CRITICAL NARRATIVE STUDY: ILLUMINATING WESTERN EPISTEMOLOGIES IN THE LIVES OF OMANI WEST-EDUCATED TEFL TEACHER EDUCATORS VIA DECOLONIAL TURN

By

AHMED AL MATA’NI

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2022
To my loving family: mom, dad, and Oman, my awesome wife, and my little boys (Alkhalil and Alhassan) who shared with me my PhD journey; I dedicate this PhD to you. I wish this to be a push for you all to continue your education and pursue your dreams.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

All praises and thanks are due to Allah (God), Most Gracious, Most Merciful. I would not have been able to attain such an achievement except by the will, ease, and mercy of Allah; for He said: “Whatever of good reaches you, is from Allah” (Holy Quran, 4:79). Therefore, I thank Allah for granting me patience and determination to finish this dissertation. Yet, prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said, “S/He who does not thank people does not thank Allah” (Aboo Daawood, 1979; Al-Tirmidhi, 1975). This doctoral journey has made me realize that this dissertation is not only mine; rather, it is the working result of countless people who have given me their deep and unselfish love, support, encouragement, guidance, and much more. Therefore, I would like to acknowledge some of them here:

Firstly and most importantly, I am deeply thankful to my doctoral committee members for their wisdom, support, and guidance, which have shaped and strengthened my research and thinking skills. My deepest gratitude to my kind-hearted and supportive advisor, Prof. Maria Coady, who had been there for me and my classmates from day one. I am grateful to her for both the academic and informal conversations that we had, which have truly shaped and fine-tuned my ability to be a critical researcher and scholar. Also, I am truly grateful for her tirelessly caring, constant support in providing feedback and edits of my work. I hope to repay her by carrying on this example in my own future professorial endeavors. I look forward to future collaboration and a continued friendship. Indeed, so thank you for being you!
Also, I am grateful to Prof. Ali Al-Issa, for his strong belief in me and encouragement to carry such a research topic despite the continuous doubts I had about myself. I would like to thank him for believing in me and for being a resourceful Omani-West academic broker. I am full of gratitude to him.

I am also indebted to Prof. Christopher Busey for believing in me and most importantly introducing me to Critical Race Theory, Decolonial Turn and other related theoretical frameworks that without I would not have thought of tackling such a topic or completing this dissertation. I am grateful to him for his support, for taking my ideas seriously and for inviting me to join the UF Holmes Scholars Program in which I have learned so much. Accordingly, I am grateful to the awesome supervising team at the Holmes Scholars led by Prof. Erica McCrary.

I am also thankful to Prof. Paula Golombek for triggering several critical questions about the topic and methodology, impressing me with her academic humility and constantly checking on me and my family. Thus, I am very thankful to her.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Prof. Mark Pacheco for providing me with beneficial ideas for my dissertation, for his strong belief in my ability to review the manuscripts for Journal of Language, Identity & Education, and for consulting me about Arab learners’ issues.

Also, I would like to thank Prof. de Jong for introducing me to fundamental frameworks which enabled me to think about bilingual education and bilingualism not from a deficit perspective, but from a strength or agentic based perspective. I am grateful to the administration staff members at the university of Alhasan and University of Alkhalil for facilitating the process of getting access to my participants.
I am also in debt to all the participants (Dr. Faiyza, Dr. Ibrahim, Dr. Fatin, Dr. Maryam, and Dr. Shamsa) for their time, wisdom, and insights. Without a doubt, they greatly contributed to the success of this dissertation. Without this scholarship, I am not sure I would have had an opportunity to pursue my PhD dream. More specifically, I would like to thank Dr. Rawya Al-Busaidi, the former minister of Higher Education in Oman, for awarding me a full scholarship and believing in me. I am also thankful to my higher institution in Oman for their support and encouragement during this fruitful journey. Particularly, I would like to thank Dr. Muneer Al Maskary, the Executive Chairman, for his continuous support and strong belief in me from day one. Also, I would like to thank both Dr. Ahmed Al Namany (formerly the dean and currently the Deputy Executive Chairman), and Dr. Beverly Baker Kelly for pushing me to pursue my PhD.

I would not make it without my friends in Oman, America and everywhere else. I am in debt to all of them for making this journey memorable, beneficial, and enjoyable and always checking on me and my family. I look forward to future collaboration and continued friendship. Also, I would like to thank my friend Ahmed Tejani for helping me format this dissertation. My friends: you are the best.

I would also like to express my gratitude to my awesome siblings and my family-in-law for their love, sincere supplications and wishes. Also, I can’t thank my caring and awesome parents for loving me unconditionally, believing in me, and most importantly for encouraging me to be the best that I could be. I know how long and hard it had been, so I am forever indebted to them.
Last, but by no means least, I would like to thank my awesome wife, Fatin, and my loved sons, Alkhalil and Alhassan, without whom this PhD thesis would NEVER have been started, let alone completed. My wife, Fatin, who is the love of my life, left her job in Oman to fully support me during this hectic and long journey. I do not have the words to describe my appreciation to her. Indeed, she has been one of the most, if not the most, blessings that Allah has granted me. Fatin: you are my heroine. My sons, Alkhalil and Alhassan, who are the joy of my life, although they drove me crazy at times, they have brought joy and contentment to my life. So to my family, I say: thank you and I love you more than ever.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background Information</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of Oman</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use and Importance of English in Oman</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) Programs in Oman</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Abroad Programs for Omanis</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Reflection</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale of the Study</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Gap: Omani Educational Context</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study and Research Questions</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions of Key Terms</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decolonial Turn</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Transfer</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Omani) TEFL Teacher Educators</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West vs. Rest</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Epistemology and Episteme</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of the Dissertation Study</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1 Summary</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Literature</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Note</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant Concepts to the DT</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse vs. ideology</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West vs. rest</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving from Global Colonialism (Cannons) to Global Coloniality (Canons)</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Decoloniality instead of Post-Colonialism?</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Lenses</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Explanation of the Theoretical Lenses’ Diagram ................................................. 59
  DT as a theoretical lens .................................................................................... 60
  Knowledge transfer .......................................................................................... 65
  Note on Types of Tensions .............................................................................. 70
Application of Decoloniality in the Rest’s Contexts ........................................ 71
  TESOL Programs: Need for Revisiting ........................................................... 72
  DT in Teaching English in the Rest Context ..................................................... 74
  Philosophical, Ideological, and Theoretical Reconceptualization .................... 75
  Instruction and Curricula in the Rest Contexts ................................................ 76
Coloniality in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries: Relevant Studies... 81
  Overview ........................................................................................................... 81
  UAE and Saudi Arabia ....................................................................................... 82
  Oman as a Case ................................................................................................ 86
    Omani educational official documents ........................................................... 87
    Use of international tests as a colonial tool in the Omani context .................... 89
    Heavy Reliance on Western Expertise .............................................................. 95
Summary Chapter and Conclusion ..................................................................... 97

3 METHODOLOGY ............................................................................................... 99
Overview ........................................................................................................... 99
Research Approach: Qualitative Research Rationale ........................................ 100
The Four Philosophical Assumptions .................................................................. 101
  Social Constructivism ....................................................................................... 102
    Axiology .......................................................................................................... 103
    Ontology ......................................................................................................... 104
    Epistemology .................................................................................................. 105
    Methodology ................................................................................................. 106
Method: Critical Narrative Inquiry ...................................................................... 106
  Narrative Inquiry ............................................................................................... 107
  Why critical? ...................................................................................................... 109
Sampling Procedures ......................................................................................... 111
  Site Selection ................................................................................................... 111
  Participant Selection ........................................................................................ 111
    Criteria for selecting participants ................................................................. 111
    Justifications for number of participants ...................................................... 113
    Procedures for contacting the participants .................................................... 116
Data Collection Methods ................................................................................... 118
  Primary Data Source(s) .................................................................................... 119
    Interviews ........................................................................................................ 119
    Documents .................................................................................................... 123
  Secondary Data Resources: Reflective Journals .............................................. 125
Procedure for Conducting Interviews ............................................................... 126
  Interview 1 ....................................................................................................... 126
  Interview 2 ....................................................................................................... 127
  Interview 3 ....................................................................................................... 128
Researcher and Participants Power Relationship ............................................... 130
Hegemony of Western Epistemologies & Epistemes in Participants’ TEFL

Overview

Context .................................................................................................................. 184
Reliance on Western Experts .............................................................................. 184
Excessive Use of Western Teaching and Testing Materials .............................. 188
Valuing Elite Bilingual/Multilingualism .......................................................... 190
Officials, Family and Friends Affording Greater Value to Western Institutions 192
Negotiating Western Epistemologies & Epistemes in Participants’ Setting ....... 196
Challenges Participants Faced during their Western Experiences ................. 196
Participants Elevating Western Epistemologies and Epistemes ..................... 200
  Preference for Western higher education institutions.............................. 200
  Preference for Western academic over non-Western ones ...................... 204
  Western gained knowledge and skills ................................................... 209
  Use of Western curricula and assessment ............................................. 225
  Elite bilingualism vs. minoritized languages ....................................... 234
  Note on adapting Western materials ................................................... 240
Limitations in Empowerment and Involvement ........................................... 246
Chapter Summary ....................................................................................... 253

6 DISCUSSION .............................................................................................. 256
Overview ...................................................................................................... 256
Hegemony of Western Epistemologies & Epistemes in Participants’ TEFL
  Context ...................................................................................................... 262
  Reliance on Western Experts .................................................................. 263
  Reducing Globalization’s Impact to the Economic Mask ......................... 265
  Western Adopted Curricula and Testing ................................................. 268
Negotiating Western Epistemologies & Epistemes in Participants’ Setting ...... 273
  Preference for Western Advisors ........................................................... 274
  Preference for Western Knowledge and Skills ........................................ 277
    Impact of native-speakerism ideology .................................................. 277
    Critical thinking vs. memorization ..................................................... 278
    Incorporating the target culture ......................................................... 284
    Note on quality assurance and accreditation ...................................... 286
  Preference for Western Curricula & Assessment ..................................... 287
  Support for Elite Bilingualism over MLs ................................................. 289
Limitations in Empowerment and Involvement ........................................... 290
Chapter Summary ....................................................................................... 293

7 CONCLUSIONS .......................................................................................... 295
Overview ...................................................................................................... 295
Summary of Findings ................................................................................... 296
Study Limitations ....................................................................................... 298
Implications ................................................................................................. 299
  Implications for Western TEFL Academic & Policy Makers ................. 300
  Implications for Omani and non-Western TEFL Academic & Policy Makers .. 301
  In Pursuit of Praxis Opportunities ........................................................ 303
  Implications for Further Research ........................................................ 307
Concluding Thoughts ................................................................................... 309

APPENDIX
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>REQUESTING PERMISSION LETTER</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>LETTER OF APPROVAL OF THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>NOMINATION LETTER FOR THE HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>RECRUITMENT EMAIL SENT TO THE PARTICIPANT</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>CONSENT FORM</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>INTERVIEW PROTOCOL</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>CONVENTIONS OF THE LANGUAGE</td>
<td>324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LIST OF REFERENCES</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-1</td>
<td>Background of study participants</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-2</td>
<td>Data collection sources</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-3</td>
<td>Examples of Interview 1 Questions</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>Examples of Interview 2 Questions</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>Examples of Interview 3 Questions</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>Details of the submitted documents by each participant</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-7</td>
<td>Illustration of the initial hunches (themes) before being refined</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-8</td>
<td>Theme 1: Hegemony of Western epistemologies &amp; epistemes in participants’ TEFL context</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-9</td>
<td>Theme 2: Negotiating Western epistemologies and epistemes in participants’ setting</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-10</td>
<td>Theme 3: Limitation in empowerment and involvement</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-1</td>
<td>Critical thinking accounts used by each participant</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-2</td>
<td>Use ratio of citing Western authors compared to non-Western ones</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-3</td>
<td>Adaptation accounts used by each participant</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-1</td>
<td>Conventions of the language</td>
<td>324</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-1</td>
<td>Map of Oman</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-1</td>
<td>Theoretical lenses’ diagram</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-2</td>
<td>The IELTS scale</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-1</td>
<td>Overview of this study’s methodology.</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-2</td>
<td>Data collection and ongoing processes timeline</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-3</td>
<td>A screenshot from on otter.ai of how the names of the speakers are shown.</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>Screenshot of an interview transcript using coded (not actual) names</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>Screenshot of the sample of the exported original files from otter.ai</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>NVivo 12 Plus data categorization and key themes</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-7</td>
<td>NVivo 12 Plus key themes with sub-themes using NVivo nodes</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-8</td>
<td>A snapshot of the email seeking feedback from participants on the interview’s protocol</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-9</td>
<td>A snapshot of the email seeking information participants’ socioeconomic status</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-10</td>
<td>A snapshot of the email seeking participants’ member-checking the narratives and interviews’ transcripts after the initial analysis.</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-11</td>
<td>A snapshot of the email seeking participants’ member-checking the narratives, findings and themes after finishing the analysis.</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-1</td>
<td>A snapshot of course outline shared by Dr. Ibrahim</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-2</td>
<td>A snapshot of a final exam shared by Dr. Shamsa</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-3</td>
<td>A snapshot of a google docs quiz shared by Dr. Fatin</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-4</td>
<td>Western representations in an Omani school textbook.</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-1</td>
<td>Alignment of the study’s findings with the research questions</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTFL</td>
<td>American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAEP</td>
<td>Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>Critical Discourse Analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoE</td>
<td>College of Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoECS</td>
<td>Department of Education and Cultural Studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DT</td>
<td>Decolonial Turn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAP</td>
<td>English for Academic Purpose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFL</td>
<td>English as a Foreign Language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EGP</td>
<td>English for General Purposes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoHERI</td>
<td>Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLs</td>
<td>Minoritized Languages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESP</td>
<td>English for Specific Purposes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NABA</td>
<td>North America, Britain, and Australia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCATE</td>
<td>National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPSP</td>
<td>National Postgraduate Scholarship Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAAAQA</td>
<td>Oman Academic Accreditation Authority and Quality Insurance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pvt-Uni-1</td>
<td>Private University One</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pvt-Uni-2</td>
<td>Private University Two</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pvt-Uni-3</td>
<td>Private University Three</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEFL</td>
<td>Teaching English as a Foreign Language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The concept Decolonial Turn (DT) has received growing attention among scholars to recognize the importance of revealing an invisible power matrix, not military but intellectual, that establishes and maintains asymmetrical power relations between the Global North and the Global South (Munemo, 2017). Therefore, DT serves as “a counternarrative to contemporary Northern assumptions of the universal” (Perry, 2020, p. 1) and validates other non-Western sources of knowing (Santos, 2010). Due to DT’s emergence in South America, much attention has rightfully been focused there (e.g., Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 1997; Walsh, 2007), but there has been a growing recent interest in using DT in African and Eastern Asian contexts. However, there has been an absence of attempts to focus on the Arab Gulf countries, including Oman. Informed mainly by DT, this study aimed to 1) address this gap, 2) investigate how Omani West-educated TEFL teacher educators negotiated Western epistemes and epistemologies in their context, and 3) articulate the tensions participants encountered while negotiating these epistemes and epistemologies.
Drawing upon empirical data from in-depth interviews, document analysis, and reflective journals, the findings using critical thematic analysis as an analytical lens showed that participants made conscientious efforts to adapt their western education to their local context, but hardly resisted them. Despite these attempts of adaptation, there was still hegemony of Western epistemologies in participants' context. Also, participants held a special fascination for the West resulting in a negative view about non-western ways of knowing and learning. Also, there was still a general avoidance among Omani academics to critically question and challenge the decisions that adopt/replicate Western epistemologies and epistemes in their context even after five decades of educational investment. Findings suggest that local policies espousing this hegemony and participants’ Western gained knowledge must be challenged and non-Western sources of knowing must be valued and integrated more often. This study provides practical implications for academics, decision makers, universities in Oman and the West. The study contributes to the scholarly discussion on the importance of DT in dismantling the Western hegemony in knowledge production especially in this overlooked part of the world.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Background Information

Overview of Oman

Oman has an absolute monarchy government and is officially known as the Sultanate of Oman. The Sultanate of Oman is located on the southeastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula (see Figure 1-1). It is considered to be one of the oldest Arab states in the Arab world (Al-Said, Al-Balushi, & Griffiths, 2017). Scholars believe Oman the trading hub and gateway to East Africa and Asia due to its coastal geographic location and the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea (Al-Said, Al-Balushi, & Griffiths, 2017). According to the World Bank website, the total population of Oman reached 4.9 million in 2018 (World Bank, 2020). Oman has a total land area of 309,500 square kilometers, making it the third-largest country in the Arabian Peninsula (Al-Maamari, 2014). Oman shares land borders with “the United Arab Emirates to the northwest, Saudi Arabia to the west, and Yemen to the southwest, and shares marine borders with Iran and Pakistan” (Peterson & Crystal, 1999, para. 5).

Oman is an ethnically diverse country with many languages, such as “Indo-Iranian languages (Baluchi, Kumzari, Lawati, & Zadjali), Modern South Arabian languages (Bathari, Harsusi, Hobyot, Jabbali & Mehri) and Bantu languages (e.g., Swahili)” (Al Jahdhami, 2018, p. 45). It is important to stress that some of these minoritized languages (MLs) do not have standardized writing systems. However, some of Mehri speakers in Oman and Yemen have recently started some personal efforts to revive or create a writing system for these languages (Mehri Language Center for Studies and Research, 2021).
Use and Importance of English in Oman

Similar to other developing countries and due to globalization, Oman places great value on learning foreign languages (Al-Issa & Al-Balushi, 2011; Al-Mahrooqi, 2016). Consequently, English, the world's lingua franca, has urged the Omani government to establish English language teaching colleges and departments to provide schools with qualified teachers, who qualified educators should train. Oman recognizes the crucial role English plays as a tool to modernize the country. Since English is viewed as the language of science and technology (Al-Issa, 2006), Oman has significantly invested in English language learning and teaching. As a result, English is the only official foreign language in Oman. This higher status given to English is clearly emphasized in many official documents. For example, the Reform and Development of General Education produced by the MoE in 1995 states, “The government recognizes that facility in English is important in the new global economy…The global language of Science and Technology is also English” (MoE, 1995, pp. 1-5). The value of English language learning is also highlighted in the Philosophy and Guidelines for the Omani
English Language School Curriculum. The document mentioned above, which three native speakers of English from the UK, Australia, and Canada prepared, espouses that English is the main tool for developing countries to fill the gap between themselves and developed countries (Nunan, Walton, & Tyacke, 1987). There is a similar emphasis on English language learning in the recent document, *Education in Oman: The Drive for Quality Education in Oman*, prepared by Oman’s MoE and The World Bank in 2013. The document asserts that employers require English, and for Omani professionals to be recruited, they must possess English and Information Technology skills that are “indispensable in the globalized economy” (Oman MoE & The World Bank, 2013, p. 163).

According to Al-Issa (2002), English has been viewed as fabled Aladdin’s lamp or the linguistic gate to several sectors such as tourism, technology, science, business, and many more, highlighting English’s critical role in Oman. As a result, for Omanization (meaning systematic and gradual replacement of non-Omani high-skilled laborers by nationals) to happen, Omanis must be competent in English (Al-Busaidi, 1995; Al-Balushi, 2001). English is required in schools and is also the primary mode of instruction in higher education institutions in both private and public sectors. English in these institutions is taught as English for Specific Purposes (ESP) or English for Academic Purpose (EAP). In other institutions where Arabic is the medium of instruction (e.g., Arabic language and religious studies majors), English is taught for general purposes (EGP) but is also a required subject that students have to pass to graduate. In addition to English, the MoE introduced French and German in 2012 as elective subjects. These two languages are offered only to 11th and 12th graders in five schools in two
governorates (3 schools in Muscat and 2 schools in Al Batinah South) out of the 11 Omani governorates where students have four classes a week (Al Abrawi, 2017). Also, two main public higher education institutions have started offering European languages (e.g. French and German) and the Chinese languages as required majors like tourism but as electives for other students. However, English, as described by Al-Issa (2020), “stands head and shoulders above all its linguistic counterparts leading to their marginalization and subordination” (p. 185).

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) Programs in Oman

In Oman, there are approximately 28 public higher education institutions (two public universities, four public colleges, and 10 nursing education institutions). In addition to public higher education institutions, there are nine (9) private universities and nineteen (19) private colleges that are all under the umbrella of the Omani MoHERI (Omani MoHERI, 2020). However, five central institutions provide degrees in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). Two of which are public institutions: the College of Education (CoE) at University of Alkhalil and the College of Education at University of Alhasan. In addition to these two, three private institutions are offering TEFL programs:

1. Department of Education (DoE), Cultural Studies (DoECS) at Private University One (Pvt-Uni-1)

2. College of Education and Arts (CoEA), College of Language Studies (CoLS) at Private University Two (Pvt-Uni-2)

3. The Department of Education (DoE) at Private University Three (Pvt-Uni-3).

University of Alkhalil, with all of its colleges, including CoE, was nationally certified by Oman Academic Accreditation Authority and Quality Insurance (OAAAQA) in 2018. University of Alkhalil-CoE has also been internationally accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Accreditation (NCATE), now the Council
for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) from the United States of America in 2016 (Al’Abri et al., 2019). It is worth mentioning that this TEFL bachelor’s degree program received international recognition by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) in 2015 (Al’Abri et al., 2019). TEFL is one of the programs offered by University of Alkhalil-CoE at bachelor’s and master’s degree levels. Like University of Alkhalil, Pvt-Uni-2, and Pvt-Uni-3 have been nationally accredited by OAAQA. Similar to University of Alkhalil, the Department of Education at Pvt-Uni-3 offers a TEFL program at both the bachelor’s and master’s degree levels. At Pvt-Uni-2, the College of Education and Arts (CoEA) offers the Bachelor of English Language Education program. However, the College of Language Studies (CoLS) at Pvt-Uni-2 offers a postgraduate program in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), leading to an MA in TESOL.

The College of Education at University of Alhasan is one of the six former Colleges of Teachers that offered education programs; however, these colleges have been expanded to provide more degrees in various applied sciences majors. In 2020, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the new Sultan of Oman, issued a Royal Decree to merge these six colleges with the seven public colleges to establish University of Alhasan (Omani Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs, 2020). Only the college of education at University of Alhasan, which was established in 2001, offers a TEFL program. Unlike the other institutions (University of Alkhalil, Pvt-Uni-2, and Pvt-Uni-3), University of Alhasan and Pvt-Uni-1 are still in the process of applying for national accreditation. These two institutions only offer a bachelor’s degree in TEFL.
The initial plan was to select participants from the two public institutions only for three main reasons. The first reason is that these public institutions receive government support, some of which appears to be specifically dedicated to sending Omanis to pursue their postgraduate studies, along with additional opportunities offered by the National Postgraduate Scholarship Program (NPSP). Also, these two programs are considered the oldest TEFL programs in the country, so both settings have had a long history of graduating Omani TEFL teachers to fulfill the needs of Omani schools. Most importantly, there are no Omani TEFL academics in the other two remaining private institutions. Since I received either no response or a negative response from Omani teacher educators at the University of Alkhalil, I ended up recruiting five participants from University of Alhasan only.

**Study Abroad Programs for Omanis**

The focus on higher education in the Sultanate started from the very beginning of the Omani Renaissance (Al-Nahda in Arabic, referring to the period between 1970-2019 when Oman was under the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said who is considered by the Omani population as the spiritual father who brought the country into modernity). In the 1970s, the Department of Knowledge (currently the MoHERI) was established to send young Omanis to various countries for higher education so when they return, they can contribute to the development of Oman.

In the 1970s, the number of students graduating from high school was minimal. This situation was primarily due to Oman having only three high schools throughout the entire country. According to the Education Council (n.d), schools have reached 1,124 now, accommodating about 579,024 male and female students. About 34,481 students were enrolled in the 12th grade, and about 34,065 passed the 12th grade. About 24,445
were enrolled in higher education institutions inside and outside Oman (Higher Education Admission Center, 2019).

As a result of the increase of students enrolled in higher education, both public and private tertiary institutions are compelled to meet the country’s needs. The Omani MoHERI urges these institutions to recruit qualified academics and staff (local and international). In addition, the financial capabilities of some public higher education institutions make it possible for them to send Omani scholars to pursue their degrees overseas. This idea led to the launch of the National Postgraduate Scholarship Program (NPSP) in 2010 to help more Omani academics in public and private higher education institutions pursue postgraduate degrees at the best universities around the world. In turn, these Omanis become highly qualified nationals who can contribute to and ensure high-quality education in Omani institutions.

The original aim of NPSP was to train people to fill positions in the growing sectors and local markets. Still, due to the increase of higher education institutions in Oman, which has generated an urgent need for qualified faculty members more than ever before, the program has dedicated specific scholarships for academics to complete their master’s and PhD’s in premier institutions worldwide. An applicant for this program must be admitted to one of the best 500 universities around the world based on the Shanghai academic ranking (Omani MoHERI, 2015). These Omani scholarship grantees must return to Oman upon completion of their course work (Omani MoHERI, 2019). The mission of NPSP is twofold: to sponsor Omanis to attend the best universities around the world and to ensure Omani’s return as competent professionals with the best expertise, ideas and practices that can be shared with their colleagues and
institutions to improve the quality of education in Oman (Omani MoHERI, 2019). In addition to the academics sponsored by their institutions, about two hundred candidates (not only academics but also candidates from various sectors) are annually sent to complete their graduate studies in premier higher education institutions around the world (Omani MoHERI, 2015). According to the Omani MoHERI, the percentage of Omani students that the government sends to foreign countries (non-Arabic speaking) is approximately 96.1% for both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. For instance, the College of Education at Sultan Qaboos University’s (the only public university in Oman) website states that all of the ten Omani teacher educators of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) were educated in in English-speaking countries such as North America, Britain, and Australia (NABA), (Sultan Qaboos University’s College of Education website, 2019).

**Personal Reflection**

Despite my African [Arab] blood, I grew up as a passive user of my ancestors’ language either due to the ultimate and extensive use of Arabic in most of my life (official language in Oman) as well as to the long history and still current stigmatization and stereotypes about things related to Africa including languages. As stated earlier, English is given a higher status, but the other minoritized languages are not recognized both educationally (as a medium of instruction or even offered as electives) or politically. This negligence could be considered a form of raciolinguistical violence (Alim et al., 2016; Flores & Rosa, 2015). Sadly, some Omanis consider Swahili as an “alien language” (Kharusi, 2012, p. 348) in the face of their African roots. Consequently, they opt not to teach or use Swahili to avoid stigmatization (Kharusi, 2012) especially if they
live in rural areas like mine. My appreciation for Swahili only increased when I moved to the capital area, where I had more chances to hear and practice it.

Inspired by nationalistic fervor and pride, one Omani academic, who is from the dominant Arab groups and not a Swahili speaker, went all the way to the other extreme to write on one of the official local newspapers expressing his anger and despondency on minoritized groups speaking and using their native languages instead of Arabic in some means of media or public by stating the following:

There are those Omanis who relegate the Arabic language into an abyss and impose new cultures on the Omani society by preferring to use (other) languages, (such as) Swahili, as a means of communicating with one another. The wise genuine Arabs are now aware that the real danger comes not from (without) but instead from (within), from those Arabs who think that they have reached the epitome of wisdom and perspicacity by changing the traditional (Arab) culture (Kharusi, 2012, p. 341).

He went further to demand people in charge and everyone to “unite against (this) danger of identity obliteration or else this malignancy will quickly spread and at that point we will lose everything” (Kharusi, 2012, p. 341) and considers “whoever is silent in the face of truth is an obtuse devil” (p. 341).

As stated earlier, Oman places great value on learning and teaching English (Al-Issa & Al-Balushi, 2011; Al-Mahrooqi, 2016). According to Tekin (2015), administrative personnel equate Anglicism with future success in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, including Oman. Tragically, several neoliberal capitalist logic and ideologies (e.g., using English as a medium of instruction and since it is considered the language science and technology) under the name of globalization are directly and indirectly emphasized in several educational official documents produced either by some Western consultants or some Omani hegemonic elites (Al-Issa, 2015). Consequently, valuing English (sometimes even more than Arabic) is becoming a common trend among
Omani families, who are “excitedly willing to introduce English to their children at an early age” (Ahmadi, 2017, p. 12). As part of “the imagined language of prestige and power” (Kenfield, 2018, p. 89), valuing the English culture is at the expense of losing Arabic and other minoritized languages. This negative attachment to native and minoritized languages might “compound the attrition rate of these languages” (Kenfield, 2018, p. 90).

Before being exposed to the DT and other critical perspectives, I was guilty of disseminating such Western epistemes and practice in my working environment as an educator. This was the case for two main reasons. The first reason is external impulsion. It comes from fearing the consequences of disobeying the norms imposed by the Western ideologies and standards. For example, the use of Western textbooks, English only policy inside institution’s premises, or insistence on using international exist (high-stake) tests like TOEFL and ILETS), which are adopted by administrative (Both Omani and non-Omani) personnel in many Omani higher education institutions. The second reason is internal impulsion. It comes within me assuming a semi-belief in the importance and need of disseminating such epistemes in my local context to survive and catch up with the West (Said, 1979) due to the impact of my Western training in Oman and while doing my master’s in the US. At some point in time, I was also embodying internalized orientalism, but this is in no way to be compared with the apparent impact produced by the Omani hegemonic elites on adopting Western policies and ideologies and sometimes implementing them to the fullest. For instance, I believed the West as the “system of reference” (Chen, 2010, p. 216) and evaluated my academic activities through Westernized eyes. In other words, I was unconsciously acting as one
of the “imperial troopers” (Edge, 2003, p. 10) via pacifying intellectual resistance and promoting the logic of coloniality (Edge, 2003). Being exposed and educated about the Decolonial Thinking perspective has made me more aware of the relations of power and the need to build critical consciousness and break the status quo of all forms of superiority (like valuing only Western epistemes and epidemiologies). In brief, I view this humble attempt as “not imposing ideas and representations from the West but engaging with contextually produced ideas on their terms, where research itself serves as a space for decolonization” (Nirmal, 2016 as cited in Nirmal, 2017, p. 179).

**Rationale of the Study**

To improve the social and economic situation of the country, the ministries of Education and Higher Education in Oman have initiated educational reforms at all levels to provide opportunities for Omanis to receive a high-quality education. Although Oman’s government has invested many financial resources to improve education in general and English language instruction in particular, Al-Mahrooqi (2012, 2014) suggests that the country has not reaped the fruits of its efforts. One of the areas that Oman has tremendously invested in is sending Omanis to pursue their education abroad. In many developing countries, there is a general trend by administrators of higher education institutions to encourage their academics to obtain advanced credentials from the West. The hope and purpose are that academics would return to their home countries with best practices, expertise, and ideas in various fields (Hamza, 2010; Subramani, 2000).

When examining the relevant studies to the Omani context (Saudi studies available) in relation to scholars or students from developing counties educated in the West, the current research focus seems to be either on largely the gained benefits or on
the challenges facing these returnees when attempting to implement what they have gained in their local contexts. Similar to the Omani NPSP expectations from Omanis educated in the West, several Saudi studies pointed out that providing teacher educators or academics with opportunities to pursue education in US, UK, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada to pursue their MA or PhD in TESOL teacher education programs could grant these scholars valuable experiences that could improve the quality of their educational systems once they return Saudi Arabia (e.g., Alandejani, 2013; Al-Mehawes, 1984; Almutairi, 2018; Le, 2014). For example, the Saudi administrators believe that the Western-educated Saudi returnees have different perspectives, skills, ideas, and problem-solving skills that would enhance institutions and educational systems in their home countries (e.g., Alandejani, 2013; Al-Mehawes, 1984; Almutairi, 2018; Le, 2014; Szkudlarek, 2010). Thus, the administrators believe that the returnees had exposure to other cultures, are confident, open-minded, independent, and empowered (Alandejani, 2013; Aldossari, 2015; Almutairi, 2018; Al-Samiri, 2020; Macias, 2016; Sendi, 2019). However, despite these important benefits and expectations, the impact of the Western epistemologies and epistemes these Saudi scholars and students might have been exposed to while studying and how this impact could influence their local contexts after their return unfortunately seem to be under examined.

Similarly, the challenges that Arab returnees or scholars face while studying in the host countries and after returning home have been researched in developing countries such as Saudi Arabia. Comparatively, the challenges that Western international scholars and students educated in the West and their local educational
systems receive less research attention. For instance, some researchers (e.g., Alandejani, 2013; Al-Mehawes, 1984; Almutairi, 2018; Le, 2014; Szkudlarek, 2010) concluded that Saudi teacher educators or academics, after their return, find their colleagues or administrators resist most of what was acquired abroad. According to the studies, the Saudi returnees educated in the West are viewed as exhibitionists and sources of danger for those who did not study abroad, who are jealous and feel inferior to those who studied in the West (Alandejani, 2013; Almutairi, 2018). This jealousy and fear from these returnees might be one reasons of what Qashqari (2017) surprisingly found. In his article, he asserted that “many Saudi graduates who earn their PhDs abroad” (para. 1) appeared to struggle to have academic positions at Saudi universities. As stated earlier, the possible exposure to Western epistemologies and epistemes and their impact on TEFL teacher educators their local contexts using the DT their local contexts remain unexplored in several Arab developing countries, including Oman. The following section highlights the significant studies about the Omani educational context to identify the gap in literature in the Omani educational context.

**Literature Gap: Omani Educational Context**

Before discussing and examining the gap in the literature in the Omani educational context, I need to define the term: stakeholder in education since it is essential to understand the gap in the literature. According to the Glossary of Education Reform’s website, a stakeholder can be defined as individuals or collective entities when speaking about stakeholders in education. Individually, a stakeholder is defined as, “anyone who is invested in the welfare and success of a school and its students, including administrators, teachers, staff members, students, parents, families, community members, local business leaders, and elected officials such as school board
members, city councilors, and state representatives” (para. 1). Collectively, stakeholders can be represented by entities like “local businesses, organizations, advocacy groups, committees, media outlets, and cultural institutions” (para. 1). In addition to these collective entities, stakeholders could be represented by specific groups like “teachers unions, parent-teacher organizations, and associations representing superintendents, principals, school boards, or teachers in specific academic disciplines” (para. 1).

When reviewing the literature about the Omani TEFL context and its key stakeholders (e.g., Omani decision makers from the MoE and MoHERI, students, student teachers, schoolteachers, parents, teacher educator), it appears some stakeholders (e.g., students, student teachers, schoolteachers) receive more research attention than the rest (Omani decision makers from the MoE and MoHERI and Omani academics). However, Omani academics are among the least researched groups for several reasons. First, in more conservative societies like Oman, Omani scholars are considered the most knowledgeable in society and they should not be challenged (Al-Issa, 2015; Al Harthi & Ginsburg, 2003). This status is granted “directly or by a delegation from social, religious or government officials” (Al Harthi & Ginsburg, 2003, p. 5). Unfortunately, most have taken advantage of the situation and begun to exercise some illegitimate and unquestioned authority (both implicitly and explicitly) to control students and curricula (Al-Issa, 2015; Al Harthi & Ginsburg, 2003). For example, Al Harthi and Ginsburg (2003) found that university students preferred not to challenge their university faculty members to avoid the consequences of failing the course or receiving lower grades. Instead, students tend to “satisfy professors' requirements to
pass exams and avoid behaviors that would not satisfy them” (p. 11). However, it is vital to stress that this authority is limited, especially in educational bureaucratic environments, despite its existence (Kreisberg, 1992). This limited authority might explain the dearth of research about the Omani academics or teacher educators who as researchers tend to rarely study themselves to transparently investigate their roles in low student learning outcomes. Such focus might suddenly put them under a microscope. Therefore, the experiences of many Omani academics in general and TEFL academics or teacher educators in particular who are educated in the West are among the least discussed topics when reviewing the literature about the Omani TEFL context and its key stakeholders. However, most importantly these Omani academics might have been exposed to Western epistemologies and epistemes during their study in the West. Therefore, other questions are worthy of exploration such as: 1) How do Omani TEFL teacher educators educated in the West negotiate Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching [in an Oman teacher education context]? and 2) What (broadly internal and external) tensions are present for these Omani educators as they negotiated Western epistememes in their scholarship and teaching? Therefore, such a lack of attention warrants further examination and exploration to fill this significant gap.

A look into several previous studies about the Omani educational context shows that Omani schoolteachers and students in both schools and higher education institutions have perhaps received the most significant research attention. Most importantly, the focus of these studies on students and schoolteachers appears to highlight the need and urgency of Oman to meet the demands of globalization to
succeed. Still, most of these studies seem to ignore the significance of the impact of the other elements of Western epistemic and epistemologies on the Omani educational system. This situation is apparent in reducing the effect of globalization to the economic aspects and disregarding the other aspects of the Western epistemics and epistemologies, namely, “linguistic, cultural, political, and spiritual domination in general and epistemic in particular in knowledge production” (Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 221).

In the context of Omani students at schools, several researchers (e.g., Al Abri et al., 2017; Al Alawi, 2016; Al-Issa, 2006; Al Hosni, 2014; Al-Saadi & Samuel, 2013; Al-Saadi et al., 2013; Al Seyabi & Tuzlukova, 2014; Al Seyabi & Tuzlukova, 2015; Al Siyabi, 2012) focused on the problems that students in Omani schools seem to face, such as linguistic competence (namely, linguistic skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening, and grammar) and their limited abilities to think and solve problems in their English classes critically. As a result, Omani students in schools are believed to fail the government’ (Al-Mahrooqi, 2012, 2014). The reason for the failure is because of the students’ performance on international tests such as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) where, in 2015, Oman “ranked 72 out of the 76 countries that participated” (Neisler et al., 2016, p. 82).

This research focus is not confined to students in schools, but it extends further to focus on students’ problems after joining higher education institutions inside and outside of Oman. Several researchers (e.g., Abdul Rahman & Abid, 2014; Alami, 2016; AlBakri, 2017; Al Barashdi, 2012; Al-Busaidi et al., 2019; Al-Issa, 2006, 2013; 2019, 2020; Al-Issa et al., 2016, 2017; Al Seyabi & Tuzlukova, 2014; Balasubramanian & Al-Mahrooqi, 2016; Neisler et al., 2016; Vaddapalli, 2012) examined students who are in
higher education institutions in general and those who want to be English teachers in particular with a focus on challenges facing these students with their English. These studies concluded that these students appear to have problems with the four skills, low performance in international tests like IELTS or TOEFL, and difficulties in other important areas like problem-solving, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence.

However, after a close examination of many of these studies (e.g., Abdul Rahman & Abid, 2014; Alami, 2016; AlBakri, 2017; Al Barashdi, 2012; Al-Busaidi et al., 2019; Al Seyabi & Tuzlukova, 2014; Balasubramanian & Al-Mahroqi, 2016; Neisler et al., 2016; Vaddapalli, 2012) appear to have used international tests like Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale (SEIS), California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST), Cornell Class-Reasoning Test (CCRT), Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal (WGCTA) without significant adaptation and modification suiting the Omani culture. Also, the focus on these studies seems to be directed to the economic aspects (meeting the demands of globalization by graduating Omani citizens who must “be competitive in an increasingly competitive global market” (Balasubramanian & Al Mahroqi, 2012, p. 150), “become an active participant in the new global economy” (Al-Jardani, 2012, p. 41) using the globalization’s tools mainly international tests to examine and measure the readiness of Omani students respond the demand of the modern global economy (Al-Ghafri, 2018; Al-Mahroqi, 2012). These studies seem to extensively use the tools of Western epistemic and epistemologies with extensive emphasis on economic factors to measure what those researchers perceive as a failure among Omani students. This tendency is discussed in Chapter 2 in detail.
In addition to students, Omani English schoolteachers, who are mostly prepared in Oman, have been criticized mainly by several researchers for lacking the skills, attitude and motivation needed to teach English and to enhance students’ language, critical thinking and problem solving skills (e.g., Al-Faki & Siddiek, 2013; Al Farsi, 2006; Al Hosni, 2014; Al-Issa, 2014, 2020; Al-Issa et al., 2017; Al-Kindi & AL-Mekhlafi, 2017; Al Mahrooqi, & Sultana, 2012; Al-Mahrooqi et al., 2015; Al-Mekhlafi, 2011; Al Seyabi & Al Rashdi, 2016; Al-Shammakhi & Al-Humaidi, 2015; Issan et al., 2011; Wyatt, 2013). As a result, the majority of these teachers end up taking extra, structured professional development (PD) courses and in-service training, organized by the MoE (e.g., Al-Hinai, 2007; Al Jabri et al., 2018; Al-Kiyumi & Alyahmadi, 2014; Al-Lamki, 2009), which costs the government more money. Regrettably, these pieces of training and professional development sessions were run by expatriate native English speaking teacher trainers (Al-Balushi, 2012, 2009). According to AL Balushi (2017), there has been some recent change involving more Omanis to run such training programs. Despite the need for these PD courses, many of these training sessions are believed to not “respond to teachers’ individual needs” (AL Balushi, 2017, p. 260). As emphasized earlier, the focus of many of these studies appears to be on the economic implications of the training, namely meeting the demands of globalization and how the teachers have failed the government’s efforts to prepare students to respond to the economic needs of globalization.

There is a little attention by government to low student learning outcomes despite the invested resources in education. Educational policies are made by “the hegemonic elites,” a term used by Al-Issa (2015) to describe officials appointed by the government
such as “Ministers, Under Secretaries, Advisors, Director Generals, Deputy Director Generals, Directors, Public and Private University Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice Chancellors, College Deans” (Al-Issa, 2015, p. 578). Because of the “prevailing hegemony and rigid exercise of authority and control by those elites” (Al-Issa, 2015, p. 570), there is a general avoidance among researchers to critically question and challenge the hegemonic minority elites (Al-Issa, 2015). This is despite the Omani constitution, which was issued in 1996, highlights that Omani citizens have rights including “free education, health care, social benefits, freedom in practicing religious rites, equality before the law, freedom of opinion and expression, and so on” (Al-Maamari, 2021, p. 1438). However, the level of evasion among academics to critically question those elites changed (but not significantly) after the Arab Awakening in 2011 (Al-Issa, 2015). Such an incident allowed some Omanis, according to Al-Issa (2015), to refuse to be “at the receiving end” (p. 563).

As stated by Al'Abri (2015), the general avoidance to discuss policies (governmental in general and educational policies in particular) among academics and researchers could be attributed to the political connotation of the word “policy” in Arabic, which overlaps in its roots with politics, meaning, “Omani political regime, its structure and policy architecture” (Al'Abri, 2015, p. 3), while politics and policy in English have different meanings (Al'Abri, 2015). However, some have started to criticize aspects of these imposed policies dictated by those hegemonic minority elites. Despite these changes, there is still a dearth of research in this area (e.g., Al-Alawi, 1994; Al'Abri, 2015; Al-Hammami, 1999; Al-Issa, 2015; Al-Issa, 2014; Al-Issa, 2019; Al-Issa, 2020; Al-Issa et al., 2017; Al-Lamki, 2009; Mahboob et al., 2018). These researchers asserted
that these policies by the Omani elites are authoritative, highly centralized, and economically driven to meet the demands of globalization.

Unfortunately, the impact of globalization, as stated previously, is mostly reduced to the economic aspects with few exceptions where some Omani researchers (Al-Issa, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2013, 2015, 2020; AL Balushi, 2018; Al-Bakri; 2013; Al-Busaidi, 1995) directed the attention towards the impact of imperialistic ideologies on areas like educational policies, school curriculum, and the influence of Omani hegemonic elites. An expanded discussion about these studies is in Chapter 2. Nevertheless, the impact of Western epistemics and epistemologies on the Omani TEFL teacher educators educated in the West (NABA countries) and how they negotiated those Western epistemics and epistemologies in their contexts remain unexplored and deserve further examination and attention.

**Significance of the Study**

An exhaustive review of the published literature on Omani education revealed no research on how TEFL Omani teacher educators in the West negotiated Western philosophies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching after returning to Oman. Also, there was no study on these Omani educators’ (broadly internal and external) tensions as they negotiated Western epistemes in their scholarship and teaching.

Irrespective of the increasing number of Omani academics, teacher educators, and scholars educated in the West who are annually sponsored by the National Postgraduate Scholarship Program (NPSP), there is continued reliance on Western expertise by many developing countries, including Oman. NPSP was launched in 2010 to provide opportunities for Omanis to pursue their master’s and PhD degrees overseas in the best universities around the world. The goal is, upon completion, to return to
Oman as highly qualified nationals who should contribute to fostering quality education in these institutions (Omani MoHERI, 2015). According to the Omani MoHERI, about two hundred candidates are sponsored by the NPSP to complete their graduate studies abroad. There are also those scholars who their institutions support. Al-Issa (2014, 2020) urges people in charge of Omani education in all sectors and at all levels (school and higher education) to stop or reduce their heavy dependence on consultants from North America, Britain, and Australia (NABA). A detailed discussion would be presented in Chapter 2.

The DT was born in Latin American contexts; therefore, the decolonial theory is evolving slowly in certain parts of the developing countries due to its recent emergence and development. In addition to the main founders (e.g., Escobar, 2007; Hall, 1992; Maldonado-Torres, 2003; Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 1997; Santos, 2010; Walsh, 2007) of the DT on Latin American contexts, it has become a popular theory among other Latin scholars (e.g., Andreotti, 2011; Balbachevsky, 2015; Granados-Beltrán, 2017; Guzmán-Valenzuela, 2017; Guzmán-Valenzuela & Gómez, 2018; Hsu, 2017; Pardo, 2020). Comparably, there is a rising research interest in adopting decolonial theory among scholars from developing countries. For example, some Asian scholars (e.g., Ching, 2010; Ha, 2018; Hino, 2020; Juntrasook & Burford, 2016; Madina & Mignolo, 2012; Moosavi, 2020; Parreñas, 2020) adopted DT in their studies. Similarly, there is increasing interest in using the DT among African scholars (e.g., Behari-Leak, 2019; Garuba, 2017; Morreira, 2015; Nhemachena et al., 2016; Oparinde & Govender, 2019; Staeger, 2015). However, using this theoretical framework has not been on the
research radar in Cooperation Council (GCC) countries (Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and UAE).

Despite the most valiant and conscientious efforts and attempts by few Omani scholars (Al-Issa, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2013, 2015, 2020; Al-Balushi, 2010; AL Balushi, 2018; Al-Bakri; 2013; Al-Busaidi, 1995); few Saudi Arabia scholars (e.g., Barnawi & Le Ha, 201; Elyas& Al-Ghamdi, 2018; Elyas & Basalamah, 2012.; Elyas & Picard, 2013; Tayan, 2017) and some scholars discussing the Emirate context (e.g., Aydarova, 2012; Troudi & Al Hafidh, 2017; Troudi and Jendli, 2011), these studies appear to focus on the impact of imperialistic ideologies on educational systems in these countries using critical paradigms (e.g., critical discourse analysis, critical inquiry, critical pedagogy, hermeneutic phenomenology) but did not adopt the DT. Barrantes-Montero (2018) argues that Phillipson’s linguistic imperialism can be connected to the decolonial theory. However, despite the benefits of these paradigms and frameworks (e.g., critical discourse analysis, critical inquiry, critical pedagogy, hermeneutic phenomenology), Phillipson’s linguistic imperialism) to unveil colonial strategies, Mignolo (2007, 2011) considers these paradigms as Eurocentric. Additionally, the focus of these functional studies on the GCC countries, including Oman, is on the impact of imperialistic ideologies on certain stakeholders (students, schoolteachers, and decision-makers) but not on Omani teacher educators in general and TEFL teacher educators in particular. In the field of teaching English (ELT, TESOL and TEFL), several scholars (Brutt-Griffler, 2002, 2006; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 2001; Canagarajah, 1999, 2002, 2004, 2009, 2012; Pennycook, 2000, 2017, 2019; Kumaravadivelu, 2003, 2006, 2014, 2015, 2016; Wong & Canagarajah, 2009) indicate the great potential of this decolonial thought in
challenging and destabilizing the Western hegemonic narratives, as well as considering non-Western sources of ideas and concepts as not inferior to Western knowledge system.

Since this study uses critical narrative inquiry, it aims to create a space for Omani TEFL teacher educators educated in NABA countries to construct and share their narratives as among the most minor researched groups. Unlike the relevant previous studies using interviews as the only tool for data collection, this study used critical documents analysis (especially analyzing participants’ research articles and any other document that foster the richness of the study). Additionally, interviews were used to increase credibility and triangulation (Erlandson et al, 1993; Shenton, 2004; Yin, 2009). These documents were analyzed using Chen & Lawless’s (2016) Critical Thematic Analysis (CTA).

All of these concerns and factors have made me curious to understand and explore the impact of Western epistemologies and epistemes on Omani TEFL teacher educators and how they negotiated these Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching. This critical exploratory, qualitative study is informed by the DT, knowledge transfer, and Adler’s (1981/2008) four-cell coping-mode scheme: “proactive, alienated, re-socialized, and rebellious” (p. 354) as theoretical lenses. Also, Critical Thematic Analysis (CTA) was employed to analyze the collected data. With the scarcity and gap in research in this area, this critical explorative study was challenging. However, this study also provided a great opportunity for me to learn and initiate a new area of research in Oman and contribute to the existing body of knowledge in this area about Oman, the Arab World and globally.
Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

Therefore, this study’s overarching goal is to investigate how Omani TEFL educators trained in the West negotiated Western epistemologies and epistemes on their local contexts. I intended to answer the following research question and sub-question:

1. Research question: How do Omani TEFL educators trained in the West negotiate Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching in their Omani TEFL teacher education context?

2. Sub-research question: What (internal and external) tensions are present for these Omani educators as they negotiated Western epistemes in their scholarship and teaching?

Definitions of Key Terms

For this study, this section will define each key term.

Decolonial Turn

This is a term developed by a group of scholars in Latin America (e.g., Mignolo 2011; Grosfoguel 2007; Maldonado-Torres, 2007). The term refers to how colonization produced a particular world order and knowledge structures via a pluriversal approach that is “neither a rejection nor a negation of Western thought” (Walsh & Mignolo, 2018, p. 3). But it aims at building a world based on re-existence by which the West and Rest are working to “re-define and re-signify conditions of dignity on our [everyone] shared planet” (p. 3) without placing superiority on one over the other (Maldonado-Torres, 2007).

Knowledge Transfer

It is the ability to appropriately apply and transfer the knowledge and skills learned in one setting to another (Holton & Baldwin, 2003). It is not an easy process
because people interpret knowledge differently depending on their various backgrounds and personal needs (Holton & Baldwin, 2003).

(Omani) TEFL Teacher Educators

Regarding repatriates and sojourners, (Omani) TEFL Teacher Educators have two identities. They are sojourners when they are pursuing a PhD degree in preparing English teachers in one of the NABA countries and repatriates, as they are back to Oman now educating and preparing Omani English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) student teachers in one of the Omani higher education institutions.

West vs. rest

The West and Rest are not geographical constructs but a historical, linguistic, and evolving concepts. The West represents “a level of development and a modern society” (Hall, 1992, p. 141). The West represents “neutral epistemic subjects” (Maldonado-Torres, 2004, p. 29), “rational, virtuous, and mature” (Said, 1979, p. 21), and universally conscious (Grosfoguel, 2007) individuals who can produce valid knowledge and function as civilizing forces (Said, 1979) to help the Rest who represent the opposite of what the West represents. As a result, the “irrational, depraved and childlike” (Said, 1979, p. 21) Rest are inferior to Westerners who need to supervise the Rest. Tragically, this imposed inferiority on the Rest is sometimes reinforced by some Elite Rest members as a form of internalized orientalism (Heng & Devan, 1992).

Western Epistemology and Episteme

It means considering sources for knowledge (Episteme such as Renaissance episteme or Enlightenment episteme) that originate from the West as valuable and valid using Western principle of analysis of systems of knowledges (Epistemology) because the West can accomplish a “universal consciousness” (Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 213) or
“universalistic, neutral, objective point of view” (p. 214) by being able to disassociate themselves (West) from “ethnic/ racial/ gender/ sexual/ epistemic location” (p. 215) when producing knowledge.

**Organization of the Dissertation Study**

This qualitative study consisted of seven chapters to describe the study’s context and objectives, outline the literature review, theoretical framework, and research methods, along with how data will be analyzed. The following provides an overview of each chapter.

Chapter 1 introduced the study and provided an overview of the Omani Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) programs and the purpose of NPSP. The rationale and significance of the study were also discussed in Chapter 1. The gaps in literature on Omani teacher educators had been noted. Chapter 1 also outlined the research questions, aims, and structure of the research. Chapter 2 provided a literature review. The first part of Chapter 2 presented the theoretical lenses (DT, knowledge transfer, and Adler’s (1981/2008) four-cell coping-mode scheme) for this study. It also covered concepts (discourse and ideology, West and Rest, modernity and postmodernity, colonialism and coloniality) relevant and central to understanding the DT and the Western epistemologies and epistemes. Following the DT discussion, knowledge transfer and Adler’s (1981, 2008) four-cell coping-mode scheme were discussed. Also, Chapter 2 discussed how these lenses are related and aligned to answer the research question. It also synthesized the previously relevant empirical studies that adopted the DT. Together these theoretical concepts provided analytical tools to understand how Omani TEFL educators educated in the West negotiated Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching in their local
contexts. Chapter 3 described the research methods of this study. Also, it discussed the rationale for choosing a qualitative approach (critical narrative inquiry in particular: combining Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) narrative inquiry and critical perspective using the DT and Chen and Lawless’s (2016) Critical Thematic Analysis (CTA) for this study. Following that, a detailed description about the data collection tools (semi-structured interviews and document analysis) was provided. Chapter 1 concluded with the suggested approach (Chen and Lawless’s Critical Thematic Analysis [CTA]) to analyze the data and the ethical considerations for this qualitative critical study. Chapter 4 illuminated participants’ experiences and stories, whereas Chapter 5 discussed the findings and themes that emerged across the five stories in this study. Chapter 6 discussed the main findings of this study based on the participants’ perspectives in light of the previously relevant literature. Chapter 7 first concluded the major results of this study. They then offered a set of implications regarding how TEFL teacher educators may use to negotiate Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching as well as how decision-makers may benefit from these stories to reduce the impact of these Western epistemologies and epistemes on the educational system in general and TEFL teacher education programs in particular. While revealing the limitations of this study, directions for future research concluded Chapter 7.

**Chapter 1 Summary**

Chapter 1 presented the completed study, which examined how Omani TEFL educators trained in the West (study’s participants) negotiated Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching in an Oman teacher education context and what tensions were present while negotiating these Western epistemologies and epistemes in their context. It began with the relevant background information to
contextualize the study’s purpose. With providing a snapshot of the gap in the literature in the Omani educational context, Chapter 1 articulated the significance of this study in the context of the dearth of in-depth knowledge of and research on Omani TEFL educators trained in the West using the DT as the main theoretical lens to explore how the participants negotiated Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching. I presented an overview of the study’s chapters. Moreover, Chapter 1 provided clear definitions of the terms used throughout the study. Chapter 2 would provide a literature review including the conceptual framework and other empirical studies related to the DT and Western epistemologies and epistemes.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Chapter 2 was devoted to reviewing the relevant literature. Due to the scarcity of literature on Omani teacher educators educated in the West, the review is situated against the broader literature on how TEFL teacher educators from the Rest (developing countries) were educated in the West negotiated those Western epistemes and epistemologies in their local contexts after returning home. Before discussing this study’s primary theoretical lens (DT), the first part of the literature review started with unpacking some main concepts (discourse and ideology, West and Rest, modernity and postmodernity, colonialism and colonially) that are central in understanding the DT.

After explaining the DT, there is a review of the relevant studies using the DT. The last section focused on literature concerning the other theoretical lenses for this study: knowledge transfer and how it helps identify any dominance of Western-centric knowledge and helps DT challenge the Western one-way knowledge transfer. Chapter 2 concluded with a synthesis of the relevant empirical studies that addressed the Western epistemologies and epistemes on the Rest’s context and those that adopted the DT in addressing the impact of the Western epistemologies and epistemes on developing countries. In brief, this study aims to add to the existing literature by identifying gaps in the current literature and research gaps based on previous studies.

