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Teachers' Perceptions toward Implementing English as a Foreign Language at Kindergarten: What Can We Learn from the Case of Kuwaiti Kindergarten Teachers?

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Teachers' Perceptions toward Implementing English as a Foreign Language at Kindergarten:
What Can We Learn from the Case of Kuwaiti Kindergarten Teachers?

Teachers' Perceptions toward Implementing English as a Foreign Language at Kindergarten:
What Can We Learn from the Case of Kuwaiti Kindergarten Teachers?

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction

By

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ABSTRACT

The teaching of English as a foreign language has a promising outlook in the nation of Kuwait. Recent policy reflects language development theories that see early childhood as an especially good period for the learning of a foreign language. Thus, English is now taught at 30 public kindergartens in Kuwait. However, the program apparently was implemented quickly, with little consideration for how teachers and other stakeholders would respond to it. This paper explores that program in the context of the perceptions and views of teachers affected by it.

A review of the existing curriculum points towards deficiencies, and investigation of the perceptions of teachers clarifies them. For this study, surveys were distributed to kindergarten teachers tasked with teaching English in 30 kindergartens in five different school districts, in Kuwait. 631 surveys were completed, providing information about teachers' perceptions and views towards: 1) learning English at an early age, 2) the current English curriculum, 3) teacher needs for effective instruction, and 4) the challenges teachers face. Total agreement was tabulated for each survey statement. Results were also subjected to one-way analysis of variance tests to identify differences according to school district, training institution, and length of teaching experience.

The results show that teachers generally agree with the idea of introducing children to English at an early age. Their agreement with the actual curriculum used for that purpose is considerably weaker. At the same time, the results indicate that teachers generally recognize that they have needs for teaching English which are not currently being met, and that they face considerable challenges in that role. District, source of training, and years of experience are connected to variation on only a few statements, but these variations help to explain the source of certain teacher perceptions and what can be done by policymakers to improve teacher

engagement with kindergarten English education. Improvements to pre-service and in-service training are recommended as the most essential changes that the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education must make in order to continue implementing the current curriculum.

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DEDICATION

To my grandmother and my loving parents, who have always prayed for me and who have always been there in both body and spirit. To my brothers, sisters, extended family, and friends whose love and encouragement has been a constant support. To my instructor Dr. George Denny, and to my student Faisal Al-Deai, who passed away prior to my dissertation defense, do not think that you are forgotten, you will be always on my mind and in my heart.

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Kawthar

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In the modern, globalized, and highly mobile world, foreign language education is increasingly important for the sake of preparing children to be successful and capable of a high level of social integration. This is especially true for societies wherein secondary or alternative languages are widely used for business purposes, or in certain fields, or by a significant and non-marginalized minority of the population. According to EurActiv Languages and Culture (2012), “English is still by far the most taught foreign language in nearly all countries from primary level and onwards” (p. 5). English as a language has, on account of its current status as a foreign language, become a top priority of many educational systems, especially in Arab countries.

Kuwait is a society in which English has clear importance as a prominent secondary language. Arabic is the primary language used by the overall population, but English is familiar at the level of government and in international business, which is a powerful element of Kuwait’s economy. It is no wonder then, that English language learning has undergone recent expansions in the Kuwaiti education system, with the 2009-2010 school year inaugurating a new initiative to introduce English to students at the public kindergarten level.

Kuwait is thus a suitable case study for the implementation of the teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) program in the early stages of primary school, but before drawing any meaningful conclusions from the experience of that school system, there are theoretical questions that remain to be addressed. There are, for instance, differing schools of thought as to how and at what stage of development second languages are best learned. Also, there are questions of appropriate pedagogy for reaching goals in the teaching of foreign languages.

These topics will be addressed in more detail in the literature review, but the ideas that are essential to the topic are that there exists a preoperational stage in language development,

which persists through kindergarten age, and which affords children a particular opportunity to acquire a second language before their acquisition of language is locked into the grammar rules of their first language (Lightfoot, Cole & Cole, 2008). Also important is the notion of second language, which Harless (2001) believes can be utilized in language education with different proportions of a first and second language depending on the linguacultural background of the education system, in order to teach both languages at once to students in the preoperational phase.

There is no shortage of linguistic research and academic literature on the topic of second language acquisition among children. In addition, thanks to both that fact and the developing international social landscape, there is a growing number of English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) programs at the primary school level in most post-industrial nations. Fahmy and Bilton (1992), for instance, indicate that EFL programs began to become public priorities in Oman even before there had been much direct contact with English-speaking nations. The fact that such programs are growing means that in places like Kuwait, where the current kindergarten English program is in its infancy, the programs remain experimental and relatively untested. That is certainly the case in Kuwait where the current initiative is brand new and still may prove to show different results from what would be found in an educational culture with different Kuwaiti teacher backgrounds, different Kuwaiti student characteristics, and different expectations.

Language Policy and Planning

Amidst the nearly universal pressures of globalization, language planning is an increasingly visible topic of policymaking in many countries wherein English is not the official or dominant language. The effort to promote and raise the social status of a new language may

be carried out by any number of stakeholders, but it is notably associated with government agenda-setting that is in turn supported by smaller actors, including individual schools and social organizations. The key trouble with language planning arises from this very situation, in which diverse groups might be working either towards or against the given goal and in different ways.

In light of the embrace of such initiatives as compulsory English curriculum in Kuwaiti kindergarten, the goal there is certainly a widespread adoption of English-language proficiency among current and future generations. A familiar reaction to this from some citizens and stakeholders is concern over the potential for a comparable loss of skill in classical Arabic or a loss of its presence as part of the cultural identity of the country. This sort of response can lead to resistance to implementation of the stated policy, especially if the government, school administrators, and English language advocates do not make a concerted effort to compensate for those negative sentiments.

