Introduction

With globalization, English has become a global lingua franca, and there is a demand for the mastery of English language skills. As in many parts of the world, Saudi Arabia has shown an increasing interest in teaching and learning of English (Abahussain, 2016). English is the only foreign language in the school curriculum of Saudi Arabia. Learning and teaching English became an official policy of the government since 1932, and consequently, in 1958, English has become a separate subject in the general education curriculum (Alkhuzay, 2016). The growing demand for learning English in Saudi Arabia is visible in the political, financial and legislative incentives given by the Saudi government. The government allocated 25 per cent of the national budget to the educational sectors in which learning and teaching of English receive great importance (Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency, 2015).

EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia are normally graduates of arts, particularly English language and literature. They enrol for an intensive course for one semester. Upon completion of their first semester, they study English linguistics, English literature, teaching methods, translation and some other elective courses (Al-Seghayer, 2014). During the four-year program, they study courses like curriculum studies, evaluation, school administration and educational psychology and they study only one course on EFL methodology of teaching; which is fairly inadequate in contrast to the high expectations and demands of the EFL teachers. To overcome this, the Ministry of Education, in 2000, in collaboration with the British Council and the U.S. Embassy in Saudi Arabia, drew up plans for an all-around teacher training, which aimed to equip 600 EFL teachers with the latest teaching methods and to help them enhance their efficiency as English teachers. In 2002, the government organised another English training programme to enhance EFL teaching (Al-Hazmi, 2003). All these actions indicate the seriousness of the Saudi government to improve English language learning.

Part of the process of becoming a language teacher involves the development of a teacher identity and identifying with language teaching as a profession. The identity that teachers attach to themselves and the identity others give them are central to the subject they teach and their relationships with the students, and the teachers in their professional community (Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2000). This implies that teachers' identities are central to their effectiveness as teachers, their decision-making concerning their teaching profession and how they approach their teaching practices (Anwaruddin, 2016; Arends, 2014; Pennington & Richards, 2016). Thus, understanding teachers' identities would provide insights into how teachers form the images that they use to reflect on their teaching practices in the classroom (Mieto, Barbato & Rosa, 2016).

Literature Review

Starting from the last century, a teacher's identity has become a significant factor that determines a teacher's knowledge and consequently, their professional development. Many researchers have revealed different types of influence that shape teachers and their identities, which also affect their professional knowledge and practice, among them, for example, are Donato (2017) and Berger and Lê Van (2000). Contemporary scholars agree on the fact that the teachers' perspectives regarding the nature of learning and teaching and their role influence their sense of well-being, their work behaviours and work effectiveness (Gu & Day, 2013, Farell, 2015; Donato, 2017). This emphasises a paramount significance on the prototype of an educator with whom teachers identify

themselves (Hanna, Oostdam, Severiens & Zijlstra, 2019). According to Hanna et al. (2019), a good teacher is defined as one who helps his or her students to learn. He or she also contributes toward the mission of teaching in some way. The teacher's role is not only limited to giving information, but he or she also has many roles in the education process. Understanding the notion of good teaching depends on a person's conception of teaching (Pennington & Richards, 2016).

Studies on non-native teacher identities indicated that the identity formations are influenced by sociocultural context (Gu & Benson, 2015; Trent, 2012; Widodo, Fang & Elyas, 2020). The influence of the contextual factors on teacher identity is an issue that also has been noted by Wenger (1998), who argued that teacher identity develops depending on the environment one finds himself/herself in. Teacher identity is situated, varied and shifting according to the sociocultural contexts in which a teacher works and lives. This is because teacher identity is constantly being renegotiated during their professional life (Wenger, 1998), which makes identity both dynamic and fluid.

There are various ways in which teachers' professional identities and professional decisions are influenced by the teaching contexts. Pennington and Richards (2016) suggest that teachers' identity normally reflects the "apprenticeship of observation and participation when they were students". In other words, teachers' identity develops through their autobiographical identity and educational experiences, including teacher education background. Studies (Gu & Day, 2013; Donato, 2017) have shown that the teachers' beliefs regarding the nature of learning and teaching and their role seem to influence their sense of identity and their instructional practices.