Theoretical Literature

Short Note

In this short note, I would like to address the difference between episteme and epistemology. They sometimes seem to be used interchangeably as one construct, but
some scholars (e.g., Mignolo, 2020; Santos, 2010) seem to treat them as different constructs. I decided to treat them as different constructs for this study after communicating with one of the main DT’s gurus: Professor Walter D Mignolo (William H Wannamaker Distinguished Professor, teaches at Duke University, Durham, NC, USA, personal communication, February 2021). He describes his personal use for these two constructs as follows:

I use episteme to refer to specific ones, like Renaissance episteme or Enlightenment episteme. In contrast, epistemology refers to the principle of analysis of systems of knowledges. Even to refer to non-Western system of knowledges like Chinese, Arabic, or Indigenous epistemologies, I began to use gnoseology for all system of knowledge and epistemology only for western systemic and disciplinary knowledge, in the sense of the Greek, episteme distinct from doxa, intuitive, common knowledge (W. D. Mignolo, personal communication, February 03, 2020).

Therefore, these two terms will be used as two different constructs in this study.

The following section would discuss some relevant and important concepts (More specifically, discourse and ideology, West and Rest, modernity and postmodernity, colonialism and coloniality) to the DT.

**Relevant Concepts to the DT**

**Discourse vs. ideology**

It would be essential to understand the concepts of discourse and ideology because they are important in understanding the West and Rest ideas. According to Mikhailov and Abramov (2020), discourse and ideology are interrelated concepts in social sciences and the humanities and are even occasionally employed interchangeably. However, sociologists such as Hall (1992) and Purvis and Hunt (1993) appeared to distinguish between them. For Hall (1992) and Purvis and Hunt (1993), ideology focuses on understanding the relationship between hegemony and
subordination and how they are produced, while discourse is concerned with the “linguistic and semiotic dimensions” (Purvis & Hunt, 1993, p. 476). Hall (1992) believes that discourse represents the West and the Rest either visually or verbally using group of different statements but systematically connected with some ideological dimensions. Hall also stresses the role of power in deciding what is considered true or false when speaking about ideology.

Al-Issa (2020) discusses three main Western-based ideologies when discussing coloniality in his study with Omani English student teachers and their experiences with taking IELTS before applying for a teaching job in Omani schools. These are meritocratic, colonialist, and neoliberal. According to him, the colonialist ideology is about the political and administrative control of certain countries (characterized as dominant) over other weak nations (colonized or dominated) to control their colonized countries’ resources and demean their cultural values (Al-Issa, 2020). These values are viewed as irrelevant to or incompatible with the requirements of modernity in comparison to colonizers’ values that are considered superior and more relevant to modernity. As a result, imposing the colonizer’s values aims to “delegitimizes, subordinates, marginalizes, and oppresses all other forms of local and context-specific knowledge held by the colonized nation” (Al-Issa, 2020, p. 192). On the other hand, the meritocratic ideology is a widespread concept in the West. Still, the Rest has adopted the term due to the spread and the impact of coloniality of knowledge production on developing countries. Meritocratic ideology aims at propagating how people’s success and accomplishments are “attributed exclusively to their efforts, abilities, or merits by disregarding their background, social advantage, or disadvantage” (Wiederkehr et al.,
2015, p. 1) via Western tools and epistemologies to decide on who fit and meet the imposed Western standards and demands. Last but not least, neoliberal ideology is driven by market competition a result of the economic pressure and demand of globalization by considering individuals as consumers (mostly the Rest at the personal, educational, professional levels because of lack of ability to produce) for the product that is mostly produced by the dominant (West) groups (Giroux, 2005).

Hall (1992) also argues that discourse of the West and the Rest cannot or should not be viewed as innocent for three main reasons. First, the West imposed their language(s), images, ideas to the Rest and demanded the Rest to follow them unquestionably. Also, the West seemed to have explicit purposes and goals from “exploring” the Rest of the New World: either economic reasons, religious agenda (converting the Rest), or political factors (expansion purposes). Last but not least, the West appeared to represent the Rest as unequal in constructing knowledge via power to accomplish what Foucault (1980) calls the “regime of truth” (p. 131) where the Rest is expected or maybe even demanded to adopt and accept that regime of knowledge. After knowing the difference between the ideology and discourse, it would be helpful to understand the difference between the West and Rest, which is discussed in the next section.

West vs. Rest

Discussing the difference between West and Rest (“intentionally capitalized, rejecting the standard grammatical norm, to represent a grammatical move towards social/racial justice and empowerment” (Huber, 2008, p. 159)) was, has been, and will be a contested topic because of its sensitivity and complexity and interrelatedness with other concepts. It would therefore be helpful to unpack these two important terms before
starting the discussion on decoloniality. According to Hall (1992), the West is not a geographical construct but a historical, linguistic, and evolving concept. This is the case because it does not include some countries (e.g., Eastern European countries) that are geographically located in Europe. Also, the West does include countries that are not geographically part of Europe, but they are considered parts of the Western world, such as the United States and Australia. These Western societies are not homogeneous group(s), but they are unified by being distinctive from the Rest and viewed as more developed, industrialized, and modern than the Rest (Hall, 1992). Therefore, the West is a complicated concept that refers to “a level of development and a type of society” (Hall, 1992, p. 141). Despite the importance of the meaning of the West, Hall (1992) seems more interested in its effect on people and what it can do to people in the West and the Rest. Hall identifies for main functions of the West concept: (a) to classify the world into categories: Western and non-Western(Rest); (b) to provide a “verbal (via ideas) and visual (using images) system of representation” (p. 143) for each category: the West representing modernity and Rest representing otherwise; (c) to provide a benchmark to compare societies: how far or close they are to the developed “Western” societies and to decide if there is a need for them to catch up with the West; and (d) to function as an ideology to provide evaluation criteria for non-Western societies.

It is important to point out that this hegemonic view of producing knowledge (scientific knowledge and theory) was restricted or was primarily under White males’ the purview. This thought was appallingly propagated by some White male philosophers such as Plato and Descartes. This ontological exclusion is evident in viewing the Others or Rest as not Beings and can’t think (Fanon, 1963, Maldonado-Torres, 2003). Castro-
Gomez (2003) uses point zero term (or ego-politics of knowledge as called by Grosfoguel, 2007) to refer to the propagation of White scholars being God-like and the only people who only can accomplish a “universal consciousness” (Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 213) or “universalistic, neutral, objective point of view” (p. 214) by being able to disassociate themselves from “ethnic/ racial/ gender/ sexual/ epistemic location” (p. 215) when producing knowledge. This “linear global thinking” (Mignolo, 2011, p. 91) is based on the assumption there must be one universal knowledge, so every nation must follow and consume this linear trajectory to be saved and developed by the West (Mignolo, 2011).

Most importantly, the West as “neutral epistemic subjects” (Maldonado-Torres, 2004, p. 29) help in reproducing “epistemic blindness” (p. 30) but not in terms of space but intellectually via valuing Western thinking and ignoring and derecognizing the other ways (Rest) of thinking and knowing. Also, Said asserts that this universal consciousness has necessitated the need for a “civilizing force” (Said, 1979, as cited in Leonardo, 2018, p. 10) that provides transformation and supervision” to the Orients to consume the Occidental’s ideas to survive and catch up with the West. The notion of “civilizing force” is not new. In the same line of Said’s orientalism, Macaulay (1835), during the British colonization of India, arrogantly stated, “…a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. The intrinsic superiority of the Western literature is indeed fully admitted…” (p.3). Sadly, Atkins (1881) seemed to gibe with Macaulay’s idea by stating, “toward teaching the Indians the mischief and folly of continuing in their barbarous practices, is to teach them the English language” (p. 679).
Therefore, the Rest are responsible for providing the “natural resources, information, and culture, but not producing knowledge” (Mignolo, 2003, p. 109). It is the West that is responsible of producing knowledge for being the custodian of modernity. Ironically, however, this propagated myth clearly contradicts the rapidly accepted notion that knowledge is socially situated (Blackler et al., 1998; Haraway, 1988; McFarlane, 2006; Moya, 2011; Thunk & Fine, 2003). For instance, Husserl (2008) argues that a “sense of lifeworld comes from daily life that ontologies, epistemologies, and critical autonomous are envisioned” (Hassel, 2008, as cited in Núñez-Pardo, 2020, p. 115).

In their extensive discussions on coloniality, DT scholars (e.g., Escobar, 2007; Hall, 1992; Maldonado-Torres, 2003; Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 1997; Santos, 2010; Walsh, 2007) have focused on four main events to show the impact of coloniality on the Rest: a) Reconquista of Al Andalusia and the expulsion of the Muslims and the Jews from the Iberian Peninsula, b) Conquest of Abya Yala: America, c) the Slave Trade and d) Genocide of millions of women in the 17th century. The first three were epistemologically, militantly, politically, economically, and religiously motivated, while the last one was substantially gender-motivated. These four main events have led to a new form of colonialism (coloniality) legitimizing the European (mainly from five countries’ [UK, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain] dominance and hegemony over knowledge production (Grosfoguel, 2007, Mignolo, 2003). Despite the continuity of this Western male hegemonic dominance, Western White females, who might embrace anti-racist ideologies, sometimes appear to have a privilege over non-Western people in general but non-Western females in particular (e.g., Bennholdt-Thomsen & Mies, 1999; Gaard, 2010; Taylor, 1997; Tlostanova et al., 2010). Therefore, the types of class,
gender, racial inequities, and exclusions tragically decide whose knowledge counts and matters.

On the other hand, the Rest entails different groups with many historical, cultural, and economic differences and can be found at different geographical locations like the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Indigenous groups in North America and Australia. According to this exaggeratingly dichotomic classifications, they are depicted as inferior to Westerners based on “cultural generalizations” (Said, 1979, p. 310). Using the concepts of Othering and Orientalizing, Said (1979), who was influenced by both Foucault and Fanon, introduces Orientalism to highlight this inferiority concept but with more focus on people from the Middle East “as a discursive object of colonialism and governance” (p. 177). According to Said (1979), occidentals (referring to the West) decide on which knowledge to be produced about the Orientals (people from the Middle East) to justify and rationalize the occidentals’ domination and supervision over the Orientals. Both Hall (1992) and Said (1970) believe these classifications cannot be considered static and absolute facts because they are artificial. Said (1970) and Hall (1992) criticize this “destructive” (p. 146) dichotomic classification or “binary codification” (Moosavi, 2020, p. 7), although it seems more accepted by both the West, who propagates ideas of superiority and “Oriental backwardness” (Said, 1978, p. 310) and some of Rest, who adopts a “self-incriminating” (Said, 1978, p. 325) attitude to reinforce those negative stereotypes about the Rest as a form of internalized orientalism.

Despite Said’s prized work on understanding the Western domination over the Rest, Habib (2005) believes that Said did not extensively focus on how “Orientals can also be Orientalists” (p. 40), highlighting what Heng and Devan (1992) called
internalized orientalism. Therefore, Orientalizing is not confined to Western power. Still, it can also be enhanced and reinforced by “non-Western academics’ acquiescence” (Moosavi, 2019, p. 233), who appear to endorse such negative ideas about the Rest. Heng and Devan (1992) call this acceptance internalized orientalism because the “hegemonic elites” (Al-Issa, 2015, p. 578) from the developing societies (Rest), who start to believe that they are better than their own people because hegemonic elites assume to obtaining qualities of the West like “modern, civilized, and progressive” (Alahmed, 2020, p. 410) and they are “patents on modernity” (Quijano, 2000, p. 543). The same phenomenon has been described with other terms such as “internal orientalism (Jansson, 2003; Schein, 1997), internal colonialism (Gouldner, 1977; Hechter, 1975; Hind, 1984), auto-orientalism (Holden, 2001; Mazzarella, 2003), reverse orientalism (Abu-Lughod, 1991), re-orientalism (Lau & Mendes, 2011), oriental orientalism (Gladney, 1994), and self-orientalization (Ong, 1999). Some of the terms are orientalized the orientalism (Dirlik, 1996), counter-orientalism (Moeran, 1996), and self-orientalism (Ching, 2000), orientalism in one country (Schneider, 1998), and orientalism within (Mitchell, 1988)” (as cited in Alahmed, 2020, p. 409). Smith (1999) warned non-Western academics from such a practice because it can be dangerous and injuring instead of empowering.

**Moving from Global Colonialism (Cannons) to Global Coloniality (Canons)**

After unpacking the West and Rest concepts, it would also essential to understand the difference between colonialism and coloniality. Colonialism (also known as cannons by Leonardo (2018)) is the colonial administration which is political, militant, and economic sovereignty and power of certain nations over others (Maldonado-Torres, 2003). On the other hand, coloniality (also known as canons by Leonardo (2018) is “the
invisible power matrix that is shaping and sustaining asymmetrical power relations between the Global North and the Global South” (Munemo, 2017, p. 181). Similarly, Maldonado-Torres (2007) contends that coloniality is a “long-standing pattern of power emerging from colonialism” (p. 243). But with more focus on defining what each culture should entail or not, who can produce valid knowledge, and how the history of the West and Rest should be told (Maldonado-Torres, 2003). According to Maldonado-Torres (2003), this coloniality has used to two processes:

1. Via the ontological colonial difference using science and epistemic colonial difference to naturalize superiority and inferiority difference to disseminate that the Rest cannot be rational. Hume (1740), Hegel (1892;1991), Kant (991), and Locke (662) were willing to go further to consider the Rest in general, and Black people in particular, as “without souls,” “less human,” “no feeling,” “barbarian,” “stupid,” “wild and untamed” as a justifying way for supervising and saving the Rest by the West.

2. Through the economically oriented process of capitalism and world market to justify the control over the labor and resources of the Rest by having one model being imposed to fit everyone.

Western epistemology and episteme aim at considering sources for knowledge from the West (mainly Europe and North America) as valuable and valid because the “rational, virtuous, and mature” (Said, 1979, p. 21) West who can accomplish a “universal consciousness” (Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 213) or “universalistic, neutral, objective point of view” (p. 214) by being able to disassociate themselves from “ethnic/racial/gender/sexual/epistemic location” (p. 215) when producing knowledge. This has resulted in extracting the Rest’s resources and demolishing the Rest’s values and knowledge. Therefore, Welch (2013) argues the Rest should refuse and resist “paternalism and an adoption of the values of mutuality and reciprocity” (p. 46). Instead of only waiting on the West criticizing their imperial domination, Mignolo (2011) urges for a DT “to build a world in which many worlds will coexist” (Mignolo, 2011, p. 54).
Grosfoguel (2002, 2007, 2012) argues that the Rest unfortunately has fallen in the trap of believing that the end of decolonization (global colonialism granting countries in the Rest illusionary independence), led to the decolonization of the world. However, instead of what Said calls liberation, a new form of colonialism or domination (global coloniality) has started. According to Maldonado-Torres (2007),

Coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects, we breathe coloniality all the time and every day. (p. 243)

This process of coloniality, according to Quijano (2000) and Walsh (2007), is a new model of power that continues in replacement of the canon or colonialism to justify domination over the Rest and their inferiority.

**Why Decoloniality instead of Post-Colonialism?**

Some might mistakenly consider decoloniality and post-colonialism as one concept, but they are not. Decoloniality has emerged to react to the weaknesses of postcolonial theory such as a) heavy reliance on Eurocentric views (European radical social theory resulting in disregarding racism and international contexts b) focus on local experiences within the global North c) lack of critique of Eurocentric views including capitalism d) critiquing scholars from the Rest or Global South if they do not remain loyal to the scholars from the West e) not giving credit to scholars from the Rest to the development of this turn especially those with anti-colonial views.

Two important terms should be explained to understand the reasons behind the birth of decoloniality: modernity and postmodernity. Postmodernity (viewing knowledge and truth as socially constructed) was originally expected to respond to modernity’s conditions: universality, totalization, and rationality for absolute truths. However,
theorists like Jameson (1989) and Harvey (1991) consider modernity and postmodernity as different phases of capitalism because both appeared to attack scholars who opposed capitalism (as cited in Brosio, 1996, p. 11). Likewise, Kona (2012) uses the metaphor of “old wine with new bottles” (p. 102) to describe the strong relation between modernity and postmodernity. Along the same line, Mignolo (2007) argues that democracy is included in an imposed package of modernity and modernization on the Rest, who must accept this package willingly or they would pay the consequences either directly or indirectly. This package is guided by neo-liberalism’s principles and believed as the only way to save the Rest from their backwardness (Mignolo, 2007). Mignolo (2007) and Said (1979) echo the same idea using exteriority (process invented by the outside [West] to define the inside [Rest] using the zero point myth). In other words, exteriority is a tool to justify the West’s authority and power, who is “rational, virtuous, and mature” (Said, 1979, p. 21), to speak for the “irrational, depraved and childlike” (Said, 1979, p. 21) Rest because of their lack of ability to speak for themselves to accomplish “salvation by development” to the Rest.

According to Dussel (1998), modernity can be explained by (Eurocentric and planetary) paradigms. Eurocentrically, modernity is viewed as a European construct that was gradually expanded to the Rest because of the “rational” Europe resulting in this existing domination. However, modernity based on the planetary paradigm is a product, not the cause of the European expansion, justifying positioning Europe at the center to justify the domination over the Rest. Quijano (1997) calls this dichotomic classification dualism, categorizing the West as the modernizer and Rest as the passive spectator who needs to be modernized.
Grosfoguel (2008) believes that both a) world systems (called by Mignolo (2002) as Modern World, which focuses on structures of capital accumulation exhorted by social sciences [e.g., politics, economics, and sociology] academics to analyze cultures) and b) post-colonial theory (known by Mignolo (2002) as a Western civilization which focuses on the agents of colonialism advocated by humanities [e.g., literature and cultural studies] academics who analyze political-economic relations) share some commonalities. Both have focused on a) criticizing developmentalism of Eurocentric forms of knowledge, b) inequalities in gender, c) inequalities in racial categories, and d) fostering (cultural and ideological) processes causing domination in relation to capitalism. The criticism of Said’s work can be an excellent example of Santos’ (2007) abyssal thinking (meaning having a system of visible and invisible distinctions, the invisible ones being the foundation of the visible ones) and explaining these weaknesses post-colonial theory. Critics of Said’s work appeared considering him disloyal to Foucault’s primary influence. Said was expected to use Foucauldian thought without being free to put his idea into the Foucauldian theory to explain Orientalism critically. Santos’ (2007) “abyssal thinking” shows that when the Rest challenges the “realm of what the accepted conception of inclusion” (p. 2), they become on the other line of exclusion.

A study by Alcoff (2018) revealed an implicit bias of the imposed and propagated European (Western) theoretical sophistication. Thus, the DT was born in Latin American contexts to “reimagine modernity as a project of violent episteme” (Andreotti, 2011, p. 382), crediting modernity to the “rational” West only. It also suggested a more promising approach to addressing Western domination and authority in producing knowledge
(Andreotti, 2011). The following section would explain the theoretical lenses of this study.

**Theoretical Lenses**

**Explanation of the Theoretical Lenses’ Diagram**

This diagram (see Figure 2-1) visualizes how I conceptualized the connections among the individual components of my conceptual framework. At the top, I used the DT to answer the main question and sub-question to explain the impact of the Western epistemologies and epistemes on the participants academic lives and decisions in their contexts. In the next level and connected to the first level is the second theoretical lens to help identify any dominance of Western-centric knowledge and helps DT challenge the Western one-way knowledge transfer. Connected to two these, in the bottommost level is the analytical tool: Critical Thematic Analysis for this study analyzes the collected data with a critical agenda, which would be discussed in Chapter 3 in detail.

Figure 2-1. Theoretical lenses' diagram.
DT as a theoretical lens

Unlike postcoloniality as grounded in Eurocentric epistemology, Mignolo (2003, 2007, 2011) and Quijano (1997, 2003) argue decoloniality serves a double-sided purpose: 1) an analytic (theoretical) and 2) programmatic directions. The analytic direction critically examines the colonial past that has contributed to silencing histories, repressing subjectivity, and disparaging the Rest’s knowledge and ways of knowing under the name of modernity (Mignolo, 2007). On the other hand, the programmatic direction serves as a de-linking tool (first suggested by Amin, 1985), to value and “bring to the foreground other epistemologies, other principles of knowledge and understanding and, consequently, another economy, other politics, other ethics” (Mignolo, 2007, p. 453). This would help challenging the “universalistic, neutral, objective point of view” (Grosfoguel, 2003, p. 214) to what Mignolo (2007) calls de-colonial epistemic shift of pluri-versality as a way to recognize multiplicity of voices (Arendt, 1985). It is also a way to provide “a counternarrative to contemporary Northern assumptions of the universal” (Perry, 2020, p. 1) or what Escobar (2018) calls “hegemony of modernity’s one-world ontology” (p. 4).

According to Mignolo and Walsh (2018), delinking is the first step. De-linking should go beyond the economic and political dimensions as first proposed by Amin (1985) to include challenging “the rhetoric of modernity and the coloniality of power, or the colonial logic” (Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 463). For Mignolo (2007), de-linking is both an epistemological and a political practice. Mignolo (2007) elaborates that delinking in changing the content and conversation and mainly changing the terms to free the Rest from the jail of the logic of coloniality. Instead of being imprisoned in the logic of coloniality, the Rest should develop a grammar of decoloniality, concerning the kind of
thinking from the eyes of the Rest not as an intellectual and valid exercise but as a liberatory tool freeing the Rest from the logic of coloniality. For de-linking to work, it has to be lived by assuming and engaging in decoloniality options in order to produce “decolonial thinkers, doers, and actors” (Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2012, p. 24).

Mignolo (2007, 2011) accepts post-coloniality. Still, he separates it from decoloniality as an option and not a mission for post-coloniality because the post-coloniality uses Eurocentric approaches and seems to reinforce the idea that the Western subjects are responsible in producing knowledge about the Rest objects.

However, the goal is to provide an option for the scholars from the Rest to speak against Western hegemonic narratives without the need to always refer to Eurocentric approaches and consider the scholars from the Rest as capable of producing knowledge. In post-colonialism’s Place, Grosfoguel (2007, 2012) urges for more subaltern epistemic perspectives (Epistemologies of the South, Modernity/Coloniality Research Program [MC], Subaltern Studies are synonyms for the DT) by scholars from the Rest that challenge this hegemonic view instead of intentionally and unintentionally producing repeated similar dominant narratives and practices.

Similarly, Leonardo (2018) encourages scholars from the Rest to not only be “critical but self-critical to avoid replicating the traps of and desires for Western thought” (p. 8). Leonardo (2018) and Mignolo (2003) believe that some globalization studies (examples of such studies about Oman and its neighboring countries are discussed below) by some scholars from the Rest appear to reduce the capitalistic system to a primarily economically oriented. However, it entails several forms of racial, linguistic, cultural, political, sexual, spiritual, and economic domination in general and epistemic in
particular in the “production of subjectivities and knowledge” (Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 221) about the Rest. Equally, Chakrabarty (2000) and Mignolo (2003) stress the idea of epistemic dependency or dependency on the West authority on producing knowledge where scholars from the Rest have to consider the Western history since the West invented the rules of writing history. Quijano (1997) refers to this authority in history as the myth of evolutionism. Grosfoguel refers to Quijano’s (2000) coloniality of knowledge as epistemic racism/sexism, meaning that knowledge from non-Westerners is classified inferior to Western knowledge. By the same token, Walsh (2007) cautions scholars from the Rest from succumbing to the temptation of associating intellectual with Western. Instead, Walsh and Leo´n urge scholars from the Rest to adopt Juan García’s advice on

Building of a collective sense of belonging, an unlearning of what the dominant society has inculcated and a relearning of past and present ancestral knowledge a focus on the social, political, and epistemic work that needs to be done within (Walsh & Leo´n, 2007, as cited in Walsh, 2007, p. 231).

Building on Dussel’s work on decolonial pedagogy and Said’s work on orientalism and agreeing with Grosfoguel’s (2007, 2012) call for more knowledge production by the Rest, Santos (2018) highlights the importance of epistemologies of the South in challenging and resisting the dominant epistemologies by the West in order to validate other sources of knowledge that are produced by the Rest of the Others at two levels: a) making the absent (Rest, oppressed, Other) present as a valid knowing being, and b) highlighting the ways of knowing as they embody realities instead of the focus of considering what knowledge appropriate using dominant epistemologies: moving beyond abyssal thinking. Santos disagrees with Foucault’s (1969) meaning of knowing of ways. Unlike Foucault’s (1969) ways of knowing which about what is unsaid, Santos concerns with what is unsaid about the unsaid people. Mignolo (2003) suggests
freeing knowledge from Western modernity that is being ruled by corporations and imperial states by establishing a “pluriversity” (p. 116) to accomplish this kind of freedom.

Despite the significant contributions of critical thought and theories in revealing power relations, Walsh (2007) argues that critical thought and theories appear to employ ways of producing meta-narratives of the West, which results in discounting the knowledge of the Rest. Several scholars (e.g., Leonardo, 2018; Mignolo, 2007; Santos, 2018; Walsh, 2007, Walsh & Mignolo, 2018) suggest the use of cultural studies of decolonial orientation to remove the “chains not from their feet but the minds” (Olivella, as cited in Walsh, 2007, p. 235) of the Rest. In the same vein of staying away from the two major Western macro-narratives (capitalism and communism) or de-linking from these Eurocentric discourses, Escobar suggests using what Santos (2018) calls epistemologies of the South or modernity/coloniality framework. This framework is to fight against three forms of power. The first form is coloniality of power “darker side of modernity,” as described by Quijano (2000), referring to the global hegemonic model of power based on race, labor, and place. The second form is the colonial difference and global coloniality as suggested by Mignolo (2001), highlighting knowledge and cultural dimensions of the subalternization processes. The last form is coloniality of being, as suggested by Maldonado-Torres (2003), which refers to the imposed particular beings on others or the Rest to construct a different epistemic grounding.

Most importantly, Maldonado-Torres (2007) warns scholars from the Rest who adopt decoloniality from falling into the trap of creating another form of imperial universality. He even argues that decoloniality is based on engaging on a “dialogue not
as impositions” (p. 261) and not based on “standardization and uniformity” (Aydarova, 2017, p. 5). Therefore, decoloniality aims at, as suggested by Hall (1992) and Maldonado-Torres (2007), revealing the impact of colonization in modern subjectivity, and providing scholars from the Rest with a chance to produce knowledge and not only confining to one side (The West) as the main (maybe the Only) producer of knowledge. Correspondingly, Walsh and Mignolo (2018) clearly emphasize DT as a pluriversal approach is “neither a rejection nor a negation of Western thought” (p.3). Still, it aims at building a world based on re-existence by which the West and Rest working to “re-define and re-signify conditions of dignity on our shared planet” (p. 3). In Chen’s (2010) words, the task of scholars from the Rest is to “multiply frames of references in our subjectivities and world view” (p. 223) in order not to place any group on the center as the case of West colonialism and imperialism. As a result, he proposes critical syncretism as an “alternative understanding of subjectivity” (p. 101) using multilayered practices leading people to “generate a system of multiple reference points that can break away from the self-reproducing neocolonial framework that structures the trajectories and flow of desire” (p. 102) to avoid the use of epistemological binarisms.

Correspondingly, Hiller (2017) stresses the same notion of co-existence by highlighting Kuokkanen’s suggestion of disposing of the West’s epistemic ignorance (Kuokkanen, 2008). Alternatively, Western scholars first should recognize the reality of this “privileged and authoritative apparatus” (Spivak, 1993, p. 58). They should also be humble, responsible, and actively engaged in educating themselves about the non-Western epistemes and stop viewing these non-Western epistemes as deficient or inferior (Kuokkanen, 2008). At the same time, Kuokkanen (2008) urges scholars from
the Rest to “actively and continually engage the gap between Indigenous and Western epistemes” (Kuokkanen, as cited in Hiller, 2017, p. 426). The DT’s ultimate goal is to ensure making visible the invisible (Du Bois, 1997). It also aims to unearth the reasons and ways that have led to the invisibility of the Rest in knowledge production by recognizing multiple voices. The decoloniality project is a collective effort where both the West and Rest have to ally and dialogue to construct and produce counter-hegemonic narratives (Chen, 2010; Maldonado-Torres, 2007). The next section would discuss knowledge transfer.

**Knowledge transfer**

**Definition of knowledge.** Knowledge, data, and information are mistakenly considered synonyms; however, Roberts (2000) believes they are different but interconnected. Data are “a series of observations, measurements, or facts” (Roberts, 2000, p. 430) and considered as the smallest piece of material that people can detect using their senses (Marchand, 1998). In contrast, information is defined as “data that have been arranged into a meaningful pattern” (p. 430). However, information becomes knowledge when is believed by people (Zaltman, 1982) by productively using it through “experience, familiarity or learning” (Roberts, 2000, p. 430). According to some scholars (Berger & Luckman, 1966, 2011; Machlup, 1980; Zaltman, 1982), knowledge is a social and psychological construction of reality. Therefore, knowledge goes beyond just data and information, but “a set of information associated to a meaning by an individual or organizational interpretation process” (Albino et al., 1999, p.54). Importantly, Thuy (2017) argues that the focus should be on the overall knowledge of returnees (meaning obtained by these individuals at different stages of their lives, including the gained
knowledge from abroad). The following section explains the differences between tacit and explicit knowledge.

**Types of knowledge.** There are several classifications for knowledge, but Polanyi’s (1966) and Nonaka’s (1991) classifications is among the most cited work in which they classify knowledge into explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge. Tacit and explicit knowledge are the two types of knowledge researchers have defined to be relevant and vital to knowledge transfer (Crowne, 2009; Kang et al., 2010; Lazarova & Tarique, 2005). Correspondingly, Spender (1996) categorizes knowledge into two main types: complex (referring to tacit) and declarative and objective (referring to explicit). Tacit knowledge is defined as “information that is highly context specific and contains a personal quality; it is gained through education, experience, or experimentation but it is hard to transfer” (Crowne, 2009, p. 135) unless it is transformed into codified or explicit knowledge. This is a challenging task because of its complexity and is unconsciously acquired; therefore, it requires more efforts to transfer (Kang et al., 2010). Kang et al. (2010) stressed that tacit knowledge is not learned from documents because it is viewed as intuitive, non-verbalizable, and unarticulated (Inkpen & Dinur, 1998). According to Goh (2002), tacit knowledge is personal because it resides in the human head (Duffy, 2000) and does get transferred through well-structured processes as the case for explicit knowledge, which is, on the other hand, gained through education.

According to Goh (2002), explicit knowledge is more “tangible; it includes what is written, recorded in manuals, reports, documents, and databases (p. 27). Unlike tacit knowledge, explicit knowledge is believed to be easily transferred. According to Khatun (2018), tacit knowledge is “knowing how” and “knowing why,” while explicit knowledge
is, “knowing what” (p. 53). Because of the importance of social setting and its impact on learning or acquired or gained knowledge, Eraut (2004) argues that “all knowledge is cultural knowledge and socially situated” (p. 1); thus, he classifies knowledge into four main types. The first type is codified knowledge that is also known as explicit (Goh (2002) or academic (Franken, 2012) knowledge, where it is acquired through stated-decreed materials and curricula. This knowledge is not confined to academia, but it can be also found in the workplace as “statements of learning outcomes, the written assessments, the course texts, and other textual artifacts” (Eraut, 2004, p. 847).

International students educated in the West can acquire this type of knowledge mainly from the classroom setting and from the workplace if they are involved in jobs while studying. Unlike codified knowledge, cultural knowledge also known as tacit (Goh (2002) and is considered uncodified because people acquire this kind of knowledge “informally through participation in working practices; and is often so taken for granted that people are unaware of its influence on their behavior” (Eraut, 2004, p. 848). Thirdly, personal knowledge is defined by Eraut (2004) as “what individual persons bring to situations that enable them to think, interact and perform” (p. 2). This kind of knowledge is beyond the academic setting to include everyday knowledge about people, cultures, and practices the self-knowledge derived from personal experiences by recalling their previous experiences that could be similar to the new situation. Last but not least, personalized codified knowledge is about integrating or combing codified knowledge into or with one’s knowledge. A good illustrative example is when graduate students write their dissertation, and they are required to cite academic references and studies as codified knowledge and integrate their accumulated and learned personal knowledge
(Franken, 2012). This process of building their gained knowledge on previous knowledge is helpful for international students or scholars who were educated in the West and returned home to adjust and fit the home culture.

**Knowledge transfer process.** Before discussing knowledge transfer, it is very important to point out are concepts such as knowledge sharing, knowledge resituation and knowledge translation are interchangeably used as synonyms of knowledge transfer despite the differences among them. According to Liyanage et al. (2009) and Tangaraja et al. (2016), knowledge sharing is understood as a one-way direction. In this process, the knowledge owners are engaged in giving knowledge to their colleagues and institutions where internalization does not necessarily happen. Similarly, knowledge resituation is “a personal and individual process” (Franken et al., 2016, p. 691) where learners “understand the new situation, recognize what knowledge and skills are needed in that situation, extract them to fit the new situation, and integrate them with other knowledge and skills in order to think/act/communicate in the new situation” (Franken et al., 2016, p. 694). Since recontextualization is crucial in knowledge resituation, Thuy (2017) argues that knowledge resituation is one of the stages that makes knowledge transfer successful. On the other hand, knowledge translation can be considered the broader concept that encompasses both knowledge transfer and knowledge resituation and emphasizes the idea of creating new knowledge out of the previous knowledge and gained knowledge from abroad experiences without placing superiority on one over the others (Williams & Balaz, 2008).

Tang, Mu, & MacLachlan define knowledge transfer as “an iterative process between senders and knowledge recipients” (Tang, Mu, & MacLachlan, 2010, p. 1,586).
However, this transfer, which could be structured/planned or unstructured/unplanned, is not easy due to differences in context, culture, and the types of learning that take place (Eraut, 2004). Therefore, transferring knowledge happens more readily when the new context is similar to the context from which knowledge emerges. Nevertheless, knowledge transfer in similar contexts could also be influenced by “the nature of what is being transferred, differences between the contexts, the disposition of the transferee and, the time and effort devoted to facilitating the transfer process” (Eraut, 2004, p. 10).

This justifies the difficulty facing international students or scholars educated in the West in transferring their gained knowledge after returning home, considering how the two different contexts (Western and non-Western) could be in terms of culture, religion, and so forth (Eraut, 2004).

**Barriers hindering knowledge transfer.** Alandejani (2013) found some common barriers that hinder knowledge transfer. The first is the lack of communication between returnees who wish to share their newly gained knowledge and their colleagues (administrators, learners, and teacher educators) who do not share the same experiences. Those returnees might not relate to these returnees’ knowledge because of their different mindsets and colleagues’ different mindsets (Oddou et al., 2008). Also, having the right environment that welcomes ideas would play a role in knowledge transfer. Alandejani’s (2013) participants could not find such an environment after returning home, mainly due to Saudi Arabia being among the most conservative and hierarchically characterized cultures, which caused returnees frustration and disappointment, because they were not able to share what they gained. In addition, organizational politics can play a crucial role in preventing knowledge sharing or transfer.
because of some with higher positions. This idea can apply to those who did not get a Western education and might be afraid of losing their dominance and power if they are perceived as less knowledgeable than the returnees educated in the West (Alandejeni, 2013; Almutairi, 2018).

**Note on Types of Tensions**

For simplicity and clarity purposes especially since the main focus was on human beings (Omani academics in this case) who are not static but fluid, changing and evolving over time, I adopted Berlak and Berlak’s (1981) two categories of tension: internal (as the power to respond [or not] lies within the teacher educator) and external (outside a teacher educator’s control) to address the second question of tension. As suggested by Berlak and Berlak (1981), the internal tension is usually triggered intrapersonally (dealing with self-doubt), interpersonally (dealing with parents, students, or colleagues) and pedagogically (teaching and assessing). Although parents, students, or colleagues might be seen as external forces, Berlak and Berlak (1981) and Rouleau (2014) believe that they are part of the internal tension circle. This is so because parents, students, or colleagues either have little or limited or no power over educators; therefore, so these educators are largely able to make their own decisions when dealing with parents, students, or colleagues. On the other hand, tension is externally sparked by outside forces like government elite officials and administrators via imposing policies, expectations, assessment tools, curricula, and standards on educators. Unlike dealing with internal tension, there is more power imbalance, according to Berlak and Berlak (1981) and Rouleau (2014), when dealing with external tension. Therefore, educators unfortunately and principally have little choice but to comply with the imposed decisions and policies.
Application of Decoloniality in the Rest’s Contexts

The DT was first developed in Latin America. Nonetheless, Alcoff (2018) argues that implementation of this turn can be applied to anywhere in the world with the Rest’s characteristics. Inspired by the Japanese scholar Yoshimi’s (1961) Asia as a Method and building on the DT, Chen (2010) has developed this concept to overcome the one-way flow of Western modernity to implement this DT in Asia. Asia as a Method has been developed to challenge the imperially-dominant narratives and universalist values of the West imposed on the Asian context. Thus, scholars from the Rest (Asia in this case) must produce decolonial and anti-imperialist knowledge. Chen also highlights the notion of internalized orientalism by warning people from the Rest to stop living in the “White [West] jail” (79) and cease considering the West as the “system of reference” (p. 216) to produce knowledge to accomplish Western modernity.

Ball (2012) argues a new form of locus of domination of the West has invaded the governments in Rest in general and educational systems in particular to legitimate the Western power by making the Rest dependent on the West. Agreeing with Quijano and Mignolo’s idea of undoing the modern/colonial matrix of power but with more focus on decoloniality in the field of TESOL, Kumaravadivelu (2016) argues “the subaltern community [The Rest] has to unfreeze and activate its latent agentive capacity and strive to derive a set of concerted, coordinated, and collective actions based not on the logic of coloniality but on a grammar of decoloniality” (pp. 80-81). Building on DT but with a focus on the field of TESOL and the extensive criticism for concept of method in TESOL by several scholars (Kumaravadivelu, 1994; Pennycook, 1989; Prabhu, 1990), Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2006) suggests a “postmethod,” which seeks to present an alternative to the dominant model of West-based methods of teaching English in the
Rest’s context. He urges educators and teachers from the Rest to move from just simple receivers of knowledge exported from the West to more of educators who can analyze their contexts and make decisions that suit their contexts when teaching. Similarly, Edge (2003) warns scholars and educators from the Rest from acting as “imperial troopers” (p. 10) who end up pacifying intellectual resistance and adopting the logic of coloniality. Consequently, their students suffer in silence (Fox, 2001).

**TESOL Programs: Need for Revisiting**

There is increasing literature that espouses the acquired or gained knowledge by Western-educated returnees does not always serve the needs of the home countries (e.g., Farrell, 2012; Govardhan et al., 1999; Kamhi-Stein, 2000; Kinginger, 2004; Liu, 1998; Liyanage & Bartlett, 2008; Lo, 2005; Murray & Coady, 2018; Nero, 2012; Pu, 2009; Ramanathan, 2002). According to Farrell (2012) and Nero (2012), “many” (Farrell, 2012, p. 441; Nero, 2012, p. 151) Teaching English to other Speakers or other Languages (TESOL) programs do not seem to stress diversity. Instead, the focus is on issues related to local communities within Western contexts, such as immigrants and second language learners in predominantly English speaking environments (NABA), with lesser attention given to the environments (EFL) in which these international students or scholars will be working (Kinginger, 2004; Liu, 1999; Murray and Coady, 2018; Pu, 2009; Ramanathan, 2002). Such curricula and design help develop dominant narrative, whether intentional or otherwise.

For instance, Liu (1998) argued that “in spite of their [international students] different backgrounds and needs, these [international] students are usually given the same training as their native-speaker peers” (p. 3) and do not appropriately prepare international students and US students who are planning to teach in EFL contexts.
Similarly, Murray and Coady (2018) concluded in their study about an ESOL program offered in the US for: “(a) need for improved career development support; (b) the need for more diversified teacher preparation; and (c) the need for more explicit training of personal qualities” (p. 81). In their evaluative and analytical study of TESOL graduate programs in the US, Govardhan et al. (1999) found these programs have “a great deal of variation” (p. 119) because they are offered by different departments (English, education, and linguistics) with different emphases; consequently, they are “of doubtful relevance” (p. 121) to the TEFL context, and international students become “overwhelmed, confounded, and misled” (p. 120). In short, these scholars believe these programs need to be reviewed to serve the needs of local teachers who teach ESL and the needs of International students who teach EFL after their return.

Citing the words of Sridhar (1994), Liu (1998) emphasizes the need to develop theories and methodologies that are “functionally oriented and culturally authentic” (p. 803). The goal is to meet the needs of teachers (international and native speakers) who are planning to teach in EFL contexts via more active involvement of international students in designing materials and choosing relevant topics that address their needs. In her study, Carrier (2003) identified five main areas that should be addressed in such programs. These are “contextually responsive teacher education content, training in a different school culture, competing with native English-speaking teacher trainees, self-confidence, and encouraging contributions by NNS teacher trainees to the field of English language teaching” (p. 242). To ensure learning from each other, she also encouraged collaboration tasks between native and non-native English speakers enrolled in these programs.
Also, Kamhi-Stein (2000) introduced nine activities to reform TESOL programs in order to address the needs and concerns of NNS students in EFL context. These nine activities are: “(a) Exploring Beliefs as Teachers and Learners; (b) Engaging in Collaborative Projects; (c) Participating Through Web-Based Discussions; (d) Participating in Case Discussions; (e) Serving as Mentors and Role Models; (f) Developing Informal Support Networks; (g) Getting Involved in Professional Organizations; (h) Working on Self-perceived Language Needs; and (i) Advocating the Status of NNS Students” (pp. 11-13). Therefore, it is important to design programs that both serve the local needs of the Western contexts, as well as the international scholars’ contexts. As Crandall and Christison (2016) suggested, more studies should be examining the impact of these programs and experiences on international scholars or students when they return home. Despite the tremendous and conscientious efforts illustrated by the studies mentioned above on revisiting TESOL or similar programs and addressing the needs of international students, they seemed to pay very little indirect and no direct attention to the impact of the new coloniality and hegemonic ideologies of the West on educating international educators. The following section discusses some of the issues about this challenge.

**DT in Teaching English in the Rest Context**

Hsu (2017) believes that there are two critical areas: 1) philosophical, ideological, and theoretical reconceptualization and 2) instruction and curricula. According to Hsu, these areas should receive more DT attention by scholars and researchers from the Rest to challenge the hegemonic Western narrative in teaching English. The following section discusses some of the studies that highlighted these two essential areas.
Philosophical, Ideological, and Theoretical Reconceptualization.

Hsu (2017) also urges scholars from the Rest in the TESOL and TEFL fields to decolonize their minds and resist the hegemonic narratives of imbuing teaching English with superior status. Instead of the continuity of reproducing such hegemonic narrative, Hsu (2017) argues that scholars from the Rest to question and reevaluate their “philosophical, ideological, and theoretical reconceptualization” (p. 115) in relation to teaching English. Building on other scholars’ ideas of critical examination of the hegemonic narratives of the West that are embedded in the field of teaching English, Hsu (2017) and Motha (2014) request scholars from the Rest to conduct a “theoretical investigation” (p. 116) to challenge such hegemonic narratives. This critical investigation could help in suggesting more the “more liberatory English language– teaching strategies” (Hsu, 2017, p. 115) and “possibilities for transformation and agency” (Motha, 2014, p. 129) to clarify and confront any racist pedagogies (Hsu, 2017).

There are a number of scholars (e.g., Brumfit, 2006; Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Canagarajah, 1999; Flores, 2013b; Motha, 2006, 2014; Murray & Coady, 2017; Shin, 2006) that have highlighted the systems of racial hierarchy in TESOL. Starting with the name of TESOL programs, Pennycook (1998) noted, “some of the central ideologies of current English Language Teaching have their origins in the cultural constructions of colonialism,” pointedly identifying how “[t]he colonial construction of Self and Other, of the ‘TE’ and ‘SOL’ of TESOL remain in many domains of ELT” (p. 22). Similarly, Shin (2006) stresses the dichotomic classifications of: “native Self as superior and the non-native Other as inferior” (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p. 541). Therefore, Veronelli (2016) argues that there must be more “critical intercultural
dialogues and local-to-local connections” (p. 406) since teaching English can both a tool for empowerment and instruction of oppressive relations of power (Edge, 2006).

**Instruction and Curricula in the Rest Contexts.**

In addition to questioning the philosophical, ideological, and theoretical reconceptualization, Hsu (2017) emphasizes the importance of examining English language instruction. Similarly, Canagarajah (2005) cautioned from the impact of globalization on local knowledge and practices. Instead, Canagarajah (2005) along with Pu & Pawan (2013) urged for an equal standing for both local and global practices without removing the local ones “at the table of negotiation to remove the dominant status given to global over local and reconstruct local and global knowledge that meet contemporary needs” (Canagarajah, 2005, p. 14).

Despite the popularity of the concept of method in teaching English, especially in TESOL and TEFL programs, some scholars (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Pennycook, 1989; Prabhu, 1990) have been vocal and critical about this concept. For example, Pennycook (1989) stresses the hegemonic ideologies embedded when defining the concept “method”. He states that the English language teaching method is:

> A prescriptive concept that articulates a positivist, progressivist, and patriarchal understanding of teaching and plays an important role in maintaining inequities between, on the one hand, predominately male academics and, on the other, female teachers and language classrooms on the international power periphery. (p. 589).

In this definition, he asserted the domination of Western ideologies that are imposed on non-Western learners and teachers which result in language learning and teaching failure and frustration among learners and teachers in EFL. By the same token, some scholars believe English language teaching methods should not have existed in the first place (Jarvis, 1991) and should have been in in the dustbin (Nunan,
Equally, Clarke (1983) describes these methods as “label with no substance” (p. 109), and they are “with little theoretical validity and even less practical utility” (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 170).

Kumaravadivelu (2006) argues that the concept of method should be revisited and critically analyzed because of its three main limitations: “ambiguous usage and application, the exaggerated claim made by its proponents, and, consequently, the gradual erosion of its utilitarian value” (p. 162). As a result, Kumaravadivelu (2001, 2006) suggests the use of postmethod as an alternative to address all these limitations found in method. Accordingly, postmethod pedagogy is defined as:

A three-dimensional system consisting of three pedagogic parameters: particularity (context-sensitive), practicality (empowering educators and teachers to theorize from their practice and practice what they theorize., and possibility external (social, political, educational, and institutional) forces that help in shaping identity formation and social transformation. The use of pedagogy is to include not only issues pertaining to classroom strategies, instructional materials, curricular objectives, and evaluation measures, but also a wide range of historical, political, and sociocultural experiences that directly or indirectly influence L2 education (p. 538).

Kumaravadivelu (2001, 2006) argues that there are three features for post-method pedagogy. Firstly, it should function as an alternative for the method concept, not as a kind of method. Also, post-method pedagogy aims at empowering educators and teachers to be autonomous and reflective about their teaching. In the same line of thought, Freeman et al. (2015) suggest using “English-for-Teaching” to stress the importance of empowering educators and teachers to make their own decisions since they are the experts of their local and cultural contexts. Last but not least, post-method pedagogy encourages educators and teachers to move from just simple receivers of knowledge exported from the West to educators who can analyze their contexts and make decisions that suit their context.
Kumaravadivelu (2006) also warns teacher educators from the Rest not to be slaves to prescriptive teaching models and transferring knowledge imposed through Western ideologies. Instead, they should encourage both “authority and autonomy” (p. 182) in their classroom teaching and provide pre-and in-service teachers with chances to reflect on their teaching. This practice can help pre-and in-service teachers to create their teaching principles and methods that meet their students’ needs and contexts (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Flores and Rosa (2015) suggest more knowledge production by the scholars from the Rest. Also, they urge scholars from the West to listen to such knowledge. This two-way approach of producing and listening would “open up possibilities for reconceptualizing language education in ways that move beyond appropriateness-based approaches” (Flores & Rosa, 2015, p. 167).

Hsu (2017) asserts that when local spaces of knowledge are viewed as legitimate, this would probably help in challenging “the hegemonic positioning of the West as the focal point of instructional power” (p. 122). Hsu (2017) asserts that when local spaces of knowledge are viewed as legitimate, this would probably help in challenging “the hegemonic positioning of the West as the focal point of instructional power” (p. 122). One of the suggested strategies is to encourage critical and explicit conversations about coloniality and other related classroom topics (Reagan, 2004). Using pedagogy of engagement, as indicated by Pennycook (1999), could help educators, students, and teachers in the Rest to “legitimately enjoy a meaningful sense of authorial ownership and professional contribution” (Pennycook, as cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 20). In addition to these formal strategies, teacher educators can incorporate some fun strategies. For example, Hari Kondabolu, an American
comedian of South Asian heritage, uses his space and platform to stress the importance of DT in educating people about the hegemonic narrative in teaching and learning English as creative and fun sources of liberation (Kondabolu, as cited in Hsu, 2017, 127).

As highlighted earlier, Leonardo (2018) and Mignolo (2003) believe that some globalization studies by some scholars from the Rest appear to reduce the capitalistic system to a primarily economically oriented view. Ross and Gibson (2007) state neoliberalism and globalization are interchangeably used. For instance, some globalization studies by some scholars from the Rest appear to reduce the capitalistic system to a primarily economically oriented view and this might be because several researchers (e.g., Carter, 2014; Dean, 2015; Evans, 2015; Hemphill, 2008; Kabir, 2011; Kapp, 2013; Mothoagae, 2011; Neyestani & McInturff, 2006; Onyejekwe, 2009; Siddiqui, 2010) appear to cite Martinez and Garcia’s (2000) definition of globalization. Martinez and Garcia (2000) define globalization as, “…a set of economic policies that have become widespread during the last 25 years or so…. the effects of neo-liberalism or globalization here as the rich grow richer and the poor grow poorer” (Martinez & Garcia, 2000, as cited in Ross & Gibson, 2007, p. 1). The definition seems to be economically oriented, but globalization (coloniality, capitalism, neoliberalism) seems to go beyond that. This reductive view of only embracing the economic aspect appears to pay no attention to other vital forms of racial, linguistic, cultural, political, sexual, and spiritual domination in general and epistemic in particular in the “production of subjectivities and knowledge” (Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 221) about the Rest. However,
Sklair (1995) provides a broader definition for globalization and states that globalization is:

A set of transnational practices are distinguished on three levels, economic, political, and cultural-ideological in which transnational corporations are the major locus of transnational economic practices; the transnational capitalist class is the major locus of transnational political practices; and the culture ideology of consumerism is the major locus of transnational cultural-ideological practices (p.6).

Despite the strong emphasis on the economic aspect of globalization in Sklair's definition, Sklair did not ignore the other factors like political practices; and the cultural ideology to show how strongly they are linked to the economic aspect when discussing globalization. This meaning of globalization has been echoed by De Sousa Santos (2006), who sees globalization as:

A multifaceted phenomenon with economic, social, political, cultural, religious, and legal dimensions, all interlinked in a complex fashion. Strangely enough, globalization seems to combine universality and the elimination of national borders, on the one hand, with rising particularity, local diversity, ethnic identity, and a return to communitarian values, on the other (p. 393).

Both definitions seem to allude to the impact of globalization (new coloniality), which has helped in elevating superior countries at the expense of diminishing others. Alarmingly, Santos argues that scholars from the Rest should not confine globalization to the economic mask, which would result in hiding its implications in the political, social, and cultural domains. Therefore, scholars from the Rest must pay much greater attention to these domains and most importantly epistemic processes in the “production of subjectivities and knowledge” (Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 221) about the Rest. These epistemic processes are ironically considered academic. The next section focuses on some of the relevant empirical studies that indirectly addressed the impact of Western
epistemologies and epistemes on three of the GCC countries: Oman, Saudi Arabia, and UAE but without referring to the DT.

**Coloniality in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries: Relevant Studies**

**Overview**

This section, using the lens of the DT, would analyze, and synthesize the relevant studies in the Omani context and UAE and with some references to some Saudi studies to emphasize the impact of Western epistemologies and epistemes on these countries) since these studies used other frameworks. The focus on these two countries and Oman from the six Cooperation Council (GCC) countries (Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and UAE), is due to the dearth in research about the other countries. In addition to the geographical location closeness among the GCC countries, Saudi Arabia, and UAE share commonalities with Oman, such as religion, language, and aspects of cultural heritage. Therefore, it would not be a surprise to find these countries have had more controlled and centralized policies over education ([Saudi Arabia: e.g., Abu Alsuood & Youde, 2018; Alyami & Floyd, 2019; Almutairi, 2017; Alsubaie & Karen Jones, 2017], [ Oman: e.g., Al-Alawi, 1994; Al'Abri, 2015; Al-Hammami, 1999; Al-Issa, 2015; Al-Issa, 2014; Al-Lamki, 2009], [ UAE: e.g., Godwin, 2006; Hussein, 2010; Pring, 2018; Ramakrishnan & Abdulai Abukari, 2020; Wilkins, 2010]).

As shown above, there are some valiant and conscientious efforts and attempts by few Omani scholars (Al-Issa, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2013, 2015, 2020; Al-Balushi, 2010; AL Balushi, 2018; Al-Bakri; 2013; Al-Busaidi, 1995), few Saudi Arabia scholars (e.g., Barnawi & Le Ha, 201; Elyas, 2011; Elyas & Al-Ghamdi, 2018; Elyas & Basalamah, 2012; Elyas & Picard, 2013; Tayan, 2017) and some scholars discussing the Emirate
context (e.g., Aydarova, 2012; Troudi & Al Hafidh, 2017; Troudi & Jendli, 2011) that addressed the impact of imperialistic ideologies on educational systems in these countries using critical paradigms such as critical discourse analysis, critical inquiry, critical pedagogy, hermeneutic phenomenology, Phillips and Ochs’ (2003, 2004) policy-borrowing framework, and Phillipson’s theory of a hegemonic Anglo-American ploy. Despite their benefits of such paradigms to unveil colonial strategies, Mignolo (2007, 2011) considers these paradigms as Eurocentric or what Tlostanova et al. (2010) call embedded in the master’s toolbox. Also, the focus of these useful studies is on the impact of Western epistemologies and epistemes (if any) on certain stakeholders (students, schoolteachers, and decision makers) but not teacher educators in general and TEFL educators in particular in GCC region.

**UAE and Saudi Arabia**

As stated earlier, Aydarova (2012), Troudi & Al Hafidh (2017), and Troudi and Jendli (2011) addressed some of English's hegemonic and imperialistic nature in the UAE. However, they did not use the DT framework in these studies to address the impact of Western epistemologies and epistemes on these educational systems. Due to the rare number of Emirate academics, Aydarova (2012) only interviewed non-Emirate experts mainly from the West for her study. Using Phillips and Ochs’ (2003, 2004) policy-borrowing framework and its four stages of cross-national attraction, decision-making, implementation, indigenization or localization, and evaluation, she found the UAE higher education system when borrowing Western policies appears to fully adopt these Western policies. For the cross-national attraction stage, the Emirate decision-maker in that university in the UAE admires the American model because he was educated there. For the decision-making and implementation stage, the institution
follows the American model due to the impact of Western education on the Emirate decision-maker. Unfortunately, the indigenization or localization stage was not evident in this borrowing process. For instance, out of the 42 courses offered at this university, only four courses deal with some elements of the local culture, and one class is taught in Arabic. For the evaluation stage, everything was benchmarked against the American system. Consequently, students seem to face many challenges. In her conclusion, Aydarova (2012) asserts that borrowing and adopting Western models in the UAE is a result of “symbolic orientations of political and economic alliances, as well as their pursuit of power and prestige” (p. 298).

Similarly, Troudi and Al Hafidh (2017) found some forms of English hegemony in the UAE educational system. For example, many schools and higher education institutions use English as the main medium of instruction. Concerning the use of English as a medium of instruction, Troudi and Al Hafidh (2017) argue that unequal bilingualism (bi-literal teaching) tragically exists in Emirate educational institutions. For instance, English native speakers are hired to teach science and mathematics, while Arabic native speaking teachers teach some human-centered (e.g., social studies and religion) courses. This kind of bilingualism is driven by economic motives to meet the demands of globalization (Troudi & Al Hafidh, 2017). Also, Troudi and Al Hafidh (2017) argue that this use of this unbalanced approach implicitly sends a message among Emirati students and families that Arabic is inferior to English because English is associated with “modernity, technology, and power” (p. 104). Consequently, some families end up sending their kids to private English-medium schools. Troudi and Al Hafidh (2017) believe making English the medium of instruction creates a double
burden on students because students have to deal with the linguistic burden of learning a foreign language (English) and the (specific domain) content burden when studying scientific subjects in English. In their conclusion, Troudi and Al Hafidh (2017) suggest the need to have a “balanced version of linguistic dualism and educational bilingualism” (p. 111) in UAE and other GCC countries, and these countries should be careful from falling into the trap of “submerging their own cultural identity” (p. 112) by fully adopting these Western models.

