide and interpret them, and I chose how to relate them to the literature. However, I also chose to take this stance and make my reflexivity clear as a part of quality.

In this section my aim was to summarize and revisit my conceptual framework. Through life experiences, reflection, inquiry, questioning, and growth, I came to understand my conceptual framework as made up of multiple aspects: my personal experience being a constructivist, my previous inquiry into the topic, taking an Islamic feminist perspective, and understanding my subjectivity and its impact in different parts of the study. Each aspect played an important role in bringing this framework together and was addressed as needed.

Summary of major findings

As I explored the tangled web of the emergent themes from our stories, I came to realize that the themes were a muddled web of meanings and understandings that mirror the web that makes up human culture (Cohen, 2000; Geertz, 1973; Mazrui, 2002; Tylor, 1974) and human identity (Jan, 2006; Nespore, 1997; Toohey, 2000; Woodward, 2000), as discussed earlier in the literature review. I believe that it is because it is the self that is

the center of all these webs; a self that is dynamic, a self that interacts and develops, a self that moves through time and space.

In this section, I summarized the emergent findings of the study discussed in detail in the previous chapter. Here, I focused on the importance of English as a second language, the theme of culture and how the different cultures had impacted the participating women and vice versa, the theme of change and how and why it is taking place, the theme of role models, and finally, the theme of Islamic feminism and how it was used by the participating women.

As we sat in comfortable settings surrounded by friends and food, our discussions revolved around the English language. It was what had brought us all here; it was what joined us, and it was a common goal we shared. As I listened to their stories, and as themes began to emerge, I began to hear and see how essential English was to the participating women. From educational, social, and economical benefits, feelings of exposure to the world and being more cultured, to the gaining of confidence and a sense of empowerment. It was clear to me that the English language was important to these women, and it was a tool they used to empower themselves and created a balance between their multiple worlds, between the traditional and the modern, and between the expected and the changing self.

While discussing the muddled theme of culture, the participating women showed me their worlds, and as I peered through their windows (Rubin and Rubin, 2005), I began to see how they took charge of understanding and creating their culture from their

surroundings. They discussed the empowerment they felt due to the important roles the Saudi culture allocated them as mothers and caretakers of the new generations, through their ambition and drive, and the empowerment they began to feel in their new environment, and new roles it created. As they discussed these new roles, they talked about how change was an important theme for the Saudi women; from the desire for change to the actual taking action to create change, change was taking place and many found that they could now challenge the norm without being challenged.

Change, thus, was another major theme. There was a general sense for a need for change that it was slowly taking place, and it was successful because it was initiated and carried out by Saudi women for Saudi women. It was Saudi women who understood the history, tradition, religious obligations, and needs of the Saudi women today; and were, therefore, able to adapt the changes to their worlds, balance the different and needed roles, and prove themselves to society and its expectations by expanding their borders, but never crossing them.

In addition to the English language as a tool in aiding these women in their quest for new adaptive multiple roles, these women looked up to role models, many of whom were other successful Saudi women. These women figures were ones who had expanded their roles and were accepted by society, women who had balanced their roles successfully and proved that it could be done. The participating women also discussed important men in their lives, men who motivated and supported them and helped them on their quest. The issue of guardianship only came up with two of the sixteen participants,

as opposed to all of the participants in the pilot study a mere two years ago. This could be an indication of the movement and changes taking place in the Saudi Arabian society.

Finally, as I took an Islamic feminist stance in my study, as a tool that gave voice to my study and allowed it to be heard by those who needed it most, I found that my participants used Islamic teachings as a tool to validate and support their actions. Thus, as discussions of changing roles and the creation of new borders, the participating women quoted the Quran and used the sayings of the prophet Mohammed, because Islam, as a religion, was part of their culture and their self, and in order to expand and adapt, it was used to answer and validate their actions and new defined selves.

As I listened to the data and watched the themes emerge, I also learned a lot about myself as a researcher who was both an insider and outsider. Thus, part of the emergent themes of this qualitative study was what emerged from my actions and reactions as a Saudi woman conducting research with other Saudi women. How I acted and reacted to different genders and different nationalities was telling of the multiple roles I personally took on as a Saudi researcher.

Conclusion

As discussed throughout this study, Saudi Arabia continues to be one of the most conservative and orthodox Muslim society in the world (Clark, 2007), and women continue to play the most visible cultural and traditional social roles. These roles revolve around the image of the “ideal” Muslim woman; a woman who is a homemaker, an educator of the next generation, and is the maintainer of tradition. This traditional “ideal”

role is still an important aspect of the participating women's identities, along with the exposure to modern and economic roles of today.

The struggle between the traditional ways and the modern world and its needs, has created what Pharaon (2004) called a “schizophrenic” approach, one “which both encourages women to join in the process of development as equal partners and holds them back in their place as secondary actors within the family context” (p. 353). However, these women have created borders, not limits, to their multiple selves and cultures, and used their situations to empower themselves.

Below was a discussion of the participating women's multiple selves and roles that emerged from the study. Using the words of the women, this section was divided into three main discussions: identity in the word *ثقة* (*thiqa*) *confidence*, culture in the word *حدود* (*hudood*) *borders*, and the English language in the word *ثقافة* (*thaqafah*) *cultured*. I then moved to a discussion on how those words of the participating women were linked to the theme of change. Finally, I discussed how Islamic feminism played a role for both me and the participants.

Confidence ثقة 'Thiqa'

As the participating women told their stories, one of the most dominant emergent themes was the feeling of confidence felt due to their learning a second language, English. This language gave them the opportunity to take on different roles and participate in new social situations; thus, it helped them reconstruct their selves. Through their interactions, these women built a relationship between their identities and the

surrounding social environment, developing a new set of social selves. Identity had been discussed as a social process that continues to grow and develop as one interacts (Erikson 1968; Mead, 1934; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Therefore, for the emergent theme of *confidence*, and for the purposes of this research, I drew from the literature review for identity to address this theme.

I drew on identity here because, as I had discussed earlier, identity is made up of multiple webbed strands (Appendix A) including: the personal self, which includes physical characteristics and the social context, which includes caste and class, both of which have an effect on self-esteem. It also includes culture and tradition, which along with the social context, create gender roles and language(s), which create along with culture and traditions, the symbolic tools one possesses. As this web is interacting, the self is developing and growing. Through exposure, these participants began to inquire and reevaluate their selves, and with new cultural environments, social expectation and languages, a new set of tools are possessed, which, in this case, have led to the feeling of confidence; confidence through the taking on of new roles and identities that are deemed positive by the self.

As Bronfenbrenner (1979) discussed in his “ecological system theory”, one's self develops within multiple systems and relationships that form one's stable, yet continually growing and changing environment. Stable in that it is based on family and growing, because it is through the interactions with community and surrounding environment. Therefore, as the self first begins to develop in the “microsystem” (family, religion,

school, etc.), it continues to come into contact with the “exosystem” (community, media, etc.) and is a part of the larger “macrosystem” (culture, economy, laws, etc.). So, as these women developed in their respective “microsystems,” they were in continuous contact with the developing “exosystem” and now a new “macrosystem,” which as Bronfenbrenner explained has a major influence on the interaction of all the other layers.