Despite numerous studies which examined the influence of sociocultural context and formation of teachers' identities, there are very few studies on EFL teachers' identities in Saudi Arabia (Elyas & Badawood, 2016; Khan, 2011; Ahmad, Latada, Shah & Wahab, 2017; ur Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013). There is a particular concern with how the identities of these EFL teachers in Saudi schools affect their professional practices. Studies on the Saudi context mainly focused on the non-native EFL instructors in Saudi Arabia colleges and universities. To our knowledge, there has not been a study conducted on Saudi EFL teachers professional identity formation in Saudi Arabia secondary schools. The awareness on the importance of providing and developing competent and well-qualified English language teachers motivates the researchers to examine the role of professional setting in the process of teacher identity construction. Thus, the findings of this study could contribute to the body of knowledge in EFL teachers' professional identity formation by filling the gaps in the existing literature.

Among the few studies conducted on the Saudi Arabia context, is the study of Elyas (2011) who carried out in-depth semi-structured interviews with one male Saudi teacher, Ali, teaching in a college in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to investigate the way this teacher views his identity and the way he sees himself enacting his identity. The finding shows that Ali embraces his role as a Muslim person rather than an English teacher. That is, his values and beliefs play a main role in his professional identity. Ali feels insecure about his identity as a teacher because he is uncomfortable with the values promoted in the English textbook, which he viewed as opposed to Islamic teaching. In another study by Elyas and Badawood (2016) report that the English curriculum in Saudi Arabia is viewed as directly linked to the faith of Islam. They add that the role

of English teachers is to teach their students to integrate knowledge and interact in keeping with Islamic values. Furthermore, Ahmad, Latada, Shah & Wahab (2017) explore the factors that develop the professional identity of 41 Pakistani EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. Their findings reveal several factors such as the decision to become EFL teachers, social factors such as their overseas EFL experience, their professional futures, interaction with other EFL teachers and being non-native English speakers seemed to have an impact on their professional identity.

A strong teacher identity is crucial for EFL teachers to develop personally and professionally so as to improve their teaching practices and job satisfaction. Hence, this study attempts to address this gap in research by exploring the identity formation of three EFL teachers in the Saudi secondary schools in Riyadh, focusing on the influence of sociocultural factors on the professional identity formation of the teachers within the framework of Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998). Viewing identity as part of socialization, Wenger (1998) considers it as "an integral aspect of a social learning theory and separable from issues of practice, community, and meaning" (p. 145). The link between identity and practice is central within the context. Engagement in practice, according to Wenger (1998) "gives us certain experiences of participation, and what our communities pay attention to reifies us as participants" (p. 150), suggesting that identity is socially constructed through participating in communities of practice (CoP). According to Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder (2002), the communities of practice are "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in their area by interacting on an ongoing basis"(p. 4). Individuals develop mastery identities as they shift their way of engaging in a (CoP) through the various social interactions and roles that they encounter.

While the community of practice construct provides insight into the teacher's involvement in their professional settings, specific teacher identity dimensions are lacking in this framework. This limitation is resolved by the use of the reconceptualised notion of teacher identity by Pennington and Richards (2016), in particular the competencies needed for language teaching and how language teachers incorporate their own professional identity building attributes and experience. Two areas of professional identity building are defined based on the reconceptualization; *foundational competence* of language teacher identity and *advanced competence* of language teacher identity. *Foundational competences* of language teacher identity include language related identity relating to the background and language skills of teachers; disciplinary identity defined by the disciplinary knowledge of teachers and the knowledge of pedagogical content; context-related identity influenced by contextual factors; self-knowledge and awareness which refers to teacher's capacity in identifying their strengths and weaknesses; as well as student-related identity which are greatly influenced by teachers' knowledge and awareness about students.

Pennington and Richards (2016) argue that teachers build their language teacher identity during their teaching experience and by actively engaged in practices of lifelong learning and professional development. We argue that these aspects of the identity of language teachers are crucial in determining the professional identity knowledge of ESL teachers.

Research Objectives
This research aims to study factors which influence three EFL teachers' professional identities formation and their classroom practices. The following research question guided this study: How do the contextual factors influence the Saudi EFL teachers' professional identities and classroom practices?

Significance of the Study
As there are relatively only a few studies in Saudi Arabia examine the influence of contextual factors on EFL teachers' professional identity construction, it is then essential to examine this process. Besides, we believe that it is important to examine how the EFL teachers draw on their educational backgrounds during their classroom practices and how contextual factors influence their professional identities. This understanding is relevant as it provides a practical contribution to the English language teaching by serving as a guideline that informs future professional development for English teachers in the Saudi Arabia schools.