This conflict is not unique to Kuwait, or even to Arabic-speaking countries. Fallon and Rublik (2011) discussed the unusual case of the Canadian province of Quebec, which is a French-speaking region of an English-speaking country. The authors indicate that with the culture of Quebec being in such a perilous situation, there is significant resistance to efforts to increase English education and usage. At the level of government, however, it is well recognized that widespread proficiency in English as a second language is important to the ability of future generations to operate effectively in the global marketplace.

The problem is further complicated by evidence that politicians do not understand the complexities of the school system or the extent to which competing interests can work against an established language policy. Despite all of this, Fallon and Rublik depict the implementation of pro-English language planning as having been remarkably successful in recent years. There are

key reasons for this. In its effort to expand English language education, the government consulted numerous outside organizations in order to explore how the policy could be implemented and presented to the public. Afterwards, that implementation was carried out through a process of explicit experimentation, testing the effectiveness and drawbacks of different curricula and training styles before committing to particular ideas. Furthermore, the adopted curriculum took public concerns into account and made certain to compensate by developing ideas that helped to prevent the loss of French culture. Fallon and Rublik indicate that this was largely a consequence of making the building of positive attitude a main goal of the language planning policy.

This is very much in keeping with the recommendations offered by Al-Rubaie (2010) who pointed to similar tensions between English language planning and traditional linguistic culture in Malaysia, Iceland, and Israel. From that research she concluded that policymaking with regard to language should be aware of diversity, linguistic human rights, and equity. She elaborated: “The goal of this process should be establishing productive links between educational communities and other policymakers such as politicians, curriculum planners, academia, and parents; as well as the probable future employers of current language learners” (pp. 92-93). This essentially describes the efforts that help to make the Canadian case successful, as well as the limitations of some of the situations studied by Al-Rubaie.

In Malaysia, problems arose in the middle of the twentieth century not because of the promotion of English, but because of the promotion of the language of a single Malaysian ethnic group. English was given prominence again beginning in the 1990s in order to correct for some of the social damage caused by the earlier policy. But in both cases, the government’s language planning followed a rather authoritarian model, and according to Al-Rubaie the greatest mistake

in implementing those policies was the failure to acknowledge how much time and how many resources would be needed to reform the national education system and implement its changes in each specific, local context. The adoption of a single ethnic language threatens to marginalize every other group, and the adoption of English threatens to marginalize absolutely everybody, unless that policy is introduced to the public very carefully.

In Kuwait, Al-Rubaie observed that English has penetrated every sphere of life, and she worries that classical Arabic is being marginalized. A preliminary look at the expressed attitudes of parents and teachers under modern linguistic policies suggests the same concern. Al-Darwish (2013) gave some indication of the flaws in implementation that lead to these perspectives. She pointed out that the new policy was taken on without advance research into its potential effects. Additionally, teacher training programs relevant to the policy were introduced only after the policy was adopted. Presumably as a consequence of this shortsighted policymaking, classroom observations reveal that teachers largely do not follow the curricula and methods laid out in the handbook for teaching English in kindergarten. This mostly seems to be the result of insufficient training for teachers who occupy this new role. Al-Darwish noted many instances in which teachers spoke incorrect English or failed to correct student mistakes. However, it may also be the case that cultural content is avoided because either some parents or the teachers themselves worry about the loss of Kuwaiti culture.

Of the material that is taught, little innovation is observed, even though the teacher handbook calls for it. This is attributed in part to the fact that teachers perceive a hidden agenda on the part of the Ministry of Education and thus only focus on trying to prepare students to pass English reading and writing tests in subsequent years (Al-Darwish, 2013). The same problem is observed in the case of English language education in Chinese universities. According to Hong

(2010), teachers in a city in northwestern China were introduced to a policy that allowed for open implementation in hopes that it would lead to innovative teaching methods. To the contrary, teachers came to simply focus their efforts upon producing good scores on national tests, regardless of actual student proficiency. Hong used this situation to point to the need for department heads and other mid-level administrators to play a strong role in the implementation of any language planning policies. The same surely applies to Kuwait. And in turn, it calls for strong communication among government policymakers, school leaders, and individual classroom teachers.

It is fair to say that if the individuals affected by a policy believe that it is driven by a hidden agenda, as Kuwaiti kindergarten teachers do, that the policy will be unstable, unsettled, and might not be effectively introduced to the population. Each observed deficiency of kindergarten English language instruction in Kuwait is indicative of possible shortcomings at the policy level. The Kuwaiti government has seemingly been too monolithic and authoritarian with its introduction of language planning policies. Policy can and should be used not just to demand a certain educational outcome, but also to structure training and methodology in such a way as to successfully implement that policy.

Al-Darwish (2013) suggested that as an alternative to the current manual for kindergarten English education, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education should set universal goals and offer a specific but diverse array of methods and resources to help teachers achieve those goals. Indeed, Phillipson (2003) indicated that there are three major factors to language policymaking: affecting the status of the given language, establishing a range of methods and resources to produce that effect, and planning for language acquisition. On the basis of a review of relevant literature, it is not clear that the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education has established a range of methods and

resources, or that it has gone very far with acquisition planning. Both of these goals seem to call for a closer interaction between policymakers and other stakeholders than has been evident so far. It is for this reason that teacher perceptions are so essential to policy research with regard to language planning.