Tajfel and Turner (1979) extended this idea in their “social identity theory,” discussing group memberships as to where one belongs or does not belong in the social context. As one develops and learns from the surroundings, first they begin to categorize people in order to understand the social environment, helping define appropriate behavior, language use, roles, etc. Second, social identification takes place where one begins to identify with the categorized group to which one belongs. The third and final step, social comparison, involves one's comparisons between groups. This final step has a major effect on self-esteem, if the group one belongs to does not compare favorably, that can create low self-esteem and vice-versa. Thus, in the new environment and through the use of language, these participating women found themselves belonging to a different social group with more social expectations and less restrictions and, therefore, to them a more favorable group.

As the self is constructed and reconstructed in a social setting, language becomes a powerful tool of negotiating and understanding the self. Weedon (1987) explained that identity is created in language, experiences and social power, and it is through language that a relationship between the self and the world take place. Language can, thus, be

viewed as the locus of social organization, symbolic power, and individual consciousness; and learning a second language can then be viewed as the participation in new social organizations, social powers, and individual consciousness, and the ability to perform different selves in the different languages. These women were gaining, not only a second language, but a new set of symbolic powers and social consciousness; they spoke of learning as transforming who they were and what they could do, thus, "an experience of identity" (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007, p. 215). As Norton and Toohey (2002) discussed, "language learners are not only learning a linguistic system; they are learning a diverse set of sociocultural practices, often best understood in the context of wider relations of power" (p. 115).

It can also be argued that a new language can also bring different ideologies of gender ingrained in that language. This provides new gendered practices, understandings of gender identity, and gendered self-expression to the speakers of a new language (Piller & Pavlenko, 2001; Skapoulli, 2004; Shi, 2006). The participating women discussed new gender roles that they were able to take on, not only in the United States, with their knowledge of English. However, this does not mean that the American English these women were learning presented equality of the sexes, but it presented and allowed the women to perform new gendered selves, which could create a feeling of confidence.

Finally, I turned to the literature on culture capital and tool for power. As discussed, capital refers to the knowledge, credentials, and modes of thought that are characteristic of the different classes or groups in relation to the surrounding context and

environment (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Coleman, 1988; Cooper & Denner, 1998; Pavlenko, 2001). When listening to these women's stories and why English as a language produced a feeling of confidence, it could be due to that fact that this new language and its linguistic resources were used as a tool for cultural capital, because it was converted into economic and social gain (Bourdieu, 1991; Pavlenko, 2001).

Choosing to focus on the word “confidence” for this section was due to multiple reasons. First, it emerged from the stories told by the participating women. Second, through the use of this word, I personally sensed a movement in the participants' identities and roles. Thus, it addressed the research questions of "What are Saudi women's views on using the English language and its impact on their roles and identities in the Saudi Arabian culture and society?" And "What are Saudi women's views of their roles and identities in the Saudi Arabian culture and society?" Through “confidence” these women painted their past, present, and changing future selves and roles.

Borders حدود “hudood”

Almost all the participants in this study discussed creating borders while in different cultural context of everyday life, so what they discussed as appropriate was only in the context of the classroom culture and not outside and vice versa. While the women illustrated their cultural borders to me, both literally as I observed and verbally in their stories, I began to draw from the literature on culture and its multiple sources (Appendix B). The women were in the process of recreating and renegotiating their individual culture from the multiple cultural contexts they currently were in.

Looking at Bronfenbrenner's (1979) "ecological system model," it is discussed that a change in one of the three layers can create a change in the self; yet, the "old" self and how it has developed stays intact and, thereby becomes multiple sources of culture. Therefore, the self is in a state of development and questioning, taking, and learning, creating, and negotiating from these multiple sources of cultural contexts in which one finds oneself. By looking at the interrelationships of individuals and the different contexts, the psychological processes of how one views oneself and how one is viewed can be addressed (Cooper & Denner, 1998; Geertz, 1973). Here, we saw these women, who had found themselves in new cultural contexts (the U.S. classroom) and were yet bound by the historical and Saudi context (large number of Saudis in said classroom), in the process of recreating and renegotiating the self within different cultural contexts.

As these women were in the process of trying to understand their social situations, they began to categorize and re-categorize others into "us" and "them" (Tajfel, 1986). These categories were usually based on "cultural knowledge and behavior found within the boundaries... each world contains values and beliefs, expectations, actions, and emotional responses familiar to insiders" (Phelan et al., 1991, p. 53), and the identification and definition within a group and a context can affect how the individual reacts and interacts with the world and vice versa (Berry, 1993; Brewer, 1991; Cooper & Denner, 1998). Once membership is defined, then the navigating and negotiating of borders begin to take place. These borders are defined by the context and social membership of the individual, and it is always a challenge when attempting to move across the multiple worlds, some worlds are accepting of the individual, while others are

harder, all depending on the individual's association with his different social contexts (Cooper & Denner, 1998).

Some of the tools the participating women used in navigating and negotiating the self were the classroom context and the English language. Skapoulli (2004) suggested that second language users, through their daily linguistic and cultural practices, are able to possess numerous vibrant and flexible identities. Bilingual speakers manipulate languages to accomplish particular interactions; each linguistic variety creates different pragmatic possibilities. “With this view of language, linguistic variability must have effects... on what social acts people accomplish through talk” (Koven, 1998, p. 412). Thus, these women used the new cultural context of the classroom and the tool of the English language to draw borders, but not limits to their goals, where they negotiated and recreated specific roles acceptable for educational purposes.

Yet, as Vygotsky (1986) explained, since consciousness is social in origin, because all human actions take place in a cultural context, when looking at human mental functions, one must consider the historical and ontogenetic development (i.e. the cultural development through the internalization of cultural artifacts and social relationships). As discussed in the second chapter, history, artifacts and relationships create the symbolic tools and signs used to create, mediate, and regulate relationships, thus creating an identity. When listening to the participating women, it was clear that they had an understanding of what was expected and acceptable and, thus, created borders.

Bruner continued to state that "it is culture that shapes human life and the human mind, [and] that gives meaning to action by situating its underlying intentional states in an interpretive system" (p. 34). Goodenough (1957) also stated that "a society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members" (discussed in Ennaji, 2011, p. 318). So, these women continued to shape their minds through historical and ontogenetic development to act in acceptable manners, and at the same time, began to internalize and renegotiate new roles and selves in the different cultural context they found themselves in.