Methodology
As the purpose of this study was to gain insights into the Saudi EFL teachers' professional identity formation in the context of secondary schools in Saudi Arabia, we employed a qualitative case study design (Merriam, 2009). The case study offers insight into the phenomenon being studied, teacher learning, as it exposes real-life situations. Within the qualitative approach utilized for this study, the emphasis was placed on the understanding and interpretation of data during the process of data gathering and analysis.

Data Collection Method
In this qualitative study, the methods of data collection included in-depth interviews and observations. For in-depth interviews, an interview protocol was developed based on the existing literature (Farrell, 2015; Senom, 2016). The study adopted what Cohen, Manion & Morrisson (2011) and Kvale (1996) called 'semi-structured interview' to be conducted on the research participants. Kvale (1996) defines this type of interview as one which has a structure of themes to be conveyed and questions to be posed. It allowed researchers to have access not only to the verbal data but to nonverbal data as well (Cohen, Manion & Morisson, 2011). The primary aim of using interviews in this research depends on the nature of the phenomenon under study. Knowing the formation of professional identity of EFL teachers includes engagement and a deep understanding of the perspectives of the teachers. Semi-structured interviews were used because these offer consistencies in the sequencing of questions to researchers (Denscombe, 2010) and open a gate for other questions to arise during the interview. The participants were encouraged to describe and evaluate their own practicum experiences thoroughly and freely from their perspectives. All the interviews were conducted face-to-face and audiotaped for transcription purposes. The interviews were transcribed immediately and the researchers reviewed each transcription with written notes from the interview while listening to the corresponding tape.

Moreover, the study employed classroom observation where two classes for each of the three teachers were observed. The significance of employing classroom observations was well explained by Marshall and Rossman (2006) who argue that this method for research data collection allows the researchers to write down and describe actions and interactions through observing, following

and identifying the behaviour of subjects in certain classroom settings. This means that the observations made while visiting the schools in general and conducting the interviews in the staff rooms in particular, allowed the researchers to observe how the participants interacted with their colleagues, the kinds of topics they choose to discuss which influenced their relationship with each other to some degree. Given that this study considers the role of the practising communities in shaping professional identity, class observations were considered significant and recorded in field notes. The data collection was completed within 12 weeks and until data saturation as a prolonged engagement to ensure trustworthiness.

Participants
To obtain rich and comprehensive data from EFL teachers in Saudi secondary school in Riyadh, a purposive sampling strategy was adopted to recruit the participants for this study. Teachers are expected to have a minimum level of English language proficiency, making it an essential component in teacher's identity construction process. The selection of the school in Riyadh was made based on having three novices.

Table 1: *Participants' profile*

Name	Gender	Educational background	Years of experience
Turki	Male	Bachelor's degree, English Education	4 years in Saudi School in Riyadh
Majdeh	Female	Bachelor's degree, English Education	4 years in Saudi School in Riyadh
Ahmed	Male	Bachelor's degree, English Education	5 years in Saudi School in Riyadh

Turki is a 32 years' old English teacher at the Riyadh secondary school. His first language is Arabic. English is his foreign language which he has studied at school since the age of thirteen when he was in grade seven. He graduated from the English language department at Umm al-Qura University in Saudi Arabia. He has been teaching English for four years. English was Mr Turki's favourite subject which he loved too much because of his English teacher Mr Ali who treated him as if he were his son. Despite his love to English, Mr Turki did not acquire English well because he merely used English during English class (four classes per week) and that English is not spoken in his city outside English class.

Majdeh is a 29 years' old English teacher at the Riyadh secondary school. Her first language is Arabic. English is her foreign language which she studied at public schools in Saudi Arabia for twelve years and then for four years at university. In 2011, she graduated with a bachelor's degree

in English from Umm al-Qura University in Saudi Arabia. She has been teaching English for four years.

Ahmed is a 30 years' old English teacher at the Riyadh secondary school. His first language is Arabic. English is his foreign language which he studied at school at the age of thirteen when he was in grade seven. He spent a total of ten years in learning English in which six years were at the intermediate and secondary schools and four were at the university level. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in English from Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University in Saudi Arabia. He has been teaching English for five years.