Emphasizing the same idea but in the Saudi context, Elyas (2008, 2011) and Karmani (2005) argues the educational reforms in Saudi Arabia stem from the escalating pressure of external pressure and forces (e.g., USA and UK) after September 11th incident and because of the fear of losing solid ties with the US. These requests and calls of reforms were also because of the association between the incident and the Saudi educational system with extremism by Western media services and US politicians (Elyas, 2008) although American researchers (e.g., Brown, 2002; Rugh, 2002) found lack of sufficient information that fully supports such claims (as cited in Elyas, 2008). Despite the resistance from some Saudis, the government decided to respond to the requested demands to reform the Saudi education system in 2004 by “introducing English and its culture to the primary schools” (Elyas, 2008, p. 33).

However, Karmani (2005) argues that these educational reforms in developing countries like Saudi Arabia appear to “promote more English” (p. 263) over cultural and religious identities. For Karmani, this emphasis on English can function as a tool for linguistic imperialism and cultural alienation.
Interestingly, Aydarova (2017) study seems to be the only study that used the DT in the Emirate context and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries. In this study, Aydarova’s (2017) used Chen’s (2010) decolonial approach as well as CDA to analyze educational policies in the United Arab Emirates. Similar to the Omani context, she found that the educational policies seem to propagate dominant discourses focusing on “economic and political priorities” (p. 8). Agreeing with Elyas and Basalamah’s (2012) “marketization discourse” (p. 34) concept of associating education with economy, she argues that Emirate educational reforms appear to be mainly motivated by meeting globalization’s demands and keen on adopting so-called modern and best global models of education. This economic association, as suggested by Elyas and Basalamah (2012) has been used to attack the educational practices in the Arab world, leading to continuous reforms. According to Aydarova (2017), such policies and adopted models emphasize the superiority of Western approaches over the non-Western ones. Like Oman, standardized assessments and tests are heavily used in the UAE to benchmark and justify the reforms and adopted “the best models” from the West (Aydarova, 2017). Her findings seemed to parallel with Slaughter and Leslie’s (1997) and Hernández et al.’s (2012) academic capitalism. According to them, academic capitalism is a metaphor used to describe forcing non-Western universities or ways of knowing to be ranked or measured or benchmarked or contrasted against Western standards in the name of universalism and unification. According to Vargas-Hernández et al. (2012), this is done under the name of “unification or standardization and normalization of global academic and educative institutions, faculty, professionals, programs, curricula, knowledge, internal management, and governance, etc., while
ignoring the local contributions” (p. 1207). Not doing so could be taken up as outdated and inferior if the followed standards do not approximate Western standard adequately (Vargas-Hernández et al., 2012).

Similar to other GCC countries, official documents by the UAE government seem to emphasize these demands. For example, The Executive Council (2007) aims at developing nationals who are characterized as “a sophisticated and entrepreneurial workforce” that will build “a sustainable knowledge-based economy” by 2021 (p. 28) and “compete on the global stage” (Aydarova, 2017, p. 9). Local and Arab scholars resented and opposed these reforms. For instance, showing his refusal for generalized problems and solutions applied in the UAE context, Baroud (2007) highlights the importance of not using “global-speak” (Aydarova, 2017, p. 9) for local contexts. Similarly, Warnicas (2011) states “that transplanting wholesale Western education models to the UAE does not work and a top-down control has ruled out innovation by students and teachers” (as cited in Aydarova, 2017, p. 11). Similarly, Lootah critiques Western knowledge and expertise and urges not to use international tests to measure of educational success (as cited in Aydarova, 2017, p. 12). According to Aydarova (2017), the hegemonic narratives and discourses are extended to include overvaluing English over Arabic and the rising recruitment of native speakers of English over local English teachers. The following section focuses on the Omani context.

**Oman as a Case**

Kazmi (1997) highlighted the impact of the Western hegemonic discourse on developing countries leading to the dominance of such discourses in all aspects including, education, to promote Western policies when designing and adopting curricula and assessments. Therefore, education in general and teaching English, in
particular, is considered as one of the key tools to accomplish the new coloniality where governments in the Rest are forced or encouraged to hand the power to private companies to decide on which standards, exams, and curriculum are to be used (Ross & Gibson, 2007). Agreeing with Martinez and Garcia (2000), Ross and Gibson (2007) believe that coloniality has comprehensively influenced the educational sector since education receives the biggest portion of the total government recurrent expenditure in most countries. For example, Oman allots about “17 percent (the highest) of total government recurrent expenditure for education” (Omani Ministry of Finance, 2020, p. 24).

**Omani educational official documents**

The studies about the Omani context did not use the DT, but they addressed some aspects of the Western ideologies. Despite the rigidity, the obvious adoption of depositing of knowledge as stressed by Freire (1971) and the centrality of textbooks and teachers in the Omani education (Al-Issa, 2006), some researchers of the Omani context (Al’Abri, 2011; Al-Harthi, 2011; Al Issa, 2006/2014) have found the tendency among decision makers of associating educational reforms with meeting the requirements of globalization and the need to produce graduates who are globally competitive for the 21st century jobs. For example, Al-Harthi (2011) points out that Basic Education (one of the educational reforms in Oman that began in 1998) has been adopted and introduced to prepare Omani graduates with the required skills demanded by the global economy and being able to “face the challenges of the globalized era” (Al-Harthi, 2011, p. 113). Al’Abri (2011) also argues that new policies and new reforms of education in Oman regarding “curriculum, testing, English teaching, life skills, work skills, and computing skills” (p. 492) are a result of the fear of not being able to meet the
demands of globalization. Equally, Al-Issa (2020) argues teaching English is one of the dominant forces driving linguistic coloniality, which has provided “native English-speaking countries with a new form of growing and expanding international trade” (p. 185).

Emphasis on meeting the demands of globalization are in some Omani official documents. For instance, the Omani National Policy of Vision 2020 report emphasizes the importance of globalization to the Omani economy and considers globalization as a critical area in that vision. For example, the Reform and Development of General Education produced by Oman’s MoE in 1995 states, “The government recognizes that facility in English is important in the new global economy. The global language of Science and Technology is also English” (Omani MoE, 1995, pp. 1-5). The value of English language learning is also highlighted in the Philosophy and Guidelines for the Omani English Language School Curriculum. The aforementioned document, which was prepared by three native speakers of English from the UK, Australia, and Canada, espouses that English is the main tool for developing countries to fill the gap between themselves and developed countries (Nunan, Walton, & Tyacke, 1987). There is a similar emphasis on English language learning in the recent document, Education in Oman: The Drive for Quality Education in Oman, prepared by Oman’s MoE and The World Bank in 2013. The document asserts that employers require English, and for Omani professionals to be recruited, they must possess English and Information Technology skills as they are “indispensable in the globalized economy” (Omani MoE & The World Bank, 2013, p. 163). Therefore, the Omani graduates must be “globally
competitive graduates” (The Oman MoE & The World Bank Joint Report, 2013) but according to Western standards and perspectives.

**Use of international tests as a colonial tool in the Omani context**

Imposing and propagating the use of International standardized tests (e.g., Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study [TIMSS], Program for International Student Assessment [PISA], International English Language Testing System [IELTS], and the Test of English as a Foreign Language [TOEFL]) is one of the tools to promote neoliberalism or new coloniality (Al-Issa, 2020; Au, 2007; Khan, 2007; Ross & Gibson, 2007; Templer, 2004). Several governments in the so-called developing countries, including Oman, seem to rely extensively on international tests to measure students’ performance without modifying and adapting them to the local context. As a result, students score below the expectations leading to making reforms derived from global experiences (Al-Harthi, 2011). For example, Omani students in schools are unfortunately believed to fail the efforts of the government because of their performance on international tests such as the Program for International Student Assessment [PISA]. In 2015, Omani students “ranked 72 out of the 76” countries that participated (Neisler et al., 2016, p. 82).

As emphasized above, using such international standardized tests measuring students’ linguistic competence from the Rest (developing countries) has received hard-hitting criticism by several researchers (e.g., Al-Issa, 2020; Au, 2007; Khan, 2007; Templer, 2004). For instance, Templer (2004) considers such standardized tests like IELTS or TOEFL as a tool for control by the West over the Rest. Comparably, Khan (2009) believes that IELTS is invalid for various local contexts and urges policymakers in developing countries to free themselves from this educational imperialism by
developing more local norms of proficiency that test. In the same line of thought, Al-Issa (2018) argues and describes IELTS as “tricky, deceptive, top-down, biased, manipulative, oppressive, and discriminatory” (Al-Issa, 2018, as cited in Al-Issa, 2020, p. 186).

Based on the recommendation of Jane Moates, a British ELT consultant in the MoE in 2006, Omani university graduates in general and English pre-service teachers in particular are required to take international tests like (IELTS or TOEFL) to “achieve the required proficiency in the globalization-orchestrated and led era by the USA” (Al-Issa et al., 2018, p. 851) before getting jobs (e.g., English teaching in Omani school) despite four to five years of higher education and preparation. The required score in IELTS by the Omani MoE is Band 6 or its equivalent in TOEFL. According to www.ielts.org’s website, IELTS results are reported on a 9-band scale (1 as the lowest and 9 as the highest). It comprises of four sections: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The website describes the scorer of band 6 as a competent user. According to the website, a band 6 is described to “have an effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriate usage, and misunderstandings and can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations” (“How IELTS is scored,” n.d.). Figure 2-2 below explains the remaining bands.
According to Moram (2021), the top universities’ minimum IELTS requirements in the USA are a band score of between 6.0 and 7.5 (or higher), but no less than band 6.0 in the four skills. Interestingly, several top universities in the US (e.g., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard University, Yale University) or in the UK (e.g. University of Cambridge, Imperial College London, University College London) appear to demand the same band for both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

In a study by Al-Malki (2015) about Omani pre-service teachers of English, she found a moderate significant relationship between IELTS scores and pre-service-teachers’ Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), but a weak relationship between their IELTS scores and their teaching competencies. In parallel with Al-Malki’s (2015)
results, Richards (2017) is against correlating linguistic competence with teaching competence. Due to issues related to cultural bias and validity found in international standardized tests such as IELTS and TOEFL), Al-Issa (2020) believes that using such tests as a benchmark is “ideologically motivated and entails a hidden agenda” (p. 188).

In his study on Omani student teachers of English being forced to obtain a particular score on the IELTS to get a teaching job, Al-Issa (2020) argues that some Omani teacher students seem to buy into the globalization’s demands because of authoritative, rigidly centralized, and controlled system in the Omani education (Al-Issa, 2006) and lack of voice and empowerment (Al-Issa, 2020). Such insistence on asking graduates to take these international tests could be used to argue against the quality of education offered by Omani higher education institutions since most of them use English as a medium of instruction. Al-Issa (2020) discusses three main ideologies discussing about coloniality in his study with Omani English student teachers and their experiences with taking IELTS before applying for a teaching job in Omani schools. These are meritocratic, colonialist, and neoliberal. Al-Issa (2020) found the participants adopting such ideologies showing the impact of coloniality on Omani English student teachers who had no choice except to reluctantly accept and submit to such imposed policies by Western consultants and fully adopt the Omani government. Al-Issa (2020) argues that the educational system in Oman is too dependent on the West. Al-Issa (2020) echoes Cranston’s (2012) suggestion in having hiring procedures that examine teachers’ effectiveness (Cranston, 2012, as cited in Al-Issa, 2020) instead of using “imported, invalid, and culturally inappropriate instruments like the IELTS” (Al-Issa, 2020, p. 203). In the same line of thought, Kirk (2013) argues that Oman and its
neighboring countries have been great importers of ideas from the West and heavily rely on Western experts, especially in the educational sector.

This extensive use of standardized tests is not confined to using tests (IELTS or TOEFL) measuring linguistic competence in the Omani context. Still, it further extends to include the use of International standardized tests measuring other skills like critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and emotional intelligence, to mention a few despite the constant criticism for using these tests, there are some studies about the Omani context that adopted the use of such tools with no or minor modifications or adaptations suiting the local context. Black (2008) argues that these tests of critical thinking were designed for specific contexts and need to be modified to be “appropriate and compatible within contextual beliefs” (p. 7). Similarly, Norris (1989) viewed these tests as inappropriate and even limited to measuring some aspects of critical thinking constructs since they are mostly structured in multiple-choice format. This kind of format tends to “measure cognitive component and overlook the dispositional component of critical thought” (Ku, 2008, p. 70). Norris also argues these tests can’t measure a candidate’s specialized knowledge Banta and Pike (2012) have argued that the skills and outcomes measured by these tests represent only a tiny part of what is vital in higher education and working environments.

Manalo et al. (2013) studied critical thinking skills among Japanese students studying in Japan and New Zealand students studying in Auckland, but the tests were given in their native languages. The Researchers found “no difference between the two groups in their academic use of critical thinking” (p. 128). Therefore, they concluded that the need for conducting these international tests or tools in the learners’ native
language with appropriate modifications to be compatible with these global learners’ cultures. Unlike Manalo et al.’s study, Al-Mahrooqi, Denman and Al-Aghbari (2018) examined the critical thinking skills of a first-year student at a local university in Oman using the Cornell Class-Reasoning Test with some minor adaption to the names as stated by the researchers. The test was initially designed for primary school children and is based on logic and reasoning, as explained by the researchers. The test was conducted in English, ignoring the linguistic challenge for the participants. The researchers concluded that the Omani university participants got similar results to grade 4 students in the United States. Some researchers (Heng. 2016; Lun et al., 2010; Manalo et al., 2013) found that conducting such tests in a second language instead of in students’ native languages has been shown to have a detrimental effect on their performance in cognitive tasks and play a role in the final results.

Another study was conducted by Neisler et al. (2016) to measure higher education Omani students’ critical thinking skills using California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST). This test focuses on the philosophical orientation of critical thinking stressing core reasoning and logic used for ideal situations and requiring foundational knowledge of logic (Bacon, 1992, 1993). Although the test was conducted in Arabic, the researchers did not mention anything about modifying the test to meet the local context when translating the test. The researchers indicated that there were minor modifications to the faculty’s written survey. As a result, scores for these Omani university-level students were lower than their American counterparts (Neisler et al., 2016). Also, the study found the development in critical thinking among some students after spending time in the university was not reflected in their academic cumulative grade point.
average (CGPA). Such low scores should have been expected since they did not modified them to fit the local needs. Black (2008) urges scholars and researchers from the Rest when using such tests to make the necessary changes to be both appropriate and compatible within contextual beliefs and the local contexts.

**Heavy Reliance on Western Expertise.**

Despite the increasing number of Omani academics, teacher educators, and scholars educated in the West who are annually sponsored by the National Postgraduate Scholarship Program (NPSP), there is continued reliance on Western expertise by many developing countries, including Oman. NPSP was launched in 2010 to provide opportunities for Omanis to pursue their master’s and PhD degrees overseas in the best universities around the world and, upon completion, to return to Oman as highly qualified nationals who should contribute to fostering quality education in these institutions (Omani MoHERI, 2015). According to the Omani MoHERI, about two hundred candidates are sponsored by the NPSP to complete their graduate studies abroad. There are also those scholars who their own institutions sponsor. Al-Issa (2014, 2020) urges people in charge of Omani education in all sectors and at all levels (school and higher education) to stop or reduce their heavy dependence on consultants from North America, Britain, and Australia (NABA). Despite the establishment of the Specialized Training Center was opened officially in 2014. The existence of some local concerned departments that are in charge of training and qualifying Oman future teachers, the MoE decided to sign a five-year agreement for millions of British pounds with the University of Leeds to upgrade the levels of a thousand Omani teachers holding associate degrees from the Teachers Training Colleges (currently known as Colleges of Applied Sciences) to graduate with a bachelor’s degree in teaching English after
finishing the program (Al-Issa, 2015). What adds salt to injury is these tests are even supervised by Western centers like the British Council and English Language Services (ELS). Al-Issa (2002, 2005, 2014, 2020) has always urged for a reduction in heavy reliance on Western expertise in designing materials, curricula, and assessment. Al-Issa (2020) echoes Hall’s (1992) idea of benchmarking (how far or close the Rest are to the West). Al-Issa (2020) believes the use of such tests “perpetuates cultural dependency on the West” (p. 186) as a “a form of benchmark” (p. 186). In the field of accreditation and quality assurance, Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA), which was formerly known as Oman Authority of Academic accreditation (OAAA), has not only been a full member, as the case for all of the GCC countries except Qatar, in International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) but has also embraced and adopted INQAAHE methods of assessment and review to evaluate local institutions. These methods are viewed by some scholars (e.g., Badry & Willoughby, 2015; Donn & Al Manthri, 2010), as Western-oriented. Interestingly, since several of the Western evaluators do not work in Oman, they are occasionally invited to prepare reports about local institutions. Although costs for inviting them for such a job are not known, but someone can do the math. However, the level of financial resources used to pay Western experts during international accreditation would stand as the best example of such a reliance. Al Barwani and Bailey (2016) who work at University of Alkhalil indicated that University of Alkhalil had to hire several Western consultants. According to them, the college of education at University of Alkhalil had to pour financial resources
(to cover the cost of Western consultants’ fees, hotel accommodations, meals, and round trip tickets, to name a few) into this process to accomplish this goal.

It is important to and stress and recognize that both the level of the impact of the Western epistemologies and epistemes on the returnee as well as the kind of attitude (Adler’s Four-cell Coping-mode Scheme: proactive, alienated, re-socialized, and rebellious) a returnee has would determine the type of knowledge shared in their local context. In addition to that, their colleagues’ readiness, and willingness to learn would help returnees determine which knowledge would be emphasized and shared in their local contexts. Therefore, such lack of research on how Omani TEFL teacher educators educated in the West negotiate Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching warrants further examination and exploration to fill this significant gap.

**Summary Chapter and Conclusion**

As this study focused on how Omani TEFL teacher educators trained in the West negotiated Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching, Chapter 2 illustrated the limited amount of literature specifically focused on the experiences of Omani TEFL educators. To date, there has not been any study focusing on this topic. The first part of the literature review focused on unpacking the DT and its related concepts. Following that, there was a detailed discussion on the other two theoretical lenses: knowledge transfer and Adler’s Four-cell Coping-mode Scheme and their relationship with the DT.

The last part concentrated on analyzing the relevant studies in the Omani context using the lenses of the DT. As shown above, there are some valiant and conscientious efforts and attempts by few Omani scholars (Al-Issa, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2013, 2015,
2020; AL Balushi, 2018; Al-Bakri; 2013; Al-Busaidi, 1995), few Saudi Arabia scholars (e.g., Barnawi & Le Ha, 201; Elyas & Al-Ghamdi, 2018; Elyas & Basalamah, 2012; Elyas & Picard, 2013; Tayan, 2017) and some scholars discussing the Emirate context (e.g., Aydarova, 2017; Troudi & Al Hafidh, 2017; Troudi & Jendli, 2011) that addressed the impact of imperialistic ideologies on educational systems in these countries using critical paradigms (e.g., critical discourse analysis, critical inquiry, critical pedagogy, hermeneutic phenomenology) but not the DT. Mignolo (2007, 2011) considers these paradigms as Eurocentric despite their benefits to unveil colonial strategies. Also, the focus of these useful studies was on the impact of Western epistemologies and epistemes on certain stakeholders (students, schoolteachers, and decision-makers) but not Omani teacher educators in general and TEFL educators in particular. With such a large gap in this area, this study is important for providing a better understanding of the impact of Western epistemologies and epistemes on Omani educational systems and how Omani TEFL educators educated in the West negotiated these Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

Overview

The purpose of the study was to explore how Omani educators trained in the West negotiated Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching. This section would provide a detailed description of the methods I used to collect and analyze the data. Chapter 3 was composed of: (1) Research perspective: constructivist paradigm with its four philosophical assumptions (axiology, ontology, epistemology, and methodology), (2) Use of critical narrative inquiry method and its use justification, (3) Research setting, (4) Site selection, (5) Participant selection, (6) Data collection, (7) Data analysis and (8) Establishing trustworthiness. I intended to answer the following main research question and sub-question:

**Main Research question:** How do Omani TEFL educators educated in the West negotiate Western epistemology/epistemes in their scholarship and teaching [in an Oman teacher education context]?

**Sub-research question:** What (broadly internal and external) tensions are present for these Omani educators as they negotiate Western epistemes in their scholarship and teaching?

The study used a critical narrative inquiry to 1) “understand the ways the participants’ stories will be constructed” (Hickson, 2016, p. 380); 2) “deconstruct the stories and assumptions construction of knowledge, power, and reality” (Hickson, 2016, p. 382); and 3) challenge the dominant perspectives prevalent in knowledge construction (Hall, 2011). Figure 3-1 below displays the overview of this study’s Methodology, including epistemology, methodology, and research design.
Figure 3-1 below displays the overview of this study’s Methodology, including epistemology, methodology, and research design.

**Epistemology**
- **Social Constructivism** (Creswell, 2013; Denzin, 2011)
- **Decolonial Turn** (Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 1997; Walsh, 2007)
- **Knowledge Transfer** (Eraut, 2004)

**Methodology**
- **Qualitative** (Glesne, 2006; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016)
- **Narrative Inquiry** (Chase, 2008; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000)
- **Critical Narrative Inquiry** (Allen & Hardi, 2001; Hickson, 2016)

**Research Design**
- **Site**: Omani Public TEFL Higher Education Institution
- **Participants**: convenience, purposeful, 5 Participants
- **Data collection**: interviews, participants’ personal documents and reflective journals, informal communication for follow-up
- **Data Analysis**: Critical Thematic Analysis: (Chen & Lawless, 2018, 2019)

**Research Approach: Qualitative Research Rationale**

This qualitative study was guided by the constructivist view. Its ultimate goal is to “understand and interpret how the various participants in a social setting construct the world around them” (Glesne, 2006, pp. 4-5) by obtaining different perspectives from the participants.

Creswell (2013) recommends the use of qualitative research when the topic must be explored because of (a) a need to study a particular population and examine variables that would be difficult to be determined in an objective manner, or (b) a need to listen to overlooked voices about some issues that can’t be researched except for listening to these participants share what might not be found or is scarcely discussed in
the existing literature. Accordingly, I aimed to understand the experiences of Omani teacher educators educated in the West (as overlooked voices) by inviting them to construct and share their stories and interpretations of their lived experiences. Hence, qualitative research is the most effective and appropriate approach to revealing these stories.

As suggested by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), qualitative methodology is about “constructing knowledge by people in a continuous manner while engaging and making sense of an experience or phenomenon” (p. 23). This study was guided by qualitative methods. Its main goal was to understand how Omani educators educated in the West negotiated Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching. One of the theoretical bases of qualitative research is constructivism, which informed this study and helped researchers recognize how participants (Omani teacher educators who are foreign-educated in the West), “construct reality within their social world” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 22).

The Four Philosophical Assumptions

Creswell (2013) has emphasized the importance of being familiar with the philosophical assumptions by researchers because these expectations support researchers in determining which ideas and questions to explore, which kinds of data and data analysis to use and how best to interpret findings. There are four philosophical assumptions which are (a) ontology (the nature of reality), (b) epistemology (the relationship between the researcher and participants), (c) axiology (the role of values in research), and (d) methodology (the process of research). For the ontological assumption, I assumed that every participant has a unique view about their own experience, which results in having multiple realities, which I described in this study.
Epistemologically speaking, researchers are encouraged to establish a close relationship with participants during the interaction of collecting data using different sources. For the axiological assumption, I acknowledged that my background, qualifications, and values probably bring some biases, which most likely would influence how the research would be conducted and how data would be collected, analyzed and interpreted. As a result, I addressed these biases in Chapter 3 under my positionality section. Finally, for the methodological assumption, this study is inductive, largely influenced by the researcher’s experience in collecting and analyzing data (Creswell, 2013). As a result of this assumption, I fully depended on both what the participants shared and related that to what the existing literature has already said, so to reduce the impact of any of my personal biases on the topic. These four assumptions provide the philosophical foundation for qualitative research studies. These assumptions are part of social constructivism, which is under the interpretive framework (Creswell, 2013). The following section explains the social constructivism paradigm and its four assumptions in detail and how they conveniently fit this study.

**Social Constructivism**

Gergen (1999) defines social constructivism as a view in which an individual mind constructs reality within a systematic relationship to the external world. For this study, my goal was to understand how Omani educators educated in the West negotiated Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching, focusing on how they describe these narratives using their own words. Subsequently, social constructivism would be the most appropriate paradigm for the purposes of this study. As explained by Creswell (2013), social constructivism highlights that reality should be informed by participants who are influenced by “historical and cultural norms”
(Creswell, 2013, p. 25) where the participants live and interact. The same notion is also emphasized by Denzin (2011), who believes that the constructivist paradigm concentrates on “the production of reconstructed understanding of the social world” (Denzin, 2011, p. 92). As a result, each participant creates their own subjective meaning for the experience (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln, 2001; Lunenburg, 2011).

Creswell (2013) highlights the need for constructivist researchers to ask “broad and general research questions” to allow participants to elaborate on their experiences and construct their own meanings. Constructivist researchers should also be aware of the influence of their backgrounds and experiences on the interpretation of the collected data. The philosophical assumptions in the social constructivist paradigm are as follows:

**Axiology**

Axiology is concerned with answering the question, what is the nature of ethics? In other words, it is concerned with ethical issues that need to be considered when planning a research proposal. According to Rodwell (1998), researchers, when using constructivist studies, should be aware that there is nothing is certain, and they should continuously indulge in dialogue and negotiation with participants to co-construct the meanings with researchers (Denzin, 2011). As suggested by Mason (1986), I, as a researcher, had tried to maintain the four principles when dealing with data and participants (PAPA): Privacy (Answering questions like: What information must a person reveal and how is the information safeguarded?), Accuracy (Answering question related to: who is responsible for keeping information correct and what are remedies if it is not?), Property (Answering question of who owns information and how is compensation determined?), and Accessibility (Answering questions like how can a person obtain information and with what safeguards?).
For privacy in this study, I made sure not force the participants to reveal what they did not want to. Also, I ensured that no harm occurred to the participants during the study (Rodwell, 1998). For accuracy, it is important for me as a researcher to “consider, account for, learn from, and include” (Lausch, 2018, p. 45) my potential participants’ background and culture throughout the research process. The goal was to help me narrate the “knowledge and truth the participants have created throughout their experiences” (Lausch, 2018, p. 45) in the NABA countries because nothing is ever certain in constructivist inquiry (Rodwell, 1998). Also, participants were given a chance to discuss the potential findings, and their possible recommendations were considered, so future participants would benefit from them. As a result, I respected their views and ideas through dialogue, consensus building, and negotiation of co-construction between the participant and me (Rodwell, 1998).

For property, I provided the participants with information on using the data. Since there was no financial compensation, the participants were offered a UF cap or shirt as a token of appreciation for their contribution and time. For accessibility, a formal communication was established with the administration of each setting to ensure getting approval to conduct the study and interview the participants (see APPENDIXES A-E for the letters). Also, all of the collected data will be stored in a safe place that will be accessible only to the researcher (me) and dissertation chair after the end of the study. As recommended in qualitative research (Cooper, 2009), I kept a dated journal while collecting data and interacting with the participants.

Ontology

Ontology answers the question about the nature of reality (Creswell, 2013; Guba, 1990). Guba (1990), a constructivist researcher, states that, “realities exist in the form of
multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content in the persons who hold them” (Guba, 1990, p. 27). Guba and Lincoln (1998) believe constructions are multiple, and realities are constructed. This belief means there are multiple perspectives of reality. This is why ontology for Guba and Lincoln (1998) is a relativist. In a constructivist study, the researcher invites participants to explain their realities and allows important concepts to develop created by the participants (Creswell, 2013). In this study, I explored realities through the eyes of Omani teacher educators after being educated in the West to help me as a researcher both understand and construct the developed meaning by these teacher educators.

**Epistemology**

The term refers to how we come to know something. Thus, it refers to how we know the truth or reality (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). According to Lincoln et al. (2011), constructivist research aims to understand and explain notions and phenomena that result of the reconstruction of meaning that is developed through or during the interaction between researchers. According to Kivunja & Kuyini (2017), researchers, when considering the epistemology paradigm, they answer these crucial questions such as: “Is knowledge something which can be acquired or, should be personally experienced?, What is the relationship between the inquirer/researcher, and what is known?” (p. 27). According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), researchers usually draw knowledge from four sources: (a) intuitive knowledge sources (beliefs, faith, and intuition); (b) authoritative knowledge sources [(books and leaders in organizations), (c) rationalist knowledge sources (focus on reasons as the surest path to knowing the truth) and (d) empirical epistemology sources (sense experiences). However, this study
appeared to fit the empirical epistemology because it is based on knowledge acquired from practical or observable first-hand experience. Epistemology is vital because it affects how researchers uncover knowledge in the social context that they investigate (Slavin, 1984).

**Methodology**

Methodology describes the procedure and approaches for collecting and analyzing the data being studied (Maxwell, 1998). Constructivist research should be designed “to capture realities holistically, to discern meaning implicit in a human activity” (Guba, 1990, p. 78). According to Chase (2011), the use of narrative inquiry is to “construct meaningful selves, identities, and realities” (p. 422). Critical narrative inquiry allows participants to, “make sense of their experiences and construct meanings and selves” (p. 80). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) believe that “experience happens narratively” and they urge researchers to study or examine educational experiences through the use of narrative (p. 108). Thus, the critical narrative inquiry was used as the methodology for this study, which is discussed in detail next section. In short, social constructivism is based on the idea that reality is a product of one’s own creation; each individual sees and interprets the world and their experiences through personal belief systems; therefore, social constructivism was an appropriate paradigm for this study because participants were expected to share and create their own realities and attach their interpreted meanings to these stories.

**Method: Critical Narrative Inquiry**

To further investigate the main research question (How do Omani educators educated in the West negotiate Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching [in an Oman teacher education context]?) and sub-question

---

106
broadly internal and external) tensions are present for these Omani educators as they negotiate Western epistemes in their scholarship and teaching?), critical-narrative-inquiry approach was appropriate for this study for few reasons which will be discussed following the narrative inquiry discussion. Critical narrative inquiry is a term Kim (2010) coined to combine narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), and a critical perspective approach. For the critical perspective, this study employed both the DT, which is developed by scholars [e.g., Escobar, 2007; Hall, 1992; Maldonado-Torres, 2003; Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 1997; Santos, 2010; Walsh, 2007]) as well as Chen & Lawless’s (2016) Critical Thematic Analysis (CDA), which would be discussed in the data analysis section in detail. Before discussing the critical aspect of the narrative inquiry, the following section would discuss narrative inquiry.

**Narrative Inquiry**

Narrative inquiry is a growing research methodology in qualitative research, yet it is not easy to define, and it is primarily considered a new and developing field (Chase, 2008; Kim, 2008; Riessman, 2002). Among the most cited definitions is the one provided by Connelly and Clandinin (2006), who define narrative inquiry as “the study of experience as a story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about the experience” (p. 375). Despite the different definitions, there is a consensus that narrative inquiry aims at helping researchers have a better understanding of and ability to make meaning of experiences (Chase, 2008; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Merriam, 2002; Trahar, 2009). Moen (2006) also believes that narrative inquiry is beneficial because it helps teacher educators tell the stories themselves. Since narrative inquiry provides a space for voices to be heard, thus empowering participants (Kim & Latta, 2010), I intended to
employ narrative inquiry to increase participants’ integrity and honor and uplift their unique voices and experiences.

Clandinin (2013) stressed the importance of context, advising researchers to go beyond narrating the individual’s experiences. Instead, researchers are urged to explore “social, cultural, familial and institutional narratives” that contribute to shaping those individual experiences (p. 12). Correspondingly, Chase (2003) urges researchers to “gain a deeper understanding of the social resources (cultural, ideological, historical, and so forth) that they draw on, resist, and transform as they tell their stories (pp. 80-81). Similarly, Savin-Baden and Van Niekert (2007) emphasized the idea of going beyond just telling stories. Since this study aims to understand the experiences of Omani teacher educators after finishing their PhD in NABA countries, narrative inquiry can help uncover possible social, cultural, and institutional challenges Omani teacher educators might be facing when implementing what they learned abroad, at home. The use of narrative is not only about knowing stories but also “about establishing continuity between the past, present, and as yet unrealized future” (Berger & Quinney, 2005, p. 4).

Polkinghorne (1995) classifies narrative inquiry into (a) analysis of narratives (meaning research in which stories are used as data and can be inductive or deductive); and (b) narrative analysis (meaning research in which storytelling is used as a means to analyze data and present findings). These two approaches are sometimes viewed as contradictory or mutually exclusive, but some scholars (e.g., Polkinghorne, 1995, Sharp et al., 2018; Smith & Sparkes, 2008) consider them complementary rather than antagonistic be combined. Bleakley (2005) describes them as “lock and key” (p. 537) despite being classified as two different approaches. For this study, I used both. In
chapter 4, I adopted analysis of narratives to introduce the participants. However, I used the analysis of narratives approach for chapter 5 to compare and contrast the collected narratives as data to identify key themes. Although it is recommended for novice researchers to deductively explore narratives through a “theoretical lens” (Sharp et al., 2018, p. 14), I inductively discovered “categories or themes from within the data” (Sharp et al., 2018, p. 9).

**Why critical?**

According to Allen and Hardin (2001), critical narrative inquiry aims at “questioning how narratives or stories are imbricated within relational plays of power, and how subjects re-authorize their positions… Analysis moves between individual and socio-cultural or historical levels without denying or discounting the words spoken by individuals. They are embraced as the site and evidence of agency while avoiding reducing persons to individualistic agents” (p. 176). Critical narrative inquiry effectively explores how individuals negotiate power structures and how larger sociocultural narratives shape their stories and experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Kim, 2016).

Therefore, critical narrative inquiry is used to 1) “understand the ways the participants’ stories will be constructed” (Hickson, 2016, p. 380); 2) “deconstruct the stories and assumptions construction of knowledge, power, and reality” (Hickson, 2016, p. 382); and 3) challenge the dominant perspectives prevalent in knowledge construction (Hall, 2011). Also, critical narrative inquiry studies highlight the importance of meaning-making via dialogue (Hibbert et al., 2010) to “enable a broader research context of social and political generative themes” (Hughes, 2017, p. 48) that influence the experiences of marginalized people or scholars from the Rest (Omani teacher educators in this study). Moreover, since Omani teacher educators are among the least
researched groups, this critical narrative inquiry study would function as a tool or a venue to allow my participants voices to be heard (Kim, 2016) as well as recognize the importance of history of knowledge production and the participants’ local contexts their decision and sense-making (Bruce, 2008). Therefore, this study aimed to illuminate the experiences of Omani educators educated in the West when attempting to negotiate Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching [in an Oman teacher education context] as well as the possible (broadly internal and external) tensions between them and other forces or factors in their contexts when trying so. Critically speaking, adopting the DT as framework for this study was meant to divert away from the traditionally Western-centered approaches and alternatively accomplish some level of decoloniality in knowledge production.

In this study, the use of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), which will be discussed in the next section in detail, and DT developed by scholars (e.g., Escobar, 2007; Hall, 1992; Maldonado-Torres, 2003; Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 1997; Santos, 2010; Walsh, 2007) highlight the importance of meaning making via dialogue (Hibbert et al., 2010) as well as “enable a broader research context of social and political generative themes that influence the educational experience” (Hughes, 2017, p. 48) of scholars from the Rest (Omani teacher educators in this study). Moreover, since Omani teacher educators are among the least researched groups, this critical narrative inquiry served as a tool to allow my participants’ voices to be heard (Kim, 2016) as well as recognize the importance of history of knowledge production and its impact on the participants’ local contexts and on their decision and sense-making (Bruce, 2008).
Sampling Procedures

Site Selection

The initial plan was to select participants from the two public TEFL institutions for three main reasons. The first reason is that these public institutions receive government support, some of which appear to be specifically dedicated to sending Omanis to pursue their postgraduate studies, along with additional opportunities offered by the National Postgraduate Scholarship Program (NPSP). Also, these two programs are considered the oldest TEFL programs in the country, so both settings have had a long history of graduating Omani TEFL teachers to fulfill the needs of Omani schools. Most importantly, there are almost no Omani TEFL academics in the other three remaining private institutions. Since there was no negative response from one public institution, I decided to contact the very few Omani academics in the private institution. Unfortunately, there was not any response from these private institutions. Therefore, I recruited five participants from the only remaining public institution.

Participant Selection

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) remind researchers who wish to use the qualitative method to establish a set of criteria to select participants. LeCompte and Schensul (2010) refer to this process as “criterion-based selection” to both pick the setting and the participant (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010, as cited in Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 97).

Criteria for selecting participants

According to Morse and Field (1995), two major considerations guide the sampling methods in qualitative research: appropriateness (the identification and use of participants who can best inform the research question) and adequacy (having enough data is available to provide a detailed description of the phenomena of interest). The
participants were purposefully selected based on the following criteria. First, participants must be Omani citizens who have received their undergraduate degrees from a non-Western country but received their master’s and PhD degrees from the West (one of the NABA countries) in any relevant area of preparing English teachers. They must be currently teaching in one of the selected two institutions in charge of preparing Omani student teachers of English. Also, participants should have been teaching for no less than three (3) years and no more than fifteen (15) years after completing their PhD. This timeframe exists for two main reasons. First, teacher educators in most Omani higher education institutions can apply for a promotion every four years to move to an associate or full professor status. For example, teacher educators at Local University One (LUO) must “spend a minimum of four years after the Ph.D. or equivalent in an academic institution, of which at least two years must be at LUO” (Local University One, 2017, p. 2) to apply for promotion.

Secondly, quality research, in general, can be time-consuming because researchers must engage in data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the collected data and other academic and administrative responsibilities and involvement (Ferguson & Gordon, 2019; Lorenzetti, 2007; Ulla, 2018). Therefore, three years or more after completing a PhD would most likely allow sufficient time for teacher educators to conduct research. This timeframe is crucial because this study aims to examine some of the participants’ research papers. Lastly, they should have never taught the researcher (me) if possible. Although gender is not a determining factor, made sure to recruit both female and male participants to accommodate different perspectives; however, recruitment for participants will be based on their willingness and availability. Due to the
previously mentioned challenges, I recruited four females and one male for this study, all of whom are from the same institution.

**Justifications for number of participants**

Sargeant (2012) asserts the sample size in qualitative research is not generally predetermined because qualitative researchers must be concerned with the participants who can “inform fully all important elements of the phenomenon being studied” (p. 2). Creswell (2013) states that “focusing on studying one or two individuals” is suitable for narrative studies (p. 157). Similarly, Haydon et al. (2018) argue that narrative inquiry research has a few participants, sometimes “only one but more commonly four (4) to six (6) participants”. For example, Creswell (2013) cited Huber and Whelan’s (1999) study, which used one participant in their narrative study.

Burmeister and Aitken, 2012 and Merriam (2009) suggest qualitative research, including narrative inquiry, is not about the numbers per se but about the depth of the data that helps accomplish data saturation. Also, Morse (2000) provides a detailed discussion on reaching saturation. She believes some factors should be considered when deciding on sample size, including the “quality of data, the scope of the study, the nature of the topic, the amount of useful information obtained from each participant, the number of interviews per participant, the use of shadowed data, and the qualitative method and study design used” (p. 1). Morse (2000) argues that the amount of data collected from one person would help determine the number of participants. In other words, the greater amount of data collected from each participant, the fewer number of participants would most likely be needed. Another factor emphasized by O’Reilly & Parker (2012) is the length of interviews. Marshall et al. (2013) state that there are three (two external and one internal) ways to decide on the sample size: (a) citing what
methodologies recommend, (b) citing similar studies, and (c) using internal justification. The first two ways are external since they rely on other scholars, while the third one “involves statistical demonstration of saturation within a dataset” (Marshall et al., 2013, p. 13). I justified the sample size for this study using the first two external ways of deciding on the proposed number of participants: 1) citing what methodologies recommend and 2) citing similar studies. As stated earlier, I recruited five (5) participants: four females and one male from one institution due to no or negative responses from the other institutions.

As stated earlier, critical narrative inquiry is about combining narrative inquiry method with a critical perspective or paradigm for presenting and/or analyzing the data to “confirm or challenge the status quo. ... When someone tells a story, he or she shapes, constructs, and performs the self, experience, and reality” (Chase, 2005, p. 657). Therefore, I would refer to narrative inquiry methodologists for the first way of citing methodologists. For instance, Beitin (2012) suggests sample size for narrative inquiry ranges from five (5) to twelve (12) participants to avoid thematic redundancy. For example, Creswell (2013) 2 or 3 for narrative research. Similarly, Huber and Whelan (1999) maintained that narrative research studies include one to two participants unless the intent is to develop a collective narrative.

Parse (1990) recommends 2–10 participants to achieve ‘redundancy or saturation’ (p. 10) in qualitative research, including narrative inquiry. When conducting qualitative research, Kuzel (1999) recommends 5–8 participants in a homogeneous sample. Agreeing with Crouch & McKenzie (2006), Schram (2006) suggested a range of 5 to 10 participants for a formal qualitative study, arguing a sample size larger than 5 to
10 participants could hinder an in-depth investigation. Relying on suggestions by the methodologists of recruiting between five (5) and twelve (12) is the first justification for choosing six (6) participants for this study as a sufficient number to accomplish data saturation considering this study involved the use of both interviews (3 interviews for each participant) as well as the use of participants’ documents.

The second way to cite similar (critical narrative inquiry) studies that share the same theme and design but did not refer to methodologies when deciding on the number of participants. For instance, Chan et al. (2013) had 5 participants in their narrative study using three interviews. Although Dembouski (2010) had 10 participants for his critical narrative study, there was one long interview for each participant. Similarly, DeMik (2008), in a narrative inquiry study, recruited five (5) participants using two interviews with each participant to collect data. Also, Hughes (2017) used one focus group interview and one semi-structured interview for each of the five participants guided by Clandinin & Connelly’s (2000) three-dimensional narrative inquiry of space, continuity, and situation.

Five participants were targeted in a critical narrative study by Cropps (2020). Using Conversational Method and Sharing Circle method (between two to three for each participant), Graham (2020) recruited six (6) participants for his critical narrative study. Also, seven participants were recruited for Teo’s (2011) critical narrative inquiry using both interviews (one interview for each) and analysis of the curriculum materials. In another vital narrative inquiry study, Mitchell (2018) hired 7 participants using participants’ demographics and one interview for each participant. Therefore, citing similar studies to my research that recruited between five (5) to ten (10) participants
using interviews (between one to three interviews for each person) was used to justify my plan for recruiting five (5) participants as a sufficient number to accomplish data saturation.

It is worth noting that some methodologists of qualitative research do not recommend specific numbers but highly advocate for looking at the amount of data collected and ensuring saturation is accomplished. For instance, Kim (2016) states, “the sample might be larger and each interview shorter or vice versa” (p. 161) to help ensure thematic saturation. Also, Lewis (2014) wrote, “The number of participants you choose for your study will depend on the inquiry question itself and can range from a focus on the narratives of one individual or to a larger number. There is no required ‘sample size,’ as might be required in a quantitative research approach” (p. 166). Comparably, Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) do not suggest specific numbers but encourage finding previous studies with the same design and comparing the number used to accomplish saturation. I conducted three primary semi-structured interviews for each participant (each interview lasted between 60 to 120 minutes). I examined participants’ documents (e.g., copies of former and recent syllabi, previous and current research articles, former and recent exams, and possible former and recent supervised dissertations).

**Procedures for contacting the participants**

The process of obtaining approval to conduct the study with the participants is composed of seven steps explained as below:

**Step one.** Following the IRB approval (IRB Approval Copy is attached in Appendix A), I promptly contacted (a copy of my advisor’s email is attached in Appendix B) the Department of Postgraduate Studies and Research in each institution to obtain the administrative approval (a copy of the administrative approval from each institution
is attached in Appendices C & D). I sent the request letter on April 3, 2021. It is worth noting that it took between a week to two weeks to get the administrative approval due to the impact of the covid-19 situation.

**Step two.** These administrative departments sent a copy of the approval letter to the head of the TEFL department. That means I was able to directly contact the possible participants who fit the selection criteria without the need to get the head of the department. Although I began contacting each potential participant on April 14, 2021, it took me more than a month to start receiving some positive responses.

**Step three.** After several (5 emails) follow-up emails, I managed to recruit five (5) participants from one institution as opposed to the initial proposal to six (6) participants from two institutions.

**Step four.** After receiving initial acceptance from the participants, I emailed each participant the consent form (a copy is attached in Appendix E) to sign and email it back to me.

**Step five.** After getting the signed consent form, the participant and I worked on the interview schedule. Even though I created a doodle link to avoid clashes among participants, it was not easy to find suitable times for each participant.

**Step six.** Each participant was asked if s/he wanted to test Microsoft Teams before conducting the interviews. Only one participant decided to do so. I sent a reminder email to each participant two days before each interview and the day of the interview. Most of the interviews were conducted on the agreed times except for two that were rescheduled to suit the participant’s most convenient times.
**Step seven.** Because the third interview was mainly based on the participant’s personal document, I kept sending emails to each participant to receive their documents between the first and the second interviews. Table 3-1 provides an overview of the study’s participants. I sketched each participant’s narrative in more detail in Chapter 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coded name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Country of Graduate Studies</th>
<th>Schools Teaching Experience</th>
<th>H.Ed. Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Post-PhD Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Ibrahim</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>13 years</td>
<td>11 years</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Maryam</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>5.5 years</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Fatin</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>One semester</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Shamsa</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>0 years</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Faiyza</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>0 years</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Collection Methods**

According to Hatch (2002), qualitative data is different from quantitative data in the way they represent social meanings, which does not seem to be a concern in quantitative data, where the focus is on “numerical analysis” (Hatch, 2002, p. 9). Data sources are classified as primary, meaning the data gathered by the researcher. In contrast, secondary data is collected by someone else and used differently from the original intended purpose. As stated by Yin (2009), “the main asset of qualitative research is the use of various sources of evidence” (p. 101). To summarize, this study’s research question and sub-questions employed two primary sources of collection data: “oral/spoken narratives” (Barkhuizen et al., 2014, p. xii) in the form of interviews and
written narratives in the form of personal documents (p. xii) to increase credibility and accomplish triangulation. These sources are discussed in the next section in detail. In Figure 3-2 below, I visualized the data collection timeline.

![Figure 3-2. Data collection and ongoing processes timeline](image.png)

**Primary Data Source(s)**

**Interviews**

Stake (1995) argues that interviews are the most important source for collecting data in qualitative research, “interviews are the main road to multiple realities” (p. 64). Interviews provide a way to capture “the unseen that was, is, will be, or should be; how respondents think or feel about something; and how they explain or account for
something” (Glesne, 2006, p. 105). As stated by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the main goal of interviews is to “get special information by getting in and on someone’s mind” (p. 108). They discuss how interviews are categorized: by structure, by philosophical stances, focus groups, and online interviews. Saunders et al. (2015) classify the interviews as structured, semi-structured, or unstructured (in-depth). On the other hand, according Frechtling-Westat et al. (2002) interviews can also be categorized into structured and in-depth interviews. In the structured interviews, the goal is to get answers for questions that are worded carefully. In contrast, the purpose of in-depth interviews is to “encourage free and open responses and perceptions of the participants in their own words” (Frechtling-Westat et al., 2002, pp. 50-51). In-depth interviews value participants’ perspectives, since they are “meaningful and knowable and extremely important in the success of the study” (Frechtling-Westat et al., 2002, p. 49). For this study, I used semi-structured interviews to allow flexibility where participants can express their thoughts freely (Cooper and Schindler, 2014).

For this study, I utilized semi-structured interviews guided by Rubin and Rubin’s (2005) responsive interviewing as my interviewing approach since it depends on both interpretive constructivism theory (considering people having different experiences, opinions, and knowledge they have different interpretations) and critical perspective (DT for this study). Also, it fits the crucial nature of this study because this approach is useful when the topic is about challenging and questioning assumptions and issues about power (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The relationship between the researcher and participants is a crucial component of the responsive interview model in recognizing they are human beings “not recording machines” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 30) who can influence each
other. As a result, researchers are expected to reflect on “his or her own biases and reactions” (p. 31) and understand that each participant has unique experiences and ways of interpreting and constructing those experiences. They are the main source for understanding their experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). As a researcher, during these interviews, I listened to every respondent or participant with “respect, no judgment or threatening attitude and with sensitive observation” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 129). Therefore, I kept journal notes during this research journey throughout the study, which will be discussed in detail in the reflective journal section.

Rubin and Rubin (2005) remind researchers that responsive interviewing should be flexible, and it is not a one-time task but an ongoing process “throughout the project” (p. 30). Similarly, Strommen (2013) suggests researchers should move back and forth between interviewing and analyzing. This flexibility and constant and systematic analysis were essential to help me generate more relevant questions considering that the third interview were mainly based on the documentary review of the participants’ documents. As suggested by Spradley (1980) and Richards (2003), I used open-ended questions to allow the participants to freely explore their experiences and create their own meanings (see Tables 3-3 to 3-5 for examples of the suggested questions for each interview). Interviews should have open-ended questions that “produce a very rich sample of perceptions of a given behavior” (Marin & Marin, 1991, p. 76). In short, this approach provided a more conversational tone and encouraged the participants to relax during the interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

**Technical considerations.** Interviews are the primary way to answer the research question and its sub-questions. I employed three formal person-to-person,
semi-structured interviews, but because of the impact of the Covid-19 virus around the world, an electronic format (Zoom or Microsoft teams) was considered. Despite the advantages of in-person interviews, electronic interviews (known as video and conference technology or Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)-mediated technologies) can be attractive solutions because of their convenience, efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and flexibility (Horrell, Stephens & Breheny, 2015). However, some tools that facilitate electronic interviews are associated with some issues. For example, Skype is a popular VoIP tool. Still, it is associated with multiple problems including, calls being dropped, connectivity issues, difficulty in reading non-verbal cues, and the recording feature being provided by a third party (Weller, 2015).

However, Zoom and Microsoft Teams can record sessions or interviews without the need for a third party. This is very important in research to protect participants' data and privacy because it provides the user with “user-specific authentication” (Archibald et al., 2019, p. 2). In their study, Archibald et al. (2019) found no issues in establishing rapport with the participants. They also pointed out that users or researchers can ask Zoom, using the privacy policy, to delete any existing recordings. Easterby-Smith et al. (2015) and Trauntschnig (2020) believe using Microsoft Teams for interviews could allow researchers to observe facial expressions, which could strengthen researcher’s ability to create follow-up questions that dig deeper into the topic (Trauntschnig, 2020).

As a result of technology failing at times, I used a smartphone during every digital interview to take precautionary measures and ensure there is another source for recording the interviews (Matthews et al., 2018). To understand each participant’s perspective and experience holistically, three (3) online/in-depth virtual interviews using
Microsoft Teams were first used to collect data. Table provides the timeline for each interview and the length of each interview: time and page wise.

### Table 3-2. Data collection sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>1st Interview</th>
<th>2nd Interview</th>
<th>3rd Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>05/02/2021</td>
<td>05/24/2021</td>
<td>06/17/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Ibrahim</td>
<td>75 Minutes</td>
<td>120 Minutes</td>
<td>130 Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28 Pages</td>
<td>58 Pages</td>
<td>58 Pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>05/09/2021</td>
<td>05/23/2021</td>
<td>06/13/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Maryam</td>
<td>85 Minutes</td>
<td>105 Minutes</td>
<td>120 Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37 Pages</td>
<td>51 Pages</td>
<td>(30 +24) Pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>05/25/2021</td>
<td>05/27/2021</td>
<td>06/23/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Fatin</td>
<td>80 Minutes</td>
<td>100 Minutes</td>
<td>90 Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35 Pages</td>
<td>45 Pages</td>
<td>41 Pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>04/30/2021</td>
<td>05/22/2021</td>
<td>06/18/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Shamsa</td>
<td>80 Minutes</td>
<td>90 Minutes</td>
<td>120 Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31 Pages</td>
<td>36 Pages</td>
<td>58 Pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>05/05/2021</td>
<td>05/26/2021</td>
<td>06/18/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Faiyza</td>
<td>75 Minutes</td>
<td>125 Minutes</td>
<td>115 Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35 Pages</td>
<td>57 Pages</td>
<td>57 Pages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is worth noting, due to the time difference, most of the interviews (13) were conducted between 12 AM to 5 AM Florida time. Only one participant picked 3 PM for the first interview and 9 AM for the second and third interviews Florida time. The interviews lasted between 75 to 130 minutes except for one participant. This participant thought she shared all the documents before the third interview. During the third interview, she realized that the documents were not sent. As a result, we agreed to schedule another short interview to cover the remaining documents.

### Documents

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), documents are generally referred to as “written, visual, digital and physical materials” (p. 162) that could be helpful to the study. Caulley (1983) defines a document as a source of information, including written documents, photographs, posters, maps, oral recordings, etc. Researchers and experts classify documents and other artifacts in several ways: “personal document, public
records, popular culture, visual documents, physical materials and artifacts” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 163).

Glesne (1999) believes the addition of documents is useful for corroborating observations and interviews to make more trustworthy findings. Also, the records could provide further insight and information that might not otherwise have been accessed (Miller & Alvarado, 2005). Beyond corroboration, they may raise questions about researchers’ hunches and thereby shape new directions for observations and interviews” (Glesne, 1999, p. 58). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the use of personal documents can allow researchers to gain more perspectives about the participants and how they make meaning from their personal experiences.

Bowen (2009) provides some main uses for documents in research. First, they could provide contexts, including background information and historical insights about the participants. Also, documents can help guide the other primary data collection methods. For example, documents could help researchers generate questions for interviews. Some of the questions in the third round of interviews were derived from scanning and skimming the participants’ personal documents. Thirdly, documents can function as “supplementary research data” (Bowen, 2009, p. 30). In addition, they could serve as a way to “track change and development” (p. 31). For this study, I obtained documents from the participants at different stages of their lives after returning to Oman to track change and/or development in their academic lives and better understand how they, “fared over time” (p. 31). Merriam (2002) declares that this method provides an objective source of information about college policy compared to other data collection methods, such as interviews. Documents can also be helpful for triangulation between various data sources (Marishane, 2013; Patton, 2002; Ticknor, 2010). Lastly,
documents can function as a verifying tool when sources appear contradictory (Bowen, 2009).

For this study, I mainly used text-based personal documents that include (former and recent) copies of research articles, course syllabi, rubrics, exam papers, and dissertation or research supervised by the participants. These documents are secondary data sources that serve as a “complement to other primary research methods” (Bowen, 2009, p. 29) including interviews, observations, and field notes. Most importantly, using information in the documents would probably help me, “form connections with information gained in the interview” (Watson, 2014, p. 53); thus, more questions might be added or some proposed questions for the interviews might be altered, based on these possibly formed connections. The documents in this study were used to cross-check some of the assertions made in the interviews. The documents also supported the data collection by providing examples of possible Western epistemologies, epistemes and knowledge. Most significantly, the document analysis functioned as a tool to provide evidence and examples of change or development in their academic lives or how they might have “fared over time” (Bowen, 2009, p. 31).

Secondary Data Resources: Reflective Journals

Reflective journals help researchers write down any thoughts, ideas, reflections, hunches, moments of struggle, and learning opportunities (Bigelow, 2010; Glesne, 2011) because it is “important to capture these analytic thoughts when they occur” (Glesne, 2011, p. 189). Not only that, but reflective journals can help researchers discover other ideas that should be examined after the initial data analysis (Primeau, 2003). Like documents, reflective journals could help generate additional questions for interviews used for this study (Bhattacharya, 2008). Medved and Turner (2011) and
Primeau (2003) encourage researchers to maintain reflective journals during their research journey because these journals could provide researchers with a chance to engage in critical self-evaluation about how their identities and subjectivities as scholars and individuals might affect analyzing collected data. The process mentioned above is part of reflexivity, a qualitative research strategy that “addresses our subjectivity as researchers related to people and events we encounter in the field” (Primeau, 2003, p. 9). Establishing trustworthiness was discussed in detail later in Chapter 3. As is the case of qualitative studies, this study was never devoid of my subjectivities, nor was I planning it to be. Therefore, keeping these journals helped me critically examine how my assumptions and values could impact collecting and analyzing data. I kept reflective journals throughout the data collection and data analysis. The following section would discuss how the collected data was analyzed. There are some samples of these journals in Appendix G.

**Procedure for Conducting Interviews**

Seidman (2019) suggests researchers leave three days to a week between each interview to provide the participants a chance to ponder over the previous interview(s) and maintain a connection to the ideas discussed. This arrangement allowed me to work with the participants for two to three weeks, to reduce any possible unexpected circumstances and establish "a substantial relationship" (Seidman, 2019, p. 27) between researchers and participants since I do not really know the participants (see Interview Protocol in Appendix E).