To address these borders created, I turned to Chang's (2008) explanation that, although the individual is an important aspect of culture, his interaction within that culture is even more important. He stated, as others have, that an individual can interact with and belong to multiple social groups concurrently. The participating women then found themselves introduced to different cultural inputs, which they could have chosen to intake or discard. Thus, the women could share values with the different social groups they were members of, which became part of their cognitive, emotional, and social functioning, as well as, returning and renegotiating the core cultural ideas that affect customs, norms, practices, and institutions (Cooper & Denner, 1998; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1996). Thus, culture here was defined as creating and being created by the individual and that individual's interaction with other individuals where information, tools, and symbols were exchanged. Each interaction offered the individual the opportunity to obtain or discard the information to create a cognitive, emotional, and social being, who then could have contributed to culture.

So, as these women created new borders in the classroom, a space that introduced them to new cultural inputs, I believe that these women were “adapting,” as explained by Reybold (2001), where they began to compromise "some personal desires and beliefs to cultural expectations" (p. 10). Thus, these women were allowing themselves flexibility in the classroom for the purpose of education but not outside, due to cultural expectations among the large number of Saudi students attending the same program. She continued, "these women who adapt their personal models of self share a common belief that rightness is relative to the situation" (p. 10), and so these women had come to the belief that in the context of the classroom, they could step out of their prescribed roles, and step back, to some extent, outside of that context where other Saudis may have been found.

It can be said then that the women had created a third culture, a hybrid between the core culture and the new cultural contexts, of which they were members. Add globalization, which brings in the different corners of the world and allows the individual different identities and contexts to explore; the “third” culture becomes a safe place, where one can experience and form identities based on the multiple contexts, languages, symbols, and tools available. This is a place where borderlines are drawn and crossed, creating a new space "between the native language/culture and the target language/culture, but cannot be reduced to either of these. It is a transformative construction of the individual learners" (Huhtala & Lehti-Eklund, 2010, p. 279).

What was taking place, I believe, was what Kraidy (2001) called “glocalization,” a "global outlook adapted to local conditions. Glocalization emphasizes the interaction of

both global and local forces in specific socio-cultural contexts where local actors can claim their ownership of English and act as active agents to engage in different creative practices" (Guo & Beckett, 2007, p. 127). Thus, these women were, I believe, taking the global and using it to benefit the local to advance their positions, while at the same time, remaining within the culturally accepted roles.

Here, the focus on borders again served multiple purposes. It again emerged from the stories of the participating women, who drew vivid cultural lines, both physically and verbally, in and out of the classrooms. It also addressed the research question, "How do Saudi women employ the different aspects of their multiple roles and identities?" By creating borders, but not limits, the participating women were able to expand their roles in a socially acceptable manner, and posed several selves, as needed.

Cultured ثقافة “thaqafah”

Through our discussions, many participating women discussed the feeling of being “cultured,” a feeling of being exposed to new things, both physically and mentally. Our discussions revolved around being introduced to topics and materials they might not have been able to see or hear before due to censorship, cultural expectations, or lack of knowledge and resources. For this emergent theme, I began to draw from the literature on the English language, as I began to see the correlation between learning English and the ability to access material. Here, I was not stating that the new materials obtained were all in English, but that the resources and methods of research were things that these participating women learned in the new environment.

As these women entered into a new environment and a new language, they were introduced to different resources, and their “frame of reference” (Mezirow, 1997) was brought to the forefront and was in a state of flux. One's “frame of reference,” as discussed earlier, is the experiences, concepts, values and, feelings that define one's world, and are primarily the result of cultural assimilation and surrounding influences. In these new cultures and different influences, the women's frames of reference was being questioned and renegotiated due to new needs, expectations, and being reflexive. Mezirow also stated that it was through language that the individual was offered a means of expression, understanding, doing, and becoming.

Examining why the English language played a role in impacting the women's frames of reference, the dominance of English as a global language, and a global culture became clear. As discussed earlier in Chapter two, a global culture is generated from within a particular time, place, and practice, and today it is within a Western setting, “we are slowly becoming aware that the West is both a particular in itself and also constitutes the universal point of reference in relation to which others recognize themselves as particularities” (Featherstone, 1990, p. 12). As these women were being introduced to a global culture through a global language, they were exposed to more of what they believed to be worldly material, and thus, a feeling of being cultured.

As the global language, “English has become a requirement for decent employment, social statues, and financial security in various parts of the world” (Guo & Beckett, 2007, p. 121). As discussed earlier, the English language has such great power

and high status in almost all the world. There are about 350 million people who speak English as their second or foreign language, and about one-third of the world's population understand and speak it to some degree (Ethnologue, 2005; Ricento, 2005; Su-Kim, 2003). It is the international language of the world, and has become the dominant global language of communication, entertainment, diplomacy, international politics, commerce, and business, etc. (Guo & Beckett, 2007; Phillipson, 2001). Thus, these women felt that through English, they had access to new cultures and knowledge, better job opportunities, and world views; therefore, they felt better exposed and cultured.

As discussed in the literature review in Chapter two, in Saudi Arabia, a growth in English indicated an effort for modernization and urbanization, "proficiency in spoken and written English becomes a status symbol, a marker for the ability to obtain private education and to travel abroad, and a sign of cosmopolitan lifestyle" (Yamani, 2000, p. 58). Jan (2006) extended this idea by stating that in Saudi Arabia, "English is taught not only as a specialty in itself as language and literature, but also as a medium for other specialties to enable the students to read books and research written in English in their fields" (p. 5). Thus, through the English language and the world's view, it carried as the international language, the participating women felt cultured due to exposure to and knowledge about the world.

I must make clear that here, I am not saying that the feeling of being "cultured" through English or living in the West is a positive or negative aspect. I am portraying the emotion I felt from my conversations with the participating women. Through their stories, they painted illustrations of access, exposure, empowerment, as well as patriotism

to their country and language. However, it was clear from the interviews, they felt that they were exposed to more; more of the world around them, more literature, more resources, more contact, etc.; thus, more was available to them, and they felt they had access in both languages and cultures.

The focus on the feeling of being cultured served multiple purposes. First, it emerged from the women's stories as a specific word some used and a feeling many illustrated. It also addressed the research question "What are Saudi women's views on using the English language and its impact on their roles and identities in the Saudi Arabian culture and society?" This feeling of being cultured also related and was linked to many of the other emergent themes and subthemes; feelings, such as confidence, exposure, and empowerment, thus, signifying the entangled web that is human nature and its muddled threads. For these women, access, exposure, and knowledge had an impact on their identities and social roles, and had led to change, no matter how slight or slow.

Identity, Culture, and English in Relation to Change

Having discussed the three emergent themes that came through from the women's own words and through their stories, and discussing how they related to the literature review and research questions, I turn here to discuss how those three themes of identity, culture, and the English language related to the overall emergent theme of change and its multiple subthemes. Here, I turn to a focus on how identity and culture are a flexible part of human development and thus, are susceptible to change as one sees needed. I also turn to what motivates an adult to continue learning and move towards change and

development. Finally, I consider why many of the participating women discussed the need for change from within by Saudi women for Saudi women.