Teachers' Perception of TEFL

Lindsay and Norman defined perception as “the process by which organisms interpret and organize sensation to produce a meaningful experience of the world” (as cited in Pickens, 2005, p. 52). Teachers’ perceptions, attitude, and methods for leading classrooms have a direct and indirect role in influencing a child’s academic experience, including learning EFL in Kuwait. According to Schoenfeld “Teacher’s perceptions, beliefs, and attitude greatly influence not only how, but what, he or she teaches” (as cited in Babich, 2010, p. 7). Beliefs pertain to goals and values the teacher has and how they view their students, teaching procedures, and teaching content. Often, teachers’ beliefs influence decisions regarding teaching methods, and further, they can affect students’ viewpoints towards learning as viewpoints are often formulated early in life (Qbeita, 2011). If a teacher is a non-native English speaker, is negative towards teaching EFL, and is apathetic in delivering EFL content, a large number of students are likely to mirror these beliefs and views, especially during kindergarten and elementary grade levels. In a step to make a quantum leap in the development of public education in Kuwait, Nayef Al-Hajraf, the minister of education in Kuwait stated that the Ministry of Education is planning to study the possibility of employing British and American teachers to teach English language in public schools, after seeing low scores in high school graduates on the TOEFL test (Al-Shammari, 2013). However, this point contradicts points made by other researchers. Andarab and Buyukyazy (2013) stated that there are many advantages that non-native speaker teachers of

English have in EFL classrooms such as “sharing similar languages, sharing similar cultures, being formerly non-native EFL learners, having experience gained over the years as a foreign language teacher, being able to find linguistic problems, being able to develop students’ interlingual awareness, being able to develop students’ intercultural awareness, and psychological advantage” (p.4). One study examined how teachers’ beliefs affected their EFL classrooms and concluded that “teachers’ beliefs are the representations of a complex and inter-related system of personal and professional knowledge that serve as implicit theories and cognitive maps for experiencing and responding to reality” (Qbeita, 2011, p. 1438). Thus, it is important to first recognize the type of beliefs and attitudes one brings to a classroom as a teacher, and to adjust it accordingly as to ensure that the teacher creates a nourishing, encouraging, positive, and effective learning environment. Richards and Lockhart (1996) pointed out that “teachers’ belief systems are founded on the goals, values, and beliefs teachers hold in relation to the content and process of teaching, and their understanding of the systems in which they work and their roles within it” (p. 30).

According to Altan (2006) “Teachers’ beliefs influence their consciousness, teaching attitude, teaching methods, and teaching policies... Teachers’ beliefs also strongly influence teaching behavior and, finally, learners’ development” (p. 45); some empirical studies have suggested that there is a close connection between teachers’ beliefs and their actual teaching practice. Despite these facts, however, a common challenge of TEFL is thought to be the lack of positive teacher perceptions toward teaching foreign language. In Qbeita’s (2011) study, after administering a questionnaire to a sample of 100 kindergarten teachers, it was determined that there were low levels of beliefs towards teaching EFL during kindergarten. While there were significant data based on teachers’ academic levels, there were significant data showing that

teachers who major in kindergarten and teachers who are more experienced (11 or more years) had significantly higher beliefs [positive beliefs] than the contrary. It is articulated that this is due to their being better equipped to teach EFL based on the knowledge accumulated in their experience or kindergarten-focused education. Additionally, higher beliefs [positive beliefs] were found among teachers in private kindergartens, which are listed as being due to private kindergarten students likely already being positively exposed to English in their home environment, and because private kindergartens have more resources to utilize when teaching (Qbeita, 2011). In the case of Kuwait, the involvement of government in Kuwaiti education is admirable, and it is becoming more admirable all the time. On the other hand, despite the fact that the government is directly involved with kindergarten, and that their involvement is so complete that the benefit of the program is roughly equal across all districts (Al-Hooli, 2009, p. 30), more than 55% of parents who enroll their children in kindergarten prefer to enroll them in private kindergartens, and “the major factor is that private schools have different kindergarten programs and build their curriculum based on the core subjects (Language Arts [including English and Arabic]; Math; Science; Social Studies; personal and social development) that prepare their children for the working school environment and more specifically for compulsory school” (Al-Hooli, 2009, p. 19). Al-Shehab (2010) suggests that high enrollment in private school may indicate a strong desire for learning (pp. 184-185). That may very well be true, but it also points to a certain kind of disconnect between the government’s approach to education and the general public’s approach.

Background of the Study

The 2009-2010 school year was the first time that an EFL program was being initiated at 12 public kindergartens in Kuwait. In the 2010-2011 school year, Kuwaiti Ministry of Education

(MOE) expanded the program to include 30 kindergartens, and expected to cover all public kindergartens across the country in the following school years. Since this is a trial experience, it is in the 90:10 format, in which 90% of the content is in the Arabic language, and 10% is in the English language (one period every school day). According to Al-Darwish (2013) “The decision to teach English in [Kuwaiti] kindergarten schools was taken without any prior field study into the positive or negative effects that might result... even though they [kindergarten teachers] have no knowledge and experience in the language itself” (pp. 44- 45). Additionally, the kindergarten teachers have not been trained enough to teach English (the ministry of education offered five days of training in 2009-2010, and nine days of training in 2010-2011 school year for the new kindergarten curriculum, and not just in the English language, and three of these days in English curriculum) thus; it was most efficient to train them to integrate a portion of English into the curriculum. Ur Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) stated that “When the specific needs of a language program are not well defined, there is always a possibility of dissatisfaction in achieving its aims and objectives and the students will end up the language program without any proper language proficiency” (p. 116). In the scenario of the EFL program faring well; it will become necessary to require that teachers are proficient in teaching English at the kindergarten level in conjunction with Arabic and in addition to other content. According to Curtain and Pesola; Tedick and Walker, as cited in Al-Darwish (2013) “One of the factors that make the teaching of foreign languages especially challenging is that teachers must maintain proficiency in the target language and stay up to date on current issues related to the culture of the target language” (p. 46).

While this is a new approach to teaching students English at the kindergarten level in Kuwait, it is certainly not a very different approach, as for over a decade English has been taught

to Kuwaiti students as early as first grade. The English language has long been and is becoming increasingly relevant in Kuwait's society. After World War II the oil industry began to emerge and Kuwait was among the leading suppliers. "In 1956, the government established a system of kindergarten, primary, middle and secondary schools that still exist today. English was introduced before the independence of Kuwait [in 1961] as one of the subjects taught and as part of the curriculum. In that era, English was taught for eight years beginning in middle school" (Mohammad, 2008, p. 5). Thus, English has a longstanding presence in Kuwait's society and school system.