**Interview 1**

The first interview had two main objectives: 1) to “establish the context of the participants’ experience” (Schuman, 1982, as cited in Seidman, 2019, p. 21) as well as
to build rapport and a relationship with the participants. Similarly, Polkinghorne (2005) suggested that the first interview should establish trust and build rapport and relationships with participants without accurately recalling the experiences. Therefore, this interview focused on learning about the participant’s educational background and having a general sense of the participants’ experiences in the West, and identifying, if possible, what Adler’s cell coping-mode scheme each participant has adopted after returning to Oman. Seidman (2019) suggests this first interview should not last more 90 minutes to get to know the participants and establish a rapport. It is ethically essential to acknowledge that I adopted some interview questions from some previous studies (e.g., Baker, 2005; Dickinson, 2012; Lloyds, 2011; Messekher, 2017; Wilson, 2014), but I modified them to fit the purpose of this study. Table 3-3 below shows examples of the grand and probing questions for the first interview that “produce a vibrant sample of perceptions of a given behavior” (Marin & Marin, 1991, p. 76). (See APPENDIX E: Interview Protocol).

Table 3-3. Examples of Interview 1 Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Type</th>
<th>Examples of the questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grand</td>
<td>Tell me about yourself, your background; and your educational background?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probing</td>
<td>Why did you decide to go to that country/university? If you could go back in time, would you consider going to a non-Western university instead of the ones you joined? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarification</td>
<td>Could you help me understand what you meant when you said_______? Will you expand on your discussion of _______ a little bit more?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>Would you like to ask me any questions? Would you like to add any further information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview 2

The second interview aimed at focusing on the topic (impact of the Western epistemologies and epistemes and how Omani TEFL academic negotiated these
Western epistemologies and epistememes in their local contexts. Like the first interview, the second interview did not last more 90 minutes. This interview’s goal was to answer the main question and sub-question as well as to address the other theoretical lens: ways of knowledge transfer. Also, Block (2006) states that “analysis of the first interview will prepare the interviewer for the second interview” (p. 67) and this was true for asking more elaboration and clarification from the first interview as shown in Table 3-4 below. Table 3-4 below showed examples of the grand questions and probing questions for the second interview:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Type</th>
<th>Examples of the questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grand</td>
<td>Please tell me how your experience in the West shaped the way you teach and conduct research now. Please tell me what you think of the influence of Western education and ways of knowing on your (Omani) context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probing</td>
<td>How relevant is what you have learned to your current work setting? Why is it the case? Please elaborate. In your view, what gives Western knowledge legitimacy, credibility, or value? How often do you encourage your students to challenge Western materials and approaches? What do you think of using international tests in Oman?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarification</td>
<td>Could you help me understand what you meant when you said________? Could you expand on your discussion of ________ a little bit more?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>Would you like to add any further information about anything?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is ethically essential to acknowledge that I adopted some interview questions from some previous studies (e.g., Baker, 2005; Dickinson, 2012; Messekher, 2017; Wilson, 2014), but I modified them to fit the purpose of this study.

**Interview 3**

Given the focus of the leading research question and sub-question, it is clear that documentary sources could provide some important insights to understand why certain
(Western) approaches, assessment tools, curriculum ideas, and discourses were privileged in the lives of these Omani TEFL teacher educators. In contrast, others were excluded or not privileged. For the third interview, I planned to generate questions from my document analysis in relation to the impact of Western epistemologies and epistemes on the participants and identify some examples or evidence in their documents. This interview functioned as a chance for the participants on the factors that help/have helped them determine what decisions to make in their settings. In the final or third interview session, each participant was invited to reflect on the meaning of their experience, which will help generate some recommendations and suggestions in order to improve the Omani context. Table 3-5 below showed examples of the grand and probing questions used for the third interview.

Table 3-5. Examples of Interview 3 Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Type</th>
<th>Examples of the questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grand</td>
<td>Please tell me how you go about what to teach and how you conduct research.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-5. Continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Type</th>
<th>Examples of the questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Probing</td>
<td>How often do you use non-Western materials in your classes? I have noticed in document X you used….., why is that? I have noticed in document Y you used more of ….than other ……., why is that? You said last time that you do..., but document Z shows that …, could you elaborate on this? Please tell me why you selected more Western references for your article.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarification</td>
<td>Could you help me understand what you meant when you mentioned_____? I would be grateful if you could elaborate on _______ a little bit more?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>Before we finish, do you like to add anything? Is there anything you think I should have asked but did not ask you? Would you like to ask me any questions?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the focus on the participants’ personal documents in this interview, I
asked them some questions that arose from the first two interviews. These questions allowed for elaboration and clarification of participants’ previous responses. It is worth noting that I separately emailed each participant to share their socio-economic status (SES) as well their parents’ educational background to check if there was any impact of these factors on the participants’ responses and views.

**Researcher and Participants Power Relationship**

Although there was not an age difference between my (in early forties) and the participants (female participants, who ranged in age from mid-thirties to late thirties and the only male who was in his late forties), I approached my participants with humility, knowing their extensive academic and professional experiences, but I also did extensive research about the topic to do justice to their stories by placing them in the proper context. Also, I attempted to maintain the approach of the researcher–participant coproduction of knowledge (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009) to humanize my interview approach (Fredricks, 2019; Maguire, 1987; Wolf, 1996).

This democratic and humanizing approach created several moments of democratic exchange (Gergen & Gergen, 2000; Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009), “unstructured, informal, anti-authoritative, and nonhierarchical atmosphere” (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009, p. 281), sharing personal details and stories that are accompanied by different emotions [e.g., excitement, laughter, sad memories] (Yassour-Borochowitz, 2012). For instance, Dr. Ibrahim asked me to introduce myself before sharing his introduction about himself. Also, Dr. Fatin asked me why it took me five years to start my master’s degree and 6 years to start my PhD degrees. When the participants appeared to overlap in terms of the details of their experiences (e.g., place of
graduation, years of graduation, years of starting the programs with mine, I was tempted to share some similar incidents after each participant’s story. Some of the participants shared personal details about their experiences that I was very appreciative of them for trusting me with these unique moments. (These stories were either modified not to reveal the participant’s or general ideas or themes were only shared in the findings of this study).

Also, some participants sought some personal and professional advice based on my personal experience. There were some moments of laughter, excitement throughout the interviews. One participant was hesitant to participate initially. Still, she was very excited to share her stories after the first interview because of the relaxing atmosphere that I tried to maintain. One of the participants described me as “You listen, you listen to people when they are talking, and this is part of being an interviewer” (Dr. Faiyza, INTVW3, LN1238-1239). When I asked participants for elaboration and clarification on some ideas, I kept using phrases like “if you wish to share” or “if it is okay with you to elaborate more” to empower participants to drive the interviews to educate the researcher (me) and take the lead to narrate and interpret their realities in their voices (Fine, 2017; Shaw, 2013). Although I conducted all interviews in English because of the participants’ linguistic competence, I was open and flexible for the use of Arabic in the interviews. The goal was to maintain the richness of ideas and participant stories, which could be lost in translation (Chen, 2014). Some participants used some proverbs or famous sayings in Arabic where I later provided the English translation in the final scripts. When they were trying to recall a word in English, I tried my best to give them
more time to remember those words before providing possible suggestions by saying, “do you mean...?”

**Note on Transcription**

Otter.ai was used to transcribe to reduce typing time. I followed these steps while using Otter.ai. Otter.ai is a Los Altos, California-based technology company that “creates technologies and products that make information from important voice conversations instantly accessible and actionable” (Otter.ai, 2021, para. 1).

First of all, two copies of each interview were downloaded from a Microsoft server in my personal computer that opens only with a password. After downloading the audio copies of each interview, I deleted all these files from the Microsoft server. Each interview was first listened to re-familiarize the researcher with the overall content and to deepen the relationship with the data, which was essential to the next steps of analysis (Giorgi, 2009). After that, each interview was uploaded to Otter.ai. Otter.ai only shows the involved speaker as speaker 1 and speaker 2 as shown in Figure 3-3 below displays how speakers appear on otter.ai.

![Otter.ai screenshot](image)

**Figure 3-3.** A screenshot from on otter.ai of how the names of the speakers are shown.

Although I conducted all of the interviews in English, all participants sometimes codeswitched between Arabic and English and Arabic to emphasize some ideas and/or
to give examples. During comparing the vocal content with the digital transcripts generated by the Otter application, I noticed that Otter.ai had some difficulty transcribing those Arabic words, phrases, or sentences. Also, Otter.ai had difficulty recognizing some of what the participants and I were trying to say in English since we (participants and I) are not native English speakers. Thus, after Otter completed the transcriptions, I listened to each interview to make corrections or add clarifications as notes, as necessary. When participants used Arabic, I translated these words, phrases or sentences following each one. During the corrections, I attempted to maintain the authenticity of what was being said by each participant. Therefore, I decided to keep doubles and triplicates of words and bracketing laughter (e.g., [Laughter]). Additionally, I did not remove any gap fillers (e.g., I mean, you know, umm, ahh, like, and so on). However, I removed every possible identifier from the transcription by putting three dots (…) or using a very general description. An example of that is “I graduated from [ certain name] was replaced with either …, or a local higher institution or X institution.

Once I made all the corrections, the given identifiers (speaker 1 and speaker 2 by otter.ai) were later replaced with coded names as shown on Figure 3-4 below, but only after downloading them as word documents in my personal computer to that only opens with a password that I only know.

**Date-and-Time**: Sunday, May 9th, 2021, at 11:00 PM-Oman-time (3:00 PM-Florida)

**Note**: This is where the interview begins.

1. **Interviewer (Ahmed Al-Matani)**: Salaam-Alaikum.

2. **Interviewee (Dr. Maryam)**: Waalykumasalam.

3. **Interviewer (Ahmed Al-Matani)**: Before we start, I would like to ask you permission to -

Figure 3-4. Screenshot of an interview transcript using coded (not actual) names.
I asked each participant to provide feedback on their interview transcripts. After receiving the feedback and comments, I made corrections accordingly. It is crucial to emphasize that these coded names never used the participants’ actual names. The goal was to ensure the anonymity of the participants. Because the exported files from otter.ai were slightly messy, as shown in Figure 3-5 below, I had to work diligently on editing and formatting the exported original files from otter.ai. to bring to the final look as shown in the previous Figure 3-3.

Figure 3-5. Screenshot of the sample of the exported original files from otter.ai.

I deleted Otter ai files permanently after the study. All data, including recordings of interviews, transcriptions, and participants’ personal documents, were stored on protected-password physical and digital drives. As per IRB protocol, these will be stored for five years, then deleted.

Procedure for Collecting Documents

Although I asked every participant to share a set of personal documents (e.g., research articles, syllabus notes, exam papers, students’ work, rubrics, and any related documents), not everyone could share the same set of personal documents. As stated
earlier, the purpose of analyzing the participants’ personal documents was to see if there were discrepancies or correspondences between what the participants said and what the documents indicated. Table 3-6 shows the details of the submitted documents by each participant:

Table 3-6. Details of the submitted documents by each participant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coded name</th>
<th>Research article</th>
<th>Syllabus note</th>
<th>Exam papers</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Ibrahim</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 Course Appraisals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 Student’s Practicum Feedback Forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Lesson Preparation with Feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 Student Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Maryam</td>
<td>2 Articles</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 Midterm</td>
<td>3 Rubrics and Assessment Criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Book</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Final</td>
<td>Forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Test</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 Quizzes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Fatin</td>
<td>2 Articles</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 Online Quizzes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 In-Class Quizzes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Shamsa</td>
<td>3 Articles</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 finals</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 quiz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 midterms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Faiyza</td>
<td>6 Articles</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 Classroom Observation Form (1 is online)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Microteaching Evaluation Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Lesson preparation &amp; e-portfolio criteria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**General Comments About the Documents**

Everyone submitted research articles except Dr. Ibrahim. First, he was extensively involved in a lot of administrative responsibilities being the acting program director for all the six EFL programs and being the head for reviewing the ELT program in his institution. In addition to those administrative responsibilities, he was upset with the people in charge for not granting the faculty members their academic title after finishing their PhD. He felt there was no benefit from researching because officials do
not recognize the importance of such academic titles for PhD holders. However, he has been working on some research projects after finally being granted the academic title designation. His interest in qualitative research made him organize a national virtual forum entitled “Current Trends in Qualitative research in Applied Linguistics and TESOL in Oman: Facts and Realities” during June 2021.

Dr. Faiyza is the only participant who could publish articles during and after her PhD either individually or with her advisor or with other colleagues. As stated earlier, her fascination for assessment and testing, especially those she got exposed to in Australia, had led her to choose an assessment topic for her PhD. Therefore, most of her published research paper (not surprisingly) appear to center around testing, assessment, students’ portfolios, and other related topics. The other three participants (Dr. Shamsa, Dr. Fatin, and Dr. Maryam) were able to publish after completing their PhD and their published articles seemed to have emerged from their PhD topics. Although these participants submitted one or two articles to me, they had been waiting on some responses from publishers regarding other submitted articles. Surprisingly and worth mentioning, I found two published articles for Dr. Shamsa after finishing her master’s that she did not share with me. I recommended and encouraged her to revisit and rewrite them because they discussed important topics.

When scanning the submitted exams and tests (in the forms of finals, midterms, tests, or quizzes), they seem to be either summative or formative assessments with more focus on multiple choice and short-answer formats that appear to largely assess rote memorization and mastery of prescribed materials. Both Dr. Faiyza and Dr. Ibrahim did not share any exams or tests due to the nature of the classes (e.g., practicum and
research skills) they teach. Interestingly, Dr. Ibrahim appears to be a non-believer in final exams, which is evident in his statement, “When I came, I told them, I don't want final exam” (Dr. Ibrahim, INTVW2, LN229-230). Instead, he wanted his students to analyze real-life case studies and previous real-life student projects. It is noteworthy that the remaining documents/artifacts (e.g., rubrics, student’s work, lesson plans, PowerPoint slides, etc.) were categorized as “others” because they did not seem to belong to any of the main classifications (mainly research articles, syllabus notes, and exams/tests). Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 included a detailed discussion on these documents.

**Challenges in Data Collection**

Although I planned to recruit from the two TEFL institutions, I was unfortunately unsuccessful in doing so. I first contacted 3 participants who fully met the selection’s criteria from the curriculum and instruction department. After so many follow-up emails, two have unfortunately rejected to participate in my study (e.g., being busy or thinking having 3 interviews is too much). The third participant expressed an initial interest, but she surprisingly stopped responding to my follow-up emails. I thought Ramadhan (month of fasting for Muslims from mid of April to middle of May) and short working hours during Ramadhan might have been the main reasons for having late or no responses from the potential participants. However, the situation remained the same after Ramadhan. After consulting the committee chair, I expanded the circle of participants to include more participants who fit the criteria and are involved in preparing Omani EFL teachers but from other departments. Unfortunately, I only had one response declining to participate in my study.
Therefore, I was left with the other institution. I also experienced some late issues with the administrative approval since the person-in-charge was on leave. Thankfully, one of my friends who knew that person casually asked her to look into my request to approve data collection. It took about two weeks to finish the approval process in this institution. After getting the administrative approval, I contacted the 6 potential participants who seemed to fit the selection criteria fully. One participant unluckily was recently asked to retire due to some unemployment issues as well as replacement and succession plans, so he could not participate. After so many follow-up emails, only four (out of the five remaining) agreed to participate in my study. When I continued getting no response from the first institution, I persuaded the fifth participant to be part of my study, although she was busy. Consequently, I ended up recruiting five (5) participants, but they were all from one institution. This slight drop in the number of participants did not affect the findings because qualitative studies do not aim for generalizability. Even two participants can enrich a study’s findings.

Last but not least, I experienced some challenges with collecting the documents. Even though I asked every participant to share a set of personal documents (e.g., research articles, syllabus notes, exam papers, students’ work, rubrics, and any related documents), not everyone could share the same set of personal documents. Also, some of the documents were submitted one day before the third interview despite several reminder emails before the interviews and after the first two interviews. This was because the participants were extremely busy preparing for their final exams, preparing for the qualitative research symposium, or being involved in accreditation work. This resulted in asking some participants more questions than the others. However, most
importantly, I am endlessly grateful to every participant for setting aside some time from their hectic schedules to make this study possible. A significant challenge in this step was to review the individually selected physical artifacts to establish connections in the documents to the study. Since each participant submitted different types of documents, this step required multiple reviews to ensure the selected information met study context while also ensuring that information not selected was outside of the study context

Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Saldana, 2013; Stake, 2009)

Data Analysis

Flick (2013) defines data analysis as “the classification and interpretation of linguistic (or visual) material to make statements about implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning-making in the material and what is represented in it” (p. 6). Data analysis aims to describe the experiences in detail, explain the conditions and similarities or differences among cases or experiences and develop a theory of the phenomenon under studies (Flick, 2013). As suggested by Creswell (2013), the primary purpose of data analysis is to make sense of data that should be continuously reviewed in order to accomplish saturation in data analysis which is “the stage where the researcher can’t produce new information into the phenomenon that is being studied” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 199).

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) also remind researchers that data analysis is “ongoing with an indefinite extension and simultaneous” and requires a lot of time since the researchers are expected to “go back and forth between different processes and approaches” (p. 202) to make sense of the data. They also explain that findings could be in various forms like “descriptive accounts, themes, categories across the data or theories to explain the data” (p. 202). Berg (2004) argues that how data are collected

139
and analyzed is subjective because researchers use their own abilities to collect and analyze data. It is vital to understand that there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ way to collect and analyze data; therefore, flexibility must be created to function as a platform for any arising analytic changes (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Trochim (2006) classifies methods of reasoning into two “broad methods: inductive and deductive approaches” (par. 1).

When researchers move from specific to general, the study is identified as inductive. However, starting with general and ending with specific means using the deductive approach (Trochim, 2006). The inductive approach fits studies based on experiences, while the deductive approach fits studies based on rules and widely accepted principles. Creswell and Clark (2007) believe that inferential studies tend to work “from top-down” where theory leads data. In contrast, inductive arguments are bottom-up, where the views presented by the participants lead the data analysis.

**Some Administrative Considerations**

For the data management, I started with transcription of the interviews with the help of otter.ai as stated earlier. Interview transcription is challenging because it is time-consuming, especially for novice researchers. My first plan was to transcribe myself, as soon as each interview was over to familiarize myself with the participants’ words, feelings, worldviews, and experiences (Patton, 2002). My second plan was to use otter.ai website (specialized in transcription) or human experts to help with the transcription. Due to time constraints, the second plan was executed, and I kept personal notes during data collection to reflect and document my observations. Some of the notes might help in generating questions for the interviews. Despite facing some challenges (e.g., difficulty detecting participants’ accent and mine, not recognizing Arabic words, working on editing the original file) using the otter.ai program, these
challenges offered me some golden chances. First, listening to and editing each interview allowed me to take notes while making corrections. Also, I was able to spend more time with the data and immerse myself in my participants’ stories. These opportunities (challenges) helped me re-familiarize the researcher with the overall content to deepen the relationship with the data, which was important to the next steps of analysis (Giorgi, 2009).

Pseudonyms, as shown previously in Table 3-1, were used to protect the participants’ identities. As suggested by American Educational Research Association (AERA, 2006), I adopted early analysis to “help inform subsequent data collection by, for instance, identifying categories of events, actions, or people for further analysis within the ongoing study or further study” (p. 37). This early analysis allowed me to interact with the data and helped me, as a beginner researcher “refine the research focus” (Chen, 2014, p. 60). Both the notes were taken by hand and the computer-assisted program NVivo 12 Plus allowed me to start a detailed analysis of the data.

As part of the data management, I organized all of the data collected so they became accessible and retrievable. I kept a hard copy of the data to avoid any technical breaches and failures. Saldaña (2011) emphasized the essence of keeping a backup of voice recordings and stored materials like interview transcripts, documents, and other important files. Each interview took place in English since the potential participants are most likely to speak in English since they are competent and use English as a medium of instruction in their classes. Allowing the flexibility to use Arabic is meant to maintain the richness of ideas and participant stories, which could be lost in translation (Chen, 2014). Translation from Arabic into English were used for reporting but not for analysis.
However, Arabic was allowed if some preferred to speak in Arabic. I was fortunate that all the participants decided to mainly use English. Therefore, there was no need for an expert as initially proposed to translate the interviews if conducted in Arabic. As stated earlier, these interviews will be audio-recorded using a smartphone in addition to the Zoom’s or Microsoft Team’s recording features. For this study, critical thematic analysis was the main approach in data analysis which is discussed in the next section.

**Overview about Critical Thematic Analysis (CTA)**

In his book *Qualitative Manifesto*, Denzin (2010) urges for a more critical turn in epistemology and methodology. Inspired by Denzin’s calls and building on the significant work of Owen’s (1984) criteria of recurrence, repetition, and forcefulness and Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-step thematic DA framework, Chen and Lawless (2019) have decided to develop critical thematic analysis (CTA) in order to “examine the interrelationships between interview discourses, social practices, power relations, and ideologies” (p. 92) and to “analyze qualitative research data and everyday discourses from critical standpoints” (p. 93).

Chen and Lawless (2018) argue that CTA is not only about revealing the power of institutions, structures, and practices in constraining discourses, but it extends to emphasize how participants “resist institutional barriers” (p. 7). They acknowledge the contributions made by Braun and Clarke (2006). Still, these contributions lacked “critical specificity in connecting everyday discourses with larger social and cultural practices nested in unequal power relations” (p. 93). Most importantly, Chen and Lawless (2016, 2019) suggest that CTA can function as a theory and method because CTA can provide researchers with more flexibility in having a ‘more open framework’ (p. 92) to
accommodate more relevant topics about power and hegemony without the need to focus on a specific critical theory.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is different from CTA in that CDA reveals power relation embedded in texts by “deconstructing the form and function of the text” (Fairclough, 1992, as cited in Chen and Lawless, 2019, p. 94). This level of CDA is popular among linguists, and media studies experts, and this linguistic focus might be hard for non-linguistic researchers (Chen & Lawless, 2019). Also, Chen and Lawless (2019) assert that CDA is hard to be transferred to interview or observation data. Accordingly, they believe that CTA is a convenient tool to inductively analyze qualitative data like interviews, as is the case for this study, which uses interviews and documents as data. In short, Chen and Lawless (2019) argue that CTA can provide a two-step process: 1) to systematically find common phenomena among participants and 2) find examples of power relations, status-based hierarchies, and larger ideologies in the data.

**CTA Analysis Process**

Despite the popularity of using Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-step thematic approach among researchers (e.g., Allen et al., 2020; Efthimiadis-Keith & Lindegger, 2014; Erica et al., 2020; Farvi & Braun, 2017; Peterson et al., 2020), I decided to use Chen and Lawless’s CTA approach. The reason is that it centers power relation topics and ideologies around the analysis process, unlike those studies (e.g., Allen et al., 2020; Efthimiadis-Keith & Lindegger, 2014; Erica et al., 2020; Farvi & Braun, 2017; Peterson et al., 2020) that only mentioned their critical conclusions in the discussion section. My study focused on how Omani TEFL teacher educators educated in the West negotiated Western epistemologies and epistemes in their local context after returning home. Throughout the study, I tried to maintain the focus of the Western epistemologies
and epistemes, including the data analysis without “criticality out of the method itself” (Chen & Lawless, 2019, p. 93). Chen and Lawless (2019) argue that what makes CTA critical is “how intersecting macro-forces enable and constrain everyday discourses” (p. 95), including interviews.

As stated earlier, Chen and Lawless (2019) adopted Owen’s (1984) criteria of recurrence (meaning “when meaning is repeated in a manuscript, not necessarily using the same words” (Chen & Lawless, 2019, p. 95)), repetition (“the specific reappearance of key words or phrases” (p. 95)), and forcefulness (“the importance that participants assign to their language, via their tone, volume, and inflection” (p. 95)), whenever available and possible) in developing their CTA. They suggest using a two-step coding process: open coding and closed coding to conduct data analysis.

In the open coding ([Reveal stage as called by Chen & Lawless (2019)]), I was guided by Owen’s (1984) criteria of recurrence, repetition, and forcefulness using the collected data (interviews and documents) to identify and reveal any “discursive patterns important, salient, or meaningful to our participants either individually or collectively” (Chen & Lawless, 2019, p. 98) about their social worlds and how the experiences were similar or different among the participants. This stage is directed to answer the question of: \textit{What was repeated, recurrent and forceful in the participants?} As a researcher, I was attentive to listen to every participant with “respect, no judgment or threatening attitude and with sensitive observation” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 129) to understand what the participants wished to reveal at this stage (Chen & Lawless, 2019).

In the second phase of coding (closed), the goal, as suggested by Chen and Lawless (2018), is to answer the question of “What hegemonic ideologies, positions of
power, or Western epistemologies and epistemes are repeated, recurrent and forceful in the data collected?” (p. 97). As suggested by Chen and Lawless (2018, 2019), I tried to “interlink the data to discourses with larger societal ideologies” (p. 98) by asking questions about “what the emerged theme might be doing or how it is functioning” (p. 98). In this stage, I not only focused on what the participants revealed but also on the concealed topics in relation to dominant ideologies and issues and why they were concealed. After identifying enough patterns of repetition, recurrence, and forcefulness from the data, I started generating themes around Western epistemologies and epistemes and their impact on the participants academic lives and decisions in their contexts.

Categorizing Data

Note of using NVivo 12 plus for data categorization

NVivo 12 plus, computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, was used to categorize themes. NVivo 12 Plus does not offer a pre-code list relevant to the topic; therefore, emerged themes were generated while reviewing and revising data from the interviews and documents several times. NVivo 12 Plus is helpful in those cases where the participant opts to speak Arabic because Arabic and English are among the possible uploaded languages in the application. Also, NVivo 12 Plus is provided by the University of Florida on its application page for free to students and faculty (the University of Florida UFAapps, n.d). This program or application allowed me as a researcher to provide notes which could be linked to other files. Throughout the process of analyzing the data, I was guided by Chen and Lawless’s (2018, 2019) advice to center power relation topics and ideologies around the analysis process and not wait until the discussion section to discuss these critical topics and conclusions.
According to Chen (2014), another important benefit of using NVivo 12 Plus is its efficiency in retrieving data. The use of this application could help in reducing the number of categories or codes (Chen, 2014). With more and continuous reviews for the emerging codes or themes, fewer, more prominent themes should emerge to help in presenting the findings (Chen, 2014). Figure 3-6 below showed a screenshot from NVivo 12 Plus for the initial hunches, which were reorganized in Table 3-7 below for ease of following the sequence:

![NVivo 12 Plus data categorization and key themes](image)

Figure 3-6. NVivo 12 Plus data categorization and key themes

It is pertinent to note that submitting different types of documents by each participant was a significant challenge in data analysis to establish connections in the documents, which will be discussed in the data analysis section. Despite those challenges with the network to access NVivo12 Plus files, the program generally helped
sort and save the data into relevant codes. NVivo12 Plus helped code both the interviews and the participants’ personal documents, which were in a PDF format.

For analysis, I combined all five participants’ interviews (a total of 15 interviews, three for each participant) into one document to deductively analyze and code the themes guided by my theoretical frameworks and inductively by being open to any arising themes from the data. In addition to the 15 interviews, I had different documents for each participant, as shown below in Table 3-6. Using the Nodes option, I was able to organize the themes hierarchically based on the relationships between these nodes, as shown in Figure 3-7, which were reorganized in Table 3-7 below for ease of following the sequence.

![Figure 3-7. NVivo 12 Plus key themes with sub-themes using NVivo nodes](image_url)
I followed Wahl’s (2018) idea in generating the final theme using NVivo 12 Plus. First, the participants’ responses were organized into groups based on similar content guided by the interview questions and literature review. Then, these groups were divided into sub-groups. The emerging themes were a result of building up within these groups. After reorganizing these groups, I ended up with four final clusters identified as key themes as shown later in Table 3-8.

**Generating the initial (hunches) codes**

Gläser and Laudel (2013) recommended removing data that is repetitive or not relevant. The data included some themes that were irrelevant to the goal of the study. Therefore, they were excluded. For instance, there were some personal accounts which were mainly to build rapport and a relationship with the participants, which were not included in the analysis. For instance, two of the participants graduated from the same institution that I graduated from during our undergraduate studies in Oman. Therefore, we (these two participants and I) attempted to recall the names of some of our classes and teachers. Also, some participants shared certain religious and cultural views about certain topics, but they requested removing such views from the analysis. Also, the data had some information about gained knowledge, but it was not fully included because it did not directly fit the critical scope of this study. For instance, the participants shared some examples of both tacit and explicit knowledge and skills (e.g., basic knowledge about their majors in linguistics, and academic writing), but those examples did not directly fall under the main core concept, *Western Epistemes and Epistemologies in an Omani TEFL Teacher Education Context*, or its themes. As a result, they were included as minor findings since the participants did not elaborate more on these areas. Using
NVivo 12 plus, Table 3-7 below depicted the initial hunches, codes, and themes before being refined:

Table 3-7. Illustration of the initial hunches (themes) before being refined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hunch 1: Ways of knowledge transfer and its challenges</th>
<th>Hunch 2: Ways of adopting, resisting, and negotiating Western epistemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What Kinds (Tacit vs Explicit)</td>
<td>• Resisting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Target (Intra-organizational vs. Inter-organizational level)</td>
<td>o Resisting but with reservations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mechanisms of Knowledge Transfer</td>
<td>o Not Resisting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Replication</td>
<td>• Negotiating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Adaptation</td>
<td>o With Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Resisting</td>
<td>o With Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Challenges when transferring knowledge</td>
<td>• Adopting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Studently</td>
<td>o Semi-adoption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Societal</td>
<td>o Full Adoption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Official</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Institutional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Financial Barriers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bureaucratic Barriers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collegial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hunch 4: Reasons for choosing teaching profession
- Personal
- Family preference
- Social pressure
- Convenience reasons
- Administrative rules

Hunch 5: Views about Non-Western Education System
- General Impression: Positive or Negative
- Non-Western Materials, Skills and Tools
- Non-Western Academics

Hunch 6: Illuminating Participants' Stories based on Adler's model (Resocialized, Rebellious, Proactive, or/and Passive)
- What Data Said
- Participants Views

Hunch 7: Forms of Western Epistemes and epistemologies in the Omani context
- Use of Western tools and materials vs. Non-Western ones
- Nativespeaksersim Ideology
- Individual Perspectives on Minoritized Language and Arabic vs. Dominant Language
- Impulsion on Western Ideologies (External or/and Internal)

Hunch 8: Skills and Practices adopted after returning Oman
- Academic:
  - o Critical thinking
  - o Academic writing
- Personal skills (e.g., Self-Development, Ownership, and Independence)

Hunch 9: Participants' Perception about the Western Experience
- General Impression: Positive or Negative
- Challenges: : Non-Academic & Academic
- Benefits : Non-Academic & Academic

Hunch 10: General Bureaucratic Hurdles while in participants’ context after their return:
- Financial
- Administrative

Hunch 11: Fascination of the West
- Individual Perceptions (not fully admitted admiration)
Deciding on the School Choice (Internal factors vs. external forces)

Hunch 12: Contradictory Perspectives (Change in Perspectives)
- What was said during the interviews
- What documents revealed
Refining the themes

Tables 3-8—3-10 below illustrated the final core concept, relevant themes, categories, codes, sub-code, and sub-sub-codes for this study using NVivo 12 Plus after being refined which involved carefully reading and re-reading transcripts and examining the documents using, before organizing the data into four larger thematic categories using NVivo 12 Plus.

Table 3-8. Theme 1: Hegemony of Western epistemologies & epistemes in participants’ TEFL context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>What data used</th>
<th>Research question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Hegemony of Western Epistemologies & Epistemes in Participants’ TEFL Context | ▪ Interviews 2 and 3  
▪ Participants’ documents  
▪ Note: To analyze these data, both deductive (guided by the literature) and inductive approaches were used. | This is to help answer the study’s (main and sub) questions. |

- Category: Excessive reliance on Western experts and expertise
  - Code: Hiring experts in several Omani public higher education entities (e.g., universities, for accreditation processes, and in conducting international tests in Omani institutions’ premises)
  - Code: Use of Western teaching methodologies, teaching materials and testing materials
    - Sub-code: no clear distinction between ESL and EFL (viewed the same, only require some level of adaptation)
    - Sub-code: Textbooks used
    - Sub-code: Exams
      - Sub-sub code: Relying on ILETS or similar tests for assessment & recruitment
      - Sub-code: Textbooks
      - Sub-sub code: Textbooks from Western publishing companies (e.g., Oxford, Cambridge)
      - Sub-sub code: Artificial adaptation to the local culture (publishers claiming textbooks designed for Middle Eastern students) (e.g., names, places but several topics are Western-oriented)
    - Sub-code: Knowledge and skills (e.g., Critical thinking Ownership & independence)
    - Sub-sub code: How to assess that? Using Western/ international measures and exams
  - Code: Seeking Western recognition (via accreditation and affiliation)
  - Code: valuing elite bilingual/multilingualism
  - Code: according greater value and recognition to Western institutions
    - Sub-code: Internationally: seeking international accreditation and affiliation
    - Sub-code: Locally: evidence of extensive use of Western Standards for Benchmarking
Table 3-9. Theme 2: Negotiating Western epistemologies and epistemes in participants’ setting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>What data used</th>
<th>Which research question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Negotiating Western epistemologies and epistemes in participants’ setting</td>
<td>Interviews 2 and 3</td>
<td>Main Research question: Ways by participants in negotiating Western epistemes and epistemologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants’ documents (e.g., syllabi notes, exams, quizzes, published articles)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Note: To analyze these data, both deductive and inductive approaches were used.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Category: Challenges Participants Faced during their Western Experiences
  - Code: Academic: (e.g., understanding system, advisors).
  - Code: Social: (understanding the culture).
  - Code: Psychological: (e.g., initial stress and depressive symptoms and anxiety).

- Category: Participants holding fascination for the West and negative attitude towards non-western
  - Code: Forms of this fascination:
    - Sub-code: Choosing Western institutions over non-Western ones
    - Sub-code: Choosing Western advisors or those follow Western approaches
    - Sub-code: Viewing Western education as better quality despite the challenges participants faced in the West
    - Sub-code: Believing in and valuing Elite bi/multilingualism (European languages):
      - Sub-sub-code: Good for the economy, creating jobs, attracting tourists
      - Sub-sub-code: offered as a major (required) or elective course in school & higher education
      - Sub-sub-code: Availability of cultural centers offering such courses and languages
    - Sub-code: Valuing Western concepts and skills (e.g., critical thinking, conducting research based on Western norms).
    - Sub-code: Adopting Nativespeakersim Ideology
      - Sub-sub-code: non-native speaker accent: viewed as a deficit
      - Sub-sub-code: Belief in the need of recruiting native speakers when resources available
      - Sub-sub-code: Participants seem to exhibit a marked tendency to sound like native speakers

Table 3-10 below illustrated theme 3 with its categories and codes:

Table 3-10. Theme 3: Limitation in empowerment and involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>What data used</th>
<th>Which research question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Limitation in empowerment</td>
<td>Interviews 2 and 3</td>
<td>What tensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Note: To analyze these data, both deductive and inductive approaches were used.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Category: External forces: Participants have no control
  - Code: imposed policies
  - Code: imposed reform
  - Code: Imposed Curricula
  - Code: Imposed exams
  - Code: Imposed regulations
  - Code: availability of resources and services

- Category: internal forces: Participants have no control
  - Code: personal convictions based on personal experiences
  - Code: family influence
  - Code: colleagues’ influence
  - Code: students’ influence

- Category: Results
  - Code: limitation in empowerment
  - Code: feeling frustration
  - Code: less involvement
Tables 3-8 through 3-10 above illustrated how the themes, categories, codes, sub-codes, and sub-codes were refined to show how they are related. There were 11 hunches (initial themes) as shown previously in Table3-7. By the end of the deductive and inductive analysis and refining process, this organization process led to one main core concept named Western Epistemes and Epistemologies in an Omani TEFL Teacher Education Context and a final coding scheme with three (3) higher order themes: [1] hegemony of Western epistemologies & epistememes in participants’ TEFL context, [2], negotiating Western epistemologies and epistememes in participants’ setting , [and [3] limitation in empowerment (All the themes would be discussed in detail in Chapter 5).

Also, each theme was broken into categories and leading to different number of codes that were further subdivided into sub-codes with sub-sub-codes in some of the themes. For the theme of the coded data provided rich examples of the relationship between themes, categories, codes and sub-codes and sub-sub-codes. As an example of such a relationship is theme three, Hegemony of Western Epistemologies & Epistemes in Participants’ TEFL Context :1) continuing reliance on Western experts, 2) excessive use of Western teaching and testing materials, 3) valuing elite bilingual/multilingualism and 4) according greater value and recognition to Western institutions. As recommended by Jick (1979), wherever possible, I made a “within method” triangulation using the participants’ documents to check the validity of statements obtained in interviews.

**Linking data to research questions**

This study’s overarching goal is to answer the following research question and sub-question:
1. **Research question**: How do Omani TEFL educators trained in the West negotiate Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching [in an Oman teacher education context]?

4. **Sub-research question**: What (broadly internal and external) tensions are present for these Omani educators as they negotiated Western epistemologies in their scholarship and teaching?

Although the two questions are interrelated, each question aimed at addressing a different aspect of analysis. As suggested by Gläser and Laudel (2013), I linked, as shown in Table 3-8. above the collected data to the relevant research question since I was guided by the questions while collecting data. For the main research question, I heavily relied on what the participants said in the interviews to capture how the participants construed their versions of the story. In addition to what was said in the interviews, it was necessary to use within method triangulation to examine the participants’ documents to see if there were discrepancies or correspondences between what the participants said and what the documents indicated. Therefore, I examined most of the submitted documents (e.g., research articles, exams, syllabi notes, samples of students’ work such portfolios and final projects) to address the first question. On the other hand, interviews were mainly used to address the sub-question with a special reference to some relevant documents to address any examples of (broadly internal and external) tensions when negotiating Western epistemologies and epistemes in the participants’ context. For instances, some participants indicated some syllabi notes were passed down to them by coordinators. Therefore, the participants sometimes did not have the chance to share their input in such documents after being developed.

In short, the themes illustrated in the final coding scheme (see Table 3-8 above), which were both inductively and deductively derived from the collected data, would be used as the headings for Chapter 5 of the findings as well as Chapter 6, while Chapter 4
would only introduce the participants’ personal and professional background in the form of narratives.

**Researcher Positionality**

**Researcher’s Identity**

My experiences in both Oman and the United States have undoubtedly shaped how I think about the type of educator I am today. As a male, practicing Muslim, Omani, African Arab, multilingual, and international doctoral candidate, I am struggling more than ever with my sense of who I am as an Omani EFL teacher and future teacher educator. However, my understanding of these elements makes me think about how my accumulated assumptions and understandings could affect the way I might have perceived my participants’ experiences and how they made sense of their experiences and how they negotiated Western epistemologies and epistemes in their local context after returning home. I intended to explain my positionality after discussing the literature review and the methodology of this study in order to provide the readers with a clearer idea about the Omani context that has shaped Omanis like myself.

Oman’s history “stretches back over 100,000 years with a colonial history, where the island of Zanzibar used to be under the Omani empire rule until the 1960s” (Al-Issa, 2019, p. 264). Also, Oman shares marine borders with United Arab Emirates, Iran, and Pakistan. Therefore, it can be argued that Oman is not an entirely homogeneous society due to several ethnicities and languages spoken. Not only that, but Oman has also been and continues to be significantly influenced by the tribal authority, which resulted in having a society based on "social stratification" (Al-Azri, 2013, p. 40), dividing people into higher and lower classifications. Omanis with African roots like myself seem to be among those who socially struggle in the Omani society from this social stratification.
system despite the existence of Article 17 in the Omani Basic Law that prohibits any form of discrimination based on “race, language, religion, or ethnicity” (Al-Azri, 2013, p. 7).

I am Omani African Arab, but I was born in Kuwait because my father had to leave Oman to get a job in Kuwait when Oman was not developed in the 1960s before finally settling down in Oman in 1987. A middle-class family raised me. My parents were not formally educated, but they attended religious schools to read Quran (Muslims’ religious scripture). Religiously speaking, I would like to believe that I am a moderate Muslim (“Multazam” in Arabic meaning religiously committed Muslim but not radical/extraordinarily conservative and not too liberal). Unfortunately, being a Multazam is usually equated by some Omanis with being incompatible with mastering foreign languages that are considered as signs of being open-minded and exhibiting a high level of civilization, which are not expected to be part of people who are multazimeen (plural form of Multazam).

I studied in Omani classrooms where my instructors and classmates were mostly Muslim males. The medium of instruction for all the subjects was Arabic, and English was taught as a separate subject (45 minutes a day) starting from the fourth grade (I was about 10 years old). As the case of many Omani students, I was a passive receiver of knowledge where teachers are expected to bank that imposed knowledge by the MoE on both the teachers and students into my head. Challenging teachers’ views or ideas is culturally considered a sign of disrespect. This passiveness is not confined to high school settings. Still, it extends to the undergraduate or university stage, especially with teachers with Arab backgrounds, including Omanis, although some were educated
in the West. Moving to the United States to earn my master’s and Ph.D. degrees, I found myself in another new context that influenced me personally and academically.

I graduated with a master’s degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) from the US. I am currently a PhD candidate in curriculum and instruction with an ESOL and Bilingual Education emphasis in the US. I experienced some transformations during my master’s and PhD programs. I took classes about Multilingualism, Critical Pedagogy, Teaching Adults, Critical Race Theory, and Teaching Adults, to name a few, and taking these classes has allowed me to engage in heated and passionate discussions. Also, I had written papers that were centered on different topics that are hardly discussed in the Omani context. I was exposed to issues of hegemony in knowledge production and the impact of Western epistemologies and epistemes on developing countries. Being exposed to diverse backgrounds has helped me to be more open and strive to learn about new cultures, and more importantly, to respect other cultures more. Being immersed in the US educational system and being in touch with professors (e.g., all my committee members and other professors) with critical perspectives have shifted me from being a passive receiver of knowledge to becoming an active learner who loves to ask many questions channels his ideas with more confidence and pay more attention to these Western epistemologies and epistemes. All of these experiences (past and current) have impacted me and would most likely influence how I examined and interpreted the findings of this study.

**Researcher as Insider- Outsider**

Researcher’s positioning is about deciding where someone stands concerning others (Merriam, Johnson-Bailey, Lee, Lee, Ntseane, & Muhamad, 2001) because of their characteristics, such as gender, race, affiliation, age, sexual orientation,
immigration status, personal experiences, linguistic tradition, beliefs, biases, preferences, theoretical, political, and ideological stances, and emotional responses to the participant (Bradbury-Jones, 2007; Finlay, 2002; Horsburgh, 2003). I hold a “status set” as an insider and an outsider, but only partially: I am neither a complete insider nor a complete outsider (Chavez, 2008). Milligan (2014) calls people with such status sets “Insider-outsider-inbetweeners” (p. 249). Milligan seems to agree with other scholars (Hellawell, 2006; Olson, 1977; Thomson & Gunter, 2010) who are “against the fixed and dichotomous notions of insiderness and outsiderness in conducting educational research” (p. 250).

Accordingly, I, as a partial insider, share some commonalities with the participants, such as religion (maybe different sects), language(s) (but some might speak languages other than Arabic and English), nationality (the participants and I are all Omanis). Partially sharing these commonalities would probably make me “sensitive” (Conant, as cited in Merton, 1972, p. 32) to the participants and their possible reactions. Also, being an insider might help easily build a rapport with participants (Richie, 1995) and might increase the trust level between us (Berger, 2016). On the other hand, I was a partial outsider, too. My potential participants differ in terms of age, years of experience, the countries of their education experience, and ethnicities. However, being an outsider was not always a bad thing; in fact, it allowed me, as a researcher, to ask some naïve questions which would let me to get detailed answers (Hellawell, 2006). Being aware of this possible shift between an insider and outsider helped me recognize and anticipate any tension that might take place. Therefore, I approached my participants with humility, knowing their extensive academic and professional
experiences as experts and scholars in their fields. At the same time, I did extensive research about the topic, so I could do justice to their stories by putting them in the proper context and comparing them to the larger, sociohistorical narratives of others who share similar experiences.

Knowing about my positionality made me aware that this research journey would not be easy. As a result, as a researcher, I did not assume that the participants would ignore who I am (religiously and socially) and just treat me as a researcher. My reflexivity as a researcher was the key to navigating this possible scenario by following Auerbach & Silverstein’s (2003) suggestion of “examining the way one’s own subjectivity influences one’s research” (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 27). Therefore, I did not assume that the participants would ignore who I am and consider me as a researcher. Auerbach & Silverstein (2003) urge researchers to recognize who they are, their values, research agenda in studying certain topics, and the impact of their personal experiences when conducting research. According to Auerbach & Silverstein (2003), revealing those unique perspectives allows other researchers to see the strength of the conclusions made by those who conducted the study (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). To bring this section to a close, as future scholars and educators after graduation, I was careful and realistic in the expectations of both my colleagues and students. In particular, I met them where they are now and steadily led them to the new change when they were ready to embrace that change (Vygotsky, 1989).

**Establishing Trustworthiness**

According to Creswell (2013), validation in qualitative studies is about striking a balance between maintaining accuracy in the findings and recognizing the experiences and biases of the researchers. Creswell (2013) considers this balance or validation a
strength in qualitative studies because “the extensive time spent in the field, the detailed thick description, and the closeness of the researcher to participants in the field, all add to the value or accuracy of a study” (p. 250). Validity in qualitative research (internal and external) and reliability have been replaced with trustworthiness and authenticity (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013). This study was based on a constructivist paradigm. My goal was to create new knowledge by understanding and interpreting the experiences of Omani teacher educators who were educated in the West and are in charge of preparing future Omani teachers of English after they return from their studies. Lincoln and Guba (1981) suggest four major concerns to ensure trustworthiness. These concerns are, credibility (truth value), transferability (applicability), consistency (dependability), and confirmability, all of which are described below.

Credibility

Credibility is about confidence in the truth value of the data and their interpretations to assure believability between the participants’ views constructed by the researcher. Credibility is essential throughout the study (data collection, data analysis and presentation of findings). Erlandson et al. (1993) suggest using prolonged engagement for credibility to allow the researcher to spend enough time understanding the context, which helped reduce the impact of the researcher’s assumptions and biases. Some approaches could be used to accomplish credibility. Erlandson et al. (1993) and Shenton (2004) urge triangulation to enhance the credibility of the study. As stated by Yin (2009), “the main asset of qualitative research is the use of various sources of evidence” (p. 101). This strategy of using several sources to collect data is called triangulation. This study employed multiple methods to collect data, including interviews, document analysis, and photo-elicitation. I used purposive sampling in this
study, one of the most common ways to find participants in qualitative research. However, my approach in selecting participants was randomly oriented because all participants should not have taught me.

Shenton (2004) also discusses the importance of member checks and review by experts to ensure credibility. Thus, I invited participants to do member checking. The purpose of member checking was to confirm the accuracy of the transcripts of their interviews. After receiving their feedback, I asked them to share their thoughts about the data analysis and interpretation. The member checking process began immediately after getting the institutional approval and getting each participant’s consent form by asking them to review the interview protocol and provide feedback and comments in Figure 3-8.

Figure 3-8. A snapshot of the email seeking feedback from participants on the interview’s protocol

Due to Covid-19 situation and the start of participants' summer annual vacation, unfortunately I did not get any feedback on that. However, when I was creating their introductory narratives, I emailed each participant asking them about their
socioeconomic status and their parents’ educational background as shown in Figure 3-9 below. Every participant responded after a couple of reminders to my request.

Figure 3-9. A snapshot of the email seeking information participants’ socioeconomic status

After finishing both preparing the interviews’ transcripts and participants’ personal narratives, I separately emailed each participant’s transcripts with the audio files for each interview along with her/his personal narrative for feedback or comments as shown in Figure 3-10 below:

Figure 3-10. A snapshot of the email seeking participants’ member-checking the narratives and interviews’ transcripts after the initial analysis.

Unfortunately, one responded with an email and another one responded a WhatsApp message approving both the personal narrative and the interviews’
transcript. This negative response was expected because covid-19 situation and it was during the participants’ summer annual vacation. After finishing the data analysis, I separately shared a four-page-summary of the finding that entails some evidence from the interviews and documents as depicted in Figure 3-11 below.

Figure 3-11. A snapshot of the email seeking participants’ member-checking the narratives, findings and themes after finishing the analysis.

Everyone got his/her own related findings along with the general ideas. Some apologized for their inability to do that because they were outside the country. I had not heard back from the remaining participants. In addition to member checking, I asked my committee members to peer-examine my findings. They kindly provided invaluable and constant monitoring and feedback of my research design done by my Doctoral Advisor and committee members.

**Transferability**

Transferability refers to the extent to which a study’s findings could apply to other settings or participants. For transferability, I provided readers with ample information and thick descriptions of the context, participants, and findings so that other researchers could have better “judgments about the degree of fit or similarity that may be made by others who wish to apply all or part of the findings elsewhere” (Lincoln & Guba, 1986, p. 162).
Shenton (2004) highlights the importance of providing thick descriptions to achieve applicability or transferability, so future researchers who wish to research with the same topic can determine whether the findings of this study could apply to their studies.

**Consistency**

Consistency aims to answer the question of: would the study findings be repeated if the inquiry were replicated with the same (or similar) participants in the same (or similar) context? Since one of the committee members is an Omani expert, he was requested to examine collecting, analyzing and interpreting the data. Along with that, I maintained a research journal to avoid any bias interference in the study. Shenton (2004) suggests using methodological triangulation such as focus groups and individual interviews. One of the primary methods of collecting data for this study was individual, semi-structured interviews and analyzing participants’ personal documents. Also, Chapter 3 described all the research procedures and processes in detail to allow other researchers to repeat the work and compare findings, which should not necessarily have the same results (Shenton, 2004).

**Confirmability**

Confirmability highlights the importance of neutrality by ensuring that the data and its interpretation are the result of the researcher’s imagination, but instead represent the participants’ actual voices. Shenton (2004) encourages researchers to triangulate to reduce the researcher’s bias. Depicting positionality and recognizing limitations of the study are also ways to ensure confirmability. Concerning the importance of managing data, as Lincoln and Guba (1981) suggested, this study used Creswell’s spiral model, which manages and prepares data to provide access to the committee members to the collected data.
Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted following the requirements of the Internal Review Board (IRB) of the University of Florida. As recommended by Erlandson et al. (1993) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016), I regularly monitored to ensure these ethical considerations: (a) protection of participants from any harm by maintaining respect all of the time (b) protection of participants’ confidentiality, where all names and related data will either be assigned pseudonyms or codes, and (c) informed consent obtained prior to any research activity that includes elements as suggested by Le (2014) of: (1) information, (2) comprehension, and (3) voluntariness. All data, including recordings of interviews, transcriptions, and participants’ personal documents, are stored both on password-protected physical and digital drives and will be stored in a safe place that will be accessible only to the researcher and dissertation chair after the study (Le, 2014). As per IRB protocol, these will be stored for five years, then deleted.

Reciprocity

Reciprocity is defined as “the exchange of favors and commitments, the building of a sense of mutual identification and feeling of community” (Glesne, 2006, p. 142). Because the participants agreed to give their time and participate in this study, I offered each participant a UF Gator (the university mascot) T-shirt. Most importantly, with participant’s approval, after finishing my PhD, I would like to collaborate with them on research and other related projects that could serve the educational system in general and teaching English as a foreign language community in particular, so I do not fall into the trap of a, “one-time exchange” or “grab and go” (Bernstein, 2019). Most importantly, I would ask for the participants’ permission to share some of the findings from the study
with a broader audience, using creative platforms such as social media (Dietrich et al., 2015; Mollett et al., 2017).

**Chapter Summary**

Chapter 3 provided details about the research methodology guiding this study. I explained the philosophical perspective (constructivist qualitative research and its four philosophical assumptions) to explore the possible transformational stories and experiences of Omani EFL teacher educators trained in the West and after their return to Oman. Also, Chapter 3 discussed the rationale of using critical narrative inquiry (combining Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) narrative inquiry and the critical perspective of using both the DT and Chen and Lawless’s (2019) critical thematic analysis (CTA)) as well as a detailed description of how I have methodologically made decisions on how to collect and analyze data. The proposed primary data collection methods were semi-structured interviews and participants’ documents, while keeping reflective journals is a secondary method. CTA was proposed for data analysis. Chapter 3 also described my positionality to reflect on how my experiences, assumptions, and subjectivity could impact the research process. Finally, I used data triangulation, member checking, and experts’ reviews to ensure trustworthiness.
CHAPTER 4
RETELLING PARTICIPANTS’ PERSONAL STORIES

Overview

Chapter 4 presented the first section of findings of this critical narrative inquiry study. While Chapter 5 presented the second section of the finding specifically four emergent themes, the purpose of Chapter 4 was to introduce each participant by describing their socioeconomic status, their educational journey (e.g., where they went to study, their general impression about each experience), and some personal aspects. However, it began with providing a review of the purpose of the study, along with the research questions that guided this qualitative study.

Study’s Purpose

This study’s overarching goal was to investigate the possible impact of Western epistemologies and epistemes on their local contexts. I intended to answer the following research question and sub-question:

Mian Research question: How do Omani TEFL educators educated in the West negotiate Western epistemology/epistemes in their scholarship and teaching [in an Oman teacher education context]?

Sub-research question: What (broadly internal and external) tensions are present for these Omani educators as they negotiate Western epistemes in their scholarship and teaching?

Participant Information

As displayed in Table 3-1 previously and below, the five participants are Omanis and PhD holders with two to four years of experience after receiving the PhD. There were four females, and one was male.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coded name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Country of graduate studies</th>
<th>Schools Teaching Experience</th>
<th>H.Ed. Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Post-PhD Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Ibrahim</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>13 years</td>
<td>11 years</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Maryam</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>5.5 years</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Fatin</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>One semester</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Shamsa</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>0 years</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Faiyza</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>0 years</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each narrative in Chapter 4 included a quote or more from the participant to represent who they are and how those Western experiences have impacted how they teach or produce research in general since Chapter 5 would present the emergent themes to address how the participants negotiated Western episteme and epistemologies in their working environment. After requesting each participant to choose her/his own pseudonym, it is imperative to note that only two (Dr. Shamsa and Dr. Faiyza) of the five participants chose their own pseudonyms. The following are the narratives of the five participants.

**Narrative of the Participants**

Chapter 4 would introduce each participant by describing their socioeconomic status and their educational journey (e.g., where they went to study and their general impression about each experience) and some personal aspects.

**Dr. Ibrahim: An Educator with Several Hats**

Dr. Ibrahim, a 47-year old, was recently given the title of a university assistant professor after several attempts and years of waiting despite his graduation with his PhD in Education in 2017. This academic title designation came about because the institution has been recently expanded to include more institutions to form the second public university in the country.
Born and raised in a semi-rural town located about 113 miles away from the capital city, Dr. Ibrahim grew up in a middle-class family. Although his parents are not educated, he always dreamt of pursuing higher education inspired by his grandfather, who was informally educated in Quranic schools.

Dr. Ibrahim appeared an articulate and confident teacher educator of his ideas, values, and beliefs about teaching English. Perhaps this comes as no surprise considering that his almost two and half decades of teaching experience in both schools (13 years) and higher education (11 years) that appeared to have equipped him with the ability to bridge the gap between theory and practice in his context. Doing part of his B.Ed. in teaching English in the UK was imposed by the circumstance surrounding the decision made by the MoE to upgrade Omani teachers with local associate degrees in teaching English to study in England to obtain a B.Ed. in teaching English as part of the professional development plans for Omani teachers between 1999 to 2008. Due to his outstanding performance in his B.Ed., he was granted an M.Ed. scholarship by the same British university he finished his bachelor’s degree from. After finishing his master’s, he was promoted as a supervisor evaluating schoolteachers and as a trainer providing teachers with professional development workshops. Because of his passion and eagerness to continue learning, he decided to enroll in an online EdD program, which is a testament for willingness to be outside the confines of normal routine. In his own words describing this continuous eagerness to learn new things and be better, Dr. Ibrahim states:

This is the scenario, you know, I used to read a lot in my free time when I was teaching that schools, you know, teachers, my colleagues were saying in Arabic “do you think you would go to the moon by reading all these books?” [This is used to show their sarcasm that Dr. Ibrahim was
wasting my time]. The same reply I got from several teachers…. This sort of discouragement, unfortunately (Dr. Ibrahim, INTVW2, LN1116-1121).