As Norton (1997) and Bruner (1986) had discussed earlier, identity is the way people understand themselves across time and space, and this understanding begins to take place at an early age, but it is never static. It allows one to continue to construct and create a relationship with the world. I saw these women as made up of multiple selves that respond to different needs, not completely schizophrenic, but something controlled, bound by a self and its needs. As one began to create a self based on the surrounding environment, it continued to stretch, move, and learn from the ever-changing surrounding environment.

I saw this reflected in Mezirow's (1997) "frame of reference," which begins to change after deep reflection on assumptions, actions, and understandings that may no longer work as anticipated. He explained this in his "transformation theory," where it is demonstrated in the way one interprets then reinterprets experience that is central to making meaning and understandings. In transformative learning theory, an adult must be faced with a situation or an understanding that does not fit the uncritically and unexamined assumptions one has grown with; and so critical reflection takes place, and changes in epistemology, identity, and roles begin to take place.

Mead (1934) believed that within and through communication one can learn the roles of the self and others and, thus, act accordingly; therefore, one's identity is constantly constructed and reconstructed through language and communication. In their

study on second language learners, Huhtala and Lehti-Eklund (2010) found that the students were constructing a language identity where they linked the past, present, and future and tried to create a third place, which linked their native culture with the L2 culture in a way that allowed the creation of a unique identity: "Students try to construct selves that are possible, not only in relation to their studies and their future profession, but to their lives in general" (p. 274). Thus, the motivation for learning a second language could be stated as the creation of possible selves.

Research on motivation and second language learning has shown a link between the self and its goals and expectations centered on the creation of "possible selves" (Carver et al., 1994; Dörnyei, 2005; Higgins et al., 1985; Markus & Nurius, 1986). Dörnyei (2005) explained that the success of learners moves beyond integration to a "superordinate vision" that keeps the learner motivated. Future hopes and visions of the self work as a motivational force for adult second language learners, or a way of investing in the future possible self. Thus, I saw the link between these women's identities and hopes for creating new possible cultural selves, with the aim of changing Saudi women's social roles, in their investment in the second language.

Norton (2006) discussed "investment" in a language as a connection between second language acquisition and identity. She described investment as:

The notion of investment conceives of the language learner as having a complex identity, changing across time and space, and reproduced in social interaction. An

investment in the target language is best understood as an investment in the learner's own identity. (p. 504)

Therefore, these women were in a constant state of change and growth, of negotiation and questioning, of creating new selves and borders, all while investing in the creation of possible desired selves.

Although these women were talking about the creation of possible selves, they do so within the context of Saudi culture and tradition. This led to the importance for change from within; but why changes from within? As Leva and Wenger (1991) discussed a "community of practice" (technical knowledge, skills, and involvement in relationships over time) developing around things that matter to that context, and for it to function the sharing of ideas, commitments and memories must be appropriated, then generated (Geertz 1973; Wenger, 1998). Thus, what binds the community of practice are the things that are shared, and an individual must understand and engage in that community to not only be a part of it, but to be involved in its movements and developments.

In addition, as Pennycook (1994) has expressed, culture is "people's way of making sense of their lives" (p. 66). So, from this perspective, culture becomes the act of engaging, learning and of doing, and not just being (Street, 1993). It is the construction and negotiation of and with the surrounding context based on one's relationships. And finally, it is the learning from a collective disposition and history transmitted from one generation to the next (Alsagoff, 2010; Geertz, 1973).

Thus, as these women engaged and learned from their surrounding cultures, began to renegotiate and reconstruct the self based on relationships, and received and transmitted dispositions and history, they began to not only be a part of the culture, but created it in a manner that was acceptable, as well as adaptable, by their generation and the next. Therefore, culture "can be learned or constructed from what members of a population say (their "talk"), as well as from what they actually do (their "behavior" or "action")" (Ogbu, 1990, p. 523).

Finally, I turned to Cohen (2000) whose belief that culture as social systems "not only prepare their succeeding generations to maintain their ways of life, but they also seek to prepare their members for new conditions of life, for new modes of acquiring a livelihood, and for new political realities when these undergo change" (p. 85). And, as discussed, these women empowered themselves by taking on what they believed to be important social, yet traditional, roles, roles that of educating and taking care of the young and using that to create an atmosphere of change and understanding that can be carried on by the next generation.

In conclusion, the emergent theme of *change* discussed by the participating women merges their discussions of traditional and modern social and cultural roles, their expected and developing identities, and their exposure and confidence through learning English as a second language. This discussion also gave rise to the research question "How do Saudi women address changing self versus expected self?" In that, the women discussed their multiple identities and roles and used English as one of the many tools to

promote, describe, and develop this change and its multiple aspects they discussed. Yes, change is a broad term, and using it as a theme here only adds to the vagueness and muddle-ness of the topic. However, I believe this was how the women spoke of change; a muddled vague goal that they wished to slowly achieve, and one that touched on all other aspects of their selves and their cultures.

Islamic feminism

Having discussed change as a vague term, one of the tools these women used to ease the unknown was to rely on what they and their Saudi culture already knew and depended on, Islam and expected social roles. By focusing on what was expected and known and working with it, I believe that these women were able to make small strides that had large impacts, not only for them, but for the following generations. By using Islamic teachings as validation of their actions, these women were able to balance the traditional and modern in a manner that permitted change in a socially and culturally acceptable manner. One clear example, as I mentioned earlier, was the presence of male guardians in the conversations of the participating women in the pilot study conducted two years prior, as compared to the almost absent mention in this study.

The focus on Islamic teachings by the participating women and by me was due to the belief that women's issues were a central and integral part of Islamic discourses. Thus, Islamic feminism was used (the re-reading and re-interpretation of Islamic text from multiple perspectives). This search was for answers and solutions, i.e. "Islamic alternatives" to the modern problem of the changing Muslim women status and the need

to accommodate their needs and aspirations (Mir-Hosseini, 1996). Thus, Muslim women rely on the teachings of Islamic discourses as a source of human rights, freedom, and equality.

Many Muslim women groups use Islamic feminism to focus on improving women's social roles, concentrating on issues, such as education, health, and child care, and financial needs; and this was clear in the participating women's conversations in their focus on their roles concerning such topics. This was because many women's groups knew that "the only weapon they can use to fight for human rights, in general, and women's rights, in particular, in those countries where religion is not separate from the state, is to base political claims on religious history" (Mernissi, 2005, p. 37). Thus, they focused on those "prescribed" roles as tools and sources of power. In Saudi Arabia, in particular, Yamani (1996) continued, women "have, in an alluring way, sought their sense of power, their sense of identity, their freedom, and their equality with men through the basic precepts of Islam" (p. 263).