Kuwait is a very small, modern, and affluent Arabic country located in the far northwest point in the Arabian Gulf. Kuwait was historically a trading point on routes between India and Europe. In the mid-1600s, Kuwait was shown on Dutch maps by the name "al-Qurain." From 1899 to 1961 Kuwait was colonized by Britain, thus, the arrival and influence of the English language and westernization. The arrangement upheld that Kuwait maintained authority over internal affairs while Britain handled international and foreign affairs (Mohammad, 2008). Today, Kuwait has a population of around 2.6 million, of which approximately 1.3 million are non-nationals (CIA World Factbook, 2012). As explained by Mohammad (2008) "Kuwait is a modern country influenced by globalization. This is visible in its westernized shopping centres, cafes, and restaurants, and in the sizable foreign community. All of these features of Kuwaiti life affect the use of English as a second language (ESL) in a society and have influenced the history of the teaching of English in public schools as a foreign language (EFL)" (p. 1). According to Zughoul (2003) "Despite the hegemonic and imperialistic nature of English, it is still badly needed in the Arab world for the purposes of communicating with the world, education, acquisition of technology and development at large" (para. 2).

English was a part of Kuwait's education curricula prior to the Iraq invasion in 1990. Until this point, English did not have great relevance in society or schools, though it was standard among government communication. The Kuwait Ministry of Education (MOE) introduced EFL in 1993 at the primary level starting at the first grade (Al-Mutawa, 1996). According to Zughoul (2003) "Right after the Second Gulf War, the Kuwaiti government took a decision to start the teaching of English in Kuwaiti public schools in the First Grade at the age of 6-7" (para. 1). Since the application of English language in elementary schools in 1993, English language literacy has been of increasing significance. Since then, teaching and learning English became increasingly prioritized, as it seemed necessary for survival in the changing, globalizing world. Knowing English then became a prerequisite to attending Universities. After the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait even evoked public interest in learning English, as much attention was shifted to the U.S. during this chaotic and shockingly traumatic period in Kuwait's history. "The impact of the occupation has made the Kuwait populations different...because of the American influence... People have become absorbed with foreign culture and parents have encouraged their children to study foreign languages, in particular English" (Mohammad, 2008, p. 3). Further, English became increasingly used in the Kuwaiti world of business and banking. In order to keep nationals employed and reduce the rate of foreign workers, it became clear that English had become an integral component to success in Kuwait. Moreover, English is now often seen on street signs, shop names, food labels, and more. "Linguistically, Kuwait has now become what has been described as a hybrid context" (Mohammad, 2008, p. 3). Arabic and English print are found in conjunction all over Kuwait, making the Kuwaiti school systems perfect candidates for teaching and learning English language at an early stage.

Theoretical Background of the Study

Several authors have pointed out the ways in which the topic of attitudes is related to the topics of beliefs and perceptions. These are each distinct categories, but they interact closely and there is overlap among them. Jones (1998) asserts that there is “an interconnection between perceptions, attitude, and beliefs that reflects their importance in how one interprets information and of one’s predisposition to action” (p.7). Perhaps of particular significance to the present study is the fact that a review of existing theory strongly implies that researchers regard perceptions as being more easily isolated and studied than attitudes. This is only natural since, as Schiff (1970) explains, attitudes are of a more general category than beliefs and perceptions. Perceptions rely on the presence of a certain stimulus, and they must be studied in the context of that stimulus. Attitudes, on the other hand, may not respond to anything that is physically present in the subject’s environment but may instead be based on a vague understanding of a general type of stimulus (p. 13).

In the context of the present study, there is a definite stimulus that is of concern, namely the presence of a newly-developed policy for the teaching of English as a foreign language in kindergarten. Because the population of interest is teachers who have been subjected to this policy, the research will be more directly interested in their perceptions of that stimulus than in general, non-empirical teacher attitudes about kindergarten EFL education. Part of the reason for this is the greater ease of study, and part of the reason is the greater reliability suggested by a review of the literature. Thompson (2009) affirms that teacher self-reports proved to be reliable indicators of individual perceptions in his study of language use in the classroom.

In addition to being reliable, there is reason to believe that the results of an inquiry into direct perceptions will also be significant. Tarman (2012) pointed out that teachers modify their

self-perceptions in response to field experience (p. 1964). Generalizing from this, it can be said that perceptions change in a meaningful way when research subjects have direct experience of the topic with which a study is concerned. This is particularly important, both in general and in the specific case of the current study, because changing perceptions have an impact on the formulation of a subject's attitudes.

The literature on these topics indicates that perceptions can be studied as a clue or a precursor to attitudes. Pickens (2005) defines an attitude as something that affects a person's behavior and that is organized through experience (p. 44). Furthermore, he pointed out that the final stage in the process of perception is interpretation, and that feedback on the basis of prior beliefs and attitudes changes the way in which stimuli are registered after the perception process begins again. This affirms Schiff's (1970) claim that attitudes and perceptions mutually affect each other, as well as both being affected by cognition (p. 11).

This fact may account for the reason why research regarding perceptions in educational contexts has repeatedly uncovered a tendency for changing perceptions to result in changes to behavior or achievement. Tirri and Nokelainen (2011) recognize this tendency in the case of performance in mathematics. They find that by attributing successes and failures to both ability and effort, students motivate themselves more effectively and continue to perform better in the long term (p. 30). Addressing the other side of this topic, and related to language acquisition, Thompson (2009) suggests that unrealistic expectations of short-term performance may lead to student dropout or diminished efforts (p. 538), and he states that further research is needed to understand how beliefs and perceptions can impede acquisition (p. 537).

Feuerborn and Chinn (2012) make a similar inference from their study into the perceptions of student needs in the context of a school-wide policy of positive behavior support.

The researchers recognize differences in perceptions according to levels of teacher training and also according to whether or not the school-wide policy is present in their own teaching environments (p. 219). They indicate that differences in perception may be attributable to unique differences among specific teachers, or they may be due in part to different levels of understanding of the given policy. Thus, they claim that identifying differences in perception may help policymakers to predict and overcome barriers to the implementation of that policy (p. 226).