This situation could be perceived as a strange outcome given the expectation that their (Dr. Ibrahim’s and his colleagues’) similar cultural backgrounds would give them a common understanding rather than differences. He thinks his colleagues do not like to step out of their comfort zones because they “don’t want to be odd” (Dr. Ibrahim, INTVW2, LN. 1112). Because of some compelling circumstances (mainly because a native English speaker was about to replace Dr. Ibrahim), he unfortunately had to quit his online EdD program. His teaching EFL in higher education began with a part-time job in a private higher education institution. After one semester of teaching in higher education, he resigned from the MoE and joined that private institution for one year. In 2009, he moved to a public higher education institution. Due to his practical experience, he was promoted as the first Omani acting program director since this position used to be filled by English native speakers. After his appointment, the ministry decided to rotate this position amongst qualified Omani academics. In 2012, he was awarded a PhD scholarship. Due to time constraints, his enrollment to an American university for his PhD, as recommended by one of the officials who is a US graduate, did not yield the expected outcome. Consequently, his PhD journey was destined to be in the UK again. His long experience in both teaching in a school and higher education made him choose a topic for his PhD concerning evaluating the professional development of TEFL teachers in Omani higher education. Interestingly, one of his main findings was that most of these programs appeared to operate on “a very ad hoc basis and mainly took the form of one-off sessions, conferences, and workshops” (Dr. Ibrahim, 2017, p. 82). This finding revealed that his context seemed to ignore other forms of professional
development such as “mentoring, reflection and online learning” (p. 82). Because of his PhD work influence, Dr. Ibrahim has been volunteering and continuing to give workshops and seminars to schoolteachers even with the mere attendance to his free-of-charge sessions.

Despite completing his B.Ed., M.Ed., and PhD in one country (UK), Dr. Ibrahim appreciated the resultant benefits and opportunities from all his education in the West such as “having supervisors treating their supervisees as peers, rather than hierarchy” and “providing clear instructions and criteria of what expected and needed” Encouraging, collaborative, and supportive faculty relations are among the significant aspects Dr. Ibrahim has adopted when dealing with his preservice teachers after returning from his PhD. When asked about the differences between non-Western and Western institutions, one notable difference Dr. Ibrahim stated is those non-Western institutions appear to be “lenient” (Dr. Ibrahim, INTVW1, LN. 381). This view or belief would be discussed in detail in Chapter 5. One of the main challenges he had faced after his return was bureaucracy, making Omani academics feel like outsiders when suggesting a change and implementing some relevant ideas from their Western education. In short, Dr. Ibrahim’s extensive and long experience has to some extent, enabled him to navigate the hierarchical system in his current institution to introduce some of the ideas he learned from his Western education after “adapting them to the local context” (Dr. Ibrahim, INTVW2, LN. 537).

Dr. Faiyza: An Educator with Love for Practicum Running in her Blood

Like Dr. Ibrahim, Dr. Faiyza is recently given the title of assistant professor, although she finished her PhD in 2017 for the same reasons mentioned earlier. Unlike the other participants, Dr. Faiyza opted for Australia as a destination for her Master’s in
Applied Linguistics and PhD in TESOL. In her own words, she described the Australian experience during her master’s as follows:

When I was thinking of doing my PhD, I felt that I would do it in Australia because I love it as a country. Because the people are friendly, that community is excellent. The weather is similar to that of Oman in some way. And I loved it. I really loved it. So I thought that once I get to when I'm going to do my PhD, I'm going to do it in Australia (Dr. Faiyza, INTVW1, LN. 75-79).

Born and raised in a semi-urban town that is located about 37 miles away from the capital city, Dr. Faiyza grew up in a middle-class family. Her parents (her late father, who was able to finish his elementary stage, and her mother, who was not formally educated) were a true inspiration to pursue higher education.

Due to the traditional EFL teaching in most developing countries, including Oman, Dr. Faiyza learned the English language within the exam-based educational environment, which is based on memorization and rote learning (Al-Issa, 2008, 2017). Considering the limited chances in higher education, she had no choice except to score highly to be enrolled in the only local higher education institution offering a TEFL degree at that time. Being a female was another factor for achieving highly because of the intense competition among female Omani students. However, things have changed nowadays where higher educations are built and added to accommodate more students. Females have outnumbered male students: “58.5% are females, and only 41.5% are males” (Omani Higher Education Admission Center, 2021, p. 13).

Despite some challenges during her undergraduate experiences, Dr. Faiyza was determined to fulfill her father’s dream to see her pursue her higher education. After graduating with her B.Ed in teaching English and having a high GPA and ILETS score, she was selected by the MoHERI to pursue her master’s in Applied Linguistics and later
assigned as a TEFL instructor in 2006 after finishing her master’s degree in 2005. Instead of waiting for her turn to get a governmental PhD scholarship, which usually takes a long time, she decided to seek other opportunities to fund her PhD. Because of her efforts and academic excellence, she managed to get a partial scholarship from an Australian university. In the face of the discouragement from some officials to accept the partial scholarship, Dr. Faiyza, with her husband’s support, who had to quit his job from the private sector, went for it. Thankfully, she was awarded a full scholarship by the Omani government after one year of sacrifice. Dr. Faiyza is grateful to her husband, who assisted her in taking care of the kids and helping her with house chores. Unfortunately, her father passed away before finishing her PhD. Without a shadow of a doubt, he would have been very proud to see how far his well-determined daughter has come and has received her PhD degree.

Dr. Faiyza does not have any school teaching experience, but she has been teaching in higher education (EFL and educational courses) for almost a decade. Her exposure to and fascination of the Australian assessment ways made her choose a PhD dissertation topic on evaluating how preservice Omani TEFL teachers in three higher education institutions are assessed. One of her main findings was the use of international tests like ILETS “is problematic, in principle, as it is positioned after graduation and therefore forms no connection to the pre-service teachers’ school experience, nor does it add to quality teaching and assessment” (Dr. Faiyza, 2015, p. 3).

Similar to other participants, Dr. Faiyza largely viewed her experience in the West as a positive one, especially in relation to availability of amenities (e.g., huge
libraries) and equipment (e.g., computer labs as well as other technological devices) necessary for both teaching and learning that seem to be lacking in several Omani higher education institutions. Linguistically and personally, Dr. Faiyza attributed her improvement in her spoken English and developing her personality as a confident educator to living in Australia by stating:

I would love to go to English speaking. And, you know, I could see that I had improved a lot even in terms of speaking when I'm talking to the people there in the community, even to my friends. So it helped shape my identity as a teacher to become (Dr. Faiyza, INTVW1, LN. 336-340).

In short, Dr. Faiyza’s determination story to fulfill her parents’ dream to finish her PhD and become a TEFL teacher educator is a plausible story. It is so not only because it resonates strongly with many Omani young academics including me, but because it exemplifies the challenges facing young academics when attempting to contribute to the development of the Omani educational system.

Dr. Maryam: From Frustrating School Experience to Realizing an Educator Dream

Dr. Maryam’s journey resembles Dr. Faiyza’s story in several aspects. Dr. Maryam also grew up in a middle-class family and was born in a rural area before moving to the capital area because of her husband’s job. Under the same system of the exam-based educational environment, Dr. Maryam had to get a high score to guarantee herself a spot in the only local public higher education that offered a TEFL degree at that time.

Like the majority of Omani students enrolled in higher education institutions, she finished her degree in five years including the foundation year, which is somewhat similar to the preparatory ESL classes as in the case for the majority of International students studying undergraduate degrees in the US. Unlike Dr. Faiyza, Dr. Maryam
taught for one year in schools. However, that experience did not turn out to be entirely satisfactory for her. In her own words, “I didn't like the experience. I mean; my ambition was I mean higher than teaching in a school” (Dr. Maryam, INTVW1, LN. 42-43). With the support from her parents, she was able to study abroad in the UK to finish her master’s in Applied Linguistics in one year.

After finishing her master’s, she returned to teaching in her school, but it did not last long. Because she noticed that the environment appear to push teachers to teach for the test, focusing more on memorization, she decided to leave school after one semester. Consequently, she joined a private higher education institution to teach EFL courses to students in their first year. At the same time, she was seizing better opportunities in the government sector. After one semester of working in that private institution, fortune smiled on her side as she was hired by a public higher education institution that offered a TEFL degree for Omani students in 2011. After joining this institution, she finished a diploma course from the University of Cambridge in teaching management in 2012. Although she wasn’t sure if she should have go for her PhD, her unintentional application (applying the last minute) was accepted by the National Postgraduate Scholarship Program (NPSP). Thus, she was awarded a scholarship to do her PhD in the UK in 2013 but in a different university than her master's. Despite the stressful journey (reasons would be discussed in detail in Chapter 5) causing her to lose weight, she had managed to finish her PhD in 2018. Since then, she has been teaching different courses (language and educational courses) in her institution and was recently granted the academic title of assistant professor like other participants.
When she was asked if she would change to a non-Western country university, she stated, “I would not change because I want to know more about the language and also because of the reputation, the reputation of these countries of offering quality education” (Dr. Maryam, INTVW1, LN. 503-504). She also elaborated on the idea that the ministry has played a role in pushing her to consider Western universities by stating:

There [is] a list of universities. I don't know whether they are Universities from India listed there I mean, the list which was recommended by Ministry of higher education. Okay, there was a list that we needed to choose from them. I don't know whether there are any kind of Indian or Saudi Arabian universities there or not. I doubt that (Dr. Maryam, INTVW1, LN. 529-533).

Driven by her advisor’s interest in quantitative research, Dr. Maryam decided to conduct a quantitative PhD study. Her main focus was how factors (e.g., language proficiency, gender, and beliefs) impact Omani students’ writing process. One of her interesting findings was that the students appeared to produce more in Arabic than in English quantitatively and qualitatively. Like other participants, Dr. Maryam seems to strongly believe that non-Western institutions even with better ranking would not have given her the same benefits she gained from Western universities, which were described by Dr. Maryam as, “very good academically and professionally” (LN. 555).

The PhD program for Dr. Maryam was a sweet-and-sour experience, but the sense of accomplishment outweighed the hardship. Despite the psychologically draining experience, Dr. Maryam considered it as an excellent chance to accomplish her dream to become a TEFL teacher educator whose ultimate goal is to inspire young Omanis to become successful English teachers. Most importantly, she found her soulmate while working on her studies.
Dr. Shamsa: An Educator's Great Storm Experience Turned into Brighter Rainbow

Like most participants, Dr. Shamsa grew up in a middle-class family. Her father has BA in History studies, while her mother was not formally educated, but she can read and write. Similar to Dr. Maryam’s situation, Dr. Shamsa was born in a rural area, located about a hundred miles a little bit more away from the capital city. However, she is now living in the capital area because of her husband’s job.

As emphasized earlier, the pressurizing education system of exam-based educational environment in the Omani educational system left Dr. Shamsa with no options except to work painstakingly to achieve outstanding exam results. She knew that having higher scores in high schools would double her chances to fulfill her conservative family’s wish to see her as an English schoolteacher. Thankfully, she managed to score exceptionally high in her high school results. However, Dr. Shamsa was woefully unprepared to make a critical decision about her future. She had to choose whether to apply for a more guaranteed TEFL higher education institution or take the risk and apply for a more, as generally viewed in Oman, prestigious TEFL program. Although she always wanted to be enrolled in the most prestigious program, she decided to choose the more secured one, fearing losing both opportunities. She was not happy at the beginning joining that program, but she realized that the program was “was pretty, very strong and challenging” (Dr. Shamsa, INTVW1, LN. 311). She took five years to finish the whole program, but that program, according to Dr. Shamsa, prepared her for postgraduate studies.

Because of the strength of her undergraduate program, Dr. Shamsa and the majority of her classmates were able to score band 7 in IELTS. She described her
cohort as a “strong batch” (LN. 580) and scored better than the other TEFL program graduates including those who graduated from the most reputable program. Dr. Shamsa indicated that graduates from that program that is perceived as more competitive. Accordingly, its graduates were given an exception from the minister of higher education at that year only to submit lower ILETS scores than the scores submitted by Dr. Shamsa and her classmates because they are viewed as more qualified than those who graduated from Dr. Shamsa’s institution (University of Alhasan), which generally viewed as less emulous. This resulted in choosing students from both institutions regardless the differences in GPA and ILETS scores and granting them scholarships for their master’s and paradoxically getting employed in the University of Alhasan TEFL program after returning to Oman.

Due to her high GPA and ILETS, she was awarded a master’s scholarship in 2008, where she opted UK as a destination for her master’s in Applied Linguistics. Because academic credentials (especially PhD) are heavily linked to promotion and tenure, she decided to apply for the National Postgraduate Scholarship Program (NPSP) to pursue her PhD in TESOL. She also chose the UK but to a different university for convenience reasons, as she describes them below:

I went to a different school and I. I chose …. University because I want to be close to my brother ’cause I was a single mom that time you know my husband could not go with me So I I I want[ed] support, so my brother was studying in X University which is close to my university (Dr. Shamsa, INTVW1, LN. 188-191).

When she was asked about if she would change to a non-Western institution, she expressed her rejection of the idea by saying:

I think I made a wise decision but it’s just that yes maybe maybe if I sometimes I think from from this point of view that if I have more experience but different cultures then then it’s it was or could have been
better for me if I choose for example America to do my master’s degree and then UK to do my PhD to learn about different cultures (Dr. Shamsa, INTVW1, LN. 439-443).

Also, she believes that when learning about a language, a person has to learn the culture of that language. She thinks that this learning about the culture can’t happen unless a person gets immersed in that culture. In addition to the convenience reasons, she also attributed some external factors for her choice for Western countries to finish her graduate studies when she said:

Because we are forced to, we got no other option is that if you want to be employed in higher education institutes, like mine or better ones I don't know, I mean, you have to just study in, in a native speaking country. Okay. So otherwise, you will not be accepted (Dr. Shamsa, INTVW1, LN. 456-459).

Although she was under the impression that her undergraduate experience to some extent prepared her for the master’s degree, she, like every participant, learned by trial and error in order to finish her doctoral journey due to (at times) lack of sufficient support from her academic committee. According to the National Postgraduate Scholarship Program (NPSP) rules, applicants must get admission to one of the best 500 universities worldwide based on the Shanghai academic ranking (Omani MoHERI, 2015). Despite the reasons for choosing the UK for her graduate studies, Dr. Shamsa appreciates that experience by saying, “you know I do not regret it now because eventually, I learned a lot from the UK” (Dr. Shamsa INTVW1, LN. 443-444).

Her PhD topic was an exploratory qualitative study focused on feedback on teaching writing to Omani students. One of her conclusions is the visible influence (local/classroom, departmental, and institutional levels) on feedback practices in her context. Both students and teachers appeared to be “more receptive” (Dr. Maryam, 2018, p. 331) to what was given to them regarding writing feedback and criteria by the
people in charge. In her conclusion, she appealed for allowing both students and teachers to “have active voices when making policy guidelines” (p. 332). In short, Dr. Shamsa’s PhD journey was tinged with great anxiety, but she learned that she needed to be persistent and strong when experiencing challenges, especially in her last year.

**Dr. Fatin: An Educator-leader in the Making**

Dr. Fatin is the only one who identifies her as growing in an upper-middle-class family when she was asked in a follow-up email. Her father has a master’s in Law, but her mother managed to finish her elementary school. In the past (mainly from 1970s to 1980s), middle and high schools are located in big towns. Most female students in rural areas were forced to stop their education after elementary because of the distance factor, unlike male students who did not have a problem living away from their parents.

Like Dr. Shamsa, Dr. Fatin had a similar decision on whether to go for a more reputable TEFL institution at University of Alkhalil or a more guaranteed but less emulous TEFL program at University of Alhasan. Out of fear of losing both chances, she opted joining the locally viewed less prestigious TEFL program at University of Alhasan. Despite this negative stigma about the program, along with the lack of facilities (the building used to be a school), Dr. Fatin appreciated the experience by assertively saying, “I wouldn’t trade it with anything else” (Dr. Fatin, INVW1, LN. 72). She was also fascinated by her teachers’ knowledge and care and the interaction with Omani female students from different parts of Oman. She learned so much about their traditions and dialects. Agreeing with Dr. Shamsa, Dr. Fatin felt the program was “really, really tough” in her own words. She also spent five years finishing the program as it was imposed on everyone regardless of the student’s linguistic competence.
Unlike Dr. Shamsa, who was under family pressure to be a teacher, Dr. Fatin wanted to be a language teacher because of convenience reasons as she describes them as follows:

But then talking about the job as a teacher, it's, I mean, for me, because it's it has a lot of features that with like any parent with I mean, even me, I would advise my kids to go to for the job, I mean name a career that has really sure fixed hours of working and those fixed hours are every morning and those fixed hours with a guarantee that if you have a problem that you have little breaks in between your work so if you have a little problem you can go out and in name, any job in the word is even in Oman, there is no other job that is an even it is highly paying job actually” (Dr. Fatin, INTVW1, LN. 99-106).

She also believes that teaching is more suitable for her and seems to match the “nature of women” (LN. 120) because she does not like “highly competitive environments” (LN. 117). Although she was selected to go for her master’s after finishing her undergraduate, Dr. Fatin decided not to rush that decision. Therefore, she worked for one semester in school before finally deciding to start her master's in 2009. Like most participants, she opted to go to the UK to finish her master’s and PhD. She used the phrase “I wouldn't trade that experience” (LN. 514) to describe her obstinate insistence on her choice of the UK. She felt she has developed academically, professionally, and personally while living in the UK. Whenever she used to go to 24/7 open libraries, she was impressed by how these libraries were crowded with people anytime she went there.

Her PhD topic was qualitative, focusing on the use of technology in teaching writing in Oman. One of her main findings was teaching writing in the Omani context seems irrelevant and carried in a “robotic manner” (Dr. Fatin, 2017, p. 284). Instead, she recommended that writing teachers reevaluate their values to let students
“experience writing and authoring by engaging in meaning-making and conscious knowledge transformation, which nowadays is accessible through technology” (p. 294).

Dr. Fatin shared an ironic challenge while working on her PhD. That was her fear of being criticized by her surroundings if she would fail as she explains it in her own words, “my focus was on what my family back home and the Omani colleagues would say about me if I could not do it” (Dr. Fatin, INTVW2, LN. 518, LN. 418). She was afraid that “they would laugh at” (LN. 421) her. It is ironic because someone would expect more support from families or close friends instead of mocking and laughing.

Interestingly, Dr. Fatin values “all the social and cultural pressure” (LN. 425) and thanks to her colleagues and family after finishing her Ph.D. Furthermore, what added salt to the wound was her unfamiliarity with the system, where she did not know that she could go and ask her advisor for clarifications when she is stuck. While Dr. Fatin was excited about the doctoral journey, she still felt isolated. She wished there was a community wherein she could feel a sense of connection and support both academically and socially. In addition to her academic duties, she seems open to learning and eager to embark on new adventures other than academia. For instance, she is currently involved in overseeing the quality assurance unit in her institution after gaining administrative experience as an eLearning coordinator, which she left after feeling “not appreciated” (LN. 518). While being an eLearning coordinator in her institution, she felt that she was left alone to do most of the work like designing the website, working on the content, updating the content regularly. She states that nobody has taken the responsibility to update the website’s content. In short, Dr. Fatin’s experience in the UK was a bitter-
sweet journey. On the bitter side, there were feelings of fear of failure and anxiety, but she got the chance to develop herself at different levels on the sweet side.

**Chapter Summary: Summary of the Introductory Narratives**

This section summarized the five participants’ backgrounds and qualities that shaped them as TEFL teacher educators now. Three participants (Dr. Faiyza, Dr. Ibrahim, and Dr. Maryam) were first generation college students in their families, while Dr. Fatin and Dr. Shamsa were second generation college students (Each participant's father was able to finish college). Dr. Fatin was the only one who grew up in an upper-middle-class family compared to everyone else who grew up in a middle-class family. All the participants studied English starting from the fourth grade for less than an hour a day under the exam-based educational environment based on memorization and rote learning (Al-Issa, 2008, 2017). Therefore, the participants, as school students, did not witness the MoE's reform enacted in 1998 about the teaching of English from the first grade with a more significant number of hours devoted to English (MoE, 1999). Despite that limited exposure to English (considerably less than those who experienced the reform), all the participants were able to succeed in learning and finishing their degrees in reputable higher education institutions due to their interest in learning English and dedicating more time to learning the language.

Out of the five participants, Dr. Faiza was the only one who completed her graduate studies in Australian institutions. At the same time, everyone else chose the UK as a destination for their graduate studies. To expand on the experience, everyone decided to select a different school for their PhD than their master's. Dr. Ibrahim (for 13 years), Dr. Maryam (for two years), and Dr. Fatin (for one semester only) had the chance to teach in high schools, while the remaining two participants (Dr. Faiyza and
Dr. Shamsa) had only been teaching in higher education institutions. Despite (at times) a lack of system awareness and sufficient academic support, all the participants managed to navigate the Western educational system and finish their master’s and doctoral journeys successfully by owning their dissertations. After their return to Oman, they also somewhat managed to navigate their working context in the face of several challenges. There was a general census among all the participants that the best and quickest way for Omani education to improve is to be recognized and catch up (Said, 2003) with the Western institutions mainly via accreditation, affiliation, and collaboration (This would be discussed in detail in Chapter 5). I was fascinated by how candid the participants were to share some of their personal and painful stories boldly and share their accomplishments proudly. Some aspects (e.g., benefits and challenges) would be explained in detail in Chapter 5. In short, every story by each participant is unique despite some of the commonalities found among them.
CHAPTER 5
FINDINGS

Overview

To capture their personal and professional backgrounds, Chapter 4 provided introductory narratives for the five participants of this study. Based on the findings from participant interviews and document analysis and guided by the main theoretical framework (DT), the initial analysis revealed about 11 hunches from the data as previously shown in Table 3-7. Three main themes emerged from the data, as displayed in Tables 3-8 to 3-11. Chapter 5 presented the three emerged themes and their sub-themes from a cross-participant analysis of this study’s data and answers the following questions:

1. Main research question: How do Omani TEFL educators educated in the West negotiate Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching [in an Oman teacher education context]? and

2. Sub-research question: What (broadly internal and external) tensions are present for these Omani educators as they negotiate Western epistemes in their scholarship and teaching?

The three emergent themes were: 1) hegemony of Western epistemologies and epistemes in participants’ TEFL context, 2) negotiating Western hegemony in participants’ TEFL context; and 3) limitations in empowerment.

Hegemony of Western Epistemologies & Epistemes in Participants’ TEFL Context

Despite conscientious efforts and attempts by the participants to adapt their Western education and training to fit their local context and needs, the hegemony of Western epistemologies and epistemes in the participants’ TEFL context was prevailing and visible in four essential aspects: continuing reliance on Western experts, excessive
use of Western teaching and testing materials, valuing elite bilingual/multilingualism and according greater value and recognition to Western institutions.

**Reliance on Western Experts**

The first aspect of this hegemony of Western epistemologies and epistemes was the continuous reliance on Western experts. All of the participants indicated two reasons why the number of hired Western experts has led to a dramatic decrease in leadership and teaching positions in several Omani educational entities, including the participants’ setting (University of Alhasan). The first reason was due to pressure on the government to meet the demand of Omanization, replacing non-Omani skilled laborers systematically and gradually by skilled nationals (Dr. Faiyza, Dr. Shamsa, Dr. Ibrahim). The second reason was the lack of financial resources to recruit more Western experts due to the unstable economic situation of the country in recent years (Dr. Ibrahim).

Specifically, when talking about recruitment of native or non-native English language teachers through local agencies used by the University of Alhasan, Dr. Ibrahim explained:

> Definitely, no, they [qualified English native speaking teachers] would go to Qatar. They would go to the highly paid countries. Then, you [as a recruiter] move to the second, you know, group groups. Then another group, until you reach those who are willing to take this low pay who are not that much qualified, but because we are in need, we recruit them, regardless of their qualifications because classes need teachers. (INTVW3, LN. 1029-1034).

In many countries, often referred to as developing countries including Oman, non-native speakers are frequently paid less than NESTs for the same jobs. Dr. Ibrahim attributed the widespread practice of recruiting more non-native speaking educators along with less qualified native speaking educators to the economic situation, implying that more qualified English native speaking educators would have been recruited if the
resources had been available. Despite the decrease in recruitment of Western experts and educators in several Omani higher institutions including University of Alhasan, Western hegemony and influence are still evident in several aspects. For instance, Western experts are frequently invited to provide keynote addresses, workshops and/or trainings in Omani higher education institutions regardless of their limited benefit and impact. One striking finding revealed by Dr. Faiyza, who, with a tone of annoyance and disapproval, described:

As I told you, they [Omani officials and decision makers] listen to them [Western experts], this is the problem, you know, they [officials and decision makers] listen to them [Western experts] and, and they [officials and decision makers] believe [in] what they [Western experts] say, you know. I remember a scenario that they [officials and decision makers] hired a Western expert just did come to conduct a workshop, and they hired him for three days. They they accommodated him in in one of the hotels. They paid for him, and he just came to conduct the workshop and you know, we know most of or all the information. You know, and he was unfortunately even drunk when he was conducting [the workshop] when he was presenting. (INTVW3, LN. 701-707).

Dr. Faiyza indicated that local elites appeared to trust and listen more to Western experts than local educators, even if these experts come “drunk” and do not respect the attendees who come to learn. Dr. Faiyza sarcastically wondered if she would have been paid that much if she had had the expertise and skills to do so. Not only that, but some participants (Dr. Ibrahim and Dr. Fatin) stated that some of the Western experts were not willing to share and exchange their knowledge and skills with Omani professionals. For instance, Dr. Ibrahim shared a vivid illustration of a Western expert appearing to refuse to share and exchange ideas and expertise below:

I have gotten one [English] native speaker HoD, I do not want to say which institution. Although I was one with an official administrative title at that time, I just wanted to go as as a colleague to learn from him from each other. Despite the official communication, upon his request, I was surprised that he did not welcome me… I told him that I wanted to to
exchange ideas and expertise with each other because I am not coming empty handed because I have got the experience. Believe me, I knocked at the door, and he was sitting in his chair, folding his legs, you know, and staying and he said in a very arrogant way, “Yes, how can I help you?” Of course, not every native speaker is like this guy, but my point is that academia needs people who are very open, very respectful, and very adaptable. (INTVW2, LN. 360-369)

Dr. Fatin also found that some of her non-Omani and English native speaking colleagues, seem to not share their expertise and knowledge with her, but she attributed these behaviors to the lack of regulations that reinforce sharing and exchanging ideas. (INTVW2).

Another area where there was still a prominent reliance on Western experts and expertise that emerged in this study’s findings is accreditation. As indicated by the participants, all Omani higher education institutions including University of Alhasan must go through local accreditation processes by the Omani Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance (OAAAQA). As indicated in Chapter 2, OAAAQA has adopted the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Western methods of assessment and review to evaluate local institutions. Not only did the methods use Western evaluation tools and standards, OAAAQA has also invited and relied on Western evaluators to come to Oman to evaluate and prepare reports about local institutions during these accreditation processes. Supporting that, Dr. Ibrahim indicated that his university’s submitted report to OAAAQA was sent to “some Western external examiners and they would say, ‘Okay, this is good,’ or otherwise” (INTVW3, LN.1190-1191). Following the steps of University of Alkhalil’s of getting international accreditation by CAEP in 2016, Dr. Maryam indicated University of Alhasan’s plan and desire to seek international accreditation in
the future “but at the beginning, we [University of Alhasan] are trying to get to the local one” (INTVW3, LN. 961-962).

Ironically, it took assigning educated Omanis (academics) into temporary “acting” leadership positions before the officials and decision makers started trusting Omani educated locals to manage such positions. Despite his practical and relevant experience in both schools and higher education, Dr. Ibrahim was assigned as the first Omani acting program director. This position used to officially (not as acting) be filled by English native speaking experts. After his appointment proved a remarkable success, the officials at the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation (MoHERI) finally decided to rotate this position amongst qualified Omani academics. In short, despite some incidents of challenging this hegemony, the (direct and indirect) continuous reliance on Western experts was apparent in the participants’ setting. The next part would cover the Western hegemony in the Omani TEFL context but with a greater focus on the teaching methods, curricula, and assessments used at University of Alhasan.

**Excessive Use of Western Teaching and Testing Materials**

Western hegemony was not only confined to the reliance on Western experts in the participants’ context but also encompassed the extensive use of Western teaching and testing materials in the participants’ settings. All of the participants indicated that two Omani retired teacher educators, who were in charge of developing the program, decided to adopt the exact model from University of Alkhalil since it offered that program earlier (in 1985) than University of Alhasan, which started offering a TEFL bachelor’s degree in 2003. The adoption of the University of Alkhalil’s program might explain the continuation of using Western-oriented textbooks that were published in the 1970s and
1980s for many of syllabi for the offered classes at University of Alhasan. Dr. Fatin commented on the reason behind the continuation of using old materials by saying:

Actually, we are using the same old textbook in our English program, because it was not reviewed at all since it was made. I think it was in 2003. It has never been reviewed. It has only been reviewed this last year. So, imagine for over 15 now 15 years. (INTVW3, LN. 452-456)

Upon further investigation of the TEFL program at University of Alkhalil. I casually asked one of the Omani academics in the TEFL program at University of Alkhalil about the program's history. This linguistics academic, who was educated in the West, told me that a group of Westerners developed the original program with some minor updates and revisions by a few Omani academics. He also asserted that different reviews for this program were conducted mainly by experts from Western universities (Personal communication, August 13, 2021). Also, when participants asked about the used textbooks in their institution, all confirmed that all of the used textbooks were from either Cambridge or Oxford publishing houses for both the preparatory (foundation) program (like ESL in the US), and the textbooks for specialization (educational, linguistic, literary) courses. Dr. Shamsa and Dr. Maryam explained that these textbooks are usually packaged with supplementary materials including sample tests, study guides, and sometimes online materials.

In addition to the adoption of Western curricula and teaching materials, international standardized tests such as TOEFL and IELTS are commonly used in Oman outside of their original purpose and scope. According to the IELTS website, the main purpose for IELTS, which is the same for TOEFL, is to assess the prospective entrants’ ability to communicate effectively within their new English-speaking environment (IELTS, 2001). However, IELTS and TOEFL appear to be used outside of
their main purpose by several Omani institutions as the golden criteria for entry or exit tests, program selection, or screening students for postgraduate studies in Omani institutions (Dr. Faiyza, INTVW3). Dr. Faiyza indicated that these tests are used as a mandatory requirement by the Omani Ministry of Education (MoE) for Omani English teachers to teach in Omani schools despite their language-focused nature. Dr. Faiyza, Dr. Ibrahim and Dr. Shamsa referenced that all Omani graduating student teachers are required to submit an IELTS band score of 6.0 or above for Omani school teaching jobs. This is the case although these candidates would have successfully completed a four-to five-year TEFL program where English is the medium of instruction, along with one year of a supervised teaching practicum (Dr. Faiyza, INTVW3).

In addition to the continuing misuse of these tests’ main purpose, several Omani higher education (private and public) institutions (including University of Alhasan) have been IELTS testing centers. The irony was, as indicated by Dr. Maryam and Dr. Shamsa, that these institutions, including University of Alhasan, have no role in conducting these exams. In other words, they only provide a physical location, while the entire process (from registering students for the exams, to proctoring the exams, from conducting the speaking section to grading the exams) is carried by the British Council. In short, the extensive use of Western teaching and testing materials was one of the main aspects of Western hegemony in the participants’ setting.

Valuing Elite Bilingual/Multilingualism

Another aspect of this hegemony of Western epistemologies and epistemes was valuing and supporting elite bilingual/multilingualism. In addition to the spread of using English as the main medium of instruction in most Omani higher education (public and private) intuitions and confining the impact of globalization to the economic mask,
interviews revealed European (French and German) languages are introduced in both schools and public and private higher education institutions. As indicated by the participants, both the University of Alkhalil and the University of Alhasan appeared to offer these European Languages (Eur.Ls) either as required languages for tourism students or as electives for other students. Interestingly, University of Alhasan also offers Chinese as a required course for tourism and business students, while it is offered as an elective for University of Alkhalil students. As indicated by Dr. Faiyza, these Eur.Ls are supervised by the help of cultural centers such as Omani French Center (Centre Franco-Omanais [CFO]) and the German Language Center (operated by Goethe-Institut). These centers also offer courses in French and German for those who are interested, but they are not free, but offered for a symbolic amount of money (around 250 US dollars) for two and half months. Also, a fully-paid-three-week scholarship is granted for those who have been attending French courses for a year or more based on merit criteria.

In contrast, there have not been any official decisions or efforts so far to introduce any of the minoritized languages (MLs) with standardized writing systems as required languages or electives in Omani educational institutions. The data suggested two main reasons for such a lack of attention and resources. One reason, as stressed by the participants in the second interview, was that investment in these languages does not seem to respond to the economic needs of globalization. Secondly, Dr. Shamsa, Dr. Ibrahim, and Dr. Maryam empathized that there is a tendency by the government, families in general and families speaking these MLs nowadays to prioritize the national (Omani Arab) identity over the ethnic group identity in the name of
maintaining stability and social order. This tendency is paradoxically undergirded by nationalistic aspirations and viewed as important to remove any unity agitation formed by considering Arabic as the official language, since Arabs are the most dominant ethnic group in Oman. (Dr. Shamsa, INTVW3; Dr. Ibrahim, INTVW3; Dr. Maryam, INTVW3).

As a result of this lack of attention and resources, Dr. Faiyza referenced a noticeable decline in the number of speakers of MLs, placing them in the endangered languages classification. In short, reducing the impact of globalization to economic aspects and disregarding other aspects of Western epistemologies, namely linguistic, cultural, political, and spiritual domination and epistemic, has led Oman to pour more resources and support into teaching English and introducing French and German languages. According to the participants, this is the case because French, German, and more recently Chinese are believed to be important languages that respond to the economic demands and needs of globalization in comparison to MLs. After revealing the existence and hegemony of Western epistemologies and epistemes in the participants’ setting, the second theme would address how the participants negotiated these Western epistemologies and epistemes in their context.

Officials, Family and Friends Affording Greater Value to Western Institutions

The decision for choosing Western institutions over non-Western ones was another aspect that helped espouse Western epistemologies and epitomes in the participants’ context. This decision among participants was motivated by internal (i.e., personal conviction) or external forces (i.e., officials, family, and friends). This section addresses the external pressures.
In addition to their significant role in deciding what reforms, curricula and testing tools as revealed previously, these local elite officials appeared to place greater value and recognition on Western institutions via putting policies and regulations that seemed to have influenced the participants’ decisions, but also tallied with their personal preference of Western institutions. For instance, when examining the most updated list of universities that are recommended for Omani applicants including this study’s participants for postgraduate scholarships on the website of the Omani MoHERI using Shanghai ranking, one would notice these observations:

1. For TESOL or related areas, Omani students can only apply to English native speaking countries if they wish to be funded by the government. Out of 390 listed names, there are five (5) universities in New Zealand, 18 in Canada, 23 in Australia, 36 in the UK and 147 in USA.

2. Out of the listed 390 named, Omani students for other majors and specializations can only apply to 21 (5 %) non-European universities (e.g., 14 Japanese+ two (2) Singaporean+ five (5) South African), 147 European universities. In addition, these students can also apply to any of the previously listed universities in UK, USA, Canada, NZ and Australian if their respective majors are available in these universities. So about 95 % of the suggested names are Western and European countries. This by itself speaks volumes of how elite decision makers seemed to fascinate the West.

Such a dominance of Western institutions on the provided lists by the Omani MoHERI appeared to both limit and indirectly force participants to largely consider Western institutions. Supporting this idea of being left with no choice or (being indirectly) forced to primarily choose Western institutions, Dr. Maryam indicated that the provided list did not seem to have non-Western universities and that left her with no other option except going to the UK. She, with a tone of acceptance, remarked:

There is kind of a list of universities. I do not know whether there are universities from India, listed there I mean, the list, which was recommended by MoHERI. Okay, there was a list that we needed to choose from them. I do not know whether there are any Indian or Saudi Arabian universities there or not. (INTVW1, LN. 529-533)
Similarly, some officials and administrators were inclined to encourage some of the Omani academics to go to Western institutions because they graduated from Western universities. For instance, one Omani elite official, a US graduate, suggested American schools for Dr. Ibrahim, while another official, a UK graduate, suggested for Dr. Ibrahim to go to a well-known British university. For convenience (e.g., security, more facilities, dislike for historic cities), Dr. Ibrahim decided to choose another reputable UK university (INTVW1). In addition to her personal desire to go to a Western higher education institution, Dr. Shamsa alluded to the influence of the regulations set by local elite officials which contributed to her choosing a Western university as she remarked with a tone of uncertainty and dubious validity:

Because of my specialization, maybe, because I am studying English. So, it would be better to study it in a(n) [English] native [speaking] country. Or it could be because or it could be because because because we are forced to, we got no other option if you want to be employed in higher education institutes, just like mine, or better ones I do not know, I mean, you have to just study in, in a(n) [English] native speaking country. Okay. So otherwise, you will not be accepted. (Dr. Shamsa, INTVW1, LN. 456-459).

She seemed to allude that her specialization as a TEFL teacher educators compelled her to go English speaking country as set by MoHERI’s regulations and rules. She also appeared to suggest that graduating from Western universities would double someone’s chances to get a job in one of the most local leading and highly-ranked institutions in Oman.

In addition to the rules set by elite officials for choosing universities, there were other significant influencers (e.g., family members, colleagues, friends, and society) that appeared to have played a significant role in that decision. For instance, Dr. Faiyza stated that she was fully encouraged by her late father who wanted to see her graduate
from the West. Similarly, Dr. Maryam was sponsored by her family to do her master’s in the UK. She stated how family, friends and colleagues impacted her choice for a Western university by saying, “And of course, you will get influenced also by people around you, that people you are working with, or your family members, I mean, you will get influenced by them” (INTVW1, LN. 527-529). Similarly, Dr. Shamsa indicated how impressed her British colleagues were with her after knowing she had graduated from that British university as portrayed in this response, “My colleague from England and said, wow, you graduated from [well-known British] University. So, it was something big for them” (INTVW1, LN. 440-441). Last but not least, Dr. Fatin, like other participants, was encouraged by her family to go to the UK as they told her, “This is a good chance you [Dr. Fatin] cannot [should not] lose” (INTVW1, LN. 231-232). Despite her fears and hesitation of the whole experience at the beginning, she ended up listening to them and travelled to the UK to finish her master’s and PhD there. It is important to stress that participants also added some personal convenience reasons for their choices (e.g., having a relative studying there, a friend, shorter flights, similar weather to Oman, having a previously positive experience).

In brief, the findings above revealed that local elites played a key role in espousing the hegemony of Western epistemologies and epistemes in the participants’ setting. As stressed by all the participants, these policies, decisions, and practices promote and foster what is demanded by Western epistemologies and epistemes under the name of globalization. The next theme focuses on how the participants viewed and negotiated the Western epistemologies and epistemes in their context.
Negotiating Western Epistemologies & Epistemes in Participants’ Setting

Despite the challenges faced by participants in their Western experiences, they appeared to hold a special fascination for the West. This special fascination among the participants seemed to have led them to develop a semi-negative attitude towards non-Western knowledge systems of knowing and learning. Data from this study identified three main findings related to how participants negotiated Western epistemologies in Omani higher education. These are participant’s challenges during their Western experiences, participants holding a special fascination for the West despite their encountered challenges in the West, participants developing a semi-negative view about non-Western education and ways of knowing and learning. However, the participants seemed to continually renegotiate their positions surrounding Western epistemologies epistemes. In other words, they kept shifting back and forth between adopting, resisting, adapting, and acquiescing to this Western hegemony.

Challenges Participants Faced during their Western Experiences

The participants’ experiences in the West were both pleasant and challenging at times. These challenges were centered around unfamiliarity of the system (largely finding themselves in a hands-off approach environment), lack of social support (inside and outside the university), and lack of familiarity with Western culture. For instance, Dr. Ibrahim during his master’s degree had to change his Western advisor who appeared to underestimate his ability to finish the program. His advisor told him, “You [Dr. Ibrahim] are not doing well. You cannot complete your study at this level” (Dr. Ibrahim, INTVW1, LN. 496-497). Dr. Ibrahim puffed in shock and continued, “like a big slap on my face. It took me three days, crying, doing nothing, eating nothing” (LN. 497). Thankfully, he was able to change to another Western advisor who was incredibly supportive and believed
in Dr. Ibrahim’s competence to finish the program (INTVW1). On a similar note, Dr. Faiyza also noted her struggle with her Western advisor who seemed to be giving her confusing and conflicting instructions for doing things. This confusion in giving instructions was illustrated in Dr. Faiyza’s following response:

> During the [candidate] confirmation, it is called like this here [Australia] where you are confirmed to carry on with PhD or not. So, you need to try to develop a kind of a proposal, let us say, literature review the methodology and be ready for the defense… So, I remember I was ready, and I wrote a complete proposal, I think with the 60 pages, something like this. And she said, “No, no, you need to shorten this to 20 pages or less”, but the other reviewers [other members of the committee in the US] told me that I needed to elaborate more. (INTVW1, LN. 591-599)

Dr. Faiyza thought the struggle would end with that first incident, but it unfortunately continued for some time. In fact, she even contemplated the idea of changing her advisor, but she could not because of lack of advisors with her research topic interest. When she noticed that her advisor did not pay much attention to what she was doing, she started to believe that her advisor might have indirectly wanted to teach her to own the full process and navigate the PhD journey mostly by herself via a hands-off approach. Sharing the same thought of hands-off approach, Dr. Shamsa believed that the advisor’s role is limited in the PhD journey, as she remarked, “I think PhD is all about self-study. Supervisors are not going to give you much feedback. It is not really that much, maybe 10% maybe less. I mean, it is all about you. Personally, I was struggling alone” (INTVW1, LN. 49-53). Likewise, Dr. Fatin appeared to have struggled with her Western advisor in terms of the lack of immediate feedback, which made her PhD journey particularly challenging. Her advisor seemed to be facing some issues balancing personal and academic/work life. That resulted in chaos and delay in Dr. Fatin’s progress. Despite that muddle, Dr. Fatin was considerate and understanding of
her advisor’s situation as illustrated in this response, “I mean she is she is one of the most known supervisors who does not reply to anyone who ditches the work and then maybe she is not organized” (LN. 445-447). Dr. Fatin also added, “Socially, she has kids, and she has her family there and she has to commute from one city to another. She has some problems there which affected her attendance” (INTVW1, LN. 447-449).

As a result of this tumultuous situation, Dr. Fatin decided to own her situation, however dire, and “approached the problem with solutions” (INTVW1, LN. 469). She handled the situation by doing the following:

So, I gave her a timing. So, I told her on this date, please add this date to your diary. I am going to send you a literature review. Please do it. Please see it. Put it in your diary she will say okay, she added because these are UK people, they will add anything to their diary. But if you send them anything out without reminding them and adding that to their calendars, their mind does not work in this manner… So I would tell her in in one month in advance, please please, Dr. [named removed], add this date to your diary or to your schedule, and then I would send you my literature review… then she would take maybe one month two months reading checking reading checking during those two months. Then, I got her the other chapter. I will do the other of the results. So, I just give her the time to do the work. (INTVW1, LN. 450-460)

In addition to the challenges related to the lack of support from her Western supervisor, Dr. Fatin pointed out the challenge of unfamiliarity of the system and lack of proper orientation about the educational system as she remarked:

But the system, the system is there [UK] is different. When I went there, I said I thought I could not ask the teachers. So, I take the assignment, and I understand it the way I understand it and yeah, I do it… But then I discovered a lot of students are going to their teachers for clarifications. I did not ask for clarifications. They [other students] asked for examples, they asked for models, for books and they go to other teachers to get advice. I never did it because I thought like come on this is the UK. So, in the UK system this is one where you cannot do this. (INTVW1, LN. 317-323)
In her case, she was under the impression that she was not supposed to ask her advisors and teachers if she needed help. In her own words, she recalled her undergraduate experience where asking questions was a sign of unpreparedness and carelessness, when she stated, “In Oman, asking questions means that you did not listen, or you did not know do your job or you did not study really hard. You are coming here you wanted like an easy-peasy way” (INTVW1, LN. 335-337). However, she realized that it was the way around because assignments, “are not based directly on [the covered materials], but they are more authentic where you go home reflect and based on that you do your own thinking, and you produce something different from the [original] assignment” (LN. 334-336).

Unlike the other participants, Dr. Maryam, and Dr. Shamsa unfortunately experienced initial stress and depressive symptoms and anxiety due to unfamiliarity of the system (hands-off approach), lack of social support (inside and outside the university) and unfamiliarity with Western culture. For instance, Dr. Maryam said sadly, “I lost a lot of weight” (INTVW1, LN. 576) because of those factors. Agreeing with Dr. Fatin and Dr. Faiyza, Dr. Shamsa shared how frustrated she was with how long it took for her advisors to respond to her requests and questions. On top of that, she lost a close family member while working on the VIVA exam (an oral examination that takes place at the very end of the PhD program in the UK). Despite these psychological challenges, both Dr. Shamsa and Dr. Maryam successfully managed to overcome them with the support of family, friends and finally their advisors. In brief, despite (at times) lack of system awareness and sufficient academic support, all of the participants managed to navigate the system and finish their doctoral journeys successfully.
Notwithstanding all those tough and grueling challenges, the findings revealed all the participants appeared to hold a special fascination for the West, as discussed in the following section.

**Participants Elevating Western Epistemologies and Epistemes**

All the participants appeared to hold enormous fascination for the West despite the challenges they faced during their Western experiences as previously discussed. The level of fascination differed from one participant to another. Also, they continually renegotiated their positions surrounding Western epistemes moving back and forth between acquiescing and adopting this Western hegemony and resisting and adapting it. However, this fascination also appeared to have led participants to have a semi-negative attitude towards non-Western systems of knowing and learning. This semi-negative attitude was evident in how participants appeared to place greater value and recognition on Western faculty over non-Western ones, Western institutions over non-Western ones, Western concepts, and skills over non-Western ones and Eur.Ls over MLs.

**Preference for Western higher education institutions**

All the participants went to universities in the UK or Australia. However, when participants were asked about the possibility of changing the Western country (UK or Australia) to a Non-Western country, all of them responded with a tone of disapproval at the idea. For instance, Dr. Faiyza justified her disapproval for the notion of studying in a non-Western country including the ones with better ranking, by stating a tone of conviction and certainty, “By default Australia” (INTVW1, LN. 386). Ironically, she seemed to justify her insistence on placing Australian institutions over non-Western institutions with better ranking using the same reasons for her choice for Australian
institutions ignoring the ranking factor. Also, she reasserted that she wanted to improve her language because she would be exposed to more English inside and outside the university in comparison to going to a non-Western university. Despite her frustration with her advisor's hands-off approach, she also emphasized how her Western experience had helped her become an autonomous learner. Unlike her Australian experience, she believed non-Western institutions extensive use of “teacher-centered approach” (INTVW1, LN. 421) based on her personal experience at the University of Alkhalil in Oman where Omani students tend to be passive or at the receiving end. (INTVW1). Therefore, she appeared to imply even non-Western institutions, including those with a better ranking, would not provide her with the learning opportunities she got from her Australian experience.

Dr. Maryam also preferred Western institutions over non-Western ones. In fact, she rejected the idea of going to a non-Western school with a better ranking as she double negates her answer, “I do not think so. No” (INTVW1, LN. 547). She justified her answer by saying, “Because I do not know. It is like a PhD in English should be in an English-speaking country” (LN. 549). She added, “Why should I bother myself going there [non-Western schools] ? Because I will not get many benefits. I wanted to improve my language, myself, personally and professionally. And I think I believe Western countries are very good academically and professionally” (LN. 552-555). Her answer seemed to imply that those gained benefits (e.g., improving language, improving personality, and having professional improvement) could not be found in non-Western universities with better ranking, let alone those without better ranking. In addition to improving her English in Western universities, Dr. Maryam stressed the reputation factor
in this response, “I want to know more about the language, the reputation, the reputation of these countries” (Dr. Maryam, INTVW1, LN. 497-498). She pointed out how Western universities market for themselves compared to non-Western ones by participating in the annual fair for universities, which is organized by the Omani MoHERI, to recruit students from Oman. However, non-Western institutions, according to Dr. Maryam, “don’t advertise themselves much in our country [Oman]” (LN. 526).

Like other participants, Dr. Shamsa disapproved of the notion of going to a Non-Western institution. However, her disapproval was based on her need and desire to improve her English because of her major. Therefore, she also refused to go to Western countries (e.g., France and Switzerland) to complete her further studies in TESOL. She illustrated that in her words, “If you ask me to go to France or Switzerland, for example, to do my master, I would say, “No, I do not think so” (Dr. Shamsa, INTVW1, LN. 497-498). She also echoed the idea of how Western institutions are characterized by attributes like having higher status, high-quality, branding, reputation and more prestige and better rankings (INTVW1). She considered the idea of going to a non-Western institution a waste as depicted in this response, “If I do not want to waste my time, my efforts, and also my money, then I would go for something worth it. I do believe that these English native language institutes are more qualified than the other ones” (LN. 502-504).

Dr. Ibrahim was no different from the other participants’ responses. He, with a strong tone of disapproval, answered my question, “No, no, no, no, no. Focus [talking to me] on No. Bold NO” (Dr. Ibrahim, INTVW1, LN. 271). One of his justifications for such strong disapproval was his belief that graduates from non-Western universities end up
producing “very descriptive very, very descriptive” (LN. 273) and “very shallow” theses because they, according to Dr. Ibrahim, they, “spend most of their time in hanging around and having fun” (LN. 275). However, he believed that students enrolled in Western universities could risk being expelled from their PhD programs after spending years working on their dissertations if they do not maintain a certain expected level of quality work. He also added that Western institutions help in producing, “excellent researcher and excellent academics who can contribute to the development of their countries” (LN. 318-319). He described non-Western as normal and very lenient which could be the reason students enrolled in such universities end up having fun and hanging around (INTVW1). Similarly, Dr. Ibrahim decided to stick to the same justifications for his disapproval for going to a non-Western University regardless of the higher ranking it might have. He seemed to attribute his decision to his firm belief that majority of (if not all) non-Western institutions largely tend to have a lenient system as noted in his short response, “No, [he won’t go to non-Western institutions] for the same reason that [non-Western institutions] being lenient” (INTVW1, LN. 361).

Finally, Dr. Fatin indicated her preference for Western universities by saying with a tone of pride and certainty, “Definitely, no. No, I would not trade that experience for anything” (Dr. Fatin, INTVW1, LN. 514) because “they [Western universities] have the system, organization, having those open libraries, having those, there you wouldn’t find it anywhere else, actually” (LN. 528-530). Also, Dr. Fatin emphasized the historical aspect of Western universities and how that has helped those universities maintain an adequate level of quality, which made her choose her Western university as she explained here, “They [Western universities] are really, really old and have established
their positions and know what they are doing, I mean, whatever they are doing. There is no failure. I mean, they will produce good highly qualitative graduates, those who can produce” (Dr. Fatin, INTVW1, LN. 539-543). She seemed to crown the West with inevitable success. Also, she appeared to imply that non-Western universities do not graduate good and highly qualitative graduates. However, and despite her appreciation for her Western and institution, Dr. Fatin illustrated her approval for the idea of going to a non-Western institution if it had a better ranking because she stressed how ranking was essential to her decision making. Dr. Fatin noted, “Yes, I would [consider a non-Western institution]. It is a better ranking, so I think I would learn better and more” (INTVW1, LN. 666). Not only that, but she also went further to say, “I don’t think it [that non-Western institution] has a better ranking unless it is doing the same or maybe better work than the other [Western] countries, so it is is about ranking” (LN. 672-674). Dr. Fatin appeared to believe maintaining high standards and ranking had nothing to do with whether the institution is Western or non-Western. What mattered most to Dr. Fatin was whether the institution (Western or non-Western) consistently followed well-designed measures to maintain a certain level of quality which would automatically qualify that institution to have a higher ranking. In short, all the participants, except for Dr. Fatin, appeared to express their resolute opposition to joining non-Western institutions even if they had better rankings than their Western institutions.

**Preference for Western academic over non-Western ones**

In relation to their preference for Western advisors over non-Western ones, both Dr. Fatin and Dr. Shamsa stood resolute with their choice for an English native speaking advisor. This was the case despite their struggle with their Western advisors as indicated earlier. For instance, Dr. Shamsa preferred a Western advisor because she
was interested in learning English and learning about English culture from native English speakers. She remarked:

As I said before, I want to get the two things. I am interested in learning the language [accent] and interested in learning the culture. I mean when I went to when I went to UK. And I chose this purposefully, because I want to learn the English native language from the native speakers. (Dr. Shamsa, INTVW2, LN. 47-51)

In her estimation, learning a language and its culture can only be acquired from English native speaking educators. Like Dr. Shamsa, Dr. Fatin suggested that she would not change her English native speaking advisor to an English non-native speaking advisor despite her negative experiences with her English native speaking advisor. She justified her choice based on a personal story that happened to her Omani friend whose advisor happened to be an Arab working in the West. At first, Dr. Fatin thought her friend was lucky to have such an advisor who was, “so supportive. He helped her so much in a way that he would give her a lot of things like worksheets for her PhD, her research. He will just direct her” (Dr. Fatin, INTVW1, LN. 642-644). She added that his awareness of Arab students’ culture and challenges made him lead the complete process to ensure that his students “do not fail and waste their years for nothing” (LN 646). However, Dr. Fatin appeared to believe that her friend missed that important experience and journey as illustrated in this response:

I really felt so sorry for her. The experience of PhD is supposed that you learned a lot of skills, at the personnel and kind of social cultural. If you do not do or if you did not go through it, you would not learn. (LN. 648-652)

Although her friend was able to finish her PhD journey, Dr. Fatin felt her friend was denied opportunities to learn important skills (owning your work, facing the problems, checking what is causing these problems, and finding solutions for your own
problems) because of her Arab advisor's excessive help and support. On the other hand, Western advisors, according to Dr. Fatin, would give their graduate students the chance to assume full responsibility and function independently by providing access to services offered both on campus and beyond before the advisors' interference. Dr. Fatin concluded her argument with a confirming statement for her choice, "I wouldn't trade anything for that journey" (LN. 658).

On the other hand, Dr. Maryam, Dr. Faiyza and Dr. Ibrahim offered a different perspective. For instance, Dr. Ibrahim was not against the notion of choosing an English non-native speaking advisor, "I don't mind because it is not, it is not a language, you know, it is not a language but some knowledge" (INTVW2, LN. 32-33). Nevertheless, he accepted the idea of having English non-native speaking advisors if they follow the Western model of advising and supervision as he explained his argument in this response:

You know, it [their supervision style] is Western wise oriented, what, what do I mean by saying this? I mean, here, they treat, you know, their supervisees as peers, rather than hierarchy [I am the supervisor, you are, you know, as sometimes you find it here [Oman or Arab or some non-Western cultures], you know, sometimes you find arrogant supervisors, they never just, you know, make a good relationship, if you talk about these sort of, you know, of features, let me say call them, you know, so this will help me because, you know, if I got a supervisor who was very open, and treat me like human, and treat me not like, you know, in terms of I am the supervisor, you are the supervisee. And, you know, you need to listen, arrogantly and you say, you need to do these instructions, or orders rather than suggestions, and, you know, and preferences. So that is, I do not know if you understand me. (LN. 68-77)

Dr. Ibrahim referred to the traditional teacher–student asymmetrical and hierarchical relationship, which is common among some Arab [including Omanis] supervisors including those were educated in the West (INTVW2). He noted, "the eastern oriented [approach], I am the supervisor, you are the supervisees and need to
listen to me. That is the sort of thing” (LN. 94). “Instead of showing our [academics] muscles” (INTVW3, LN. 26), Dr. Ibrahim suggested the use of egalitarian relationships between the advisors and their advisees. In fact, he indicated his adoption for this egalitarian relationship approach by asking his students to call him by his first name without the need for using academic titles because, as he remarked with a sense of respect, pride, and trustworthiness of his learners, they:

are not empty handed. And I always tell them, whatever I am saying is not always correct. Not everything, whatever you are reading from that I am giving you the materials you are given, is correct. No, but it is a suggestion. And now these can be challenged as well. I am very open. Okay. I like to learn from my learners. (INTVW2, LN. 821-824).