In conclusion, the participating women were very aware of the rights given to them by Islam but misinterpreted in society. They used Islamic teachings as a weapon of empowerment to create a balance between the expected and the needed, to give their prescribed roles extreme value, and to expand, but not break, those expectations. I believe that the use of Islamic teachings by these women as validation was due to the fact that it tied to the roots of their identities and culture, as well as my own, and not fully due to religious beliefs. We continued to negotiate and recreate ourselves using the tools

available, such as religion, because they were culturally and socially acceptable and were a deep aspect of our culture and selves. Thus, I believe that this issue also helped give rise to the research question, "How do Saudi women address changing self versus expected self?", i.e. by using tools available to them to empower themselves and adapt to their needs, both modern and traditional.

Implications and Recommendations

As the traditional society of Saudi Arabia continues to dictate and prescribe a woman's role, the participating women used this cultural background and knowledge as an extension in their quest to expand their individual culture and personal social roles and needs. As the focus continued to be on her role as a wife and mother (Mill-Rosser, Chapman, & Francis, 2006), these women empowered themselves through the realization of the importance of this role in the changing and empowerment of the future generation. As Al- Marayati (1997) explained, "a Muslim woman's main function is to produce righteous Muslim children; she is the primary caretaker, in charge of the household and chief supporter of her husband" (p. 22) and because these women understood these expectations, they placed great importance on that role and its power.

Thus, the growth of confidence was not only in being able to perform different tasks, but in choosing to perform those tasks instead of having to, confidence in their growing roles that expanded from a blend of the known and new, and confidence in having new tools to negotiate and renegotiate their needs. They also used those tools to educate and expand their horizons and gain a feeling of being cultured through

knowledge of the world around them. Yet, because of their understanding of their background and the cultural needs and expectations along with their own, they created borders that permitted movement and stability.

With this insider knowledge, the women also expressed the need for change from Saudi women for Saudi women. These women also understood that because they were a part of the culture, they were also a part of its development; thus, there was a need for insider knowledge. For example, looking back at the pilot study, it was interesting to me, the Saudi researcher, that the participating women mentioned the approval of a male guardian, because I was aware of that cultural aspect. It was also interesting to me, the Saudi researcher, that there was a lack of mention of male guardians in this study, again because I am aware of the culture. It also brought up the issue that things were changing so rapidly, that in only two years, there was a more profound difference, which again might have been missed by an outsider, because it seemed trivial.

This research also indicated the need for the voices of Saudi women, as there was a gap and sometimes a misrepresentation in the literature. The willingness and reception received from the participating women indicated that there was a story to be told and a need for it to be heard. I began to see that these women, myself included, were in a process of change and movement, and there was a need to understand it in order to benefit, not just those involved in the study, but Saudi women and those involved in their lives.

This research not only created a venue for the participating women's voices, but a place for a Saudi woman researcher. As both an insider and an outsider, my personal roles and feelings became central to the study. I noted how I presented myself, and I was received; I noticed how we talked, moved, and interacted; and I also noticed the real feelings and friendships that we created and maintained throughout this study.

This study was an extension of Yamani's (2000) study "Changing Identities: The Challenge of the New Generation in Saudi Arabia", but it focused specifically on Saudi women attending ESL programs in the United States. However, it could be extended to looking at Saudi women studying ESL in Saudi Arabia, ESL through media, and ESL for different fields of study (studying English for medicine versus becoming a teacher).

Although this study did not generalize to all Saudi women or intend to, it took place in an ESL program with over 75% of the student population from Saudi Arabia (from program website). Thus, the findings could be applied to many ESL programs in the United States, which may find a surplus in Saudi student population due to many reasons, including scholarships from the King (as discussed in Chapter two).

The data that emerged through the study made it known there was a need to better understand these women, to see from their perspectives, and to hear their voices. It did help in opening up and shedding light on the gap in literature and the willingness and need to discuss and create change from the inside out.

In addition to shedding light on the need for Saudi women's voices, this research could also shed light into second language classrooms and help second language educators in both the United States and Saudi Arabia, as there is currently a surge in the

number of Saudis attending English as a second language (ESL) programs all over the world. By getting a better understanding of their students' cultural backgrounds and multiple selves brought to and due to the class, they can better address those students' needs and help them achieve their goals.

Although many different themes emerged from the stories of the participating women, I chose to focus as an educator on those aspects of identity, roles, and the impact of ESL, so as to not become overwhelmed and to be able to manage this study. However, there needs to be more research conducted on how and why these women used code switching, that is using a mixture of both Arabic and English, to express their ideas and feelings. Future research may also focus on how these women felt overall about their education, both in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere, and why many of the participants with children chose to enroll them in American public schools, although many Islamic and Arabic schools were available in the area.

Although I took the stand early on that this research was not religious or political in anyway, so that it may have reached those who might have needed it, Saudi women's roles and movements were very religious and political in nature, and thus, more research needs to be conducted on both religious identity, role of religion, and on politics and its impact on the social and cultural individual.

The stories told had multiple characteristics to them, but again, as an individual with specific needs and goals, I heard and saw some aspects of it. As a constructivist, I knew that the data would continue to teach me and lead me, and this was not the end, just

the end of this study and its needs. This does not mean, however, that I constrained the data, but we worked together to create a path that met both our needs, as a researcher and Saudi women.

Summary

Saudi women's movement and change will continue to be slow and complicated due to their deep-rooted expected role and their symbolic status in society. However, small changes are an indication of strength and an understanding of the culture, tradition, history, and society of Saudi Arabia and the outside world. That is why those changes that come from them, by them, and for them are of great impact.

English as a second language was used in this study as one of multiple tools that helped the participating women create multiple selves through exposure and a better connection with the outside world. However, it was clear that the women used that tool in addition to multiple others available to them, including tradition and religion, to create multiple selves that they employed as needed, thus shifting and moving, renegotiating, and recreating multiple selves and roles as needed to benefit not only themselves, but future generations of Saudi women.

Before I conclude this paper, I wish to wholeheartedly thank the women in this study who accepted and welcomed me in an overwhelming manner. From learning about my topic to learning about me, these women had a hand in my own change and understanding of self. It would be cliché to say that without them I would not be here,