This same concern may be of significance to the current study. If there are tensions among teacher perceptions of the new policy of kindergarten EFL education, it may point to a deficient approach to the implementation of that policy by the Ministry of Education and by individual districts. This is especially the case if the differences in perception can be attributed to key demographic differences, such as level of teaching experience. On the other hand, if, contrary to Feuerborn and Chinn, there is a high degree of cohesion among various teachers' perceptions of the policy, that may point to deficiency in the policy itself.

Statement of the Problem

In Kuwait today there is debate among teachers over the introduction of EFL at the kindergarten level. Some Kuwaiti kindergarten teachers appeared not to welcome teaching foreign language in the kindergarten curriculum and were anxious about teaching English because they had not studied English since college. According to the assistant undersecretary for the Educational Research and Curricula Sector in Kuwait Ministry of Education Mariam Al-Wutaid, the most important problem facing the English program is the inability of kindergarten teachers to speak and teach English (Al-Shammari, 2012). Moreover, Al-Bazaz, the head of the English department at the College of Basic Education in Kuwait, asserts that the English

curriculum is not commensurate with available circumstances to application. This is not only on the kindergarten level, but also at the level of student teachers in pre-service preparation in the college (Shaaban, 2009). Concern about teaching English became a critical issue for teachers in Kuwaiti kindergartens because Kuwaiti teachers were not familiar with the new subject. Therefore, it is important to conduct research about teachers' perceptions, beliefs, and their concerns of teaching a foreign language for the purpose of better assessing English language education in Kuwait's new kindergarten program.

In this sense, the current situation suggests both an ongoing problem and a nascent opportunity. The theoretical effectiveness of second language education programs means little until the theory has been borne out by empirical evidence gathered from its implementation in an ESL context. Naturally, such empirical data are lacking in the case of the Kuwaiti EFL program at the kindergarten level. Data are needed for the sake of understanding the effectiveness of the specific program and the general expectations that can be developed for other applications of the same underlying theories of second language acquisition. The theoretical and empirical sides of the subject support one another and heighten insight into the overall topic. Regardless of how language acquisition theories have been elaborated to explain acquiring another language, the classroom setting affects the implementation and outcomes of any teaching program. Language acquisition theories may establish best general classroom practices, but student and teacher feedback contributes to essential improvements to those programs.

Teaching English at public kindergarten in Kuwait is a new program. Therefore, this program is a specific case that needs to be studied in depth to get empirical testing in the associated social, cultural, and educational landscape. There is little such empirical data now, except from entirely different contexts with entirely different variables. The details of American

foreign language programs for students in early childhood, which have been longer established despite still being few in number (Potowski, 2007, p. 10), may not be generalizable to Arabic-English programs or distinct cultures, but the Kuwaiti situation may provide insight relevant to other Middle Eastern educational systems or to Arabic teachers and learners of foreign languages elsewhere.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine Kuwaiti kindergarten teachers' perceptions and beliefs toward introducing EFL in the kindergarten curriculum. The study is expected to raise the awareness of all concerned teachers, parents, policy makers, members of society, and other officials of the need to address the challenges of teaching English as a foreign language, especially at the kindergarten level of education. The diagnosis of these challenges as they affect the belief and perceptions of teachers at the beginning of the program will help solve and address such issues and problems and propose feasible and evidence-based solutions.

It is my expectation that the Kuwaiti early childhood English program will demonstrate the general effectiveness of such a program. The theoretical framework seems to be well-established in support of early introduction of teaching other languages to school children, but the effect of students, teachers, and cultures remain to be seen. Therefore, this present study will assess the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of the EFL program for kindergartners in Kuwait in order to garner an idea as to how well the program has been implemented so far, as well as generating recommendations for what can be improved.

Toward that end, this study will describe the data gathered directly from Kuwaiti teachers who have now had initial experience with the EFL program. Their participation will ideally cover a great deal of ground that is relevant to this study. Further theoretical background and

existing academic literature will aid in answering some of the questions touched upon by the empirical information. Thus, the approach to the study mirrors its basic subject matter insofar as it is concerned with the common ground between the theoretical and the empirical. Using such broad-based analysis, there is a fairly wide variety of research questions this study will seek to answer.

Research Questions

In an attempt to investigate the problem, the following research questions were designed:

1. What are Kuwaiti kindergarten teachers' perceptions toward the four research domains:
 - A. Learning a second language in early childhood (ages 3 ½ -before 6)?
 - B. English curriculum (content, manual, textbooks)?
 - C. Teachers' needs in order to achieve the goal of teaching English?
 - D. Challenges that kindergarten teachers face in teaching English?
2. Is there any significant difference among teachers' perceptions toward the research domains (A - D) among six different school districts?
3. Is there any significant difference among teachers' perceptions toward the research domains (A - D) due to graduate institution (Kuwait University, College of Basic Education)?
4. Is there any significant difference among teachers' perceptions toward the research domains (A - D) due to years of experience?
5. What measures can teachers recommend to the policy makers and curriculum designers in order to address these needs and challenges?

In addition, this study will strive to gather teachers' own commentary as to what short-term outcomes can be seen from the adoption of EFL programs, what methods have been utilized

in executing that program, what methods have worked effectively, and what could be improved. Looking beyond the feedback of the subjects, this study will also investigate what effects the beliefs and perceptions evidenced by that feedback might have on the classroom climate and student and teacher performance in teaching and learning of primary and secondary language. This in turn is only one part of conditions in the classroom as they appear in Kuwait under the new program. Others include class size and demographics, extent of government oversight in enforcing standards and educational program guidelines, community support, and the nature of competition from alternative schools. Such conditions will also be of concern to this research, as they are significant to the question of what particular challenges face Kuwaiti teachers and students when it comes to implementing and benefiting from the EFL program. Instructor feedback ought to also provide input about the effect of local classroom conditions on that program in particular.