Data Analysis

Marshall and Rossman's (2006) seven analytical stages were chosen to guide the data analysis of this study. This involves 1) organising the data; 2) immersing in the data; 3) generating categories and themes; 4) coding the data; 5) offering interpretation; 6) searching alternative understandings, and 7) writing the findings. To synthesize the data, the researchers identified some major patterns or themes that are linked together and collectively described the Saudi EFL teachers' teaching experience.

In constructing teacher identity in language teaching, Pennington and Richard (2016) proposed foundational competences and advanced competences. The foundational competences are language-related identity, disciplinary identity, context-related identity, self-knowledge and awareness and student-related identity. Under the second theme, the categories of practiced and responsive teaching skills, theorizing from practice and membership in the community of practice and profession were proposed.

However, for this study, only the five foundational competences are discussed, i.e. language-related, disciplinary, context-related, self- knowledge and awareness, and student-related competences.

Findings

Saudi EFL teachers' professional identity formation is reflected through the data presented in this study. The construct of professional identity is depicted through the teachers' foundational competences, i.e. language-related, disciplinary, context-related, self- knowledge and awareness, and student-related competences. Through the accounts of the teachers' experiences, their construction of the EFL teachers' identity can be understood. The teachers' foundational competences are discussed as follows.

Language-related Identity

Language-related identity is structured by a person's language proficiency and background, which developed over the years of learning a language. In this regard, the three teachers revealed during the interview that they started learning the English language from the intermediate school and went on to study English language at the undergraduate bachelor's degree level at a local university in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the three teachers claimed to have studied the English language for a combined ten years. While Turki and Majdeh did not complain, Ahmed argued that he faced challenges during his bachelor's degree studies due to having a poor background in the English language, but his degree program helped and made him interested in the English language. Moreover, all the three teachers did not undertake any language proficiency test yet. On the scale

of ten, Turki rated himself between seven to eight, Majdeh rated her English language proficiency seven and Ahmed rated his English language proficiency at eight.

Another important aspect under the category of language-related identity is the use of Arabic in teaching English. The teachers were asked whether they use Arabic while teaching English or they refrain from using it. All the three teachers claimed that they use Arabic to a minimal extent. These claimed proven correct during class observations. In explaining the use of Arabic language, Turki stated:

> *Sometimes you need to use Arabic to make a point or meaning of a word clear by giving examples and adding extra explanations or explaining difficult concepts.* [Turki, recall interview]

This implies that the teacher did not want to be judged as 'deficient', but real classroom practices obligate the use of Arabic to ensure full understanding of the lesson by the students. Furthermore, on the development of language-teacher identity, Turki makes use of his peers and available sources to develop his language proficiency. While Majdeh did not discuss the development of her language-teacher identity, Ahmed argued that practice makes perfection, adding that:

> *Practising English spoken and written inside classrooms has been an essential element in developing my English as well as listening to native speakers. There are different media, of course. To become a better language teacher, you have to consider language as a part of your life. That is the more you use the English language the more you become a better speaker of it.* [Ahmed, Interview]

On the relationship between teachers' learning experience and their identity construction, Turki stated that his experience of reading materials in English and watching English movies exposed him to English culture. Similarly, Ahmed mentioned that his experience with the English language helped to shape his professional identity through exposure to Western culture, particularly the English-speaking Western world.

It can be concluded that the teachers believe the significance of their English language learning experiences on their professional practices of teaching the English language, as supported by the observations of their classroom practices.

Disciplinary Identity

Disciplinary identity is the knowledge of the content of the field (disciplinary knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge, whether gained through experience or formal education) that contributes to the overall identity of the language teacher. In this aspect, the teachers were asked about the English-related courses that they studied during their bachelor degree. While Turki studied applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, curriculum planning and assessment, Majdeh studied teaching methods, critical pedagogy and linguistics, and Ahmed studied English teaching methods, applied linguistics and translation. This means that the teachers were exposed to an array of different English-related courses.