Therefore, his reservation, in his estimation, is based on the rarity of the use of an egalitarian, relational approach among non-Western academics and advisors with their advisees. Similarly, Dr. Faiyza’s view aligned with Dr. Ibrahim’s view that the supervising process is not about the language but about giving feedback at the right time, in the right manner, as she explained:

It depends on the supervision process. It is not about the nationality but whether the supervisor is qualified enough to supervise the PhD candidate in terms of providing him or her a kind of an advice, for example, space, providing me some advice regarding how to do the the PhD and is able to read my paper or my work whenever I whenever I submit it to him or to her. And the most important thing is that she or he is available for discussion, either online or even face to face. And that is very important, because I believe these are the crucial components of supervision. So, in this case, I mean, the language does not hinder here when it comes to the supervisor’s role. So, the most important are the points that I have mentioned previously. So, it does not matter if the supervisor is a native or nonnative speaker. (Dr. Faiyza, INTVW2, LN. 18-27)

Dr. Faiyza shared her struggle with her Western advisor at the beginning due to the extensive use of the hands-off approach, but she later began to believe that her advisor might have been trying to teach her to own her dissertation and the whole
journey. In addition to the advisor’s availability to respond [online or face to face] to questions and concerns and to provide feedback and advice to advisees, she also believed that an advisor must have one essential quality as she described in this response, “And the most important thing is that s/he knows about her/his subject, s/he knows about the subject that you [as a student] are studying. So that s/he can provide you [as a student] that piece of advice” (LN. 30-31). Emphasizing egalitarian relationships and based on her personal experience in Australia of empowering student teachers, in one of her articles Dr. Faiyza indicated the need to reduce power differentials between student teachers and their supervisors and school administrators. She asserted removing or minimizing “hierarchy and power differential would provide a safe avenue for Omani student teachers to negotiate with and provide feedback to their supervisors and school administrators” (Faiyza, RA2, 2014, p. 39).

On the other hand, Dr. Maryam used to hold a negative view about English non-native speaking advisors before starting her PhD as she indicated in her response, “At the beginning at the beginning, maybe before I got into my PhD, I do not think so [choosing a non-native speaker advisor]” (INTVW2, LN. 21-22). However, when she began her PhD, she changed her view because she felt she became “more mature” (LN. 23). She elaborated on this change by saying, “It doesn't matter whether they are English native speaking advisors or not, what matters is their their experience in the field” (Dr. Maryam, INTVW 2, LN. 23-25). In another similar account stressing this idea, she stated, “It depends on their experience or knowledge in [about] the field” (LN. 41). She even indicated that she learned more from her external examiner, who is Spanish, than from her main British advisor. Dr. Maryam attributed that to the fact that her
external examiner “published massively in this in this in this regard [teaching EFL]” (LN. 31). Ironically, when Dr. Maryam’s British advisor recommended an Arab external examiner before choosing the Spanish one, she was “a little bit reluctant” (LN. 52) and justified her hesitancy by saying, “I do not know why said no and why I did not choose him although he was very, very popular, I mean, popular, I would say” LN. 54-56). She added, “He has quite I mean, good experience in the field and he published I mean, quite very interesting papers in my field” (LN. 57-59). She attributed her disinclination to choose that Arab advisor to his age as she described, “maybe he's still young. He is really young” (LN. 69).

**Western gained knowledge and skills**

All the participants were exposed to different types of knowledge, skills, and strategies during their Western experiences. Academically, they were exposed to theories in their fields such as education, applied linguistics, methods of teaching and learning during their master’s degrees. Unlike Dr. Fatin and Dr. Faiyza, the remaining three participants (Dr. Shams, Dr. Ibrahim, and Dr. Maryam) did not have to take required modules or courses during their PhD, but were encouraged to take some when needed, as they were offered as optional courses. In contrast, Dr. Fatin, and Dr. Faiyza had to finish certain modules in research paradigms, conducting literature review, research methodologies, types of research and other related modules for preparing students to write their dissertations. In addition, they all stressed cultural aspects of learning and teaching English as well as skills like self-development, ownership, and independence. Although the participants shared several types of knowledge and skills gained from their Western education, this section focuses on the kinds of knowledge and skills that are Western-oriented due to the focus of this study.
Speaking and communication skills with some aspects of native speakerism ideology. The first tacit benefit stressed by most participants was improving their speaking and communication skills. During the interviews, all of the participants seemed to exhibit a marked tendency to sound like native speakers with a British or Australian variety. For instance, they all appeared to drop the /r/ sound and replace it with a schwa /ə/ especially at the end of the word and when pausing. Dr. Fatin interestingly glottalized [t] when speaking in English.

The findings disclosed that three female participants. (Dr. Shamsa, Dr. Faiyza and Dr. Maryam) highlighted how their speaking skills had improved from dealing and interacting with English native speakers (e.g., advisors, neighbors, friends, and classmates). For example, Dr. Maryam attributed living in the UK as the main factor for improving her English skills. More specifically, she compared her English before going for her master’s and after as follows:

I remember that I mean, before just going to the master’s degree, I applied for a scholarship, which was offered by MoHERI. And I was interviewed, which, okay, but unfortunately, I did not get the scholarship. And I thought it was because of my GPA, although it was very good. And maybe because I was less proficient linguistically than the others who have been chosen. But then after my master’s degree, I felt that I am more proficient, I cannot express myself better. And I can speak about different issues more, I mean, yeah, more confidently. (INTVW1, LN. 217-224)

Dr. Maryam seemed to attribute her inability to get a scholarship after finishing her undergraduate studies to studying in Oman and low proficiency in English despite her high GPA. On the other hand, she appeared to believe being sponsored by her parents to do her master’s in the UK helped her improve her linguistic proficiency and her ability to express herself confidently. Conversely, Dr. Shamsa attributed her strength on subject matter knowledge to her English non-native speaking faculty members.
during her undergraduate studies, as she put it in her own words, “They are more qualified in terms of theoretical side, about theories of teachings, linguistics, word formation, syntax morphology, semantic linguistic courses” (INTVW1, LN. 603-604). Nevertheless, she indicated that being “taught by English native speaking teachers from UK, America, South Africa” (LN. 578) during her undergraduate degree largely contributed to getting a high score in IELTS as she reasserted here, “That is why we [her classmates and she] got a very high score in our ILETS. I mean, most of most of the graduates from my cohort got six or above. And it was a very strong batch” (LN. 579-581).

She also emphasized that one of her main reasons for choosing the UK was to “learn the language from the English native speakers” (LN. 51). Quite ironically, Dr. Shamsa regarded a semi-negative evaluation for English non-native speakers’ accents although she is an English non-native speaker herself. She aggressively went to describe this negative evaluation using the following metaphor:

It is just like when when some people ask, “why don't you bring (mentioning an Eastern Asian nationality) nanny, for example, to teach your child English?” And I said, “I do not want my child to be taught by a (Eastern Asian nationality) babysitter because, because this is not their language. And if you see their English is broken and poor with some grammatical problems there, and their accents, are not really very nice. I do not know. As I said, it is just a feeling we had. (INTVW1, LN. 524-528)

Dr. Shamsa seemed to have fallen into the native speaker fallacy by positioning the pronunciations and grammar of some non-native English speakers as deficient. On the other hand, she seemed to synonymize accuracy in grammar, vocabulary, or accent with native English speakers. She also described English native speaking educators as more qualified, but she provided a different meaning for qualified by remarking,
It is not about being more qualified in teaching. They [English native speaking educators] might be less qualified in teaching, of course, the teaching methods, but it [being qualified] is just that they are qualified in their language, I mean, they are using accurate language, I do not know, the grammar is more accurate, and the the accent is more accurate. (INTVW1, LN. 530-533)

In addition to the accuracy aspect, she alluded to the possible gains (e.g., economic advancement and professional advancement) from graduating from a native speaking country and learning the native-like English as she stated here, “If you want to be employed in higher education institutes, just like mine, or better ones, I mean, you have to just study in, in an English native speaking country. Otherwise, you will not be accepted” (INTVW1, LN. 520-523). On a related response to English native-speakerism by Dr. Faiyza, she showed an exaggerated eagerness to master US English by asking the researcher [me] to provide her with tips and suggestions since I was studying in the US despite her intelligible pronunciation and fantastic English communication skills. Contrastingly, Dr. Ibrahim appeared to believe in diversifying teachers, so students could have a chance to be “exposed to different cultures, to different ways of teaching, to different things. And it is all totally healthy” (INTVW1, LN. 974-975). However, he was also in favor of using “a constant evaluation to whatever they [English teachers regardless of their nationality] provide because they are they are providing it in our country” (LN. 984-985).

**Critical thinking (CT).** In addition to speaking and communication skills, CT was the most emphasized tacit skill by all the participants. This came as no surprise considering the amount of focus placed by Western institutions on or to CT. All participants used diverse ways to address and stress CT concept. Table 5-1 below illustrates the different accounts and how many times each word or phrase was
repeated by each participant during the interviews to stress and discuss CT or its other forms in their academic lives as graduate students and as teacher educators:

Table 5-1. Critical thinking accounts used by each participant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Dr. Fatin</th>
<th>Dr. Maryam</th>
<th>Dr. Shamsa</th>
<th>Dr. Faiyza</th>
<th>Dr. Ibrahim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Words to describe Critical thinking (CT)</td>
<td>Reflection (2)</td>
<td>Shares own views (2)</td>
<td>Share your views (2)</td>
<td>Share your views (2)</td>
<td>Critical thinking (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking accounts</td>
<td>Reflect (1)</td>
<td>Provide evidence for own view (2)</td>
<td>Provide evidence for own view (2)</td>
<td>Provide evidence for own view (2)</td>
<td>Critical discussion (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical think (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negotiate (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critically reflect (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Push learners to the next level (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not submissive (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the interviews, all the participants appeared to place much greater value and more significance on CT than memorization and recalling skills. More specifically, they appeared to undermine and diminish the value of memorization and recall skills in several accounts. For instance, Dr. Ibrahim described CT as both a Western concept and good. He also highlighted the importance of CT and how his experience in the West played a role in improving his CT and helped him incorporate it in his teaching by confidently stating:

One good thing I learned is being patient and being good analytic, you know, a person [who] analyzes things before, you know, just taking any decision. And before even my class, you know, in earlier where you teach, you feel that you wanted to try this approach, for example, you say that you are going to reflect on it once you are done. Well, I mean, it does help me a lot to study in a very western country (INTVW2, LN. 1257-1261)

Not only did CT help him make decisions, but Dr. Ibrahim also seemed to believe that CT helped him revisit and reflect on his own teaching. As a result, his decisions on which approach to use are usually made after a thorough reflection and analysis of his
own context. What stood out most from his emphasis on CT was Dr. Ibrahim’s approach to assessing his students. He was against recall and memorization. When speaking about assessment, he criticized exams that are based on memorization as he explained in this statement, “If you [researcher] talk about the exam, asking your learners questions that they memorize this stuff, and pour the knowledge in this [exam] paper. That is the context here [Omani context]” (INTVW2, LN. 276-278). Instead, he wanted his student teachers to think critically. That was clearly evidenced in his response to his student teachers requesting him to postpone one of the tests. He, with a joyful voice, explained, “I do not want you [talking to his students] to study [implying memorizing and recalling]. I do not want you to study, can you bring your mind to the class to my classroom? Just I want your mind” (INTVW2, LN. 1209-210). Therefore, he appeared to equate CT with expressing one’s own views. In his own words, he proudly stated, “I respect my students, you know, they speak their points of views and I like to learn from my learners” (INTVW2, LN. 1263-1264) because “they are not coming to our classroom empty handed. They have got the experience being students themselves, you know” (INTVW3, LN. 19-20).

Despite his firm belief in the importance of CT, one of his shared documents by Dr Ibrahim was DOC CS 1 [syllabus notes for Classroom Research and Teacher Development]) as shown in Figure 5-1 below seemed to only stress the first three levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy mainly understanding (six out of nine objectives of the course) and application (three out of the nine objectives). However, the other levels were not included or stressed in these learning objectives.
Figure 5-1. A snapshot of course outline shared by Dr. Ibrahim

However, he indicated in the Course Appraisal document the need to address both learner-centered and CT skills since students complained they were not exposed to such skills as he remarked in this course appraisal:

They [Omani student teachers] kept saying that they have not been exposed to the learner-centered approach and CT skills before. They have been facing difficulties implementing such notions in their micro-teaching. I guess we need to consider learner-centered approach and CT skills (since they are our main target) in theories before they get into practicum stages. (DOC CA Course Appraisal, p. 2)

Finally, Dr. Ibrahim seemed to be selective when using CT despite his enormous belief in the importance of CT. This could largely be found in the limited practice and use of CT to challenge or asking his students to challenge Western epistemologies and epistemes in their teaching and research scholarship. He associated speaking about the impact of Western epistemologies and epistemes with politically oriented topics, which
should be avoided in classroom discussions as indicated by most of the participants. Also, he asserted that TEFL academics might not be capable of discussing topics because TEFL academics might be “not acquainted to that level” (INTVW3, LN. 481) and “are education oriented and can just argue with education” (LN. 482).

During the first interview, Dr. Shamsa also underscored the importance of CT and how she appreciated her experience in the West in improving her CT as illustrated in this response:

But then you know they (teachers in the UK) are relying too much on CT while doing research. Then you have to think deeply about your topic or think critically whenever you read about it, you think critically that what they want you to be. They [Western academics in the West] want you to use your mind and not review, memorization or recitation of knowledge as in Oman. (INTVW1, LN. 379-384)

Dr. Shamsa suggested that the Omani educational system largely emphasizes memorization and recall unlike the Western educational system. She appeared, in the above included response, to agree with Dr. Ibrahim in implying that non-Western academics do not push students to critically think but instead appear to focus on memorization and recall. In the same line of thought of criticizing memorization and recall, Dr. Shamsa compared how the Western educational system appeared to stress CT more than the Omani context. This is evident in her following response,

They [Western academics in the West] want you to use your mind and not review, memorization or recitation of knowledge. Yeah, whatever we [as Omani students] memorize we have to copy and paste, you know, copy, and paste it on our exam papers. That is it. But then you know they (teachers in the UK) are relying too much on CT while doing research. (INTVW1, LN. 379-384)

She went on to describe Omani schools as a system that “is killing our mind. It is [so] because the learning system is based on memorization and recitation of English” (LN. 545-548). She felt “very sad and really shy” (LN. 549) in the UK because she was
not able to answer religious questions raised by her friends, which she attributed to the memorization system in Oman. Ironically, some of her shared documents seemed to reveal a contradiction between her personal belief and practice when it comes to the use of CT. She shared two final exam papers (DOC.FE.1 and DOC FE 2). One common observation found in these two documents was that she used questions that extensively focused on the first three levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy (knowledge, understanding and application).

![Figure 5-2. A snapshot of a final exam shared by Dr. Shamsa.](image)

As shown in Figure 5-2 above [real content was transparentized], a lot of questions in this document (DOC.FE.1) were centered around explaining statements, defining, stating, listing, and providing a few examples but seemed to hardly evaluate
students’ CT as emphasized in the interviews. Although the quiz document (Dr Shamsa, DOC Qz) appeared to include some questions that trigger CT (e.g., decide how, evaluate this vocabulary lesson), this document was not devoid of examples of the first three levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy (e.g., define and identify). When Dr. Shamsa was asked about the extensive use of these first levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy in these documents, she attributed that to the continuation of having stagnant “institution, guidance and policies” (Dr. Shamsa, INTVW3, LN. 172) along with the low linguistic proficiency of her students who tend to rebel against teachers who ask questions about CT. In relation to being selective when to use CT, Dr. Shamsa did not have any objection about discussing the political aspect of English but only if it was part of the course or assigned curricula as she explained, “Well, if I mean, if it is part of the course description of course or objectives, then yes” (INTVW3, LN. 582) and “If the politics has no harm on them [students], then why not?” (INTVW3, LN. 605).

Dr. Fatin was no different from Dr. Ibrahim and Dr. Shamsa in stressing the importance of CT and how her Western experience helped her develop CT. At the personal level, Dr. Fatin pointed out how the Western system “pushed her to the next level to do things like CT, reflection” (INTVW2, LN. 292-293). However, she seemed to define CT by what it demands a person to do by stating, “we [as learners] have to navigate, learn, and search, surf, look for and …I mean, the [UK] system allowed us [international students] to do CT, reflection, I mean, [it] allowed me” (INTVW2, LN. 293-295). Some of Dr. Fatin’s shared documents were no different from focusing on the first levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy. Figure 5-3 below [real content was transparentized] depicted this focus on the first levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy.
When asked why she appeared to extensively use multiple choice and gap filling with the focus on recalling information, understanding information and application (defining, identifying, deciding True or False without justifying false, gap filling, explaining) in her google form quizzes, (Dr Fatin, DOC QZ GGLEF 1; Dr Fatin, DOC QZ GGLEF 2; Dr Fatin DOC QZ GGLEF 3) with a tone of outrage and frustration, Dr. Fatin remarked, “Because I mean, anyway, the students would copy and paste. So, we would just I mean asked multiple choice questions but based on their understanding” (INTVW3, LN. 874-876). She elaborated on how students are inclined to complain about other forms of questions in this response: “Our students would argue about the longer questions yes, about the subjective one…If I give [deduct] three marks for grammar, okay, you [Dr. Fatin] don't need to take three marks take one mark only” (LN. 882-884). She also justified her use of such questions because using them would help her find out if her students prepared for the class. In addition, she added convenience reasons like
automatic correction and immediate feedback considering the large working load (teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities [e.g., accreditation and program review]) given to the academics. She further indicated that she followed what the coordinator of the course used earlier since it was her first time teaching the Report Writing and Classroom Research and Teacher Development course. Finally, in relation to being selective when to use CT, she appeared to hold Dr. Shamsa’s view of using CT in challenging Western epistemologies and epistemes or the political aspect of English dominance only if that was part of the curricula.

Emphasizing the negative view towards recall and memorization, Dr. Maryam indicated that her main reason for leaving a teaching job in high school after one semester was because she noticed that the school environment appeared to push teachers to teach to the test with more focus on memorization. Such focus on memorization and recall led her to move to higher education. Like the other participants, she addressed the importance of CT and how her experience in the West helped her hone her CT skills. Like Dr. Ibrahim, Dr. Maryam stressed the importance of reflection on her own teaching practices, when she explained that in her own words, “I realized that reflection is very important. You need to give your opinion you need to discuss it with other colleagues who are teaching the same course” (Dr. Maryam, INTVW3, LN. 218-220). Like Dr. Ibrahim and Dr. Maryam, she appeared to equate CT to giving opinions and reflecting. In her writing rubric (DOC AC 2 Rubric) document, Dr. Maryam stressed the higher levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) by asking students to both develop an argument with supporting details and provide a clear and logical refutation argument. However, when examining her assessment documents
(DOC MT 1; DOC QZ 1; DOC Test 1), there were more questions of the first three levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy than the higher three levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy. For instance, the questions were centered around recalling information, identifying, defining, combining sentences with connectors, providing examples. When I asked Dr. Maryam about this extensive use of such questions, she replied with a tone of hopelessness or even disapproval:

I will not generalize it, but my students now are different, completely different from our generation even good students, I remember last last semester, I was teaching very good students, most of them are females, I would say excellent students, they do not care about thinking they are even impolite, but they just care about grades, if you just take half mark, oh my goodness. They will fight, they will complain, they will write a report to the Head of the department. (Dr. Maryam, INTVW3, LN. 343-349)

Dr. Maryam believed the new generation of students appeared to be concerned with passing the course, not learning from her feedback. Instead, they resisted CT while doing assignments and projects. She, in speaking to this point, explained:

In the assignments, for example, I try to ask them to argue, and to show me their point of view and to provide evidence for their point of view, but I see very little argument there. I mean, students are not very well trained for this kind of, of this kind of writing or this kind of thinking to challenge something. (INTVW2, LN. 748-751)

Dr. Maryam attributed the struggle among her students to exhibit a low level of CT in their writing to both their low linguistic competence and to how the educational system has made them stagnant and hard to change when they enter higher education. Finally, she agreed with Dr. Fatin and Dr. Shamsa regarding her approval of challenging Western hegemony but only if it was part of the curricula.

Finally, Dr. Faiyza appeared to believe that CT is “not just to be negative, or just to criticize things” (INTVW3, LN. 473-474). She asserted that some academics seem to mix CT with being argumentative by only challenging others to make them look dumb.
For her, CT should aim at helping people to “negotiate” (LN. 471) knowledge and decide on whether certain knowledge fits or does not fit their own context. Also, she added, to be a critical thinker means, “to be open, you know, to have my voice. It [CT] is to improve professionally, as well as improve and improve someone’s language” (INTVW3, LN. 480). On the other hand, Dr. Faiyza was not against discussing and challenging Western hegemony and dominance, but she attributed avoiding discussing any politically oriented discussions inside the classrooms to the administrative regulations by stating;

To be honest with you it was one of the restrictions it is one of the institution policies not to talk about politics inside the classroom we could you could indirectly if one of the students for example mentioned but not talk about it in detail. (INTVW3, LN. 368-371)

To illustrate the same concept of avoidance more, she stated that once there was a student who wanted to discuss a political event inside the class, but Dr. Faiyza had to politely refuse that request and reminded the student that discussing such topics is not allowed by the institution’s policies.

Like everyone, Dr. Faiyza criticized memorization and recall when speaking about changing the learning and teaching culture in her working environment. She described the Omani educational system as “old traditional” (INTVW2, LN. 205) where Omani students seemed to believe they are “knowledge receivers” (LN. 206) while teachers should function as “transmitters of the knowledge” (LN. 208). According to Dr. Faiyza, as a result, during exams students appeared to provide answers based on what they memorize from what the teachers transmit in the classes. However, most importantly, she did not want her student teachers to be “submissive or recipients of knowledge” (INTVW3, LN. 480). Instead, she hoped to see her students become
“critical enough” (INTVW2, LN. 204) to make important decisions in their classes when they encounter any challenges. In short, CT was the most emphasized skill by all the participants in which participants appeared to have developed a negative attitude towards recall and memorization. Despite their firm belief in the importance of CT, their practices in teaching and especially in assessment, appeared to largely promote the first levels of Bloom’s taxonomy. Finally, they seemed to be selective when using CT, especially when discussing the impact of hegemony of Western epistemologies and epistemes.

**Understanding and incorporating the Western culture in teaching and learning English.** Another example of tacit knowledge gained by some of the participants was having a better understanding of other cultures, especially Western culture. Inspired and based on the notion of linking English to the cultures of Inner Circle countries, Dr. Shamsa indicated that her ultimate goals from studying in the West, considering her specialty, were, improving her linguistic competence, as well as understanding the cultural aspect of English. She advised international students to “see how other people are thinking about this, from which points of view why they are doing this, why they are acting like this” (INTVW1, LN. 539-541). Dr. Shamsa went further to stress the importance of expanding someone’s knowledge about other religions because, according to her, Omanis are mostly exposed to Islam in schools. She asserted the need to educate students about other cultures and religions. According to her, doing so would help reduce some embarrassing situations arising because of lack of knowledge about other cultures and religions. Both Dr. Ibrahim and Dr. Maryam appeared to agree with Dr. Shamsa on the importance of understanding other cultures,
especially Western culture. For instance, Dr. Ibrahim criticized his Omani roommate for just focusing on his studies while studying in the UK. According to him, his roommate “did not socialize at all, he did not attend, you know, different, you know, parties, different occasion, celebrations” (INTVW1, LN. 465-467). Instead, he advised students to interact with others not only for cultural benefits but for academic ones as well. He narrated a story where he met a female student who shared her experience with passing the confirmation exam. This interaction helped him understand how to pass his confirmation exam.

Although Dr. Maryam indicated that she was slightly shocked with some concepts that conflicted and clashed with her values, she appreciated the opportunity to learn about other cultures. She stated that she was able to learn about the British culture and other cultures like Chinese while studying abroad. Like the other participants, Dr. Fatin depicted the importance of integrating the cultural aspect in teaching English in this response:

If you are teaching an English language, and you are teaching a culture as part of it, how can you speak it in will teach it in like, by changing it to suit another culture. If we are like, in our case, like we are, we go there. And I mean, eventually come back, and teach English language, English language, mostly, it is cultural. Like, any language is cultural, the way you speak the way you use the words which you avoid the way and so on. (INTVW3, LN. 342-347)

Dr. Fatin appeared to agree with Dr. Shamsa’s notion of authenticity while teaching English. In other words, providing authentic materials for English non-native learners, according to her, would improve both their communicative and cultural competencies, which are important for English teachers. When examining the documents provided by the participants, there was one class titled, “Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)” which was taught by two participants (Dr. Faiyza
[previously] and Dr. Maryam [during the interviews]). One of the objective of CLT course as indicated in the syllabus was to provide student teachers with approaches in teaching English to “enhance their linguistic and cultural competences” (Dr. Maryam, DCSN1, p. 1).

Unlike the others, Dr. Faiyza seemed to have a different perspective about incorporating the cultural aspect of the target language. That was the case because she believed that some of the Omani curricula appeared to include Western materials that “are not relevant to our Omani context” (INTVW, LN. 342-347). According to her, some materials were artificially adapted, did not seem to highlight Omani values and culture, and instead pushed these values to the background. Therefore, she, as a form of resistance, encouraged her student teachers to analyze such materials to find ways to adapt them to the Omani context.

**Use of Western curricula and assessment**

As stressed earlier, all the textbooks used for the language courses, main skills (listening, reading, speaking, or writing) and specialization (e.g., educational, linguistic, literary) courses are from either Cambridge or Oxford Publishing Press. Most of the participants expressed their admiration for these textbooks. For example, Dr. Shamsa shared her admiration for using such textbooks in her classes by noting:

Their [Oxford Publishing Press] curricula are really very well designed. And they are meant for for the English language learners. For the Gulf countries, it is written on the books … they are meant for the, for the English non-native speaker speakers, especially the Gulf, Arabian Gulf countries, and if you see the photos there, you know, people are wearing Arab clothes something like this. (INTVW3, LN. 228-232)

In addition to the good design, she appeared to believe these textbooks are designed for non-native speaking learners and include some topics related to Arabian
Gulf countries. Despite her struggle as an undergraduate in Oman dealing with “authentic materials for native speakers” (LN. 638), she appreciated the use of authentic materials from her native speaker teachers. Therefore, she seemed to advocate for integrating the cultural aspect when learning the English language, as she explained,

"It is very good to have some time to choose topics really related to our culture to, you know, be more interesting when you learn the language. But sometimes we need to be very open to other cultures, to learn about these cultures. Why? Why are they using some of the words specific to that culture? (INTVW3, LN. 645-649)"

Ironically, she used the subway example to illustrate her support for teaching the cultural aspect by saying, “As I say, like subways. How do we know subways? If we do not know the culture of why they are using subways, why don't we have subways?” (LN. 649-651). Agreeing with Dr. Shamsa in terms of suitability of the textbooks for the students, Dr. Maryam shared the same thought by stating, “I like the textbooks… because I felt that it is very well organized. And I mean, they are good for the students' level, I mean, the language. And, they have exercises. So, I felt that is good” (INTVW2, LN. 619-621). When she asked if she would consider textbooks written by Omani or non-Western authors or publishing companies, she did not seem to support the idea. In fact, she went on to describe the textbooks produced by Oxford and Cambridge as “Well, I don't know, I felt that the Western ones are much better and going to be more more effective” (LN. 651-652). Also, she indicated that Western companies have extensive experience as she explained in this response:

"They are more experienced, and they get used to publishing these kinds of books. They are also I mean; their team is quite experienced. So, they are working for many institutions. That is why I felt that I would go for the western ones. (LN. 655-658)"
Supporting the use of authentic materials, Dr. Maryam indicated that she “always provides the student with articles from the guardian” (LN. 622) and sometimes with articles from local newspapers.

Similarly, Dr. Fatin first described these companies as, “commercial, commercial print press” but immediately interjected with, “But not only commercial, but they also have their own reputation” (LN. 782). She appeared to agree with the use of these textbooks because of her positive personal experience as an undergraduate student in Oman as she explained, “They [Oxford and Cambridge Press] have proven that the books are good. I have studied them, and and they really produced good outcomes” (INTVW2, LN. 783-784). Elaborating on that, she seemed to believe that these publishing companies (Oxford and Cambridge) have a “long, well-established and good reputation and their books are really built on the newest theories” (LN. 788-789).

According to Dr. Fatin, the problem lies in the lack of trust in Omani PhD holders by some officials and decision maker administrators in designing materials after gaining a lot of knowledge and skills from the West upon their return as illustrated in her response, “They [officials and decision makers] don’t trust the educators with PhD in our in our university or college, so there is a problem” (LN. 798-799). Therefore, she believed that using these materials imported from the West would be the best way to maintain a certain level of quality (INTVW2).

Echoing the notion of synonymizing reputation and quality to the West, Dr. Ibrahim shared his reasons for using Western materials in his classes as he remarked, “I use textbooks and handouts from the West. In all the materials I am using from the West, not because I admire the West, but because of the quality” (INTVW2, LN. 797-
He seemed to imply that non-Western textbooks are of low quality. In a limited use of non-Western materials, he indicated that he would provide his students with articles written by Western and non-Western authors to analyze and criticize. However, he observed that his student teachers tend to “always go for the local ones to, you know, to criticize [the] most” (INTVW3, LN. 1153-1154) and his student teachers did not provide any justification for their preference.

On the other hand, Dr. Faiyza believed these adapted versions, which other participants seemed to admire, appeared to be artificially adapted as she explained:

There is an attempt [to adapt them to the local context], there is an attempt to incorporate the Arabic culture and Omani for example, in the English for me [Omani high school textbooks] books, there is that you could see that there are there are names in Arabic but but still, still [below the expectations]. The [local Omani] culture is not vivid there. Sometimes you see, for example, Arabic names with English culture” (INTVW3, LN. 219-223)

She was the only who shared her worry that about the impact of incorporating and stressing Western culture in teaching on the Omani youth as she remarked here:

So, we want an authentic one [curriculum], which keeps our identity because the coming generations might lose this identity over the time you know, so when our children you know, just grow up and and be educated in or have or learn from this curriculum, they would not find their their identity, their culture there. They will find, yes, the names are out there, but what is the culture? Actually, there is an attempt to as I am not saying, but it is not, it is not authentic and as we hope to see. (LN. 225-231)

She was worried about the loss of local identity because of the vividness of Western culture in these textbooks. Interestingly enough, she seemed to define authenticity from the local source culture perspectives unlike Dr. Fatin and Dr. Shamsa who appeared to define it from a target Western culture perspective. In short, everyone, apart from Dr. Faiyza, conveyed their admiration for Western textbooks and materials
over non-Western ones. Dr. Faiyza was the only one who was worried about artificial adaptation in these textbooks and the consequences of local identity loss.

Use of non-Western materials. The participants appeared to boundedly use materials used by non-Western authors. Except for Dr. Faiyza, all of the participants cited more Western authors in their published articles and used materials. Table 5-2 below displays the approximate use ratio of participants’ citing Western authors in comparison to non-Western (Arab, Asian, African, Latin American) authors. The percentages were derived from the articles submitted to the author by the participants.

When they were asked about the extensive use of Western references, one of their main justifications was centered around the lack of articles by non-Western authors that are published in high-ranked journals. Also, they indicated that citing more Western authors in comparison to non-Western authors would double their chances of getting published.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Article (RA)</th>
<th>Published Article</th>
<th>Textbooks</th>
<th>Other Materials</th>
<th>Non-Western</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Faiyza</td>
<td>RA 1 35%</td>
<td>Western 65%</td>
<td>100% from</td>
<td>Open to using both western and non-Western if they are relevant and beneficial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RA 2 38%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cambridge or Oxford publishing houses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Shamsa</td>
<td>RA 1 25%</td>
<td>Western 75%</td>
<td>And 0% for non-Western ones</td>
<td>Not against using non-Western materials but preferring using more “authentic” Western materials to develop students’ linguistic and cultural competence as well as language issues with some non-Western articles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RA 2 33%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Maryam</td>
<td>RA 1 31%</td>
<td>Western 69%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Exposing her students to both non-Western and western materials as long as they are relevant.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RA 2 35%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Fatin</td>
<td>RA 1 33%</td>
<td>Western 67%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Open to using non-Western materials but preferring more Western materials because they are usually published in high index journals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RA 2 29%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Ibrahim</td>
<td>Did not share any articles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Extensively Western materials, but rare use of non-Western materials could be allowed for certain comparison tasks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interestingly, Dr. Shamsa had never tried to use articles written in Arabic or by non-Western authors because “Most of the articles published in very high peer reviewed journals are written by native [English] speakers. Maybe 90 or at least 80%” (INTVW2, LN. 839-841). She went further to describe that the language used in some articles written by some non-native speakers of English as, “Really horrible. There are even errors in spelling or other issues” (LN. 387-388). However, she anticipated that the situation would be changing because “A lot of non-native speakers are publishing in very, very high-quality journals, and articles” (INTVW2, LN. 842-843).

For the use of materials written by non-Western authors, Dr. Faiyza had used some articles written by non-Western authors for her classes. In fact, she cited several non-Western authors including Omanis in her published articles. In her own words, she said, “I remember last semester, I exposed my students to a number of articles written from the, you know, from the ELT written in the ELT context from Saudi Arabia or Kuwait” (INTVW2, LN. 1028-1031). She added that “they [articles] resonate with my students because of the similarities between contexts. So, we read them and compare and contrast” (LN. 1032-1033). Similarly, Dr. Maryam stated that in her graduate studies she used and liked to use non-Western materials when authoring her article as she remarked herself, “Sometimes, I mean, yeah, it depends, it depends. I would like to argue that some of the articles that I mean cited are written by non-native speakers from China, Egypt, Morocco, and other other non-Western materials as well” (INTVW2, LN.229-231).She also added that she used one article written by her colleagues which was related to one of her classes (INTVW3). Similarly, Dr. Fatin indicated that some of her non-Western teachers used materials and articles written by themselves along with
other articles that were written by Western and non-Western authors during her undergraduate studies in Oman. Dr. Fatin’s extensive use of Western articles and authors was mainly to ensure getting published because her institution demanded she and her colleagues publish in “high index journals” (INTVW2, LN. 871). She also appeared to imply that citing more Western authors than non-Western authors would help her get published.

All the participants were against the widespread practice of some Omani researchers or decision makers using Western tools to measure students’ skills like CT, without proper adaptation and modifications to fit the local context. Dr. Ibrahim and Dr. Fatin were in favor of building on what has already been used in the West but adapting these measures or tools to suit the local needs. Similarly, Dr. Faiyza, Dr. Maryam and Dr. Shamsa indicated designing assessment tools should be based on certain criteria that suit the local culture and needs. Otherwise, as described by Dr. Shamsa, these tools could be characterized as devious and unfair (INTVW3) to evaluate Omani students.

However, the participants shared different views about the use of international language tests (IELTS or TOEFL). Although some of the views held by some participants appeared to have changed, it was important to mention them to show how people could change and mature in their thinking. For instance, Dr. Ibrahim, after finishing his master’s degree was “one of the people who recommended ILETS, in the MoE before it was implemented” (LN. 706-707). That was after he finished his master’s, but he appeared to have changed his idea of adopting international tests by stating:

We [Omani academics] can make a national exam, you know, is with a committee with other concerned institutions provide this ELT program, sit
together, Minister of Education, sit together, come up with, you know, with a standardized exam like IELTS through which you can tell that this teacher is capable, is qualified to teach in our school or otherwise. (LN. 726-730)

He stressed the notion of building on by learning from these international tests but also argues Omani academics who were funded by the government to go to the best universities, have not been given the task to create a national test that not only examines the linguistic competence, but also checks teaching ability and readiness for Omani teacher students based on what they learned during their education. In the same line of thought of the lack of correlation between linguistic competence and teaching competence when using such exams, Dr. Faiyza, who extensively examined the effectiveness of IELTS in her published article and PhD dissertation, seemed to stress that such exams tend to check only one aspect and overlook other important indicators like teaching readiness. She remarked on her rejection for such use:

We have ILETS, which is okay, is for measuring students' language proficiency. I am not I am not I am not saying anything about this, but actually I argue about why it is actually it, why why you are using it for students who have spent five years teaching English and learning in English in English and for five for five years, and then you are going to measure them against their language proficiency and that one is an indicator or determine if they are going to get employment or not. (INTVW2, LN. 838-844)

In fact, she appeared to find using such exams to measure student teachers’ linguistic proficiency insulting to the academics and institutions in Oman considering these students were enrolled for four to five years between language and educational courses. Therefore, she urged the decision makers or officials not “to import systems or tests from the from the Western institutions blindly, without thinking about the context” (LN. 845-846) and build more trust in Omani academics in producing tools that serve the needs of the Omani context. (INTVW2).
Dr. Maryam seemed to agree with Dr. Faiyza’s view on how the purpose of using tests was twisted. She remarked:

I think it is, it [using these international exams] is good. I mean, I like the idea that they are using it for recruitment because in the end, you want students with a good language proficiency level. And I mean, IELTS can give you a good indication about their English language proficiency level. Maybe it will not tell you much about their teaching skills, but at least to have a rough idea about their, their English language level. So, I think I am with I mean, maybe a lot of people said that it does not give much about a student’s experience or skills in teaching and so on. (INTVW2, LN. 667-673)

Therefore, she was not against the use of such a test to check graduates’ linguistic competence, but she believed these tests do not provide a complete picture of the graduates’ readiness to teach in schools. Dr. Fatin’s views were no different from Dr. Faiyza and Dr. Maryam’s views. In a more general sense, she believed using such tests could be a fair tool to check students’ linguistic proficiency, but they cannot capture other skills as she noted, “Maybe for assessing a language competence, but then there is nothing else regarding other skills, and then particular jobs require particular tests to be taken to join this kind of market or job” (INTVW2, LN. 721-723). Therefore, she suggested developing tests that both examine linguist competence and required skills for certain jobs as she explained her view in this response, “We need a test that is really designed to the market requirements and the job requirement, each each job or specialization has its test, really, we need it” (LN. 725-727).

Despite the continuous debate on whether these international tests are valid or not, Dr. Shamsa decided to take the side that these tests are valid. Not only that, but she also appeared to question the credibility of national exams as she described her intake on the use of developed national exams:
So, if we are going for local exams, I am sure there will be some corruption in this. Some of them, you know, will pass it because there is no credibility. The IELTS exams are marked in the UK. These exams are sent to the UK, and they are marked there, and you get your certificates sent to you from the UK. (INTVW2, LN. 635-638).

According to her, nationally designed exams and tests are more likely to be leaked and appear to lack validity and credibility. In short, the participants appeared to range in their perspective of the use of Western assessment tools in the Omani TEFL context. Apart from Dr. Shamsa, everyone shared some issues that must be addressed and some factors that must be considered (e.g., lack of correlation between linguistic competence with teaching competence and building more trust in Omani academics) if the decision makers insisted on using such international tests or tools to better serve the needs of the Omani context.

**Elite bilingualism vs. minoritized languages**

As stressed earlier, Oman is an ethnically diverse country with many languages. Therefore, it was important to capture the participants’ views about the government's preference for introducing European languages over MLs. All the participants seemed to confine or reduce the effect of globalization to the economic aspects and disregard other aspects of the Western epistemics and epistemologies (namely, linguistic, cultural, political, and spiritual domination in general and epistemic in knowledge production). This resulted in participants being amenable to introducing European languages (German and French), which are already introduced in some schools and some public and private higher education institutions, and Chinese, which is offered in some public higher education institutions, over MLs. The participants differed in their reactions (ranging from semi-aggressive to semi-supportive) to the idea of introducing the common MLs in Omani educational institutions (schools and higher education).
For instance, Dr. Faiyza was not against introducing MLs spoken in Oman, especially the documented ones as she described that, “It [introducing MLs] would be a very fantastic, excellent idea” (INTVW3, LN. 303). She noted that some of her Omani students, who speak these MLs, organized an event to teach the academics, classmates and administrative staff about these languages and their cultural aspects.

According to Dr. Faiyza, everyone (students, academics, and staff) appeared to enjoy that event. She believed introducing MLs could expand the limited or restricted use of these languages among their speakers and could help “revive them” (LN. 360) since they are almost dying among their speakers. However, she was concerned about how students, who decided to choose to learn these MLs, could benefit from them economically and professionally as depicted in this response:

Learning MLs unluckily will not help our children when they graduate and you know, to find a job, and who’s gonna, who’s gonna employ, you know, a graduate who has[speaks], for example, Baluchi language. Who is going to employ him or her? If we think about it, you know, economically or practically, you know. I think this is the perception of a lot of people and in particular, parents, they are just worried about their children. They want them to, you know, to be employed, or, you know, to get a job easily after they graduate. That is why they think of English in the first place. And maybe the European language like French and the Chinese language in the second place. (LN. 317-324)

Despite her sympathy and worry about the possibility of these MLs disappearing in the future, the economic aspect of globalization appeared to win the argument for Dr. Faiyza. With a focus on the impact of the economic aspects of globalization and the Chinese language in particular, Dr. Faiyza stated:

Maybe Chinese is now trying to compete with America so we [Omani government and decision makers] are afraid the future may China or Chinese could be the most dominant language so as a kind of preparation for the generation to I mean to, to speak Chinese. Yeah, and it could be the same as with with with with the languages that you have just mentioned [French and German]. (LN. 281-285)
However, she unintentionally referred to the intellectual role played by some cultural European centers (the German Language Center and French-Omani Centre) in propagating these languages. This was evident when she stated that, “But to be honest, maybe this is as I said, out of cooperation. I have no no idea about it” (LN. 268-267). Similarly, Dr. Ibrahim seemed to reduce the effect of globalization on economic aspects and disregard the other aspects of Western epistemics and epistemologies. According to him, he personally asked some officials in the government about introducing these European languages and they told him that the choice for German came after the increasing number of German tourists to Oman. Therefore, tourism graduates are required to learn one of these languages.

When it comes to MLs, Dr. Ibrahim first rejected the idea when he said, “And my point of view, I don’t think it is a good idea” (INTVW3, LN. 303) because having more than one language (other than Arabic as the official language) could create a lack of harmony and unity knowing that the official language of Oman is Arabic. Dr. Ibrahim appeared to loosen up about the idea of offering MLs as electives instead of requirements. However, he stressed that students must be made aware of what they get themselves into. He added that students should not blame the government later for choosing one of these MLs if they do not see any economic value in the future. Also, he appeared to indicate the lack of practice opportunities if someone decided to learn one of the MLs, unlike European languages where resources and practice opportunities could be easily found. He remarked:

The limited scope of these minoritized language here is going to use with a certain group of people... You are not using that language always. The more you practice it, the more you gain it, the more you acquire it. Let us say from the language acquisition point of view...but for German you can
use the German language online you can use you can practice it you can you go around you find German, German tourists around in Oman. (LN. 343-351).

Agreeing with Dr. Ibrahim on the probable future benefits, Dr. Fatin shared her concern about introducing these MLs. She inquired, “Where would we [the country of Oman] need that knowledge for and how would our graduates benefit from learning them?” (INTVW3, LN. 285-286). She seemed to assert that spending on these MLs could be “a waste of money and time and effort, let's take, let me teach you something that you are not going to benefit from” (LN. 287-288). Stressing the economic side, she seemed to assert that introducing MLs would cost the government a lot of resources, but that the outcomes might not parallel the resources:

All these languages you mentioned, I do not know if there is knowledge can be gained. But still, if you are going in to pay for a teacher to teach them you also have the resources. And, I mean, I do not know. So, I do not think it is beneficial. (LN. 290-293)

It was obvious that the economic aspect of globalization also appeared to win the argument for Dr. Fatin. Dr. Maryam presented another concern regarding introducing MLs in educational institutions, which was the large number of languages in Oman as well as a lack of documentation systems for some of these languages. She remarked, “Once I read that, about 15 languages were were were spoken in Oman, 15 languages. So, what language(s) should we emphasize? Because most of these languages are not even documented, they are not written (INTVW3, LN. 317-321).

Also, Dr. Maryam appeared to be concerned with Omani people's reaction, especially those who do not speak MLs as illustrated in this response:

I do not know whether people will accept, for example, someone who is I mean, who is originally has nothing to do with Baluchi or with Lawati, or for example, with Hindi. For what or why should I teach my kids these
languages? It does not even relate to my culture, my heritage [with a tone of disapproval]. (LN. 324-327)

She echoed Dr. Ibrahim’s idea of unity and harmony in emphasizing the official language. She was in favor of encouraging her daughter to learn Eur.Ls over MLs in the future because of the professional and economic gains as she explained:

I do not know. I mean, I am talking about myself as a parent, if you ask me to choose between two, or what languages should I teach my daughter? Of course, I would choose German or or or French, other than Swahili and other other languages. Why? She will not benefit from them [minoritized languages]. At least French, maybe she will study in France, or she will travel there at least, you know, but for the others. I do not know. I do not think she will need them. (LN. 352-357)

In addition to the previously stressed economic aspects of globalization and its demands, Dr. Maryam like this, Dr. Shamsa brought the cultural aspect or the nationalistic fervor to the discussion when she remarked:

No, I do not think so. Why? If you are interested in or if you have hobbies in languages, yes, but I do not think they should be introduced to students. Because there are minor there are minor people who are speaking these languages in Oman. So why are we going, for example, to learn Swahili? What what why do we need this? Is it necessary? It could be part of the Swahili people culture, yes. So, they would learn that language from their parents. And maybe it could be like, optional, we get some private institution, some we do have private institution in Oman teaching these languages so they can go to this institution. Otherwise, I do not think the government should really encourage teaching these languages. Because usually the governments are introducing what is necessary for its people. But I do not think these languages are necessary. (INTVW3, LN. 427-437)

She seemed to refer to Dr. Ibrahim and Dr. Maryam’s idea of limited scope as she used “minor” to describe MLs. Also, she appeared to emphasize the economic gain demanded by globalization. She was also against offering these MLs even as electives by the government. Accordingly, she believed that these languages should be offered by private institutions because they are not as necessary as Eur.Ls and Chinese.
Therefore, the government, according to her, should not spend any resources on introducing them. I asked her to elaborate on why they are not necessary. She noted:

In terms of everything, in terms of, for example, life, daily life? Do we need them? Do we get in trouble if we do not know Swahili? I do not think so. Do we get in trouble you know, in our job, for example? Does our job involve these languages? Do we get in trouble If we go to shopping malls if we do not know these languages? Or or do we get in trouble reading medical reports? or text on our phone? I do not think so. That is why they are not necessary. And I do not think the government should introduce them really. (LN. 440-446)

Like everyone else, Dr. Shamsa’s long response was reduced to the economic aspect and appeared to disregard the other political and intellectual aspects of globalization. Emphasizing the nationalistic ardor and identity, she went further to stress that people in Oman would have a negative reaction towards such an idea because introducing such language, according to her, could negatively agitate Oman’s harmonious society and social peace as she illustrated in this response with a strong tone of disapproval and even reproach:

I think the people will have different reactions. If you, for example, if you are forcing, let me say part of the curriculum, and you have these languages, then the people will will get annoyed, because it is not part of our culture. We are we have what is called our identity actually, is defined by our Arabic language. So, these languages are not part of our culture or everyone’s culture. Why are we why are you trying to get us to enculturate us into this language, we do not want to. But if you are not using them as optional, for example, as an option as choices, I think also the people will have a negative reaction, because you are going to spend much money on these courses, which not them not all the people who get the benefit of them, only very much a minority of people will get benefit from these courses. And the government is going to spend a lot of money on them. And you know, the financial situation now, people now becoming really more aware of what the cost should be spent on. So, the cost should be spent on something necessary. They do not think this language is unnecessary. This is what I believe. I do not think many people would think this language is necessary for them. And I am talking about the majority of people because the majority of people do not know about these languages and are not in their culture. (LN. 464-480)
In addition to calling these languages minor, she used [ethnolinguistic] minority to refer to people who speak these MLs. She also indicated the current economic situation does not allow for incorporating unnecessary steps like spending resources on languages that are not economically beneficial and largely not spoken by the majority of Omanis. Hence, she was against the notion of introducing these MLs because they, according to her, would incur more bads than goods. In short, in addition to all the participants reducing the influence of globalization to the economic aspects, the majority of participants appeared to hold the belief that introducing MLs would both stimulate a negative reaction and agitate the harmonious society and social peace in Oman.

Overall, the participants appeared to hold a special fascination for the West, which was evident in their value for Western educators, institutions, curricula, and assessment. This fascination was also extended to valuing European languages over minoritized languages. This special fascination led the participants to develop a negative attitude towards non-Western ways of knowing and learning.

**Note on adapting Western materials**

Despite the participants’ fascination and admiration for the West as stressed in the section above, all the participants seemed to be aware of the importance of adaptation to such Western knowledge, skills, and approaches to fit their own local context. Table 5-3 below illustrates the words and phrases and how many times each word or phrase was repeated by each participant during the interviews. The data provide an example of how the participants stated they made changes to their work.

**Table 5-3. Adaptation accounts used by each participant**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Dr. Fatin</th>
<th>Dr. Shamsa</th>
<th>Dr. Faiyza</th>
<th>Dr. Maryam</th>
<th>Dr. Ibrahim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used words or phrases</td>
<td>Modify:1</td>
<td>Knowledge is adaptable: 1</td>
<td>Adapt:3</td>
<td>Adopt:1</td>
<td>Adaptable:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change :1</td>
<td>Modify:8</td>
<td>Adaptation:1</td>
<td>Adapt:5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Looking at the data, both Dr. Faiyza and Dr. Ibrahim appeared to show more eagerness and passion towards the importance of adaptation compared to the remaining participants. For instance, Dr. Ibrahim indicated he wanted to use almost everything he learned from the West when applicable and by adapting whatever is relevant to their own particular local conditions and current needs as he noted, “So, first of all, I give them [student teachers and schoolteachers] the theory, then I moved to the practical part, using their own materials, not using materials from the West, how can you adapt these ideas into your class” (INTVW3, LN. 613-615). Instead of fully adopting Western skills and knowledge, he seemed to believe in building on what has already been developed in other contexts. He remarked, “You need to start where other people have finished” (LN. 725) and adapted that developed knowledge to fit the local context. He was upset with the frequent practice by some officials in Oman of importing certain Western models and expecting them to work in the Omani context as they are. He suggested for these officials and decision makers to have a proper adaptation and “pilot
them at a smaller scale to evaluate how effective or otherwise these models may be in improving the quality of education before going into a full-fledged implementation” (LN. 721-724).

Similarly, Dr. Faiyza changed her idea of a full-fledged adoption of the Australian model of evaluating teaching practicum to the need to adapt to fit the local context:

What you have learned from the Western you need to look at it. See if it is really suitable to the Omani context and see what you can change or modify instead of just importing it and just, you know, directly implementing it in the Omani context. (INTVW2, LN. 352-356)

She appreciated her colleagues’ comments that helped her modify the teaching practicum evaluating form to suit the Omani educational setting. Dr. Faiyza was also training her students to critique, analyze the materials and textbooks used in their contexts and adapt them to suit the local context as explained in her response:

We need to teach our students to be critical. Yes, we need to look at the materials we read it, but we need to critically discuss this and negotiate ideas included in the textbooks or any used materials. So, it is not just you accepting it. And doing so will actually improve ourselves and our students, instead of just being submissive, and you know, just the receive recipient of the knowledge. (INTVW3, LN. 476-481)

As stated earlier, all participants with the exception of Dr. Faiyza showed their admiration for and strong positive beliefs and trust in textbooks by Cambridge or Oxford publishing houses. However, Dr. Faiyza disagreed with them emphasizing the vividness and influence of Western culture in these adapted versions as well as the irrelevancy of some materials in these textbooks including the Omani school textbooks. In fact, she referenced that these adaptations are artificial because they are only centered around changing names and some factual information influence in these textbooks. The western vividness she referred to was found in a student portfolio model shared by Dr. Faiyza. In the portfolio were several examples of representations of Western culture in
some of the activities in the Omani school textbooks chosen by the student teacher. For instance, the characters were not Omanis on page 15 as shown in Figure 5-4 below:

Figure 5-4. Western representations in an Omani school textbook: A) Non-Omani characters, B) Kangaroos and igloo for plural form, and C) Superman character used to describe the word hero.

Another indirect example for the Western representation was on page 58 in that portfolio discussing plural and singular nouns, in which it used nouns like kangaroos,
igloo to Omani students who have never seen or experienced these nouns. What stood out the most was using the picture of a superman character to describe the word “hero” (Image C in Figure 5-4). Therefore, Dr. Faiyza suggested to the people in charge to form a team of Omani experts to either design materials suitable for the Omani context or at least modify the current used materials to suit the Omani needs (INTVW3).

Stressing the importance of adaptation, Dr. Fatin wanted to implement the maximum of what she learned from her Western experience. However, she was aware of the need to adapt things to suit the Omani context as she explained here, “Not all of what I have learned could be applicable in terms of teaching, but like I always adapt it to suit the context” (INTVW3, LN. 25-30). Similarly, Dr. Shamsa was also keen on sharing her gained knowledge with her students, but was aware of the need to adapt to fit her local context as she explained here:

For whatever I learned there, maybe I learned that about the theories, yes, about the origins of the theories. But I am sure that I will adapt something… because the level of the students would be different, their nature, their background, their schematic knowledge. I mean, there are lots of variables, which would determine the knowledge, which I am going to use in my context. (INTVW3, LN. 33-39)

Dr. Shamsa seemed to be aware of the different variables to be taken when sharing her gained Western knowledge like context, students’ backgrounds, and levels. Also, she believed that TEFL as a discipline, “not like science, physics, or math, the knowledge is adaptable, based on the context” (LN. 76-77). Elaborating on the significance of adaptation and fluidity of knowledge, she urged teachers to researchers trying to understand their own context and decide on what suits their context (INTVW3). Finally, Dr. Maryam unquestionably agreed with the significance of adapting
her knowledge gained from the West to suit the local needs. She explained by giving a specific example from one of her classes as described below:

When I introduce Communicative Language Teaching, of course, I introduce the students to the main aspects of it, how it started, its strengths and weaknesses and obstacles in implementing it in our context. So, we discuss all of that. I believe that the teachers should acquire the ability to adapt whatever method to be applicable in their context. So, one of the things that the student teachers and teachers should acquire is the skill of knowing their students very well and adopt and adapt, whatever technique or method to suit their students more. (INTVW3, LN. 141-149)

Dr. Maryam clearly believed in equipping her student teachers with the ability to adapt materials or teaching methods because of the differences between teaching contexts and students’ backgrounds. On another related note about the importance of adaptation, all the participants were against the common practice among some Omani researchers or decision makers in using Western tools to measure students’ skills like CT, without proper adaptation and modifications to fit the local context. As a result of such use, Omani students were misevaluated. Dr. Fatin shared her rejection of this practice by saying, “Definitely no. I will tailor something specific to the needs and nature of Oman, or to the needs of the industry or the companies in Oman” (INTVW2, LN. 910-911). She also added that some parts of these international tests could be used but after getting adapted based on what Oman needs “because I mean, I mean, I mean, it [use of these tests] is generally the same, but practically it is different from one place to another or what the country needs” (LN. 913-915). Similarly, Dr. Shamsa was against using tools without properly modifying to fit the students’ background and context by stating, “It is not okay. Actually, it is unfair for the students. You need to adapt them to the students’ level, their backgrounds and which stage they are in: at the beginning or at the end of studies? ” (INTVW3, LN. 683-688). She also added to her argument for why
she held such strong beliefs against the blind adoption of tools by remarking, “Any assessment can really be very devious. It is not like you copy and paste” (LN. 707-708). Therefore, she urged those who use these tests, “to adapt them based on the context, students’ levels” (LN. 709). Because if these factors are not taken in considerations, these tests, according to Dr. Shamsa, become invalid. She concluded by explaining how exam questions are designed in her institution by asking fundamental questions, “1) Are these are the questions covering the course objectives? 2) Are the questions challenging, very challenging, and far above their level? Because if you are not doing that, that assessment is invalid” (INTVW3, LN. 711-714).

In short, all the participants seemed to be aware of the needs and significance of adapting Western teaching and testing materials to suit the local needs. They also appeared to equip their student teachers with the ability to adapt materials when they do not match their local contexts.

**Limitations in Empowerment and Involvement**

This section aimed at addressing the sub-question of this study: what (broadly internal and external) tensions are present for these Omani educators as they negotiate Western epistemes in their scholarship and teaching? Interestingly, with the Omani constitution ensuring the freedom of opinion and expression, after five decades of educational growth and development and a decade since the Arab Awakening, the findings of this study showed there still was a general avoidance among Omani teacher educators to critically question and challenge the policies and decisions made by whom Al-Issa (2015) calls, Omani hegemonic minority elites. According to the participants, most of these decisions and policies are demanded by the requirements of the Western epistemologies in the name of globalization. This observation was
reinforced by several statements made by the participants of this study. This is not meant to belittle or denounce the role of the participants’ personal conviction of and admiration of the West, but rather to illustrate the impact of the lack of empowerment and actual involvement in planning and decision-making processes.