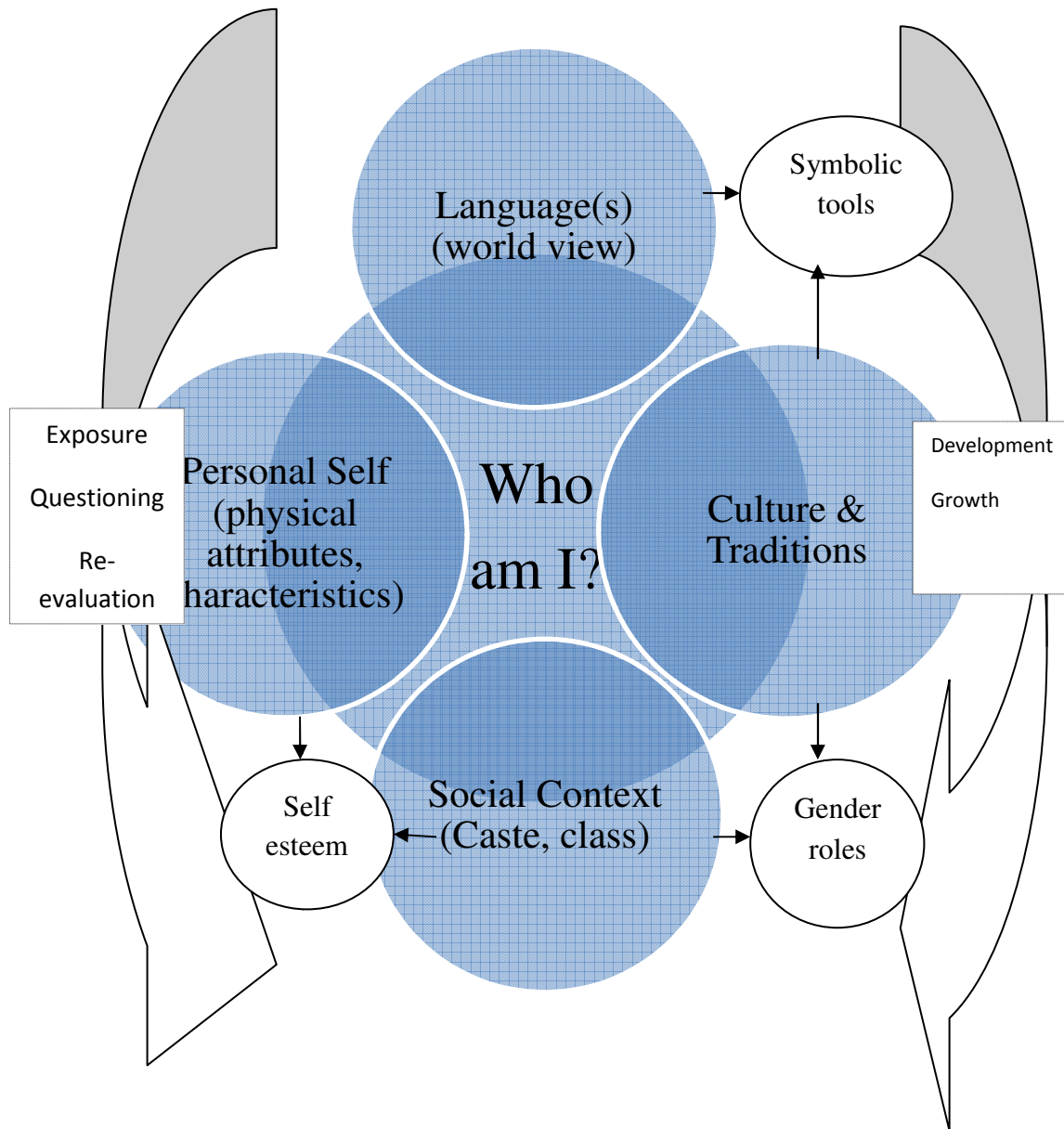
but the truth is they taught me about my study, myself, and guided my research. I wish nothing but the best for them and for Saudi women trying to achieve such goals.

Endnotes

1. Shari'a: Islamic doctrine, the body of Islamic law; the legal framework inspired by the Quran (the Muslim holy book).
2. Sunna: Directly translated it means "trodden path". The ways and the manner of the Prophet Mohammad the tradition of the prophet
3. Shahadah: The oath to God
4. Mahram: Legal male guardian
5. Ulama: Men who study the Quran, the Muslim Holy Book, and the Hadith, (the tradition of what the prophet Mohammed said and did), and who work as religious scholars to apply the Sharia, which constitutes the basic law of Saudi Arabia". (Al Rawaf, Simmons, 1991, p. 288)
6. Quran: The Muslim holy book believed to be the words of God.
7. Fuqaha: Religious instructions.

Appendix A

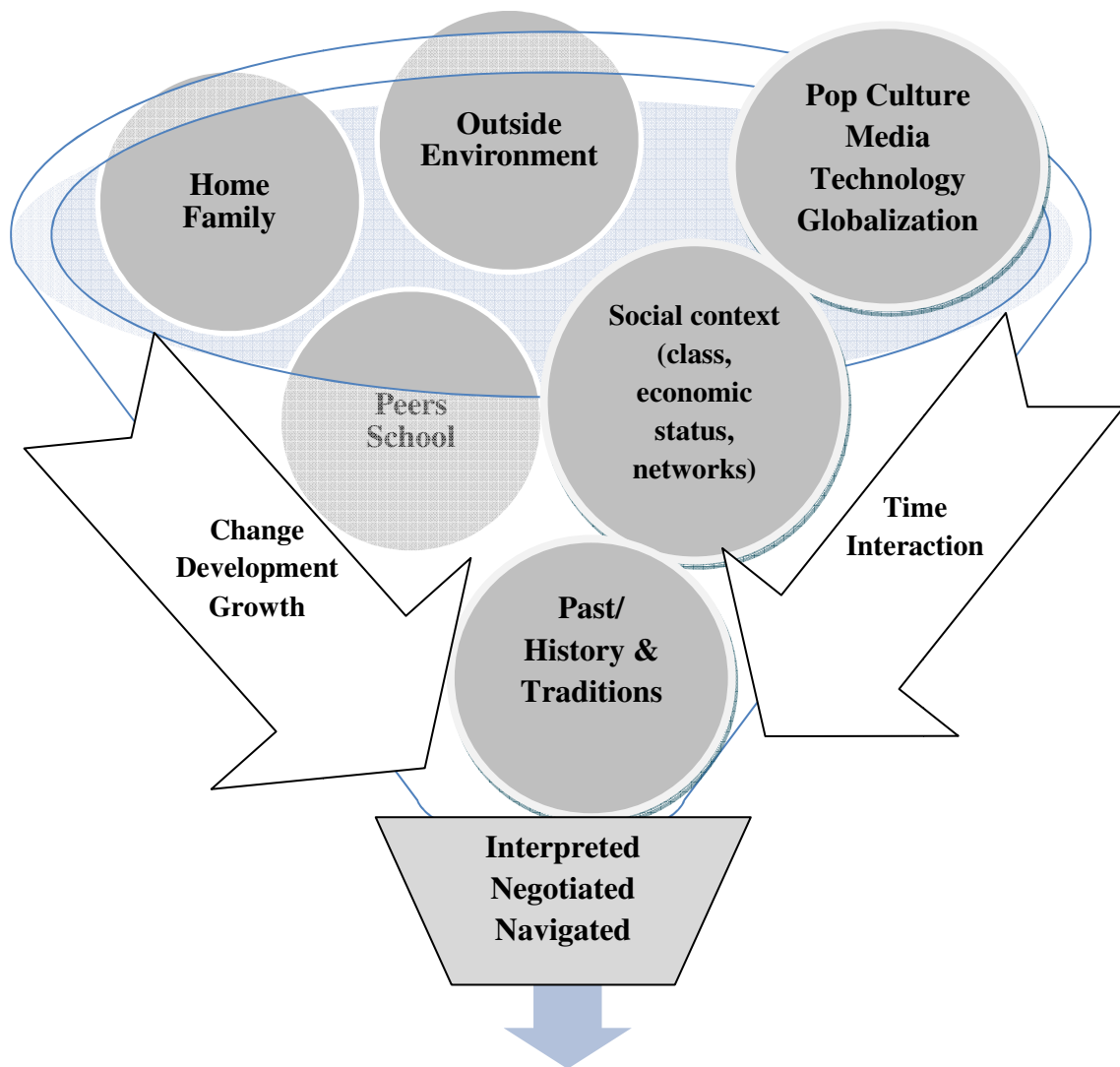
Identity Formation



Note: I have come up with this multidimensional diagram to represent what I believe to be the components of the Saudi woman's identity.