Moreover, the teachers claimed that practical experience of teaching has been more influential than the knowledge gained through the bachelor's degree program in shaping their EFL identity

and facilitating their role as EFL teachers at the Saudi school in Riyadh. In this regard, Majdeh elucidated that:

> *By applying different styles of teaching, I was able to deal with the difficulties I face in classroom practices.* [Majdeh, interview]

Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a limited impact of the disciplinary knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge on the teachers' disciplinary identity. Nevertheless, teachers' practical experiences are found to have more contributions. This finding matches with the finding of Elyas (2011) where his respondent reported that his teacher education did not prepare him to implement the English language curriculum in his classroom practices.

Context-related Identity
Context-related identity illustrates how different teaching contexts create different learning and identity development environments. It is divided into the favouring conditions that support teaching and learning and the disfavouring conditions that limit the teaching and learning.

As EFL teachers, teachers mediate between the cultures of English and Arabic. The three teachers agreed that while the English curriculum was adapted to suit the Saudi Arabia culture, they have to draw examples from the English culture in explaining culturally-specific English vocabularies at some points. In this regard, Turki discussed:

> *Sometimes we need to carry something to move from one side of the river to the other side. Whenever we carry something across the river, we have to begin to think about the nature of the landscapes we will encounter on the other side and you have to do the same with different cultures.* [Turki, Recall Interview]

In discussing some teaching and learning supportive facilities in their school, teachers argued that they have excellent facilities and equipment as well as skilled administrators. During classroom observations, it was found that the number of students in one classroom is about 35 students. However, the class was equipped with a whiteboard, LCD monitors and projectors, which the teachers used to display their PowerPoint presentations.

Nevertheless, the teachers stated that the negative factors inhibiting teaching and learning are the limited resources, the large number of students in a classroom and the lack of an English room (or English club) where the teacher and his students interact better in English. These factors were reflected in the poor participation of the students in English conversations and activities.

Moreover, the context of teaching English as a foreign language in Riyadh is found to significantly form the identity of the teachers. From Turki's point of view, it helps him to establish contact with English native speakers, get the opportunity to attend the classes of many native English expert teachers. He added that in Riyadh there are many workshops which unfortunately he has no time to attend on weekdays. Majdeh claimed that teaching in Riyadh helps her in understanding students' needs and increases her teaching abilities. She added: "I have to be more patient with students' lack of interest in the English language". [Majdeh, Interview]. Besides, Ahmed believes that teaching in a big city like Riyadh makes teaching easier due to the availability of facilities which is in contrast with teaching in rural areas where facilities are limited, and the

students need more efforts from the teacher to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the subject.

It can be concluded, therefore, that context-related identity contributes to the teacher's identity by providing context-based situations and experiences. The challenges that teachers' face varies, allowing the teachers to apply different teaching methods and styles. However, although teaching at the same school would implicate the same challenges, teachers have unique experience reflected in their diverse identity construction.

Self-knowledge and Awareness

Self-knowledge and awareness focus on the awareness of teachers to their role as EFL teachers and how such awareness shapes their identity and development. To understand how the teachers are aware of themselves as EFL teachers and their teaching profession, the teachers were asked to state their views on their job, including his teaching and non-teaching duties. In this regard, Turki discussed that despite his love of the profession of teaching, it has its share of challenges. He furthered:

> Well. It is not an easy job, as an EFL teacher you will need to plan, prepare, and deliver lessons to an array of classes and age groups. You also need to prepare and set tests, examinations papers and exercises. An EFL teacher needs also to mark and provide appropriate feedback on oral and written work. The teacher needs to write and produce new materials including audio and visual resources, organise and get involved in social and cultural activities such as sports competitions, school parties and excursions. [Turki, Interview]

For Majdeh, as an English teacher, she needs to be experienced enough to teach different levels of students from the beginner to the advanced levels. She also added that she gets involved in various other activities outside her teaching duties that include general activities in Arabic as well as monitoring students during breaks.

Similarly, Ahmed discussed that in addition to his typical English teaching duties, he also has to participate in extra-curricular activities as well as monitor the students during break and prayer times, and supervise them when writing their examinations. He then added that as a teacher, he is also responsible for a particular classroom and students as a class master.

Moreover, to understand how exhaustively self-knowledge and awareness contribute to the construction of the EFL teacher's identity, the teachers were asked about their plans and goals. Turki responded by saying that he needs to keep on studying to obtain further qualifications and he hopes in five years he can be able to have a master's degree in TESOL. Turki added:

> I aim to keep myself up to date with the latest methods in education. I would use technology in my classroom and my work to the maximum extent. I would also design my website so that parents and students are always aware of what is happening in term of homework, test, events and holidays. Students and parents will also be able to communicate with me via my website. [Turki, Interview]

However, Majdeh gave a short response mentioning that she hopes she will still be teaching in a better way which will help her reach her goals. The teacher aims to make her students better in the English language.