Notably, all participants in this study during the interviews directly or indirectly expressed some level of concern for sharing thoughts that might be perceived as crossing the line between acceptable and unacceptable criticism against decisions and policies made by hegemonic minority elites and demanded by Western epistemologies and epistemes. This reluctance to challenge or criticize officials and their policies was found in several incidences where some participants asked me to either say things “off-record” or asked me to paraphrase their statements since criticizing officials and their policies is not something academics were ready to take on yet as this section would show.

One of the most striking examples of this reluctance and avoidance was expressed by Dr. Ibrahim, who was concerned to be identified by officials considering the small number of Omani teacher educators in the field of TEFL as clearly included in this interview script:

But before we kick off the interview, and just let me give you some information here, a bit cautious of any sensitive, you know, questions I can answer, but because of the qualitative research nature, the number of participants is extremely low. So, people can be easily identified from one organization, you know. So, yes, you would not say the names but still, whatever we are going to say can be identified, that is my point. (Dr. Ibrahim, INTVW1, LN. 20-28)

These statements clearly illustrated some level of fear and/or anxiety to report ideas that could be deemed by decision makers and officials as stepping over the line. Therefore, some participants asked me to either say things off-record or asked me to
Dr. Faiyza audaciously explained why such an avoidance exists among Omani academics and teacher educators. According to Dr. Faiyza, even if these academics chose to take the burden and risk of challenging official policies and procedures in their institutions, Omani academics' ideas, and efforts to improve teaching were still not always welcomed and valued. This was clearly [with a tone of exasperation] stated as follows:

Part of it they [officials and administrators] do not read part of it because most of the officials do not speak English. And another thing is that they are not interested, you know, or to spend time reading about it and discussing what you have researched about. And then nobody would ask you what your research is about, what recommendations you have or what benefits from what you have researched and investigated about. Nothing. (INTVW3, LN. 879-883)

The word “nothing” summed it all up. In addition to the lack of value of the participants' work and language barriers, she credited the problem to the professional background of some of the decision makers and officials by stating this:

So, maybe then there is a kind of misunderstanding between academics and those people who are in power who are not not in academia. So, they are not fully qualified enough to understand that. Educators and teachers should actually help in making decisions because this [involvement] will have a significant impact on our students' performances. So, there there is a gap actually. (INTVW3, LN. 1157-1161)

In this response, Dr. Faiyza seemed to indicate the impact of the gap between the administrators and academics, which could lead to uneasy and ambivalent relationships between academics and administrators and increase the level of frustration among academics. The participants asserted that, apart from the departmental-level initiatives, none of them were asked by the officials or administrators to present their dissertations' findings, recommendations, or the other research articles they had been publishing since their return to Oman. This culpable negligence for their
(Omani academics) efforts during their postgraduate studies, as indicated by Dr. Faiyza, Dr. Ibrahim and Dr. Shamsa, seemed to contradict with the main mission of NPSP (National Postgraduate Scholarship Program) of sponsoring Omanis to contribute to improving the quality of education in Oman after attending the best universities around the world. According to Dr. Faiyza, it was only the previous HoD (Omani female educated in the UK) of the department who encouraged these participants to share their research findings and conduct research workshops to exchange their gained knowledge with their colleagues in the department and in other departments when requested. This practice has fortunately been continued by the current HoD, who is an Arab educated in the UK.

Despite its efforts in encouraging academics to produce research, the research committees at University of Alhasan, according to Dr. Faiyza, appeared to be concerned with collecting information about research by academics for archival and recordkeeping purposes. As depicted in her words, with a tone of heaviness and pessimism, she said, “Most of it [research] is just paperwork: how many papers or article have you written and how many conferences you attended and presented?” (INTVW3, LN. 886-888). Similarly, Dr. Ibrahim disapproved of some training sessions for schoolteachers by trainers who might not be aware of the realities of these teachers. According to him [with a tone of frustration and disapproval], teachers “are poured [by trainers] with knowledge the way they are pouring the knowledge to their learners” (INTVW3, LN. 602-603). He asserted that these ideas were irrelevant and sometimes were not adapted to fit the teachers’ context and realities. When he was asked about what could happen to academics who tend to criticize such practices and policies, his reply after
careful consideration was, “They [academics with critical perspectives against elite officials] would be neglected because they are, you know, critical. They they are not given any post or positions. Unfortunately, this is the other way around” (INTVW2, LN. 1158-1160).

He appeared to imply that challenging policies could jeopardize their chances for advancement up the faculty ladder, tenure, and promotion. Dr. Ibrahim attributed the rejection of some of his suggested ideas because of what he called “politics” (INTVW3, LN. 1054) and having connections as he explained, "If I know Ahmed [an example], let me take him" (INTVW3, LN. 648) to do the job regardless of if s/he could or could not do the job. Similarly, Dr. Shamsa’s reply to the same question about challenging some of the decisions and policies made by the officials was, with a tone of irritation, “difficult because they [officials] do not want a headache. That is the thing they do not want headache” (INTVW3, LN. 1133-1134). She showed a high level of frustration on how sending Omani academics to pursue their PhDs, in her own words, could be:

A waste of money because they [officials and decision makers] have plans, they will do whatever they want. I mean, they are not going to take your point of view. Eventually, we do have students’ survey or teachers’ survey at the end of the semester to evaluate the course, but nobody, nobody is looking at them. It felt like wasting our time. (INTVW3. LN. 1249-1253)

According to her, conducting those surveys appeared to be artificial and purposeless and were principally done for documentation and record purposes, especially for accreditation. Similarly, Dr. Faiyza, with a tone of frustration, shared the same conviction by remarking:

And therefore, we [academics educated in the West] when we are just trying to lay out or raise the problems that we are having in our institutions, we were always shut down or rejected by, you know, by the officials. So, because they [officials] do not want to hear a lot of problems, they would
like us just to go on with the current practices, and just to finish our work. So, they do not listen a lot to us and to especially to the Omanis, who come from the Western institutions. (INTVW3, LN. 681-686)

She seemed to assert that some officials and administrators seemed to view academics educated in the West as “troublemakers and would like to create problems” (INTVW3, LN. 687-688). To the contrary, Dr. Faiyza believes, “we [academics educated in the West] would like to help solve the problems” (LN. 688-689). In addition to that, Dr. Shamsa highlighted another concerning matter, as she remarked, “They [officials] are getting sensitive because they do not think people are criticizing the system or the policies, but they [people] are criticizing them [officials] in person, which is not true. (INTVW3, LN. 1137-1139). According to her, policy makers sadly took criticism about their policies personally even though the criticism was expressed with the goal of improving the quality of education. Echoing the same idea, Dr. Faiyza seemed to assert decision makers and officials should understand providing constructive criticism by these academics aims at correcting some of the decisions or behaviors and not at targeting them or their individual characteristics. Hence, they should avoid taking criticism personally. Agreeing with Dr. Maryam and Dr. Faiyza, Dr. Shamsa shared her thoughts by saying, “We are not actually criticizing these policymakers but the policies. But they take things personally, so they would not like it. Therefore, they choose, you know, more flexible people” (INTVW3, LN. 1143-1145).

In addition to agreeing with the notion of taking things personally, Dr. Shamsa appeared to echo Dr. Ibrahim’s perspective that quieter, more submissive nominees would be chosen to work with decisions makers and officials. Interestingly, Dr. Shamsa interjected at the end of her response with a remedial statement, “I don't know because
I am not an expert in analyzing this” (LN. 1145). This could be a way to redress her criticism for the officials’ decisions and how they select their team members.

In addition to taking criticism personally, there was an unhealthy and worrisome trend among new official appointees who tend to change things completely instead of building on good practices and eliminating ineffective ones. That was evidenced in Dr. Shamsa’s remarks, “They [officials] don't have fixed policies and procedures” (INTVW3. LN. 1140) because “these policymakers are free to do whatever they want to. So, when they leave, when they leave their job, and another leader or leadership, then s/he has to invent policy from the start. (INTVW3. LN. 1124-1126). This continuous change in policies, regulations, and procedures appeared to focus on changing reforms but ignores preparing teachers for these changes as stressed by Dr. Ibrahim:

Some some some decision-makers make a radical change to the system, the curriculum, but they do not change the mentality of the teachers. Also, if they want to change, there is research. They should ask experts like us to analyze what is going on and to bridge this gap because it is not a matter of changing, but it is a matter of who is dealing with this curriculum. We [Academics] are education advocates and should be consulted (with a tone of bitterness), but we are not consulted or even wanted by these people. (INTVW3, LN. 589-592)

Dr. Fatin also attributed the failure in implementing a lot of their ideas not only to the elite officials, but also the people who were in the middle (between the academics and officials). For instance, Dr. Fatin found that some administrators in her institution seemed to be an obstacle by not making use of the resources provided, including the financial ones. She explained the problem with a tone of disapproval as follows:

So, I am gonna give you an example. So, I have in the institution fund support that goes to the technology information system and to the resources. These are in the hands of like one or two people, one or two people give the importance to other things… who would not listen to anyone. That is another problem. (INTVW3, LN. 692-696)
Despite the annually allocated 30,000 Omani Rials (about 78,000 US dollars) by the government for technological projects, Dr. Fatin indicated that she faced challenges convincing these administrators in the middle to allow her to use some of the funds for projects that improve the quality of teaching and learning. Even when attempting to ask them “politely and diplomatically”, most of these attempts ended up in failure and disappointment. Accordingly, she appeared to suggest having an accountability system or what she called “monitoring system” (INTVW3, LN. 707) by stating with a tone of outrage, “people in the middle need someone who just tracks them out a little bit more” (INTVW3, LN. 710-711).

To bring this section to a close, all the participants stressed the importance of providing Omani academics with more trust and time to effectively contribute to the needs and goals of the country and its development by not only addressing educational challenges but most importantly, helping to find solutions for these challenges. Also, there was an elevated level of optimism and hope among some participants (Dr. Ibrahim, Dr. Faiyza, Dr. Maryam) for things to be changed despite all those discouraging accounts and precedents mentioned. This hopeful optimism was because their institution recently merged with other institutions and is going through an accreditation process which requires accommodation for innovative ideas. The next section addresses the strategies and attitudes each participants adopted to cope with the above-mentioned pressing forces.

**Chapter Summary**

In the first section of Chapter 5, I presented the findings in relation to the main research question: how do Omani TEFL educators educated in the West negotiate Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching [in an Oman
teacher education context]? The findings revealed three main findings. First, there were prevailing examples of reinforcing the hegemony of Western epistemologies and epistemes in the participants’ context. Second, participants appeared to hold a high fascination for the West and accord greater value to Western skills and knowledge. This fascination for the West resulted in both having a semi-negative view about non-Western education and devaluing non-Western skills like recalling and memorization. Thirdly, despite the dedicated and conscientious efforts by the participants to some extent adapt their Western education and training to fit their local context and needs as well as occasionally resisting some Western epistemologies and epistemes, these Western epistemologies and epistemes appeared to overshadow participants’ efforts and their occasional resistance to dominant epistemologies and epistemes. This was attributed to the reduction of the impact of globalization held by both the participants and local elites to the economic aspects and overlooked the other (namely, linguistic, cultural, political, and spiritual domination in general and epistemic) aspects of the Western epistemes and epistemologies in knowledge production.

In the second section of Chapter 5, the findings addressed the sub-research question: what tensions are present for these Omani educators while negotiating Western epistemes in their scholarship and teaching? The findings revealed that after a decade since the Arab Awakening in 2011, there was a still general avoidance among participants to critically question and challenge the policies and decisions made by hegemonic minority elites, policies, and ideologies that are demanded by the Western epistemologies and globalization. That was the case due to the tensions participants faced in their working environment. Both internal tensions (e.g., personal conviction,
own teaching practices and philosophies based on individual experiences, dealing with colleagues, students, and family where participants) and external tensions (e.g., imposed polices and curricula and assessment tools by local elites) played a crucial role in this western hegemony in their context. However, the external tension appeared to override the internal tension resulting in accelerating dominance of and dependency on Western epistemologies and epistemes in the participants’ TEFL context. In Chapter 6, I would discuss the participants’ stories from Chapter 4 and findings from Chapter 5 in light of this study’s main conceptual framework (the decolonial turn) and relevant scholarly literature.
CHAPTER 6
DISCUSSION

Overview

The purpose of this critical narrative qualitative study was to investigate and answer:

1. How do Omani TEFL educators trained in the West negotiate Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching in their Omani TEFL teacher education context?

2. What (internal and external) tensions are present for these Omani educators as they negotiated Western epistemes in their scholarship and teaching?

When reviewing the literature about the Omani TEFL context and its key stakeholders (e.g., Omani decision makers from MoE and MoHERI, students, student teachers, schoolteachers, parents, teacher educators, etc.), it was apparent there was a dearth of research concerning the impact of Western epistemologies and epistemes on Omani teacher educators in general. In fact, research examining Omani TEFL teacher educators in particular was almost absent despite the most valiant and conscientious efforts and attempts by few Omani scholars (Al-Issa, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2013, 2015, 2020; Al-Balushi, 2010; AL Balushi, 2018; Al-Bakri; 2013; Al-Busaidi, 1995) addressing the effect of imperialistic ideologies in teaching English in Oman. These researchers focusing on the Omani TEFL context along with scholars focusing on the Saudi context (e.g., Barnawi & Le Ha, 201; Elyas, 2011; Elyas & Al-Ghamdi, 2018; Elyas & Basalamah, 2012; Elyas & Picard, 2013; Tayan, 2017] and scholars studying the Emirate context (e.g., Aydarova, 2012; Troudi & Al Hafidh, 2017; Troudi & Jendli, 2011]) appeared to focus on the impact of imperialistic ideologies on educational systems in Oman, Saudi Arabia and UAE using Eurocentric critical paradigms (e.g., critical discourse analysis, critical inquiry, critical pedagogy, hermeneutic phenomenology).
Despite their usefulness, Tlostanova et al. (2010) believe these paradigms are embedded in the master’s toolbox. Therefore, scholars from the Rest need to cast off the chains of Western epistemologies and adopt a decolonial position to dismantle these dominant epistemologies because “the master will never dismantle the master’s house” (Lorde, 2018, p. 19). Therefore, this study was undertaken to address this gap using the decolonial turn (DT) with the goal of challenging and dismantling the Western hegemonic narratives, as well as considering non-Western sources of ideas and concepts as not inferior to Western knowledge system (Brutt-Griffler, 2002, 2006; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 2001; Canagarajah, 1999, 2002, 2004, 2009, 2012; Pennycook, 2000, 2017, 2019; Kumaravadivelu, 2003, 2006, 2014, 2015, 2016; Wong & Canagarajah, 2009) but, of course, with a focus on the Omani TEFL context.

In chapter 2, I shared the conceptual diagram (see Figure 2-1) to visualize the connections between DT as the main conceptual framework and the other important theoretical lenses (Knowledge Transfer, Adler’s Four-cell Coping-mode Scheme) and Critical Thematic Analysis (CTA) as the analytical tool for the study. Following that, I unpacked four concepts (discourse and ideology; West and Rest; modernity and postmodernity; colonialism and coloniality) that were central in understanding DT. These concepts revealed that the discourse of the West and the Rest should not be viewed as innocent because of the interplay of direct and indirect intentionality of the hegemonic view that feeds into considering Western knowledge and its producers as the only or main producer of knowledge and overlooking non-Western sources of knowledge and its producers who inevitably need to be ‘saved’ by the West. Following that, I emphasized how important DT is and how different it is from the other Eurocentric
critical paradigms. I argued that DT in its analytic aspect aims to reveal the West’s contribution in silencing non-Western ways of knowing and their producers (Mignolo, 2007). Most importantly, DT in its programmatic direction aims to de-link from these Eurocentric discourses and focus on other (linguistic, cultural, political, spiritual, and epistemic) aspects of the impact of Western epistemics and epistemologies (Grosfoguel, 2007). After that, I reviewed the academic literature on knowledge transfer, its two main types (tacit and explicit) as well as Adler’s Coping-mode Scheme used by international academics to cope with the internal and external tensions they could face after returning to their home countries.

Although internal and external tensions are categorized as separate constructs, this study found that there was an overlap and interplay between the two in espousing Western epistemologies and epistememes in the participants’ setting. Internally, the participants appeared to have developed a prominent level of fascination for the West based on their personal and professional experiences, resulting in the development of negative attitude towards non-Western knowledge systems in general. However, this was not to totally disregard or downplay the role and impact of the external (tensions) factors (e.g., local elite policies and decision makers, globalization’s demands of universality and Western experts) in reinforcing the hegemony and dominance of these Western epistememes and epistemologies in non-Western contexts like Oman. In fact, findings suggested that external factors seem to have contributed more to this hegemony, as via imposing packaged Western-oriented curricula and reforms and adopting and zoning regulations promoting preferences Western institutions and ways of knowing and learning. Some of these policies and decision were largely imposed by
local minority elites and demanded by Western epistemologies and epistememes under the name of globalization in the Omani TEFL context. Even five decades of educational investment and after a decade since the Arab Awakening in 2011, there was still a general avoidance among this study’s participants to critically question and challenge the decisions and policies that adopt or replicate Western epistemologies and epistememes. Alternatively, participants in this study mostly seemed to waver between appeasing the adopted and imposed Western ideologies, adapting them when circumstances allowed, and scarcely resisting western hegemony. Accordingly, this led to accelerating dominance of and dependency on Western epistemologies and epistememes in the participants’ TEFL context.

As stressed earlier, the previous empirical research about the impact of Western hegemony on the Omani context and other similar contexts (e.g., Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates) appeared to use Eurocentric paradigms. Also, these studies seemed to have indirectly focused on the impact of Western hegemony with a focus on certain stakeholders (students, schoolteachers, and decision makers) but not on teacher educators in general and TEFL teacher educators in the Arabian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region. Thus, I argued that the understanding of the impact of Western epistemologies and epistememes using DT on Omani Western-trained TEFL teacher educators after their return and their roles in resisting or accommodating or abetting or complying with the Western epistemologies and epistememes remains to be investigated. Lastly, I discussed the role of primarily confining the impact of Western epistemologies and epistememes under the name of globalization to the economical orientation (Leonardo, 2018; Mignolo, 2003). This reductive view has disappointingly led
to overlooking other important forms of racial, linguistic, cultural, political, sexual, spiritual, and economic domination in general and epistemic in the "production of subjectivities and knowledge" (Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 221) about the Rest including the Omani educational context.

In this study using DT as the main theoretical framework, I identified three main themes: [1] hegemony of Western epistemologies and epistemes in participants’ setting, [2] participants negotiating Western epistemologies and epistemes resulted in holding a special fascination for the West but developing a negative attitude towards non-Western ways of knowing and learning, [3] participants lacking empowerment and real involvement after decades of educational investment. Findings from this study revealed that despite the passing of several decades of sending and educating Omanis in the Western universities as perceived by local elites, there were several examples of an over-reliance on Western experts and expertise in the Omani TEFL context even after five decades of educational investment in and development of local academics and professional.

Another significant finding indicated that the existence and dominance of Western epistemologies and epistemes in the Omani TEFL contexts appeared to stem from both internal and external forces and influences which created tensions between academics and local policy makers. Moreover, the impact of external forces appeared to override the internal ones. However, the overlap and interplay between the two in this study appeared to push Omani TEFL teacher educators to rarely resist the impact of Western epistemologies and epistemes in their context. In this study, participants (Omani Western-educated TEFL teacher educators) generally confined the impact of
Western epistemologies and epistemes to economic aspects and disregarded the other important aspects of Western epistemics and epistemologies and globalization. Therefore, I argued that problematizing this reductive view was incrementally important for Omani TEFL teacher educators to both understand the impact of Western epistemologies and epistemes as well as to challenge the Western epistemes and epistemologies and their continuous impact on the Omani TEFL context in general and their own TEFL context. This view seemed especially apparent in the limited research reviewed. Therefore, using DT instead of Eurocentric approaches to address this dominance and existence has greater potential in dismantling Western hegemony in knowledge production, especially in this overlooked part of the world, Oman.

In Chapter 6, I discussed the study’s findings in connection with the visual model (see Figure 6-1 below) to answer the research questions. At the middle or center of this visual, I described the hegemony of Western epistemologies and epistemes in the participants’ context. Below the hegemony of Western epistemologies and epistemes in the visual, I discussed the study’s findings in light of DT and other theoretical lenses highlighting how this study’s participants viewed and negotiated these Western epistemologies and epistemes in their context. At the top of this visual addressing the sub-question, I discussed the broader types of (internal and external) tensions the participants seemed to face, while they were negotiating Western epistemologies and epistemes and their (tensions) crucial role in accelerating dominance of and dependency on Western epistemologies and epistemes in the participants’ TEFL context. Lastly, I provide a summary of Chapter 6 in the last section.
Hegemony of Western Epistemologies & Epistemes in Participants’ TEFL Context

A significant finding that emerged from this study was the ongoing and prominent influence and dominance of Western hegemony and epistemologies and epistemes in the participants’ context. Such is the case despite the noticeable decrease in quantity.
but not necessarily in the level of Western hegemony and domination. However, this perpetuating sense of dependency was particularly evident in four primary areas: continuing reliance on Western experts, excessive use of Western teaching and testing materials, seeking accreditation, and valuing elite bi/multilingualism.

**Reliance on Western Experts**

Despite a noticeable decrease in recruitment of Western experts in several Omani higher education institutions because of the unstable economy (Dr. Ibrahim) and the pressure of Omanization (Dr. Faiyza), their influence remains high in the Omani education sector and the Omani TEFL context. The aforementioned findings of this study regarding the overreliance and dependency on Western experts and expertise align with scholars (Al-Issa, 2002, 2005, 2014, 2020; Kumaravadivelu, 2012) who have criticized this overreliance and suggested breaking the dependency on Western experts and expertise. This dependency on Western experts happens despite the increasing numbers of qualified Omanis graduating from the best universities in education and teaching English and despite the past earlier and continuous calls by Al-Issa (2002, 2005, 2014, 2020) for reducing this heavy reliance on Western experts in designing materials, curricula, and assessment. Drawing on Foucault's notion of an epistemic break, Kumaravadivelu (2012) urges non-Western nations, decision makers and scholars to decrease their continuous dependency on the West or what he calls epistemic dependencies (e.g., native-speakerism, methods, concepts of culture, textbooks), which has contributed to marginalizing local ELT knowledge and self-marginalizing language teachers and language teacher educators in the global periphery. Along the same line of thought, Morgan (2016) urges scholars from the Rest instead of shying away from discussing geopolitics of English when designing materials.
or curricula to cover geopolitics of English, relating English to colonialism, neoliberalism, and globalization. This could be accomplished by including readings and articles that “examine local and global articulations involving poverty, race, gender, and spirituality” (p. 98).

In addition to limited academic value, some did not appear to show respect to these Omani teacher educators. The example of the invited Western expert, who was drunk while providing a training session for Omani TEFL academics in University of Alhasan and arrogant attitude by that Western educator towards Dr. Ibrahim were examples of that disrespect for participants’ time and culture. Discussing the Emirate context, Shaun (2021) urged non-local educators to respect locals and their cultures and vice versa because mutual respect helps build a positive relationship and equal partnership between human beings. In the case of the expert, local elites seemed to overlook or remain quiet about culturally inappropriate instances of behavior by some Western experts because of their admiration for the West and synonymizing the West with the “gold standard” (Altbach, 1997, p. 635). This finding is in line with previous studies (Almuhaish, 2016; Badry & Willoughby, 2015). For instance, Almuhaish (2016), speaking about the Qatari EFL context, asserted that Qatari policy makers appear to rely on Western experts in developing Qatari educational systems instead of relying on local experts. The same level of dependency on Western experts was echoed by Badry and Willoughby (2015) when speaking about the other GCC countries like Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and UAE.

Another area that demonstrated a prominent reliance on Western experts and expertise and emerged in this study’s findings is accreditation. As the findings revealed,
all Omani higher education institutions including the University of Alhasan must go through local accreditation processes by the Omani Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance (OAAAQA). Not only using Western evaluation tools and standards, but OAAAQA has also heavily relied on inviting Western evaluators to occasionally come to Oman to evaluate and prepare reports about local institutions during these processes of accreditation (e.g., Badry & Willoughby, 2015; Donn & Al Manthri, 2010). Such reliance on Western experts in accreditation by using Western standards of evaluation and mostly carried by Western experts seems to align with Chen’s (2010) “system of reference” (p. 216) as well as Hall’s (1992) and Said’s (2003) idea of benchmarking of how far or close the Rest lies.

In short, the overreliance on Western experts was apparent in several educational process like planning, designing, testing and accreditation despite the increasing number of Omani academics and experts in education. Therefore, researchers (e.g., Badry & Willoughby, 2015; Elyas & Al-Ghamdi, 2018; Mills, 2008; Spring, 2009), focus on the GCC contexts, acknowledged that these transplanted Western models and system were and are still supervised by either external partnerships or Western consultants but most importantly supported by local elite policy makers, who seem to function as “Orientalists” (Habib, 2005, p. 40). Using decolonizing language, Walsh (2007) reminded the Rest that these kinds of practices help reproduce Western practices and ideologies that devalue other (non-Western) ways of knowing and thinking.

**Reducing Globalization’s Impact to the Economic Mask**

As asserted by all the five focal participants in the study, these changes, reforms, adopted curricula and assessments are motivated by meeting the demands of
globalization. However, these demands operate with a reductive view or an extensive emphasis on the economic aspect of globalization. Some researchers (De Sousa Santos, 2006; Grosfoguel, 2007; Troudi & Al Hafidh, 2017) acknowledged the danger of confining the impact of Western epistemologies and epistemes to the economic mask of globalization. This economic confinement has helped maintain the superpower status of the West through policies privileging the capitalist market (Bunker & Ciccantell, 2006; Harvey, 2003) where the Rest is “enslaved and made to consume this ideological curtain of globalization ” (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1972, p. xv) and runs after the myth of economic success. Because of this economic and political pressure, these empirical research studies along with the findings of this study have demonstrated that local elite policies and decision makers in GCC countries appear to be left with no choice except to expedite these reforms by importing and imposing Western models and systems into higher education institutions (Elyas & Al-Ghamdi, 2018; Mills, 2008; Spring, 2009). This continues to occur despite Chen’s (2010) warning for people from the Rest to stop living in the “White [West] jail” (79) and cease considering the West as the “system of reference” (p. 216) to accomplish Western modernity.

Offering European languages (Eur.Ls) and overlooking minoritized languages (MLs) is another example that supports the reductive view and focuses on the economic aspect of Western epistemologies. As stressed by Al Jahdhami (2018), Oman is a linguistically diverse country with about 10 MLs. However, these MLs do not seem to receive any attention and resources from the Omani government in comparison to languages like Arabic, English, French, German, and Chinese. In Oman, Eur.Ls (French and German) are offered as elective or required languages in both schools and higher
education and the Chinese language is offered as elective or required in few higher education institutions including in University of Alkhalil and University of Alhasan to meet the demand of globalization as stressed by all the participants.

Selleck and Barakos (2018) call this kind of bilingual/multilingualism as elite because it “brings social and/or material capital, a sense of belonging, prestige, excellence, privilege, and access through the use of specific linguistic resources for certain social groups and individuals” (Selleck & Barakos, 2019, p. 287). All the participants focused on the economic aspect of meeting the demands of globalization when speaking about the significance of introducing these Eur.Ls in schools and higher education. For instance, Dr. Ibrahim stated that he spoke to one of the officials who told him learning these languages, especially German, would create more jobs in the tourism section for Omanis because of the increasing number of German tourists. Echoing that, Dr. Faiyza asserted that learning these Eur.Ls as part of meeting globalization “will elevate Oman to be compatible with the other developed countries in the world” (Dr. Faiyza, INTVW3). Therefore, MLs compared to French, German or Chinese, do not appear to provide any economic gains for the country or to the speakers and learners of these MLs. This view of economic gain is line with De Mejía’s (2002) perspective about elite bilingual/multilingualism which “represents a definite advantage, socially and economically for people who choose to learn more than one language because of their lifestyle, employment opportunities, or education” (p. 41).

In addition to elite bilingualism, there were some examples of what Liddicoat (1991) call folk bilingualism in the Omani educational context. According to Bagwasi (2021), Bagwasi and Alimi (2018) and Liddicoat (1999), this form of bilingualism tends to
promote power asymmetries because it occurs despite the will of people who speak MLs. In other words, while speakers of MLs must learn the official languages (Arabic and English) as a matter of survival, yet native speakers of Arabic do not feel the need to learn MLs. The use of Arabic as the official language could be seen understandable considering Oman’s location, use of Arabic as a medium of instruction in most schools, and the significant number of Arabic speakers. Nevertheless, negligence of MLs has led to a noticeable decline in the number of speakers of these languages. Such suppression of MLs could result in a subtractive bilingualism leading to a continuous decline in using these MLs and placing them in endangered languages classifications especially among young people (Kenfield, 2018; Said, 2018). As stated by some participants (Dr. Shamsa, Dr. Ibrahim, and Dr. Maryam), there is also a tendency by the government and families in general and families speaking these MLs nowadays to prioritize the national (Omani Arab) identity over the ethnic group identity. This was evident in some participants’ (Dr. Shamsa, Dr. Maryam, and Dr. Ibrahim) responses which are consistent with the previous studies on the widespread belief among elite policy makers and these families in prioritizing Arabic in the name of maintaining stability and social order (Al-Issa, 2020; Al Jahdhami, 2015, 2016, 2018; Al-Isaa & Dahan, 2011). This tendency appears motivated by nationalistic aspirations that are viewed as important to remove any sources of agitation since Arabic is considered the official language (Al-Issa, 2020; Al Jahdhami, 2018; Kharusi, 2012).

**Western Adopted Curricula and Testing**

In addition to the reliance of Western experts, the Western hegemony in the participants’ setting was apparent in the adopted curricula and teaching materials. Hargreaves (1994) described them as packaged as they include both textbooks and
teachers’ resources. At the University of Alhasan, all the participants in this study confirmed that the used textbooks were from either Cambridge or Oxford publishing houses for all the departments and colleges. Apart from Dr. Faiyza, the other participants asserted that these curricula were designed for students from the Middle East. According to Dr. Shamsa, the publishers or producers of these textbooks claimed that some of these textbooks were designed for specific (e.g., Arab, or Asian or Latin, African) populations. However, scholars (e.g., Al-Dali et al., 2013; Al-Issa, 2002, 2005; Almuhaish, 2016; Bandura & Sercu, 2005; Gómez, 2015; Kramsch, 1998; Mohrman, 2005; Núñez-Pardo, 2020) found otherwise. These researchers found that so claimed adapted textbooks for the Arabian GCC countries seem to overlook the local or other non-Western contexts, knowledge, and skills. In fact, other scholars (e.g., Fernández-Reiris, 2006; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005; Littlejohn, 2012; Núñez-Pardo, 2020) believe these Western imposed packaged curricula have led non-Western academics and educators to embrace a machine-like role or what De Sousa (2010) refers to as conformist way of action. In other words, everything is provided by the West, but non-Western educators’ main job is delivering those packaged curricula to catch up with the West.

However, in alignment with other scholars (Almuhaish, 2016; Bandura & Sercu, 2005; Gómez, 2015; Kramsch, 1998; Núñez-Pardo, 2020), Dr. Faiyza in this study asserted these adaptations are artificial and limited to “names in Arabic, but the local culture is not vivid there” (INTVW3, LN.221). Confirming Dr. Faiyza’s view on these adapted textbooks, Kramsch (1998) believes if there is any adaptation, it would be artificial and seems to focus on trivial aspects (the 4 Fs): festivals, food, folklore, and
statistical facts. According to Gómez (2015) and Bandura and Sercu (2005), such artificial adaptations could lead to cultural bias where Western values are represented in more sophisticated and advanced ways, while non-Western cultures are confined to statistical information. Agreeing with Dr. Faiyza’s evaluation for the artificially adapted textbooks in Oman, Almuhaish (2016) in a previous study about the Qatari EFL context added the adaptation process for the English textbooks largely focused on replacing some images of Western people and food with Qatari ones. In fact, he found that “most of the information used in the text was for the most part Western in orientation and British in particular” (p. 55).

Also, in a student portfolio model shared by Dr. Faiyza, there were several examples of representations of Western culture in the used materials chosen by that Omani student teacher. For instance, the characters did not appear to be images of Omanis. Another indirect example for the Western representation was on page 58 in that portfolio discussing plural and singular nouns, in which it used nouns like kangaroos, igloo to Omani students who have never seen or experienced these nouns. What stood out the most was using the picture of a superman character to describe the word hero. Dr. Faiyza’s perspective appears to support Almuhaish’s (2016) idea of the importance and existence of local characters and authors in the curricula would help in better in facilitating learning because local learners could easily relate to these characters. Instead, he found a prominence of British cultural imagery in these adapted textbooks for the Qatari context in comparison to other cultures which were either limited or underrepresented. He also pointed out in his study that Western cultures in these textbooks are depicted as more developed and more democratic than developing
countries. However, some scholars (e.g., Bell & Owen, 2017; Fenton, 2016, 2018; Fenton & Calabrese, 2015; Horkheimer, 1995) challenge this idea of considering the West as the main custodian of democracy. These scholars argue that these so-called democratic societies are actually highly unequal societies in which economic inequity, racism, and class discrimination are empirical realities and are naturalized through the dissemination of dominant ideology.

This Western reliance is not confined to importing curricula, but it appears to extend using Western testing and assessment tools that are packaged with the imposed western curricula along with extensive use of international standardized tests like IELTS and TOEFL. Unfortunately, these international standardized tests, as indicated by the participants, are used in some detrimental recruitment decisions and admission processes. Al-Issa (2020) believes the use of such tests “perpetuates cultural dependency on the West” (p. 186) as they function a “a form of benchmark” (p. 186) or “system of reference” (Chen, 2010, p. 216). Ironically, these standardized tests’ main purpose does not align with why and how these tests are used for by Omani elite policy makers and local higher education institutions. According to the IELTS’s official website, the IELTS (TOEFL is used by American universities) is “designed to help you work, study, or migrate to a country where English is the native language. This includes countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK, and USA” (IELTS, n.d., para. 1). However, several Omani institutions, as indicated by the participants of this study, including University of Alkhalil and University of Alhasan, used these tests as entry or exit tests for their students.
Similarly, Omani elite policy makers have imposed the use of these tests as one of the main (if not the main) recruitment criteria for teaching employment for non-native speakers (including Omanis) of English in both schools and higher education. Dr. Faiyza published an article based on her dissertation about the use of IELTS in determining job acceptance or rejection for teaching English in Omani educational institution. She found a moderate significant relationship between IELTS scores and pre-service- teachers’ Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), but a weak relationship between their IELTS scores and their teaching competencies. In parallel with Dr. Faiyza’s (2015) results, Richards (2017) is opposed to correlating linguistic competence with teaching competence. At the same time, many institutions across the West use these standardized tests as well for entry decision-making despite the issues they entail. Consequently, international students from non-English speaking countries are “handcuffed to them no matter where they go” (M. R . Coady, personal communication, July 10, 2022).

To bring this section to an end, Badry and Willoughby (2015) asserted that importing such packaged Western standardized exams, curricula, models, and systems have made several institutions in the GCC more of teaching institutions rather than research and teaching institutions. As a result, they largely submit to these transplanted and imposed systems and curricula instead of resisting irrelevant and sometimes harmful epistemologies and epistemes. Such reliance and dependence on Western experts and expertise have and would jeopardize(d) academics in GCC countries including Oman the chance of becoming among leaders who advance and contribute to knowledge production (Badry & Willoughby, 2015). Rather, they remain at the receiving
end (Al-Harthi, 2011; Al-Isaa, 2015) of the imposed “contemporary Northern assumptions of the universal” (Perry, 2020, p. 1) under the new exploiting economic mask of globalization to accomplish universalism and unification (Hernández et al., 2012).

**Negotiating Western Epistemologies & Epistemes in Participants’ Setting**

This theme addressed the main and sub questions of this study. All participants faced several challenges during their Western experiences. Most of these challenges were centered around unfamiliarity of the system (largely finding themselves in a hands-off approach environment), lack of social support (inside and outside the university), psychological issues and lack of familiarity with Western culture. These challenges were in alignment with previous studies that focused on graduate students from GCC countries studying in the West (e.g., Alkahtani, 2011; Al-Qahtani, 2013; Alharbi, 2016; Hamdan, 2014; Jandova, 2014; Sywelem et al., 2012; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Despite these difficult challenges, all the participants generally seemed to hold a special fascination for the West, which seemed to lead to developing a negative attitude towards non-Western knowledge systems and their producers. The fascination was motivated by both internal and external forces and tensions. This special fascination for the West and semi-negative attitude towards Western ways of knowing and their users and producers were prominent in four principal areas:

1. participants’ choice of Western academic advisors over non-Western ones,
2. their preference in promoting Western knowledge and skills (e.g., critical thinking, native-like accent, Western culture),
3. their preference for Western curricula and testing and
4. their support for elite bilingual/multilingualism of Western languages over MLs.
Preference for Western Advisors

In alignment with local elites’ continuous reliance on Western experts, all the participants appeared to prefer Western academic advisors over non-Western ones. This aspect is mingled with the participants’ past experiences with some non-Western advisors and educators especially during undergraduate studies in Oman. When scholars (e.g., Abu-Lughod, 1991; Gouldner, 1977; Hechter, 1975; Heng & Devan, 1992; Hind, 1984; Holden, 2001; Mazzarella, 2003, Smith, 1999) discuss internalized orientalism, they tend to largely accredit this behavior to local hegemonic elites from developing societies (Rest). Such is the case because of these elites’ assumption of obtaining qualities of the West like “modern, civilized, and progressive” (Alahmed, 2020, p. 410) and they are “patents on modernity” (Quijano, 2000, p. 543). However, most of the participants, who were not among the local elites, appeared to adopt internalized orientalism when speaking about their inclination to choose Western educators or advisors over non-Western ones. In this study, all the participants had (Western) English native speaking advisors during their graduate studies and showed no desire to change to non-Western ones if circumstances and time had allowed.

For instance, some (Dr. Fatin and Dr. Shamsa) seemed to stand resolutely by their choice of an English native speaking advisor despite their struggle with their English native speaking advisors as indicated earlier in Chapter 5. Specifically, Dr. Shamsa seemed to be largely influenced by the dominant ideology of native-speakerism (Modiano, 2004; Holliday, 2005; Phillipson, 1992, 2003) because of her obsession of acquiring an English native-like accent. Also, Dr. Faiyza’s obsession of mastering an American accent was absurdly unjustifiable considering her intelligible pronunciation and fantastic English communication skills. This finding seemed to be in line with
several studies (e.g., Alseweed, 2012; Gurkan & Yuksel, 2012; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002) supporting the overall preference by non-native speakers of English for English native-speaking educators. For instance, Lasagabaster and Sierra’s (2002) study revealed that the Spanish learners preferred English native-speaking educators especially for areas of pronunciation, speaking, vocabulary, and culture. Similarly, Gurkan and Yuksel (2012) found Turkish students also preferred native-speaking educators over non-native speaking educators emphasizing the areas of pronunciation and culture, but informality and creativity were added in this study. Emphasizing the informality and flexibility factor, Alseweed (2012) found Saudi students also preferred native speaking educators over non-native speaking educators.

In this study, Dr. Shamsa supported her arguments by comparing how having more English native speakers during her undergraduate study improved her communication skills compared to her current Omani students who seem to struggle with their English. In her view, the decrease in recruiting of native speaker teachers in University of Alhasan contributed to this struggle among her current students. Even though she credited her subject knowledge growth to her non-native speaker educators and advisors during her undergraduate in Oman, she attributed getting a high score in IELTS to being taught by English native speakers from UK, America, and South Africa (INTVW1). This seems ironic considering that she herself is an English non-native speaking educator now. Emphasizing and adopting McKinney’s (2017) notion of anglonormativity and seemingly adopting the standard language ideology, Dr. Shamsa regarded a semi-negative evaluation for non-native speakers’ accent of English although she is a non-native speaker herself. Emphasizing Alim et al.’s (2016) and
Flores and Rosa’s (2015) raciolinguistical ideologies and the native English speaking positioning, she seemed to position the pronunciation and grammar of some non-native speakers of English as deficient when speaking about hiring a babysitter with an Eastern Asian nationality. Inoue (2006) argued that everyone has an accent but some people from dominant groups seem to systematically perceive some linguistic practices and ignore others.

To justify their preference for Western advisors, all participants seemed to allude to non-Western educators, unlike their Western counterparts, lacking, hardly promoting Western skills (e.g., CT, egalitarian approach, autonomy and independence), but promoting memorization, dependency, rote learning (Holliday, 2005). This common and propagated view of Othering helps promote negatively characterizing non-Western educators as “traditional, lenient, static, rigid, dependent, collectivist, passive, less sophisticated, authoritarian, less democratic, need to be trained, and empowered by the West” (Holliday, 2005, pp. 19-20). According to Said (2003), such negative attachments propagated by non-Western local elites and scholars contribute “to vaccinate the Rest against its own illnesses, to occidentalize the Orientals” (p. 245). Also, these participants’ tendency to stigmatize non-Western educators for lacking Western values and skills can itself promote hierarchy of credibility (Autar, 2017; Moosavi, 2020). In other words, non-Western educators compared to their Western counterparts are viewed as lacking what Autar (2017) calls Western epistemic competencies.

Most importantly, Kumaravadivelu (2002) stressed that lacking skills like advanced thinking, critical thinking, independence, or autonomy are common in all cultures and dependent upon individual character and surrounding circumstances.
Accordingly, Kumaravadivelu (2002) and Moosavi (2020) caution non-Western educators from falling into the trap of what Said (2003) refer to as Orientalist generalizations via putting every non-Western person or those from the Rest under certain bubbles of stereotypes based on personal encounters. Mignolo (2015) and Moosavi (2020) observed the same phenomenon among non-Western scholars and students and urge them to stop feeding into these stereotypes and negative attachments by benchmarking non-Western educators and their contexts to how far or close the Rest are to the West (Hall, 1992). Finally, Smith (1999) rebuked non-Western academics and policy makers for using such practices because they can be dangerous and injuring instead of empowering.

**Preference for Western Knowledge and Skills**

As discussed in the previous section, the participants seemed to value some Western skills and values (e.g., critical thinking, native-like accent, interculturality, independence, autonomy) that they claimed to have largely learned from their Western experiences, described in Chapter 5. However, the participants generally appeared to have developed a deficit perspective toward non-Western ways of speaking, learning approaches such as memorization and recalling skills, incorporating source (local) cultures when teaching and MLs.

**Impact of native-speakerism ideology**

As stressed in the preference for Western advisors' section, Dr. Shamsa’s attitude towards the Eastern Asian accent and Dr. Faiyza’s eagerness to master US English stood as strong examples of McKinney’s (2017) notion of anglonormativity viewing non-native accent as a problem. Although the other participants did not directly share similar views, all the participants, during the interviews, referred to their desire to
improve their English from English native speaking advisors and other native speakers of English. This might explain why the participants remarkably exhibit a marked tendency to sound like (British and Australian) native speakers. Specifically, they all appeared to drop the /r/ sound and replace it with a schwa /ə/ especially at the end of the word and when pausing. Dr. Fatin interestingly glottalized [t] when speaking in English. One might wonder if such negative views about a non-native English-like accent is the main reason for this tendency to sound like English native speakers. In fact, some participants (Dr. Shamsa, Dr. Faiyza, and Dr. Maryam) attributed that tendency to their exposure to English native speaking educators and native speakers outside their universities. Fondness of acquiring English native-like accent among non-native speakers of English including participants of this study could be motivated by Nordquist’s (2017) linguistic prestige and line with other related studies (e.g., Anderson et al., 2007; Taqi et al., 2018; Zarrinabadi & Khodarahmi, 2017). These researchers found that non-native speakers of English with English native-like pronunciations are viewed as prestigious and linguistically knowledgeable. This tendency did not come out in the findings. However, this tendency of synonymizing the West with better pronunciation, accurate language as mainly stressed by Dr. Shamsa could be compared to Nordquist’s (2017) linguistic prestige. Last but not least, Both Pennycook (2013) and Phillipson (2009) cautioned from adopting ideologies that elevate certain varieties of English and consider them as most prestigious, while other varieties are viewed as inferior and subordinate.

**Critical thinking vs. memorization**

**Critical thinking (CT).** CT was the most emphasized tacit skill by all the participants. This came as no surprise considering the amount of focus placed by
Western institutions on or to CT. In fact, Dr. Ibrahim considered CT as a Western concept. All the participants attributed their CT development to their Western experiences implying that non-Western educators appear to stress memorization more than critical thinking. However, all the participants appeared to provide a different understanding for CT. Away from the common and vague notion of higher order thinking such to a complex philosophy of thought, some (Dr. Ibrahim and Dr. Maryam) equated CT with using reflection to revisit own practices and providing supports for own points of views, while others (Dr. Shamsa and Dr. Fatin) associate it with navigating new systems and finding solutions for own challenges. Also, Dr. Faiyza disapproved of the negative and argumentative understanding of CT which tends to mainly criticize their own selves and of their own educational environments only. Instead, she viewed CT as analyzing one’s own contexts and practices, so a person does not become submissive to everything, s/he can make important decisions for their challenges. These different perceptions of CT by the participants are in alignment with Nisbett’s (2003) argument that both Western and non-Western learners are critical thinkers but in diverse ways. The former uses analytic thinking more while the latter uses more holistic thinking. Instead of focusing on the Western meaning of CT, Ronald (2000) argued that CT thinking should be a blend of expert opinions from literature, educators’ conceptions, and reflections from personal teaching experience.

One significant observation among the participants was being selective when to use CT. More specifically, they all avoided using CT and encouraging discussions that address and challenge Western hegemony and its epistemes in their classes unless such topics were part of the used curricula. Dr. Faiyza indicated discussing any
politically oriented topics is against the institution’s regulation. In participants’
estimation, challenging the Western hegemony and dominance of English can fall under
the political topics. As stated by Al'Abri (2015), the general avoidance to discuss policies
(governmental in general and educational policies in particular) among academics and
researchers could be attributed to the political connotation of the word “policy” in Arabic,
which overlaps in its roots with politics, meaning, “Omani political regime, its structure
and policy architecture” (Al'Abri, 2015, p. 3), while politics and policy in English have
different meanings (Al'Abri, 2015). This might explain the general avoidance among the
participants when hearing political or its derivatives since most of these policies and
decisions are made by local elites who tend to take criticism personally as indicated by
the five focal participants. Despite their firm belief in CT’s significance, all the
participants indicated the difficulty of teaching CT in their context. As a result, they
appeared to focus on assessments that are based on Blooms’ first three levels as
revealed in participants’ documents. This finding is line with the previous studies on the
difficulty incorporating CT in TEFL contexts because of difficulty training metacognitive
skills (Wang & Zheng, 2016) or lack of systematic support and reinforcement or due to a
lack of time, compulsory curriculums, and fixed textbooks, made it difficult for EFL
teachers to perform CT teaching (Li, 2016; Mok, 2010).

Some of the participants’ statements discussing CT seemed to reinforce Said’s
and strategic formations and internalized orientalism. For instance, some participants
appeared to negatively characterize non-Western educators and their culture and
equate CT with Western education and educators only. For instance, they used phrases
like “using their [Western educators] minds more” or “relying too much on critical
thinking” or “their [Western educators] mind is really very fresh and, and they are thinking critically about this issue” (Dr. Shamsa, INTVW2) or “CT as a Western thing” (Dr. Ibrahim, INTVW2) or “CT is a concept that is mainly emphasized in Western countries in their curricula” or “the Western system allowed us to do like critical thinking” (Dr. Fatin, INTVW2) to reinforce certain biases and assumptions instead of doubting these propagated stereotypes (Said, 2003). On the other hand, non-Western ways of knowing and learning, according to the majority of the participants, do not promote CT. For instance, Dr. Ibrahim compared how graduates from non-Western, or normal, as he described. Institutions are not like graduates from the West. Also, non-Western educators were described as “knowledge transmitters” (Dr. Faiyza, INTVW2) or “pouring the knowledge into learners’ head” (Dr. Ibrahim, INTVW2). However, Nayar (2002) warns educators especially non-Western ones from blindly submitting to the notion that propagates and promotes those Western educators as the only “representatives of correct language acts, authentic pragmatics, proper critical thinking, unassailable rules of elegant behaviors in English” (p. 463). Therefore, (Western or non-Western) educators should not operate CT when dealing with non-Western cultures from a deficient perspective but rather from a strength-based perspective. Such an (strength-based) approach does not only respect other (non-Western) ways of knowing and thinking but most importantly also eradicates the notion of the Rest need for the West to survive (e.g., Fell & Lukianova, 2015; Gee, 1994; Hammersley-Fletcher & Hanely, 2016; Hofstede. 2001, Norman et al., 2017, Said, 2003).

**Viewing memorization and recall from a deficit perspective.** This is not to discredit the importance of CT, but all the participants appeared to place much greater
value and significance on CT than on memorization and recalling skills. Most non-Western educational contexts and cultures including the Omani ones seem to be usually characterized with dependent on memorization and rote learning (Al-Issa, 2008, 2017; AlGhamdi & Deraney, 2013; Alnassar & Dow, 2013; Al-Ohali & Shin, 2013). All the participants appeared to have a negative idea about memorization and recall skills. In fact, they all criticized them and Omani students for using them in several accounts. However, and rather than blaming non-western systems of knowing for extensively using memorization, Badry and Willoughby (2015) provided a different perspective on that. They argued that such characterization could be because of the pressure of meeting the demands of globalization. The political and economic pressure, as stressed earlier by Badry and Willoughby (2015), seemed to have pushed these governments in GCC to expedite the implementation of Western reforms to catch up with the West. With imposed and packaged curricula and other administrative responsibilities, educators in GCC countries and participants in this study, as the finding revealed, are forced to use teaching practices and assessment tools that are based on memorization. This could be the case because local educators’ ultimate goal has shifted to ensuring the coverage of the packaged and imposed curricula to meet globalization’s demands (Badry & Willoughby, 2015; Dearden, 2015; King, 2015).

Instead of the popular a shortfall perspective towards memorization and recalling skills and unlike participants’ negative attitude towards memorization, some scholars (e.g., Bromage & Moore1993; Boyle, 2006; Heng, 2021; Hess & Azuma,1991; Klemm, 2007; Purdie & Hattie, 1996) adopted a strength-based perspective when discussing memorization and recalling skills. In his study, Heng found that Chinese students
believe that such skills are essential for understanding and making sense of the memorized rules and formulas in science, mathematics and learning a language. Therefore, he asserted that memorization and recall skills should not always be viewed from a deficit perspective just because they are not widely nurtured or practiced in the West. Similarly, Klemm (2007) stressed the importance of CT, but it should not be at the expense of overlooking the importance of effective memorization skills. Similarly, Biggs and Moore (1993) argued that not all memorizations can be identified as superficial or lacking in understanding. Also, Gathercole (1995) found there was a strong connection between memorization and obtaining high IQ scores. Stressing the importance of examining memorization from a strength-based perspective, Purdie and Hattie (1996) and Bromage and Mayer (1986) also argue that memorization should be examined from a quality point of view of what resulted outcomes learner accomplish not from a quantity (negative) perspective of how much being stored.

Emphasizing the value of memorization of religious texts, Ishak et al. (2021) found that memorizing the Quran had a positive impact on students’ IQ, and their mental and physical health. Similarly, Boyle (2006) asserted that memorization of the Quran is considered the first step towards understanding its Islamic teachings. They also added that religious knowledge seekers are not only encouraged to memorize the religious text for religious rituals, but most importantly they also must contemplate, reflect, and reason to have a better understanding for their religious principles (Akdere et al., 2006; Boyle, 2006). In line with the same thought of the importance of memorization and recall, Hess and Azuma (1991) found Japanese students’ repetition is the main route to understanding. Also, Pals et al. (2017) found that the ability to recall
both facilitates students’ understanding of new and related learning material and enhances their capacity to analyze the nature of problems.

Therefore, all these scholars urge educators to stop labeling non-Western skills like memorization and recall as less effective or inferior tools as usually propagated in the West because such tools could be extremely useful for accomplishing learning outcomes for some groups of learners. Instead of just considering Western ways of learning and knowing are “natural or superior,” educators especially Western should be open to learning from other non-Western cultures and should engage in “dialogue not as impositions” (Purdie & Hattie, 1996, p. 261) and not based on “standardization and uniformity” (Aydarova, 2017, p. 5).

**Incorporating the target culture**

Apart from Dr. Faiyza, the participants stressed the importance of integrating cultures in teaching. However, these participants appeared to have emphasized the target culture more than the source culture during the interviews. This emphasis is based on their belief that incorporating the Western or target culture help Omani student teachers improve both their communicative and cultural competencies, which are important for English teachers. CLT is one of the courses offered at the university of Alhasan and tends to advocate for developing intercultural competence among learners and teachers. However, Pishghadam and Ordoubody (2011) argue that non-Western educators should make their student teachers aware that gaining intercultural competence should not be at the expense of their own cultural identity. Dr. Faiyza believed in the importance of stressing the source culture more because of the vividness and influence of Western culture in the textbooks used in the university of Alhasan.
The findings also revealed that all the participants with the exception of Dr. Faiyza in this study preferred using authentic materials either the ones found in their textbooks, or from the Internet or from materials based on their individual experiences in the West. This finding seems to be in line with Al Washahi (2020) and Purba (2011) on the importance of using authentic materials to provide learners with authentic cultural experiences. However, Canagarajah (1999, 2006) insightfully cautioned EFL educators from imposing a foreign value system on their learners at the expense of bringing them a common language. Discussing the Vietnamese TEFL context, Doan (2014) challenges the notion of emphasizing and incorporating the target culture in the EFL paradigm and urges non-Western educators to instead adopt EIL pedagogy which endorse all the kinds of cultures: source, target, and international culture materials. Similarly, Brown (2007) reminded educators, especially those from the West, to be careful when incorporating target culture in teaching English by stating, “our zeal for spreading English needs to be accompanied by concurrent efforts to value home languages and cultures” (Brown, 2007, p. 207). In the Iranian TEFL context, Pishghadam and Ordoubody (2011) urged non-Western educators to guide their students to beware of English’s linguistic and cultural hegemony and use incorporating the target culture to teach their students about that hegemony. All the participants stressed the importance and need to cope with economic globalization and need to open to other cultures. Decolonially-speaking, Gao (2010) reminds non-western educators to be aware of the danger of associating the target culture with the global culture in the name of meeting the demand of globalization or in Said’s language of catching up with the West, which could lead to suppressing the source culture.
Note on quality assurance and accreditation

With respect to quality assurance and accreditation, the academics who took part in this study were not different from the decisions makers. In fact, participants in this study seemed to be impressed with other local institutions obtaining international accreditation. Therefore, they supported the use of Western standards and believed that these standards would help their institution and other local institutions achieve and maintain a high level of quality. Decolonially speaking, this finding does not seem to be in line with several scholars who oppose such dependency. For instance, Ball (1998) and Ball and Youdell (2008) were critical about quality assurance and accreditation due to their hidden economic and political agendas. Particularly, Ball and Youdell (2008) considered quality assurance and accreditation as unethical and function as a tool to govern and control developing countries. Correspondingly, Ball (2001) viewed quality assurance and accreditation as a picture-perfect illustration of Al-Issa’s (2020) classifications of Western-based ideologies, namely, meritocratic, colonialist, and neoliberal ideologies. Consequently, education has become more of a business oriented commodity not a liberatory tool as viewed by Ladson-Billings (1992). Similarly, Ramirez (2015) criticizes the intensified competition among Western universities to partner and collaborate with non-Western universities to perform their gatekeeping role over non-Western institutions. Ramirez (2015) urges leaders in non-Western universities to reflect on these partnerships and collaborations as a way for self and institutional empowerment instead of blindly following these standards forged by the West.
Preference for Western Curricula & Assessment

Apart from Dr. Faiyza, participants showed their admiration for and strong positive beliefs and trust in Western textbooks. Specifically, they believed that the Western textbooks they were using were useful because of the high quality of their language accuracy, being adapted to the GCC needs (Dr. Shamsa and Dr. Ibrahim) and organized along with supplemental materials (Dr. Maryam). However, Dr. Faiyza disagreed with them emphasizing the vividness and influence of Western culture in these adapted versions as well as the irrelevancy of some materials in these textbooks. In fact, she referenced that these adaptations are artificial because they are only centered around changing names and some factual information influence in these textbooks. This finding seems to align with the previous studies highlighted in the previous section of adopting western curricula by the Omani government and local elites. These scholars (Almuhaish, 2016; Bandura & Sercu, 2005; Gómez, 2015; Kramsch, 1998) stressed that these adaptations are artificial and confined to trivially simple statistical information about the source or local culture, while representing Western people and their cultures in more sophisticated and advanced ways.