Closely related to this topic is the question of Kuwaiti teacher readiness and the challenges that those teachers face, not necessarily just under the new program, but in teaching English in general. Understanding of this is largely a matter of investigating teacher training, as well as procedures for performance assessments. Specifically with regard to EFL, it is important to know what, if any, additional training and expectations are placed upon the teachers involved. And once again, the input of teachers is valuable here; in this case regarding what is expected of them and what their experience suggests ought to be and ought not to be expected.

Empirical data from teachers and individuals directly involved with the EFL program will be central to this study. Background information regarding the character of Kuwaiti schools, teacher training programs, and linguistic theories of second language acquisition will work in connection with this hands-on qualitative information to answer the larger research questions. In

short, these are how well do the linguistic theories supporting EFL adaptation to the existing Kuwaiti education system, and what can be done to improve the current program that is the outcome of that adaptation?

Significance of the Study

There is little research that has investigated Kuwaiti teachers' beliefs and perceptions toward introducing English as a foreign language in kindergarten curriculum. The study of teacher's beliefs and perceptions toward introducing EFL in kindergarten curriculum may help provide a better understanding for the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education regarding the issues of teaching English at the kindergarten level. In addition, the outcomes of this study may provide the Ministry of Education clearer perceptions toward challenges, strengths, and weaknesses of the new program. Thus, the Ministry can create plans that would improve teaching second languages to achieve a comprehensive and meaningful curriculum. The significance of any answers found for those questions may extend beyond the Kuwaiti classrooms concerned. For one thing, they can be expected to provide feedback into the content of the theories that underlie this topic. If the results show favorable outcomes from the implementation of EFL programs, or if unfavorable outcomes can be attributed to weaknesses in the Kuwaiti education system itself, then those results help to support the notion that young children develop better overall language skills if exposed to a second language early in their development, rather than after mastery of the first language. More than just supporting or undercutting the theory's basic hypothesis, the results of this study may also suggest additional detail, such as what level of language expertise is appropriate for EFL teachers to be effective and what classroom characteristics make such programs particularly practical.

Any markedly specific insights that emerge from this study would likely apply to theories about the teaching of second language in general, especially concerning the perspective that particular cultures, demographics, and school system backgrounds can have an influence on how the same theories apply in different situations. Conclusions from this study might be applicable to other nations and systems that are culturally or procedurally similar to Kuwaiti education. Naturally, this could include education systems in the same general geographic region, but it might also include classrooms from anywhere in the world that have similar demographic makeup, either ethnically or socio-economically. In addition, if the methodology of this study proves successful, it establishes patterns of research and results that could be applied in different contexts if similar research is applied to the education systems of other regions.

The primary significance of the study is obvious: If the research conclusions are robust and fairly conclusive, they will provide the groundwork for recommendations that could, in the next several years, specifically improve the design, implementation, and outcomes of foreign language programs throughout the Kuwaiti early childhood education system. The study necessarily relies on Kuwaiti sources of data and feedback for the sake of generating results that are specific to the Kuwaiti situation in hopes that those same results may help to more clearly elucidate the general topic.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study will be limited to the following aspects:

- All participants in this study will be from Kuwait. Therefore, the results may not be generalized to kindergarten teachers' perceptions in other countries.
- The participants of the study are female teachers from public kindergartens in Kuwait, as all kindergarten teachers in Kuwait are female.

- Though the result of this study may be insights to other levels of education in relation to the encountered problems, the result of this study still cannot be generalized to other contexts in Kuwait (e.g. private kindergarten in Kuwait).
- The supervisors of kindergartens did not participate in this study.
- Finally, this research was limited to the public kindergarten level of education and its teachers. The views, beliefs, and perceptions of primary, intermediate, secondary schools, and university teachers will not be examined during the investigation of this research.

Definitions and Operational Terms

To facilitate the understanding of this proposal, the following terms are defined:

1. *Attitudes*. A positive or negative evaluation toward an object, event, or evaluation of an object (Mueller, 1986) and (Ajzen, 1988).
2. *Beliefs about Early Childhood English Language Teaching*. “Teachers’ beliefs about teaching English for kindergartners and how these beliefs are reflected on teachers’ practices and methods inside the classroom” (Qbeita, 2011, p. 1443).
3. *Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)*. Method which is used when learners are involved in real communication, so their natural strategies for language acquisition will be used and this will allow them to learn to use the language. (Richards & Rodgers, as cited in Qbeita, 2011, 1443).
4. *English as a Foreign Language (EFL)*. “Learning of nonnative language in the environment of one’s native language” (Gass & Selinker, 2008, p.7). This applies to the case of Kuwait.
5. *English as a Second Language (ESL)*. Learning English in a country where English is the primary or official language. This specific title is to characterize when students are living

in an English speaking country and their native language is a foreign language. (Gass & Selinker, 2008, p.7).

6. *First language (L1)*. Also -native language or mother tongue- is the language(s) a person has learned from birth or within the critical period.
7. *Perceptions*. “Views or opinions held by an individual resulting from experience and external factors acting on the individual” (Susuwele-Banda, 2005, p. 13).
8. *Second language (L2)*. The language(s) learned after one's first language.
9. *Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)*. Teaching English to students whose first language is not English. According to Thornton, “TEFL usually occurs in the student’s own country, either within the government or private school system” (as cited in Qbeita, 2011, p. 1442).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Prior to observing and reporting the results of this study, which was conducted on Kuwaiti kindergarten teachers' perceptions toward introducing English as a foreign language in kindergarten curriculum, it was beneficial to elicit understanding of the current landscape of English curriculum and current early childhood education in Kuwait as well as understanding of the nature and influence of teacher attitudes and perceptions and that in order to give context to the general topic and specific research areas of this study. Additionally, it was important to conduct a formal literature review on existing research that is relevant to the four domains of the study: learning a second language in early childhood (age 3 ½ to 6), EFL English curriculum, EFL teachers' needs, and EFL teachers' challenges in TEFL.