Nevertheless, Ahmed claimed to have no specific plans, but he will continue his job as an English teacher and continue improving himself. He then added that he would try to take more professional courses that will help him develop his English language. The teacher aims to improve himself by obtaining more training. Hence, his own goal is to make himself a better teacher in the future.

To better understand the teachers' perceptions of themselves as EFL teachers, the teachers were asked to explain how they see themselves as EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. On this, Turki opined that:

> *Being an EFL teacher promoted my creativity, enabled me to find different solutions for problems and helped me become more patient and understanding.*
> [Turki, Interview]

Yet, Majdeh claimed that she feels happy when she can help her students to learn the language and be able to determine their weaknesses.

Differently, Ahmed sees himself in the eye of his society. He explained:

> *I think our society looks at teachers in an equal eye, but for English teacher, I think they look at him as a distinctive one because sometimes we need him to help us in some cases which need his language expertise.* [Ahmed, Interview]

Furthermore, the teachers were asked to describe the kind of teachers they are. While Turki sees himself as a big brother teacher, Majdeh views herself as a kind, patient, acceptable and funny teacher, and Ahmed regards himself as normal, trying to be diligent, optimistic by positively looking at things, dealing with his students in a good way and trying to fulfil their learning goals.

To follow up on the teachers' descriptions of the type of teacher they are, the teachers were then asked to describe an ideal EFL teacher in their views. Turki opined that an ideal EFL teacher needs to attend a TEFL course that will allow the language teacher to better understand the profession of teaching English. Yet, Majdeh thinks that an ideal EFL teacher would be an acceptable and patient to face many difficult problems like students' weakness, students' laziness and students' individuality.

In conclusion, although the three teachers have different perspectives and understanding of the self, they agree on the fact that they need to improve themselves as EFL teachers, hoping for better classroom practices. This finding matches Widodo, Fang & Elyas's (2020) suggestion that English language teachers professionals should be informed of the most recent development in theories of teaching English as a foreign language via in-service education programs.

Student-related Identity

Student-related identity is concerned with the teachers' focus on students and their learning needs and developments. The main aspect of student-related identity is teachers' classroom management styles. In this respect, Turki stated that he makes the students active and gives them the option to either carry out their assignments in the classroom or take them home. He also added that he changes his tone to make the students pay attention.

Majdeh argued that she employs motivation and group competition. However, during both observation sessions, the teacher did not use any group activity and the class remained more teacher-centred. The teacher was asked during a recall interview as to why some students were not participating. She justified that some students find English a difficult subject or they do not find English an interesting subject.

Meanwhile, Ahmed, he claimed to work in his class as a facilitator. However, during observation sessions, Ahmed's class was managed in a traditional passive style in which the students listen whereas only the teacher speaks. The teacher explained during a recall interview that some students do not have the desire to participate.

It can be concluded that the three teachers have different perspectives on classroom management styles. Nevertheless, while they all agree theoretically that the classroom should be student-centred, they all practically apply teacher-centred classroom approaches.

Conclusion

This paper discussed three English language teachers in Saudi secondary school teachers' identity development in the context of EFL setting. It is argued in this paper that contextual factors play a role in shaping Saudi EFL teachers' professional identity formation.

First, this study found that the Saudi teachers' educational background and life experiences act as formative elements which influence their EFL professional identity formation. Moreover, the participating teachers agree that practical experience and teaching community played a more significant role than their educational background in terms of shaping their teacher's identity construction and their classroom practices.

Secondly, the findings showed that language-related, disciplinary, context-related, self-knowledge and awareness, and student-related competences have an impact on the teachers' identity construction. However, competences such as 'self-knowledge and awareness' contribute more to teachers' identity construction than the others.

The findings of the present study have several implications for improving existing teacher education program in Saudi Arabia. If teacher education program aims to develop EFL teachers' professional identity construction, then we may need to review the English language teacher education curricula to implement some changes within the program. Programs can address the notion of teacher identity explicitly through methods or professional courses.

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