The other most significant finding in relation to teaching materials is the dominance of mainstream publishers. This was the case because all the used textbooks were from either Cambridge or Oxford publishing houses for all the departments and colleges. Despite describing the Western publishers with commercials, Dr. Fatin stressed the reputation factor for why her institution decided to choose these textbooks. This significant consumption of Western textbooks was justified by several participants (Dr. Ibrahim, Dr. Fatin, Dr. Shamsa, and Dr. Maryam) with the need to meet globalization’s demands as stressed by the government. Most importantly, these
participants seemed to agree with the government’s effort to meet those demands to be part of the global world. This view by the participants in this study seems to be in line with Cooper’s (1989) notion that modernity cannot be accomplished unless western standards, textbooks and testing are followed and met.

For the adopting Western assessment tools, Dr. Ibrahim, Dr. Shamsa, and Dr. Fatin appeared to agree with the government’s adoption for these assessment tools like IELTS and TOEFL because of their validity, being marked by English native speaking experts. However, all the participants indicated that these tests can only identify the linguistic competence and suggested developing a test that measures both the linguistic and teaching competences. This suggestion is in parallel with Faiyza’s (2015) and Richards (2017) who were against correlating or confounding linguistic competence with teaching competence. In fact, Dr. Shamsa, in the form of internalized orientalism, believed that using these international tests was a great idea and would prevent any possibility of leaking local exams if they were to be used. With regards to the validity of these tests, Crichton and Murray (2014) pointed out that international English language tests such as IELTS and TOEFL are designed only on the base of English as spoken in inner-circle countries. This view is in line with the main purpose of using the IELTS as indicated in IELTS’s website. Comparably, Khan (2009) believes that the IELTS is invalid for various local contexts. Decolonially-speaking, scholars like Al-Issa (2020), Khan (2009) and Templer (2004) urge policymakers in developing countries to free themselves from this educational imperialism by developing more local norms of proficiency that address the local needs and adequately measure local students’ linguistic and teaching.
Support for Elite Bilingualism over MLs

Confining the impact of globalization and western epistemologies to the economic mask has led the participants to agree with the government and local elites’ policies in introducing Eur.Ls. As a result of this reductive view, they appeared to develop a negative idea towards MLs and support elite bilingualism. All the participants seemed to believe MLs do not bring any economic gains as is the case for Eur.Ls. These views are line with previous studies (De Mejía, 2002; González, & Llurda, 2016; Selleck & Barakos, 2018) perspective on elite bilingualism that provide economic gains since these languages are directly connected to expanding economic opportunities as clearly stressed by all the participants. Participants’ support for such bilingual/multilingualism over MLs seems to be in alignment with Duchêne’s (2011, 2016) notion of linguistic investments, which are largely motivated by the question of what economic returns a learner could get from learning and investing. Some participants clearly asserted that they would encourage their kids to learn these Eur.Ls over MLs. Although elite bilingual/multilingualism entails different (political, economic, cultural, and linguistic) aspects and capitals (Sonntag, 2003), the economic aspect was heavily stressed in this study. This economic confinement by the participants seem to contribute to hiding its implications in the political, social, and cultural domains (Santos, 2010), which were evident in the extensive representation of Western culture in the imported teaching and testing materials.

Another significant finding was the support by the participants for the marginalization and call for not supporting MLs and association of learning dominant languages appeared to contribute to the perseverance of the status quo by perpetuating elite bilingualism (Preece, 2018; Ruiz, 1984). In relation to the status quo in relation to
MLs, the findings also revealed some level of what Liddicoat calls folk bilingualism. This was the case because of financially and politically prioritizing the national (Omani Arab) identity over the ethnic group identity remove any unity agitation forms since Arabic is considered the official language (Al-Issa, 2020; Al Jahdhami, 2018; Kharusi, 2012). This prioritization for Arabic might be understood to some extent considering the widespread of Arabic speakers. However, prioritizing funding and supporting Eur.Ls over MLs cannot be fully justified, because it reinforces the status quo and results in placing these MLs in the endangered languages classifications (Kenfield, 2018; Said, 2018). In short, reducing the impact of globalization to its economic aspects and disregarding the other aspects of the Western epistemologies has led Oman to pour more resources and support teaching English and introducing French and German languages. This is believed to respond to the economic needs of globalization in comparison to MLs, but most importantly it maintains the status quo that favors western languages rather than dismantling elite bilingualism (Flores, 2019).

**Limitations in Empowerment and Involvement**

In addition to the participants’ personal conviction, there were other pressing factors that contributed to confirming the participants’ preferences and support for western hegemony in their TEFL context. One significant finding was centered around the lack of empowerment and real involvement. According to Gibson (1991), disempowering of academics takes place when they feel they do not have control over what they do and when they are not fully involved in the decision-making processes related to their expertise and experience within their institutions. This disempowerment was found at the institutional (meso-level), and national (macro-level) levels. This lack of empowerment and real involvement led to an overall avoidance among the participants
to question and challenge the policies and decisions made by Omani hegemonic minority elites critically and directly. This finding is not fully in line with Al-Issa’s (2015) who suggested that the level of evasion among academics to critically question those elites changed after the Arab Awakening in 2011 (Al-Issa, 2015).

The participants in this study referenced this lack of empowerment in several aspects. Both Dr. Shamsa and Dr. Maryam justified their avoidance to challenge decisions made by local elites because these elites take criticism personally. Echoing the same sense of disempowerment and real involvement, Dr. Ibrahim justified his avoidance because of professional politics, the power of nepotism and his avoidance falling into the trap of sycophancy and functional hypocrisy. He indicated that he does not like to be associated with sycophantic praising everything even if it is not good or beneficial for the educational system in Oman. He also appeared to imply that challenging policies could jeopardize their chances for advancement up the faculty ladder, tenure, and promotion. These aspects of disempowerment align with what Alawi (2020), Alandejani (2013) and Almutairi (2018) found in the Saudi context where Saudi returning academics felt disempowered, frustrated, and disappointed.

With reference to Kim’s (2016) notion of individual empowerment, findings of this study have shown a certain degree of individual empowerment among the participants, particularly in terms of collaboration, and professional development. This was in line with the previous findings where Asian academics experience some level of individual empowerment (e.g., Han, 2022; Kim, 2016; Suzanne, 2009; Mok & Cheung, 2011). For instance, all the participants got the chance to pursue their graduate studies and got fully funded. In addition to pursuing their degrees in the West, Dr. Maryam indicated that
she was also sponsored for a professional development course in the UK in teaching management. All the participants reported several examples of building collaborations inside their institutions and with other Omani institutions. Han (2022) indicated that collaboration in familiar contexts appeared to be easier. This was the case because most of the Omani TEFL academics were classmates, or students to other Omani TEFL faculty members. In one of the events organized by the participants’ department, I attended some of the sessions where the participants co-presented with other academic from other institutions. Also, Dr. Fatin co-authored a paper with another academic from another college.

However, findings revealed examples of disempowerment. For instance, participants shared that they lacked bargaining power against the institution and local elites. Notably, all participants in this study during the interviews directly or indirectly expressed some level of concern for sharing thoughts that might be perceived as crossing the line between acceptable and unacceptable criticism against decisions and policies made by hegemonic minority elites and demanded by Western epistemologies and epistemes. Specifically, some (Dr. Faiyza, Dr. Ibrahim and Dr. Shamsa) participants seemed to assert that some officials and administrators seemed to view academics educated in the West as troublemakers who like to go against the will of the institutions by raising issues within the institutions in which they work. Due to hierarchical approach of management in most Omani universities and lack of trust in Omani academics as indicated by Dr. Ibrahim and Dr. Faiyza, academics tend to avoid challenging these officials and administrators and their unnegotiable decisions and policies. This finding seems to be in parallel with some previous studies about the Saudi context (e.g., West
(Alandejani, 2013; Almutairi, 2018). In these studies, researchers found that Saudi academics after returning home are viewed as exhibitionists and sources of danger for those who did not study abroad.

These examples seemed to align with Han’s (2020) studying the disempowerment returning Chinese educators faced in their Chinese context. Also, Dei and Asgharzadeh (2001) urged decision makers in developing countries to empower their educators instead of disempowering them by trusting western experts and expertise. According to Oviawe (2013), such lack of trust as emphasized in this study by the participants tend to alienate rather than empower. In the same line of trust and supporting agency, Rouleau (2014) and Toom, Pyhältö, and O’Connell-Rust, (2015) asserted that when leaders or decision makers empower educator’s agency, educators become more active and involved. Otherwise, they would experience more anxiety and disempowerment would negatively impact their communication, style of pedagogy and teaching proficiency (e.g., Leask 2004; Collins 2008). This negative impact could also extend to reach students (Waterkeyn, 2021). All the participants shared some level of frustration due to the lack of agency and empowerment on the part of local elites, administrators, and decision makers. Al-Issa (2020) also criticized the MoE for its dependency on Western experts and expertise. He argued that MoE using its power has led to disempower and marginalize local educators’ agency by relying on and trusting Western tools and expertise.

Chapter Summary

In Chapter 6, I discussed findings from the study in relation to the DT framework presented in Chapter 2. I found that the hegemony of Western epistemologies and epistemes can be found in several aspects in the participants’ setting. These were
continuing reliance on Western experts, excessive use of Western teaching and testing materials, seeking accreditation, and valuing elite bi/multilingualism due to the reductive view of confining the impact of globalization and western hegemony to the economic mask. Despite the significant role played by the local elites in espousing this hegemony of Western epistemologies and epistemes in the participants' setting, the participants held a special fascination for the West but a negative attitude towards non-western ways of knowing and learning. This was the case due to the imposed policies and regulations but also voluntarily through their personal conviction and preferences for Western educators, institutions, curricula as well as their support for elite bilingualism. I theorized that problematizing this reductive view was incrementally important for Omani TEFL teacher educators to both understand the impact of Western epistemologies and epistemes as well as to challenge the Western epistemes and epistemologies and their continuous impact on the Omani TEFL context in general and their own TEFL context. In light of the study’s findings, the DT framework reflects the significant role in dismantling Western hegemony in knowledge production, especially in this overlooked part of the world, Oman. Accordingly, knowledge gained from the West should be both challenged at all (academic, institutional, and policymaking) levels and implemented to serve the uniqueness of Oman’s needs. Moreover, non-Western sources of knowing should be valued and integrated by Omani TEFL teacher educators as equally as those from the West.
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSIONS

Overview

The purpose of this critical native qualitative study was to investigate how Omani TEFL teacher educators negotiated Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching in their Omani TEFL teacher education context. With this goal in mind, the main research question was, “How do Omani TEFL educators trained in the West negotiate Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching in their Omani TEFL teacher education context?” The sub-research question was: What (internal and external) tensions are present for these Omani educators as they negotiated Western epistemes in their scholarship and teaching?

I adopted a constructivist epistemological perspective to frame this critical narrative qualitative study to illuminate how the five Omani TEFL educators trained in the West negotiate Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching in their Omani TEFL teacher education context. The constructivist epistemology concentrates on “the production of reconstructed understanding of the social world” (Denzin, 2011, p. 92) and allows each participant the opportunity to create their own subjective meaning for the experience (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln, 2001; Lunenburg, 2011). Also, this study used a critical narrative inquiry to “understand the ways the participants' stories will be constructed” (Hickson, 2016, p. 380); to “deconstruct the stories and assumptions construction of knowledge, power, and reality” (Hickson, 2016, p. 382); and to challenge the dominant perspectives prevalent in knowledge construction (Hall, 2011). Also, my personal background and experiences being insider-outsider did influence and shape my interpretation of the findings as I
made sense of what participants said they know about Western epistemologies and epistemes and their impact on their local context. Last but not least, findings from this study using DT revealed that both the internal and external tensions that they encountered and the interplay between the two played a significant role in espousing this hegemony of Western epistemologies and epistemes in the participants’ setting. However, participants continuously renegotiated these Western epistemologies and epistemes in their context. That renegotiation helped to understand and illuminate the apparent influence of these epistemologies and epistemes on these Omani teacher educators. In Chapter 7, first I provided a summary of findings. Second, I presented this study’s implications for teacher educators and practitioners. Third, I depicted the limitations of this study. Fourth, I described questions for future research. Finally, I close Chapter 7 with concluding thoughts.

Summary of Findings

This dissertation using DT hoped to dismantle Western hegemonies in knowledge production, especially in this overlooked part of the world, Oman, and around the world. Addressing the research questions, three main findings emerged regarding how Omani TEFL teacher educators educated in the West negotiated Western epistemologies and epistemes in their own context. There were: 1) hegemony of Western epistemologies and epistemes in participants’ TEFL context, 2) participants negotiating this hegemony and 3) participants lacking empowerment and authority after five decades of educational investment and development.

Findings showed that participants made conscientious efforts to adapt their western education to their local context, but the hegemony of Western epistemologies and epistemes were prevalent in the participants' context. Also, the finding revealed that
some local elites played a significant role via their policies and practices in espousing this hegemony of Western epistemologies and epistemes in the participants’ setting. This role was prevailing and visible in four essential aspects: continuing reliance on Western experts, excessive use of Western teaching and testing materials, valuing elite bilingual/multilingualism and according greater value and recognition to Western institutions.

The finding also revealed both local elites and participants confined the impact of these Western epistemologies and epistemes to its economic aspect and overlooked other important aspects in knowledge production. This reduction has significantly contributed to espousing Western hegemony in the participants’ context. This part of the findings echoes that of others in reminding scholars from the ‘Rest’ to examine and halt the reductive economic analysis that ignores the importance of other vital forms of racial, linguistic, cultural, political, sexual, spiritual, and epistemic domination in knowledge production (Grosfoguel, 2007; Leonardo, 2018; Mignolo, 2003).

As a result of reductive economic framing and imposed regulations promoting Western hegemony, participants were found to hold a special fascination for the West and a negative attitude towards non-western ways of knowing and learning despite the several challenges they encountered in the West. This alignment with the local elites’ admiration for the West led to participants’ preference for Western institutions over non-Western ones, choice for Western advisors over non-Western ones, their overall adoption of Western teaching and testing materials and their support for elite bilingual/multilingualism over MLs. Alatas (1977), Said (2003) Talukder and Samuel (2017) urged non-Western nations to stop viewing every non-Western (e.g., educators,
institutions, teaching and testing materials and MLs) constructs as inferior to the West as they lacked the universal consciousness (Grosfoguel, 2007) and necessitates the need for a civilizing force (West) to save the Rest (Leonardo, 2018; Mignolo, 2011; Said, 2003). This is usually done by employing the over-generalization of the binarisms upon themselves and upon other minoritized or non-western groups. Instead, these Western epistemologies and epistemes must be interrogated and problematized (Alatas, 1977; Said, 1995; Talukder & Samuel, 2017). However, and most importantly, Maldonado-Torres (2007) cautioned non-Western scholars including the participants of this study from falling into the trap of creating another form of imperial universality. Instead, he suggests that scholars from the Rest and West engage a “dialogue not as impositions” (p. 261) and not based on “standardization and uniformity” (Aydarova, 2017, p. 5) but rather on re-existence to “re-define and re-signify conditions of dignity on our shared planet” (p. 3).

**Study Limitations**

The conclusion of this narrative inquiry was limited to Omani TEFL teacher educators, who finished their graduate studies in the West (mainly from UK and Australia), work in a local public TEFL higher education institution (University of Alhasan). Due to the nature of qualitative research, as a researcher, I did not use any methods that could be used to generalize findings from this study to other TEFL teacher educators. Each participant shared their own stories that focused on the impact of their Western education on their personal, academic, professional development and decisions as well as the ways they negotiated those Western epistemics and epistemologies in their local contexts after returning home.
The second limitation referred to the nature of the data. My primary sources were based on interview data since no observations were conducted due to the 2020-2022 Covid-19 situation where classes and most of the educational procedures had gone online. However, I minimized this limitation by conducting three different interviews with each participant, triangulating information from interviews with participants’ personal documents and implementing member checking.

The delimitation is that each Omani TEFL teacher educator distinctly focused on their experience and the individual impact that it has on their personal, academic, professional development and decisions. Therefore, the recommendations and suggestions that came out of this study would only be transferable to Omani TEFL teacher educators, who finished their graduate studies in the West (mainly from UK and Australia) and work in similar working environments. This is true because each higher education (whether in Oman or elsewhere) has its own culture and system which are not necessarily like the setting explored in this study (University of Alhasan). Last but not least, other Omani TEFL teacher educators, who are educated in other Western countries (e.g., USA, Canada, or New Zealand), might also have different stories and experiences to share, which could limit the transferability of this study and were not included.

**Implications**

Findings from this study aimed at contributing to the discussion on the feasibility of creating an educational world through collective effort where both the West and Rest at the academic (academics) and administrative (policy and decision makers) levels must ally and dialogue to construct and produce counter-hegemonic narratives (Chen, 2010; Maldonado-Torres, 2007).
Implications for Western TEFL Academic & Policy Makers

Despite the researcher’s short contact (3 months) with the participants, the findings revealed that they and were not fully aware and were not exposed to such non-Western important paradigms during their studies. The researcher explained some related terms and constructs to the participants during the interviews. Personally, although I was exposed to Said’s work in one of the classes, I accidently got to know about the DT framework from my interactions with my committee members. Because of this lack of exposure and the hegemony of the Western epistemologies and epistemes in the participants’ context and experiences, the participants developed a native attitude towards non-Western ways of knowing and learning and their producers.

Stressing the partnership concept by Maldonado-Torres (2007), Western higher education institutions and their academics should expose their Western and non-Western international students to both non-Western and western paradigms and ways of knowing. Such a partnership and exposure would provide everyone with the chance to participate in a dialogue that respects all views and does not value one thought over the other. Instead, this dialogue must be based on re-existence by which the West and Rest working to “re-define and re-signify conditions of dignity on our “shared planet” (p. 3). Despite the efforts and initiatives by some individual academics, this task must be taken at all levels to dismantle this hegemony. According to Alfred (2004) and Smith (2009), Western institutions and academics should and must move from being part of the larger institutional system that serve the imperial agenda to commit to diversifying universities, staff and courses to empower non-Western ways of knowing (Andreotti et al., 2015; Liyanage, 2020). For instance, Abu Moghli and Kadiwal (2021) urged Western higher education institutions to review university syllabuses, identify alternative literature
and highlight the importance of knowledge(s) produced by academics from the Rest or the Global South from a strength-based perspective not from a deficit perspective. Also, Most importantly, both Kuokkanen (2008) and Pidgeon (2008) urge Western universities and scholars to stop suppressing non-Western scholars and students under the calls of intelligibility to Eurocentric scholarship or the risk not being understood by the West. In addition to diversifying staff and curricula, Dyke and Meyerhoff (2013) and Smith (2009) urge Western scholars and institutions to think beyond the academic walls by creating spaces, events or decoloniality reading groups that celebrate and respect other non-Western ways of knowing. To bring this section to an end, I would like to echo what Abu Moghli and Kadiwal (2021) emphasized on the significant role by Western decision and policy makers in Western universities to dismantle this Western hegemony. Agreeing with Tikly and Bond (2013), Abu Moghli and Kadiwal (2021) remarked:

If there is no “real political will, and a change in the structure, and in the hearts and minds of those in decision-making positions, and a shift in the practices of knowledge production on all levels. Once this is achieved, academics and students within higher education will not be apologetic when using knowledge(s) that prioritize the interests and voices of marginalized groups, and which relate to wider concerns of social justice” (p. 13).

In short, Western scholars and institutions should stop promoting “monocultures of knowledge and should not be driven by economic imperatives (Santos, 2014, p. 272).

**Implications for Omani and non-Western TEFL Academic & Policy Makers**

Abu Moghli and Kadiwal (2021) stressed the importance of people who oversee higher education institutions in dismantling this hegemony in the West. Although the number of Western experts has decreased in recent years. However, this decrease appears to, to a considerable extent, be because of the economic situation. Therefore, Omani, and non-Western policymakers, according to Marr (2019), must stop operate
from a deficit perspective towards non-Western ways of knowing and learning (Leonardo, 2018; Mignolo, 2003). Such practices tend to confirm the propagated stereotypes about the Rest. Most importantly, these policy and decision makers should not confine the impact of globalization to the economic aspect and ignore the other political and intellectual aspects that have led to some forms of internalized orientalism (Heng & Devan, 1992; Said, 1978, 2003).

Oman is an ethnically diverse country with several MLs. Instead of devaluing and defunding MLs in comparison to Arabic and other European languages (English, French and German) by the Omani government, policy makers should provide some resources to help people speaking these MLs preserve and maintain the linguistic and cultural heritage of such ethnocultural communities in Oman. The current suppression helps elevate and favor politically and culturally dominant languages more than MLs. Although there have been some individual initiatives of the speakers of these languages, the government should establish and/or adopt such initiatives and projects at a national level especially with the increasing number of Omani academics who study these languages. Finally, participants in this study indicated the disempowerment they experienced from some local elites require revisiting. Dei and Asgharzadeh (2001) urged decision makers in developing countries to empower their educators instead of disempowering them by trusting western experts and expertise. According to Oviawe (2013), such lack of trust as emphasized in this study by the participants tend to alienate rather than empower. Therefore, more real involvement and trust for these academic would create a great partnership between the two teams instead of widening
the gap (Rouleau, 2014; Toom et al., 2015) especially the cost educational investment in these educators and academics (Al-Issa, 2015).

On the part of academics, Edge (2003) warns scholars and educators from the Rest from acting as “imperial troopers” (p. 10) who end up pacifying intellectual resistance and adopting the logic of coloniality. Consequently, their students suffer in silence (Fox, 2001). The participants must revisit their fascination, favoritism, and preferences for Western ways of knowing and learning and their producers over non-Western ones. Therefore, they must pay much greater attention to these domains and most importantly epistemic processes in the “production of subjectivities and knowledge” (Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 221) about the Rest.

In terms of research production, Omani academics and researchers should cite non-Western authors and consider them as valuable as the Western ones as the findings revealed. With reference to MLs, academics should not ally with the negative claims that marginalize MLs. Instead, they should adopt a strength-based perspective about MLs and encourage their students to preserve and maintain these languages by designing assignments that promote the revival and maintenance of these MLs. Moreover, Omani academics and teacher educators should not subscribe to “the murder of their own cognitive matrix” (Paraskeva, 2018, p. 4). In short, Omani, and non-Western scholars and administrators should not only be “critical but also self-critical to avoid replicating the traps of and desires for Western thought” (Leonardo, 2018, p. 8).

In Pursuit of Praxis Opportunities

In the previous section on implications, I addressed some of the pragmatic implications that scholars (teacher educators) and decision and policy makers from the Rest and the West should consider to dismantle Western hegemony and its
epistemologies. In this part, I would focus on praxis opportunities based on what I have learned from this research experience and what it means going forward.

First, I echo Joseph and Johnson’s (2019) suggestion of the importance of taking initiatives in organizing more professional development for local teacher educators and students alike to understand the impact of Western hegemony in the Omani context and other similar contexts. If time and circumstances allow, these professional opportunities could be expanded to include other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. Although I presented my dissertation topic to some Saudi doctoral students (from different major, not necessarily education) studying in the US, it would be extremely important and beneficial to expand these educational and informational opportunities to include TEFL academics and students in the GCC countries. This could happen by making use of the connections and links that I have built with the GCC doctoral students after returning to their home countries. Such collaboration and initiatives would help change the hyper-fascination of the West, undermine prevalent myths and hegemony of the West over the Rest, and reduce the fast-growing negative attitude towards non-Western ways of knowing and learning.

Following Freire (1970), Kubota and Miller (2017) argue that criticality is praxis where theory and practice are inseparable; they argue that scholars and teacher educators need to reflect and take action to facilitate transformation or change. Similarly, and drawing from Joseph and Johnson’s (2019) suggestion, scholars from the Rest need to indulge in what Domínguez (2019) call decolonial reflection on “their behaviors within their own academic communities” (Joseph & Johnson, 2019, p. 334) and be more aware of these forms of hegemony. In Chapter 1, I challenged myself to
practice what I preach by reflecting on my previous behaviors and how I personally and intellectually evolved; I will continue to reflect on my decisions and actions and seeking feedback from my students and colleagues.

Epistemologically, one of my ultimate goals after being exposed to the decolonial turn is to commit and encourage other Omani TEFL scholars to draw upon work conducted by scholars from the Rest and minoritized groups. Drawing from Domínguez’s (2018) concept of epistemic shift and innovation, I believe conducting professional development would help scholars from the Rest to change and challenge their mindset and perceptions. This could be done, as suggested by Domínguez (2018), by anchoring themselves and their student teachers “in the epistemic and ontological perspectives of the global south” (Domínguez, 2018, p. 47) instead of only holding a special fascination for the West (Grosfoguel, 2007; Said, 2003; Talukder & Samuel, 2017). Also, I plan to incorporate decolonial reflection after the informational and educational professional development sessions. Building on Walsh’s (2001, 2018) concept of the praxis of decolonial fissure, I will remind myself and encourage my colleagues to “disobey, interrupt, and counter as much as possible and pushing the limits of laws and regulations of the hegemonic Western individuality and universality” (Walsh, 2018, p. 84).

As a social implication, although there is some research attention on minoritized languages, this great attention seems to focus on the purely linguistic aspects of these languages (e.g., Al Aghbari & Ourang, 2017; Al Bulushi, 2019; Al Jahdhami, 2015, 2016; 2018a, 2018b; Shlonsky & Bendjaballah, 2017). Therefore, there should be more research attempts (e.g., Al-Issa, 2020; Al Jahdhami, 2015, 2018b; Kharusi, 2012) that
address other critical aspects like language maintenance, and language policy and planning (LPP) situations, and how that has affected what languages are introduced and what languages are excluded (Al-Issa, 2020). In addition to the significance of DT, I plan to conduct research with some of participants and other Omani scholars using other relevant frameworks like critical applied linguistics (Pennycook, 2001), raciolinguistic perspectives (Alim et al., 2016; Flores & Rosa, 2015) and/or colonialinguism, meaning viewing multilingual and multicultural learners and non-native speakers of English from a deficit lens and Western hegemonic perspectives (Meighan, 2022). Drawing on Meighan’s (2019, 2022) Heritage Language Pedagogy (HLP) of engaging learners and educators in a decolonial exchange of knowledges along with language learning, I plan to work with my students, colleagues, and other speakers of minoritized languages on shifting their (our) thinking about these languages from a deficit perspective to a strength-based perspective (García et al., 2021). Pragmatically, I plan to incorporate and encourage my students to celebrate, write, teach and present about their minoritized languages. Instead of waiting for local elites, I would encourage them to take initiatives to maintain these languages and teach these languages to their kids or provide courses for people who might be interested in learning these languages (Paris & Alim, 2017). In my critical thinking class and drawing from Pennycook’s (2022) new role of critical applied linguistics, I plan as much as I can to use this class as a space to “maintain a project of intellectual critique – pointing to injustices, calling out discriminations, illuminating inequalities – while also believing that things can be changed by concerted political action” (Pennycook, 2022, p. 6) instead of just focusing on Western understanding of critical thinking as I used to do. To bring this
section to a close, it is very important to realize that there is no singular effective way to dismantle western hegemony and its epistemologies simply because it is work in progress. This is why collaboration among scholars from the Rest and West is crucial to accelerate progress towards dismantlement of any hegemony and narrowing the gap between the two worlds (Maldonado-Torres, 2007).

**Implications for Further Research**

Though this study would add both empirical and conceptual contributions on the literature of DT and Omani TEFL teacher education, I fully recognize that researchers and academics still need to investigate their own practices more often since they are among the least researched groups. Since South American, Eastern Asian, and African teacher educators are among the most researched groups in the literature of DT related to TEFL teacher education, it would be informative to both study other groups in GCC and compare between two groups of non-Western teacher educators in Oman or other GCC countries in how each group would renegotiate these epistemologies and epistemes and what others forces in espousing this western hegemony in each context.

As the individual narrative mentioned in Chapter 4, each participant in this study went to the same Western country for his/her master’s and PhD. For example, how would TEFL educators who were educated in two different Western (one Western for the master’s and another Western country for the PhD) countries negotiate western epistemologies after experiencing that in two Western countries? Since all the participants went to the UK or Australia, how about those who went or are going to the other NABA countries like US or Canada or New Zealand? As described in Chapter 4, all these participants attended universities in English native speaking countries, but what about those who were educated in non-Western countries? How much of an
influence would these non-Western institutions and non-Western educators have on Omani TEFL teacher educators in terms of the hegemony of western epistemologies and epistemes? The participant's were young and did not have a long experience (five years or less) after the PhD; thus, how about those who have more years of experience? Would having more years of experience be a determining factor? If so, in what ways?

As mentioned in Chapter 4, all the participants were in English native speaking countries, but how do those educated in non-Western countries respond? How much of an influence would these non-Western institutions and non-Western educators working have on Omani TEFL teacher educators in terms of the hegemony of western epistemologies and epistemes?

The participants referenced some of the challenges in relation to the Omani student teachers (e.g., linguistic competence, intercultural competence, lacking critical thinking and others). It would be beneficial to study the same topic but adding Omani pre-service teachers’ perspective to increase credibility and accomplish triangulation. How would Omani student teachers negotiate these western epistemologies and epistemes? In addition to the challenge centered around students’ abilities, the participants also highlighted how some local elites disempowered them. To better understand the relationship between teacher agency and resistance of Western hegemony, future research should ask: How different or similar would it be if these Omani TEFL teachers were more empowered? Finally, since the participants’ setting was going through accreditation during data collection and they discussed the importance of accreditation in revisiting and reflecting on their own practices, it would be
further useful to follow the five Omani TEFL teacher educators after their institution locally and internationally and to examine how such processes espouse or challenge the hegemony of Western epistemologies and epistemes.

Concluding Thoughts

This dissertation using DT hoped to dismantling the Western hegemony in knowledge production especially in this overlooked part of the world, Oman and around the world. This critical narrative study revealed the significance of problematizing and deconstructing what is presented as apolitical, natural and/or universal (Alatas, 1977; Said, 1995; Talukder & Samuel, 2017).

Despite all their individual differences, the five participants’ (Dr. Faiyza, Dr. Fatin, Dr. Ibrahim, Dr. Maryam, and Dr. Shamsa) narratives made conscientious efforts to adapt their western education to their local context, but the hegemony of Western epistemologies and epistemes appeared to override these efforts. Reducing and confining the impact of globalization and western epistemologies and epistemes to the economic mask has led participants to adopt and espouse this hegemony of Western epistemologies and epistemes in these aspects: preference for Western institutions over non-Western ones, choice for Western advisors over non-Western ones, their overall adoption of Western teaching and testing materials and their support for elite bilingual/multilingualism over MLs.

Als, both internal tensions (e.g., personal conviction, own teaching practices and philosophies based on individual experiences, dealing with colleagues, students, and family where participants had the power to respond to) and external tensions (e.g., imposed polices and curricula and assessment tools by local elites where participants did not have any control) played a crucial role in promoting this Western hegemony
(Berlak & Berlak, 1981; Rouleau, 2014). This is not to deny or undermine. However, the external tensions appeared to override the internal tensions resulting in accelerating dominance of and dependency on Western epistemologies and epistemes in the participants’ TEFL context. This is not to deny or undermine the role of internal tensions but to emphasize the significance of external factors in fostering this hegemony.

Echoing Maldonado-Torres’ (2007) advice for the scholars from the Rest including Oman is to be aware and not fall into the trap of creating another form of imperial universality. Instead, he suggests that scholars from the Rest and West engage a “dialogue not as impositions” (p. 261) and not based on “standardization and uniformity” (Aydarova, 2017, p. 5) but rather on re-existence to “re-define and re-signify conditions of dignity on our shared planet” (p. 3).
APPENDIX A
REQUESTING PERMISSION LETTER

College of Education
School of Teaching and Learning

2403 Norman Hall
PO Box 117048
Gainesville, FL 32611-7048
352-392-9191
352-392-9193 Fax
http://education.ufl.edu/school

14 April 2021

[Redacted]

Re: UF IRB#: IRB202003016

Subject: Requesting Permission for Mr. Ahmed Al Mata’ni to Conduct Research at your Institution

Dear [Redacted],

My name is Dr Maria Coady, Professor ESOL/Bilingual Education in the School of Teaching and Learning, College of Education, at the University of Florida, USA. I am the Supervising Faculty and Academic Advisor for Mr. Ahmed Al Mata’ni, who is an ESOL and Bilingual Education doctoral candidate at the UF College of Education. His UF ID number is 1953-8332. As a part of Mr. Al Mata’ni’s doctoral program, he is required to complete a dissertation research project.

I am writing to seek permission to allow Mr. Al Mata’ni to conduct a research study under your authority. The title of his project is Critical Narrative Study on How Omani TEFL Educators Educated in the West Adopt, Resist, and Negotiate Western Epistemologies and Epistemes In their Scholarship and Teaching in Oman. The research focuses on understanding how Omani TEFL PhD teacher educators, educated in the West, make sense of their educational experiences and how they negotiate Western epistemologies and epistomes in their local context.

Mr. Al Mata’ni proposes that you will allow him to recruit 3-4 participants from the English Department based on the following criteria:

a. be Omani
b. have received their undergraduate degrees from a non-western country
c. have received their master’s and PhD from NABA (North America, Britain, and Australia) countries in preparing Omani English teachers (TEFL)
d. teach at least one educational course (e.g., ELT Teaching Method, ELT School Curriculum Analysis, Language Acquisition, Practicum, and so on).
e. have at least three years of experience after completing PhD

[Redacted]

An Equal Opportunity Institution
If approval is granted, Mr. Al Mata’ni will collect data from the potential participants using interviews (via Microsoft Teams) and potential participants’ personal documents (e.g., copies of former and recent syllabi, previous and recent research articles, former and recent exams, and possible former and recent supervised dissertations). He is planning to conduct this research after working hours to minimize any disruption. No costs will be incurred by either your institution or the individual participants. With your permission, he is planning to begin data collection in April, 2021.

I would be happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have. You may contact me at via phone: +1 352.273.4228 or email: mcoady@coe.ufl.edu

Attached are copies of the study summary, interview protocol, and a copy the approval of the study from the University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Thank you for considering my request. I look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely yours,

Maria R. Coady, Ph.D.
Professor ESOL/Bilingual Education
Chair, American Educational Research Association (AERA) Bilingual Education Research
Past-President, Florida Association for Bilingual Education (FABE) (https://fabefl.org)
Director and PI, Project STELLAR (https://education.ufl.edu/stellar/)
Box 117048, 2-282 Norman Hall
Gainesville, FL 32611, FL, USA
APPENDIX B

LETTER OF APPROVAL OF THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA

DATE: 3/31/2021
TO: Maria Coady
Box 117048
Gainesville, Florida 32611
FROM: Ira Fischler, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus
Chair IRB-02
IRB#: IRB202003016
TITLE: Critical Narrative Study on How Omani TELF Educators Educated in the West Adopt, Resist, and Negotiate Western Epistemologies and Epistemes in their Scholarship and Teaching in Oman

Approved as Exempt

You have received IRB approval to conduct the above-listed research project. Approval of this project was granted on 3/31/2021 by IRB-02. This study is approved as exempt because it poses minimal risk and is approved under the following exempt category/categories:

(2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met: (i) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; (ii) Any disclosure of the human subjects’ responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects’ financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation; or (iii) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(s)(7).

Special Note(s) to Investigator:

Exempt approved studies will not have an approval stamp on the consents, fliers, emails, etc. However, the documents reviewed are the ones to be used. If you need to modify the document(s) in any manner then you’d need to submit to our office for review and approval prior to implementation.

Please review this Institutional Guideline to determine if you can in fact continue your activities and/or enroll participants: https://clinicalresearch.ctsi.ufl.edu/covid-19/resuming-hsr-study-activities/

Principal Investigator Responsibilities:
The PI is responsible for the conduct of the study.

• Using currently approved consent form to enroll subjects (if applicable)
• Obtaining approval for revisions before implementation
• Reporting Adverse Events
• Retention of Research Records
• Obtaining approval to conduct research at the VA
• Notifying other parties about this project’s approval status

Should the nature of the study change or you need to revise the protocol in any manner please contact this office prior to implementation at 352-392-0433 or via email at irb@ufl.edu.

Study Team:

Ahmed Al Ma'atani Co-Investigator

The Foundation for The Gator Nation
An Equal Opportunity Institution
Confidentiality Notice: This e-mail message, including any attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s), and may contain legally privileged information. Any other distribution, copying, or disclosure is strictly prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender and destroy this message immediately. Unauthorized access to confidential information is subject to federal and state laws and could result in personal liability, fines, and imprisonment. Thank you.
Dr.
Head of Curriculum and Instruction Department
College of education
Sultan Qaboos University

SUBJECT: Nomination for Participants for my Study

Dear Dr.

My name is Ahmed Al Mata’ni and a 2003 LUO graduate. I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Teaching and Learning at the College of Education, University of Florida, USA. As a part of my doctoral dissertation research project, I am required to complete this project. Therefore, I would like to recruit Omani EFL teacher educators who were educated in the West for my dissertation study understanding how Omani EFL Teacher educators with a PhD who are educated in the West make sense of their educational experiences and how they negotiated Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching in their institutions.

I intend to recruit (3-5) participants, each of whom must:

a. be Omani
b. have received their undergraduate degrees from a non-western country
c. have received their master’s and PhD from NABA (North America, Britain, and Australia) countries in curriculum and instruction or related degrees in preparing Omani English teachers (TEFL)
d. have at least four years of experience after completing PhD

Due to the scarcity of research in this area in the Arab World in general and Oman specifically, I hope to fill the gap in literature in this area by further understanding such experiences. I will be collecting data through three semi-structured interviews using Zoom or Microsoft Teams and participants’ personal documents (e.g., copies of former and recent syllabi, previous and recent research articles, former and recent exams, and possible former and recent supervised dissertations).

Here is what will be asked of participants:

1. Share former and current copies of their personal documents e.g. syllabus notes, exam papers, research articles and so forth) before starting the interviews
2. Participate in 3 recorded one-on-one, in-person interviews at a time that is convenient, for approximately 60 minutes to 1 ½ hours for each interview through Zoom or Microsoft Teams.
3. Respond to possible follow up questions to provide clarity or additional information as needed

Therefore, I greatly appreciate your time and consideration to nominate participants. Should you have anyone viable to nominate, or if you have any questions about the study, please contact me via e-mail (ahmed7979@ufl.edu) or phone (+1-352-222-6380).

Yours Sincerely,
Ahmed Al Matani
Dear (Name of Participant):

My name is Ahmed Al Mata’ni, and I am a doctoral student at University of Florida. As a part of my doctoral dissertation research project, I am focusing on understanding how Omani EFL Teacher educators with a PhD who are educated in the West, like yourself, make sense of their educational experiences and how they negotiated Western epistemologies and epitomes in their scholarship and teaching in their institutions. You have been contacted because you meet the selection’s criteria.

As a graduate student, I was able to finish my master’s in the United States of America and now I am doing my PhD in USA. These programs have left a great impact on my personal, academic, and professional life in several ways and have continued to shape my education and profession. Due to the scarcity of research in this area in the Arab World in general and Oman specifically, I hope to fill the gap in literature by learning from your insights and expertise.

For this project, I will be collecting data through three semi-structured interviews, and participants’ personal documents (e.g., copies of former and recent syllabi, previous and recent research articles, former and recent exams, and possible former and recent supervised dissertations).

**What will you do if you agree to take part in this research?**

1. Suggest a suitable time slot for every interview, which is most convenient for you
2. Share copies of your former and current personal documents (e.g. syllabus notes, exam papers, research articles and so forth) before starting the interviews
3. Participate in 3 recorded one-on-one, in-person interviews at a time that is convenient, following their submission of the photos, for approximately 60 minutes to 1 ½ hours for each interview through Zoom or Microsoft Teams.
4. Respond to possible follow up questions to provide clarity or additional information as needed.

You may refuse to answer any question you do not feel like answering. You are more than welcome to extend your answer to areas that you feel important but not yet covered in the questions. I will take notes of your answer during the interviews. Only with your permission, the interview will be both audio-recorded and recorded via Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. Please find the interview protocol attached. If you would not like to participate, thank you for your consideration. If you are interested in participating or have any further questions, please contact me at: Cell phone: +1-352-222-6380, WhatsApp: +968-99833863 or email: ahmed7979@ufl.edu at your earliest convenience. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,

Ahmed Al Mata’ni
APPENDIX E
CONSENT FORM

Written Consent Form

IRB#: IRB202003016

Study Title: Critical Narrative Study on How Omani TEFL Educators Educated in the West Adopt, Resist, and Negotiate Western Epistemologies and Epistemes In their Scholarship and Teaching in Oman.

Dear Participant,

Please read this document carefully before you decide to participate in this research study. Your participation is voluntary, and you can decline to participate, or withdraw consent at any time, with no consequences.

Persons conducting the research:

If you wish to discuss the information above or any discomforts you may experience, please ask questions now or contact one of the research team members listed at the top of this form.

Principle Researcher and Academic Advisor: Maria Coady, Ph.D., School of Teaching and Learning, College of Education; mcoady@coe.ufl.edu, 352 273-4228, 2-282, Norman Hall

Co-Principle Researcher: Ahmed Al Mata’ni, Ph.D. Candidate, School of Teaching and Learning, College of Education, ahmed7979@ufl.edu or, +1-352-222-6380

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand how Omani TEFL PhD Teacher educators educated in the West make sense of their educational experiences and how those experiences have shaped their academic journey as an TEFL educators after returning and to specifically answer the following research question and sub-question:

Main Research question: How do Omani TEFL educators educated in the West adopt, resist, and negotiate Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching in an Oman teacher education context?

Sub-research question: What personal and national tensions are present for these Omani educators as they negotiate Western epistemes in their scholarship and teaching?
Significance of the Study

As a graduate student, I was able to finish my master's in the United States of America and now I am doing my PhD in USA. These programs have left a great impact on my personal, academic, and professional life in several ways and have continued to shape my education and profession. Due to the scarcity of research in this area in the Arab World in general and Oman specifically, I hope to fill the gap in literature in this area by further understanding the experiences of Omani EFL scholars like yourself and how they make meaning of their educational experiences in their current settings in Oman.

Voluntary participation

Your volunteer participation in this research study is highly appreciated and it will help the researcher successfully complete his research on the above-cited topic, contribute to recommendations for future Omani TEFL teacher educators, and fill in the significant gap in the literature about Omani TEFL teacher educators and in the Arab world. For this project, I will be collecting data through three semi-structured interviews, the photo-elicitation method, and participants' personal documents (e.g., syllabus notes, exam papers, research articles and so forth).

Controller of Personal Data

Your personal data will be treated in compliance with applicable data protection laws. For this study, University of Florida is the controller of your personal data. Your rights related to your personal data collected will be treated in compliance with applicable data protection laws. If you wish to exercise any of these rights, you must contact University of Florida at UF-Compliance@ufl.edu or +1(352) 392-0433, located at 3007 SW Williston Road, Gainesville, FL 32608. Also, you may contact me for any further information at: ahmed7979@ufl.edu or +1-352-222-6380. You may also find more information about the local supervisory authority in Oman at: https://www.sgu.edu.om/Portals/4/Documents/Guides/Research_Regulations-English.pdf.

What will you do if you agree to take part in this research?:

a. After reading this consent form and answering your questions about the study, kindly sign it and email it back to me.

b. Suggest a suitable time slot for our meetings, which are most convenient for you.

c. Share copies of your former and current personal documents (e.g. syllabus notes, exam papers, research articles and so forth) before starting the interviews.

d. Participate in 3 recorded one-on-one, in-person interviews at a time that is convenient, following their submission of the photos, for approximately 60 minutes to 1½ hours for each interview through Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

e. Respond to possible follow up questions to provide clarity or additional information as needed.

Understanding your rights

As a volunteer participant in this research study,
1) You have the right to decide not to participate in this study on any point during any designated research activity or withdraw from the study at any time. Withdrawal from participating in this study at any point will be treated as a discretion of the participant(s) and will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject or participant is otherwise entitled.

2) The researcher is bound to adhere to your decision and make sure that your decision will not lead to any penalty or loss of benefit and confirm that there are no adverse consequences (physical, social, economic, legal, or psychological) for a subject's decision to withdraw from the research at any point.

3) If the researcher wants to publish the findings of his research, he is bound to keep your identity as confidential, and any kind of information will not be disclosed to anyone.

4) During the interviews, you may refuse to answer any question you do not feel like answering. You are more than welcome to extend your answer to areas that you feel important but not yet covered in the questions.

5) The researcher will take notes of your answer during the interviews.

6) Only with your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded via a recorder and Microsoft Teams, which will be downloaded and stored in a secure password server.

7) According to University of Florida, I would like to assure you that all electronic copies of transcribed data are stored on a personal, password protected computer. In addition, hard copies of the data will be stored for up to three years in a locked file in the home of the researcher. After three years, all electronic files will be deleted, and hard copies will be shredded or burned.

**Risks and Benefits**

You as a participants are unlikely to experience more than what is referred to as “minimal risk” by participating in this study. Further, I anticipate you can possibly benefit from participating in this study because this study will provide you as an Omani TEFL teacher educator with a chance to share and discuss your experiences since Omani TEFL teacher educators are among the overlooked groups. Also, the results will benefit the TEFL academic community, especially in Oman, by adding to the knowledge and understanding how teacher educators educated in NABA (North America, Britain, and Australia) Countries adopt, resist, and negotiate Western epistemologies and epistemes in their scholarship and teaching [in an Oman teacher education context].

**May the researcher benefit from the research?**

I may benefit professionally if the results of the study are presented at meetings or in scientific journals.

**Compensation**

There is no financial compensation, but I would be offering each participant a UF Gator’s T-shirt as a token of appreciation for your time and effort.

**Confidentiality**

In order to keep the data confidential, pseudonyms are used throughout analysis and reporting to protect participants’ privacy and confidentiality. Also, the researcher would like to assure you that the interview records as well as the copies of shared photos and
documents will be kept secured in a safe place that the researcher and dissertation chair have agreed on. For the soft copies, the researcher and dissertation chair have agreed to keep these electronic files using a special password that will not be shared with others.

**Who to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:**
IRB02 Office  
Box 100173  
University of Florida  
Gainesville, FL 32611-2250  
Phone: +1-352-392-0433

**Agreement**
You are entitled to receive a copy of this description. Your signature below indicates you have read the procedure described above, you voluntarily agree to take part in this research and grant permission to the researcher to use all the data collected from the interviews and documents.

**Please Sign Only One Of The Lines Below**
YES, I DO want my data to be included in this study

________________________________________________________________________
Name of participant

________________________________________________________________________
Signature of participant               Date

Thank you for your volunteering and I appreciate your efforts for sparing time for research study.
APPENDIX F
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol

Study IRB#: IRB202003016
Study’s Title: Critical Narrative Study on How Omani TEFL Educators Educated in the West Adopt, Resist, and Negotiate Western Epistemologies and Epistemes In their Scholarship and Teaching in Oman.
Student’s Name: Ahmed Al Mata’ni

Interview 1
Purpose of Interview 1: To establish the context of the participants’ experience and building rapport with the participant.

Introduction
I would like to start by thanking you for accepting to be part of this study. As you know, I am a PhD student, and I am conducting this interview as part of my PhD study at the university of Florida. I am interested in learning about your view to understand your experience and its impact on your academic journey after returning to Oman. However, today I am interested in knowing you better and establishing rapport with you. Kindly relax and feel free to share anything that comes to your mind. Your responses are highly appreciated. Do you have any questions before we start?

Tape recorder instructions
If it is fine with you, I will be recording this conversation as stated in the invitation email/letter. The purpose of this is getting all the details as well as being able to have a natural and thoughtful conversation. As a researcher, I would like to assure you that all your comments and information will remain confidential and anonymous without any reference to individuals.

Signing Consent Form
Before starting this interview, I have a consent form that needs to be signed indicating your willingness to participate in this study. I anticipate this interview to last anywhere between 60 to 90 minutes. If you agree to the terms I just described, please sign right (Consent Form) here. One copy will be kept with me is for personal keeping of the study’s files and the other one is for you.

Starting the Interview
If there are no further questions, let us get started with the first question.

Questions for Interview 1

Grand questions
- Tell me a little bit about yourself and your background.
- Could you describe your educational background?

Probing questions
- Tell me about your educational background.
- How did you decide to be a teacher educator?
- Why did you decide to go to that country/university?
- Was it (country or university) your choice? Why? Why not?
Please tell me about/describe your educational experiences during your master’s and PhD.

- If you could go back in time, would you consider going to a non-Western university instead of the ones you joined? Why?
  - What was your experience like overseas?
  - What have you learned from your experience?
  - Can you give me specific examples of what you just mentioned?
  - If any, how did these experiences help in your academic advancement?

Clarification Questions

- Could you help me understand what you meant when you said _______?
- If I understood you correctly, you said _____?
- Will you expand on your discussion of _______ a little bit more?

Concluding remarks

- Is there anything you think I should have asked but did not ask you?
- Would you like to ask me any questions?
- Would you like to add any further information about this?

Thank you very much for accepting to conduct the interview. Your time is very much appreciated, and your comments have been very helpful. I will see you next time for the second interview.

Interview 2

Purpose of Interview 2: To “allow participants to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occurs” (Schuman, as cited in Seidman, 2019, p. 21) in order to understand how the participants construct meaning of their experiences.

Introduction

I would like to start by thanking you again for being part of this study. Last interview was very helpful, and I got to know so much about you. Today, I am going to focus on understanding your experience in the West and how you negotiate Western epistemologies and epistemes in your scholarship and teaching. Kindly relax and feel free to share anything that comes to your mind because your responses are highly appreciated, and they will enrich this study. Do you have any questions before we start?

Warm-up

- Is there anything you would like to add to your comments or clarify from earlier?
- If there are no further questions, let’s get started with the first question.

Possible rising question(s) from Interview 1

Questions

- Please tell me how this experience shape the way you teach and conduct research now.
- Please tell me what you think of having Western

Probing questions

- How relevant is what you have learned to your current work setting in terms of teaching and research you do now Why is it the case? Please elaborate.
- How useful are your acquired knowledge and skills from NABA to your students?
- Did your study expose you to non-Western knowledge? How often? Why do you think it was the case?
epistemologies and epistemes in the Omani context.

- How often do you apply your gained theoretical knowledge from the West in your teaching and research now? Why?
- How often do you share that knowledge with your colleagues? How did that go? How did you feel about that? what kinds of challenge do you usually face? How did you deal/respond to those challenges? How is it different if you are to use non-western knowledge?
- How about using non-Western knowledge? Why?
- What do you think of using international tests like IELTS in Oman? Why is that?
- What do you think of using non-Western tools? Please elaborate.
- How often do you encourage your students to challenge Western materials and approaches?
- In your view, What gives Western knowledge legitimacy, credibility, or value?
- How often do you conduct research in Arabic? Why?
- How often do you use materials in Arabic in your teaching? Why?
- How much are you involved in making educational policies for the country? Why?
- What do you think of having non-Omani experts in charge of making major decisions?
- What do you think of your institution being accredited by a Western body?
- What is your role Western models adopted in your institution?

Concluding remarks
- Is there anything you think I should have asked but did not ask you?
- Would you like to ask me any questions?
- Would you like to add any further information about this?

Thank you very much for accepting to conduct the interview. Your time is very much appreciated, and your comments have been very helpful. I will see you next time for the second interview.

Interview 3
Purpose of Interview 3: To ask questions based on the participants' personal documents

Introduction
I would like to start by thanking you again for the great interview yesterday on your experience in the West. Today, I would like you to focus on your personal documents in reference to what you mentioned in your last interview. Kindly relax and feel free to share anything that comes to your mind because your responses are highly appreciated, and they will enrich this study. Do you have any questions before we start?

Warm-up
- Is there anything you would like to add to your comments or clarify from earlier?
- If there are no further questions, let's get started with the first question.

Questions
Grand questions Probing questions
Please tell me how you go about what to teach and how you conduct research

• How do you choose your teaching materials?
• How do you choose your research topics?
• What topics do you encourage your students to research about?
  • I have noticed in document X you used….., why is that?
  • I have noticed in document Y you used more of ….than other …….., why is that?
  • You said last time that you do..., but document Z shows that …., could you elaborate on this?

Examples of Photo elicitation questions
Main questions
Please tell me about this picture

Probing questions
• Why did you choose this photo?
• Please give more details about it
• How do you feel now looking back at the photo?
If you had a magic wand and could change something, what would you change?

Closing
Concluding remarks
• Is there anything you think I should have asked but did not ask you?
• Would you like to ask me any questions?
• Would you like to add any further information about this?

Thank you very much for accepting to conduct this third interview. Your time is very much appreciated, and your comments have been very helpful.
As we have agreed earlier, I might need to conduct one additional interview if there is a need for more elaboration, follow-up questions or clarifications regarding your answers. I have already shared my information with if you require any questions. It simply would not be possible without you. Also, if you are interested in learning how this study turns out, please feel free to contact me and I’ll be happy to keep you updated.
APPENDIX G
CONVENTIONS OF THE LANGUAGE

To be consistent in my report of the findings, I will use the future tense in this section at this stage since I have not collected data yet. These tenses will be changed to past tense after the study is completed. As suggested by Corden and Sainsbury (2006), I will use “verbatim quotations” (p. 1) as to identify what participants would say using the codes described in the Table H-1 below:

Table G-1 Conventions of the language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>Code used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The setting</td>
<td>University of Alhasan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants (pseudonymous names)</td>
<td>Dr. Faiyza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dr. Fatin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dr. Ibrahim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dr. Maryam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dr. Shamsa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data sources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview one</td>
<td>INTVW1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview two</td>
<td>INTVW2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview three</td>
<td>INTVW2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document (syllabi)</td>
<td>DOC SN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document (Rubric)</td>
<td>DOC R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example of an exam</td>
<td>DOC FE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example of a quiz</td>
<td>DOC QZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document (Lesson Plan)</td>
<td>DOC LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research article</td>
<td>DOC RA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lines within a data source</td>
<td>LN. followed by the number of the line</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As an example, the code (Dr. Faiyza, INTVW1, LN. 2-3) shall be interpreted as: Dr. Faiyza, Interview one, line 2 through 3.
LIST OF REFERENCES


Al Balushi, K. D. (2017). "...They feel that they have a voice, and their voice is heard": *Towards participatory forms of teachers' CPD in Oman* (13832431) [Doctoral dissertation]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.


Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2013). The landscape of qualitative research (4th ed.). SAGE.


Hofstede, G. H. (2001). Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions and organizations across nations (2nd ed.). SAGE.


Kraus, E. S. (2019). *Building the NEST: How native English speaking teachers (NESTS) in the TESL field develop intercultural competence* [Doctoral dissertation]. https://via.library.depaul.edu/soe_etd/157


355


Takayama, K. (2016). Beyond "the west as Method": Repositioning the Japanese education research communities in/against the global structure of academic knowledge. Educational Studies in Japan, 10(0), 19-31. https://doi.org/10.7571/esjkyoiku.10.19


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ahmed Al Mata’ni graduated with a Ph.D. degree in ESOL/ Bilingual Education at School of Teaching and Learning, University of Florida in 2022. Before starting his PhD in 2016, he was teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Oman, for more than a decade and a half (since 2003). He is one of the PhD awardees of the Sultan Qaboos Program for Postgraduate studies, which is the most prestigious program in Oman, to complete his PhD. Also, he was a grantee of the Civic Education and Leadership Fellows (CELF) program scholarship that is funded through the U.S. State Department’s Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) at Syracuse University in 2013.

His research interests lie primarily at the intersection of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Language Identity of Non-native Speakers of English, Bilingual Education, Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Educational Leadership, with a more current research interest in Social Justice Issues, Raciolinguistic Perspective, Decolonial Turn, and Critical Race Theory in education.

Ahmed Al Mata’ni holds a Master of Education in Teaching English to Other Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) from the University of Missouri, St. Louis. His most recent professional experience in Oman includes being involved in the local accreditation process as the person in charge of the Students and Student Support Services Standard, where his higher education institution in Oman was accredited by the Omani Authority of Academic Accreditation (2015-2016).