Appendix B

Individual's Cultural Understanding



Components that Influence an Individual's Cultural Understanding

Appendix C

Script for Oral Recruitment of Participants

Hello. My name is Reema Alsweel, and I am from Saudi Arabia. I am a student at GMU in the education department, and I am working on a PhD. As part of my PhD study, I will be doing research. I am interested in young Saudi women studying in the U.S. and how English can affect their life and ideas. Can you please help me by participating in my study? If you agree, it will mean that we can meet for short interviews anywhere you would like and at any time that is convenient to you. Being a part of the study is completely voluntary, and it has nothing to do with your studies here at the English language program. You can also choose to withdraw from this study at any time without a reason.

Thank you.

مرحباً, اسمي ريما السويل و أنا من المملكة العربية السعودية أدرس دكتوراه بقسم التربية في جامعة جورج ميسون.
من ملتزمات تخرجي إعداد و تنفيذ بحث

أقوم بإعداد دراسة عن المرأة السعودية وتأثير اللغة الانجليزية في حياتها, فكرها و خيالاتها

هل لكي أن تساعدني في إجراء دراستي؟ إذا وافقتي، فإن ذلك يعني أن نعقد على اللقاء لإجراء مقابلات قصيرة
مكان وزمان يناسبك وذلك في أي

أن المساهمة في هذه الدراسة تطوعية ولا علاقة لها بدراستك في معد اللغة الانجليزية. كما أن بإمكانك الانسحاب من
الدراسة متى شئتني دون عواقب أو الحاجة لإبداء الأسباب

شكراً لك

Appendix D

Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This study aims at understanding the changes that are currently taking place in the Saudi woman's social and cultural roles. The focus is on English as a second language and its role in those changes. I want to learn about the introduction to new information through English, and how it is understood and used by the Saudi women, and how this new information is applied to the daily life (for example education, work and everyday life).

If you agree to participate, it means that you agree to meet for at least two face-to-face interviews of 30 minutes or more each that may be audio recorded. In case additional information is needed you will be contacted by the researcher for follow-up interviews.

RISKS and BENEFITS

There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research and no deception will be employed. There are also no benefits to you as a participant.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The data in this study will be confidential. Confidentiality will be maintained by creating a pseudonym for each participant and throughout the codification of data. Once the recordings have been transcribed and checked, they will be deleted from all records with only the unidentifiable transcriptions remaining. There will be no identifying markings on the data.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There are no costs to you or any other party.

CONTACT

This research is being conducted by Reema Alsweel, a PhD student at the College of Education and Human Development at George Mason University, she may be reached at alsweel@masonlive.gmu.edu or (xxx)xxx-xxxxx for questions or to report a research-

related problem. This study is being supervised by Dr. Haley, a professor at George Mason University, who may be reached at mhaley@gmu.edu or (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

This study was approved by the Human Subjects Review Board. You may contact the George Mason University Office of Research Subject Protections at xxx-xxx-xxxx if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the research.

CONSENT

I have read this form and agree to participate in this study.

☐ I agree to audio taping ☐ I do not agree to audio taping

Signature

Date of Signature

Printed Name

ملحق (د)

تأثير اللغة الانكليزية كلغة ثانية على هوية و دور المرأة السعودية

إجراءات البحث

يهدف هذا البحث إلى فهم التغيرات التي طرأت على الأدوار الثقافية والاجتماعية التي تلعبها المرأة السعودية وسيكون التركيز على اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية ودورها في تلك التغيرات. أسعى إلى معرفة كيفية حصول المرأة السعودية على المعلومات عن طريق اللغة الإنجليزية وكيف تستخدم تلك المعلومات وتفهمها، بالإضافة إلى كيفية تطبيقها في الحياة اليومية (كالتعليم والعمل والأعباء اليومية).

فيما إذا قررت الموافقة على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة فيعني ذلك موافقتك على الاجتماع وجهاً لوجه من مرة واحدة إلى عدة مرات لما يقارب الثلاثين دقيقة أو أكثر لكل مقابلة. وقد يتم تسجيل هذه المقابلات صوتياً. وإن تطلب الأمر مزيداً من المعلومات فسيتم الاتصال بك من قبل الباحثة لإجراء مقابلات إضافية. وستجرى جميع المقابلات لكل مشارك في غخلال شهرين إلى ثلاثة أشهر من المقابلة الأولية.

ما لك:

ليس من المتوقع أن ينجم عن المشاركة في هذا البحث أية مخاطر ولن تتعرض لأي خدع

ما عليك:

لا يتوقع أن تجني أية فوائد من المشاركة.

السرية:

ستكون المعلومات التي يتم الحصول عليها أثناء هذا البحث سرية وسيتم الحفاظ على السرية بتخصيص اسم مستعار لكل مشارك خلال جمع المعلومات وستحذف المعلومات التي تم جمعها بعد إنهاء البحث باستثناء المخطوطات المجهولة الهوية ولن يبقى للمعلومات أية علامات دالة على مصدرها.

المشاركة:

للمؤهله في البحث يجب أن تتراوح أعمار المشاركين بين ١٨ إلى ٣٥. مشاركتك في هذه الدراسة تأتي على سبيل التطوع ولك الانسحاب من المشاركة في أي وقت تشاء دون إبداء الأسباب ولو قررت عدم المشاركة أو الانسحاب فلن تتأثر المميزات التي كان يمكن أن تحصل عليها كما لن يترتب على ذلك عقوبة. ولا يلزمك غرامة أو أي طرف آخر بسبب ذلك.

للاتصال:

ستقوم الأستاذة/ريما السويل بإجراء هذا البحث وهي طالبة دكتوراه في قسم التربية والتنمية البشرية بجامعة جورج ميسون ويمكن الاتصال بها على العنوان الإلكتروني التالي: ralsweel@masonlive.gmu.edu أو الهاتف رقم: (xxx)xxx-xxxxx للاستفسار أو الإبلاغ عن مشكلة تتعلق بموضوع البحث، وستشرف على هذا البحث البروفسورة/ هيلي من جامعة جورج ميسون والتي يمكن الاتصال بها على البريد الإلكتروني التالي: mhaley@gmu.edu أو الهاتف رقم: (xxx) xxx-xxxxx.