Outlook for EFL in Kuwait

Research is continually demonstrating the merits of EFL programs in Kuwait and elsewhere (Al-Darwish, 2013; Al-Rubaie, 2010; Mohammad, 2008). At the same time, the programs are becoming increasingly significant as Kuwait's economy and culture becomes progressively affected by globalism. Language is a primary tool that connects individuals within global contexts. "Sociology, psychology, political science, and linguistics are certain disciplines which address various developments in society that precipitated under the influence of globalization" (Al-Qahtani, 2011, p. 2). The English language has achieved utmost prominence among world languages, and further, Kuwaitis have been learning and speaking English for over a century since British colonization [1899-1961]. English is the most common foreign language used in publications, research, education, and industries; therefore, learning English means accessing the most resources and job opportunities.

Compulsory school systems in Kuwait have introduced students to English as early as first grade since 1993. In the 2009-2010 school year an EFL program was initiated for the first time at 12 kindergartens in Kuwait across six districts (two kindergartens in each district). In the 2010-2011 school year the Ministry of Education in Kuwait expanded the program to include 30 kindergartens and expect to cover all kindergartens across the country in the following years. In the Kuwaiti school system children attend kindergarten between the ages of 3 ½ and 6 in a building separate from the elementary school. After that, primary education includes five grades, the intermediate level involves four grades, and secondary school consists of the final three pre-university grade levels, taking children up to around the age of seventeen. The Kuwaiti government has the following objectives regarding teaching English to Kuwaiti students: 1) to improve students' English literacy and competence, so they can better listen and articulate themselves in instances requiring English communication and 2) to help students develop a broader worldview by expanding their knowledge and experience (Al-Qahtani, 2011).

Based on this information, various schools in Arab countries have researched means to improve the efficiency of EFL, which has elucidated the rationale for introducing EFL during elementary grades. Pennfield, Roberts, and Lenneberg as cited in Ghawi (2005) tested and proposed the Biological Maturation Theory, which attests: "There is a critical period for language development in children, beginning roughly at age two...and largely completed by about age five." Additional research discoveries support this theory, revealing "linguistic, metalinguistic, cognitive, metacognitive, and sociolinguistic benefits for early second language learning and simultaneous bilingualism" (p. 1). Qbeita (2011) also reports that approximately 50% of a child's ability to learn language lasts only until the age of five, and another 30% is gone by the time a child is eight years old (p. 1437).

Kuwait's regional neighbors are responding to this sort of information, and those responses could serve as guidance for the development of their own programs. Jordan is becoming an increasingly affluent nation in the Arab region, and their government has prioritized EFL at all levels of learning from kindergarten to the university level. As addressed by Qbeita (2011), "it would be a waste not to use a child's natural ability to learn during his/her most vital years, when learning a foreign language is as easy as learning (one's) mother tongue" (p. 1437).

The pertinence of English literacy is becoming increasingly addressed and researched in the region, as the demands of globalization require improving EFL efficiency so that students may be prepared for future economies. It is evident that kindergarten is a very critical time period to introduce students to EFL. The main questions include the following: Which methods are best to employ at the kindergarten level in order to enrich the experience of learning both the first language and the second language? How can teachers adopt these methods and successfully implement them in classrooms? What kind of training do they need? A portion of the answers to these questions are sure to be found in the consideration of teachers' attitudes and perceptions regarding instruction, curriculum, and their needs and challenges.

Overview of Early Childhood Education in Kuwait

Education begins by age six for most Kuwaiti students but can begin earlier for those who enroll in kindergarten, which is currently not compulsory and is provided free for Kuwaiti citizens (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization -UNESCO-, 2011, p. 6). The choice to begin at this earlier level can be highly beneficial to the student later in his education. Al-Hooli (2009) illustrates the positive effect that kindergarten enrollment can have on lifelong learning. She explains that the early stage of education can be "an extremely important, necessary, and preparatory stage" which studies demonstrate to have a significant

overall effect on development, including development of social skills as well as cognitive skills and general knowledge (p. 23). More specifically Al-Hooli pointed out that kindergarten offers children an opportunity to gain understanding of school life, personal safety, cooperation, making friends, developing better motor skills, and getting acquainted with basic reading, writing, and math, all before they are cast into the role of learning full time (p. 30).

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) when the Ministry of Education reviewed the Kuwait early childhood education system in 2006, it was determined that there was a normal inclusion of programs covering health, literacy, basic knowledge, and growing awareness of their surroundings (p.7). Furthermore, some research articles have addressed Kuwait's school system as being strikingly similar to those present in the United States and Europe (Al-Hooli, 2009, p. 387).

The increased demand for Western curriculum occurred after liberation. This increased demand took place mainly because of "the perceived inadequacy of state education, the importance of an English language education as a preparation for further education overseas and life in general, and the advanced curricula of the non-Arabic foreign schools in Kuwait" (Oxford Business Group, 2008, para.9). In Kuwait, kindergarten is available for children as young as 3½ years old, and the duration of kindergarten typically lasts two years. Thus, kindergarten is for students aged 3½ to 6.

Also noted in this document are the objectives of kindergarten programs in Kuwait: "Kindergartens strive to provide the appropriate conditions for the development of the child physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and socially, in accordance with the child's abilities and needs" (UNESCO, 2011, p. 7). The specific approach to accomplishing this is suggested by the policies and practices set by the Ministry of Education. By recognizing them,

we can hope to better understand the context in which individual kindergarten teachers are working. That context is largely what they will be responding to when asked about their perceptions and attitudes, and specifically about how early foreign language introduction is and ought to be applied within the existing educational structure.