وقد تمت الموافقة على هذا البحث من قبل مجلس مراجعة العينات البشرية ويمكن الاتصال بمكتب جامعة جورج ميسون لحماية الأفراد المشاركين في الأبحاث على الهاتف xxx-xxx-xxxxx في حال وجود استفسارات أو تعليقات بشأن حقوقك كمشارك في هذا البحث.

يرجى إبلاغ الباحثه إذا توافقي أو لا توافقي على التسجيل الصوتي

Appendix E

Interview Guide

Opening Questions:

- Can you tell me a little about yourself (where you grew up, education, family, activities or hobbies, travel; favorite TV shows, books, newspapers, magazines, websites, etc.?)
- How and why did you choose your educational fields?

Language:

- How accessible was English to you in Saudi Arabia?
- How important to you is/was language in your marriage choices and why?
- How do you feel about being able to speak two languages or more in Saudi? In the United States? Do you think it had any effect on your life?
- How do you feel about people who can speak English in Saudi Arabia? About people who don't speak English in Saudi Arabia?
- Do you think learning a second language is important? Why or why not?
- When and where do you use English and why?
- Why did you choose to study English?
- How do you feel about learning English?

Media:

- Do you use a lot of media (internet, TV, radio)? For what purposes? How about in Saudi? How accessible, easy is it for you? Do you use any for work, pleasure, school etc.? And in what language?
- What do you feel like you get from this technology?

Roles/ Future plans:

- What are your future plans? Why?
- Who helps/ has an input/ is important to you in making choices? Why?
- Do you feel there are/ were any obstacles that you would like to see change? If so what and how do you think they can/ have changed?
- What kind of roles do Saudi women play? What do you think are the most essential roles of Saudi Women? What essential roles do they play?
- If someone wanted to transfer to Saudi Arabia, how would you describe Saudi women to them? How are they different than other women (both Arab or non-Arab)?
- How would you describe a successful Saudi woman?

Friendship, family, education, work and socialization:

- Looking back on your life so far, who do you think has had a very strong role in the choices you make (for example coming here to study? The program you choose, who you came with etc.?)

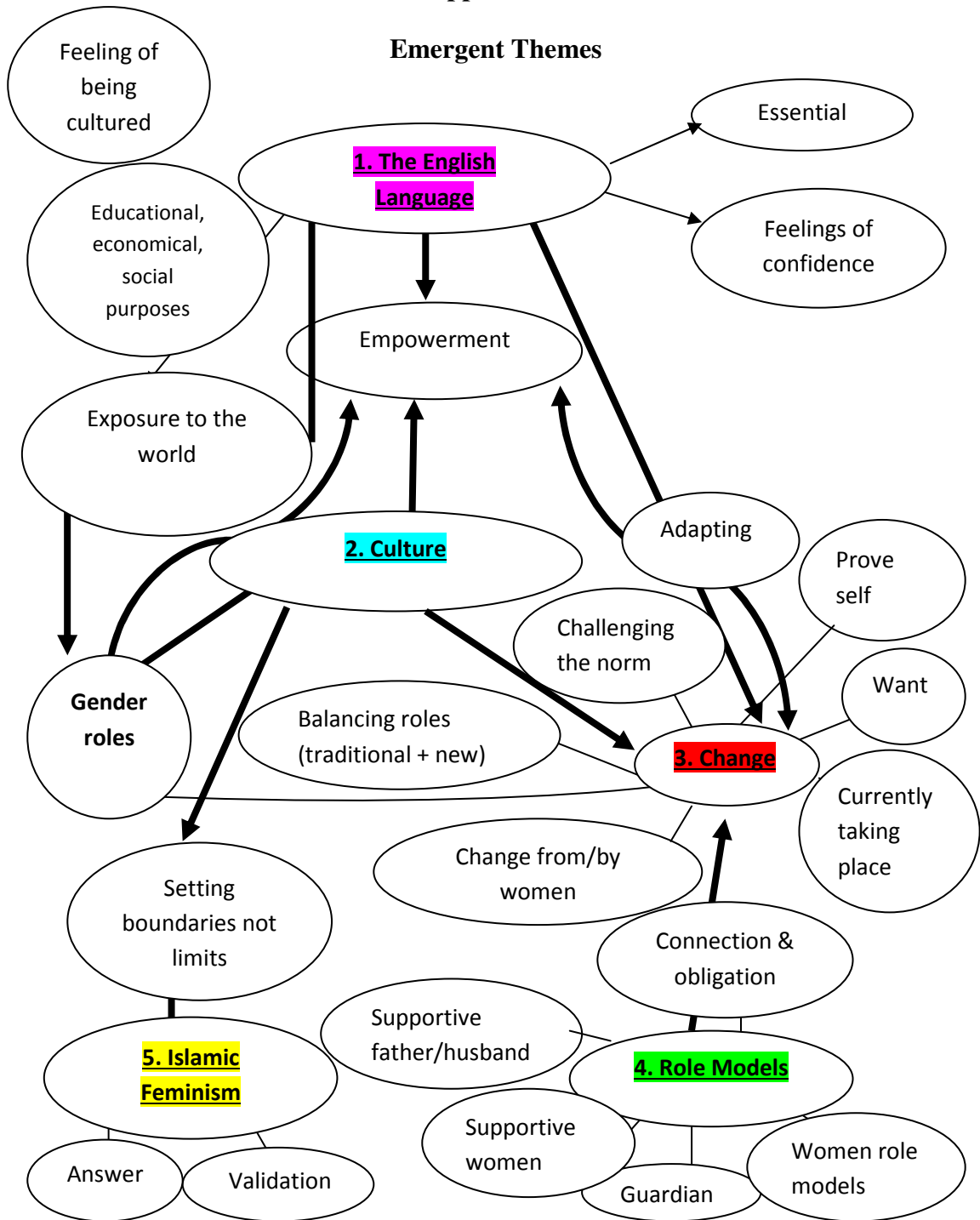
- School
 - Family/ husband
 - Media
 - Friends
 - Culture
- How do you feel about your education? Education in Saudi Arabia?
 - Where do you feel most comfortable being yourself, expressing your opinion?
Why and how?

Western Classroom:

- Do you feel that this new environment is any different than what you are accustomed to? How and why?
- When in this classroom do you feel you are comfortable? Why or why not?
- How do you interact with others in your classroom, both male and female? How about if they were Saudi?

Appendix F

Emergent Themes



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Curriculum Vitae

Reema A Alsweel received her Bachelor of Arts from The Girls College of Arts, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 2001. She was employed as an ESL teacher in King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences for a year. She received her Master of Arts in TESOL from San Jose State University in 2006. Her research interests include Saudi women and the impact of English as a second language.