The philosophy of learning English language in kindergarten in Kuwait. The philosophy of learning English in kindergarten comes out of the significance of the pre-school period and its long-term effect on children's growth. The kindergarten English language curriculum tends to prepare children for primary school by acting as a bridge between the pre-school and primary stages. In order to learn and acquire a foreign language, it is necessary to devote much attention and great concern to the preparation of the learning environment, as by enriching it with linguistic situations and experiences, applying modern scholarship concerning learning in early childhood, and employing games and activities to develop the child's capabilities, skills, and attitudes. In addition, the English language curriculum aims at the early formation of positive tendencies in the learning of a foreign language. This is an indispensable goal in the present day, and the means of achieving it are compatible with the general framework of Kuwaiti kindergarten education and with the characteristics of a child's developmental capabilities at this stage (Developer Manual of Teacher's Guidebook in Kindergarten, 2011-2012, p.14).

The objectives of learning English language in the kindergarten stage in Kuwait. According to the Developer Manual of Teacher's Guidebook in Kindergarten, there are six key objectives which the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education (MOE) expects English language students to recognize and pursue in their own education. These are:

1. To acquire good listening skills.
2. To acquire clear and accurate pronunciation skills.

3. To acquire simple language vocabulary.
4. To know the alphabet and how to pronounce each letter.
5. To know the numbers from 1-20 in the English language.
6. To know how to recognize some colors by their English names.

Foundations and features of English language learning in Kuwaiti kindergarten.

Learning the English language in kindergarten depends mainly on issues in the surrounding environment, primarily the content of other major subjects in the kindergarten curricula and their suitability to the child's age and abilities. With this in mind the English language learning environment, according to the Developer Manual of Teacher's Guidebook in Kindergarten, should adopt progressive practices for the teaching of English to each child, such as:

- Taking into consideration the significance of building the child's character and maintaining his self-esteem and personal intellectual strengths, in addition to developing his physical, psychological, and mental capabilities.
- Taking into consideration the nature and philosophy of the society as a community open to other cultures, which at the same time maintains its religious values and social traditions.
- Using modern teaching methods to make English instruction as suitable as possible to the characteristics and capabilities of this age group. This can be accomplished through the simplified and engaging mode of presentation provided by various language and educational games, in addition to the use of teaching aids that suit the different learning styles of children.
- Encouraging children to identify the necessary English language skills along with the teacher through various activities provided by the school, with which the child learns by watching, listening, and speaking in English.
- Helping students identify the necessary skills of the English language together with the various

activities provided by the kindergarten, where the child learns by watching, listening, and speaking in English.

- Providing enough time for activities and interaction with others in order to provide more opportunities to learn and practice the language.
- Improving pre-reading and pre-writing skills in the kindergarten stage in order to prepare the children for the primary stage. This is necessary to language development and it can be done by learning the sounds and letters of the English language, in addition to engaging in other activities that enhance and improve writing skills.
- Keeping the communication channels open with the child's home and the family, and reminding them that English language learning is very essential and worthwhile (Developer Manual of Teacher's Guidebook in Kindergarten, 2011-2012, p.26).

Teacher preparation programs. It is interesting that in Kuwait the majority of Kuwaiti teachers are female, and all kindergarten teachers are female. The job is viewed from a somewhat old-fashioned perspective as being more of a woman's job as it deals with acting from a nurturing role. Typically, the number of teachers is quite high compared to the number of students. In the 1970s, the student-to-teacher ratio was sixteen to one. In the nineteen eighties it had reduced to fourteen to one (Al-Sharaf, 2006, p. 106). Currently, there are more students pursuing careers in education each year, as compared to the year before, and class sizes continued to go down between 2004 and 2010 (Al-Yaseen, 2011, p. 672). It is common wisdom in the field of educational policy that smaller class sizes are better for education, as they allow for individualized attention and narrower focus. By that logic, the Kuwaiti education system is growing in strength year after year as it benefits from the presence of more and more teachers.

According to UNESCO (2011) two institutes train teachers “the Faculty of Basic Education, which offers academic, cultural and pedagogical training; and the Faculty of Education, at the University of Kuwait. Both institutes offer a four-year program (eight semesters) leading to a bachelor’s degree” (p. 12).

Kindergarten teacher preparation program at Kuwait University. According to the College of Education Programs and Services Handbook (2011), the program seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. Prepare teachers with an important role in serving the community through their profession.
2. Provide students with distinguished knowledge background and early field experience so that they become empowered in serving kindergarten programs in the Ministry of Education.
3. Prepare educators who respect and promote diversity in the community while recognizing the surrounding global village as context for their cultural identity.
4. Improve the overall care and the quality of learning provided to pre-primary children.
5. Help the community to build a partnership with families, schools, and community childhood organizations.
6. Prepare students for life and the primary stage after the completion of kindergarten.

(College of Education programs and services handbook, 2011, p. 18)

Kindergarten teacher preparation program at College of Basic Education. According to Al-Darwish (2013), the kindergarten preparation program in the College of Basic Education focuses on three areas:

1. “Oral communication, writing skills in Arabic, and the intellectual skills in understanding and appreciating the Arab and Islamic culture.
2. Knowledge and skills of pedagogy in kindergarten stage.
3. Major requirement and covers the conceptual knowledge of different educational curriculums such as sustainable, environmental, educational citizenship, kindergarten school math and science, kinetic and musical, child nutrition, child literature in Arabic, psychology, and kindergarten workshop” (p.45).

According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report (2011), teachers are primarily trained 38% in cultural training (48 credit hours), 32% in academic training (40 credit hours), and 30% in vocational training (38 credit hours) (p. 12). Therefore, there is potential for teachers to be trained to teach English during the culture component of training. The adoption of such training is important to the future of Kuwaiti education, since EFL is a growing segment of the education system. On the other hand, Al-Shehab (2010) and Al-Sharaf (2006) suggest that despite the Kuwaiti government’s good intentions in education, there is a disconnect between the level of policy and what happens in classrooms and communities. Al-Sharaf (2006) says that there is a strong disconnect between Kuwait University and the institutions in which people begin their student teaching assignments. He indicates that while the Ministry of Education has tight controls over curriculum and standards as students are doing their coursework, afterwards they are thrown into a school without any serious attention or guidance from the Ministry.

Perceptions as Elements of EFL Education

It is a fairly common refrain in existing literature that there is a relative shortage of research into the perceptions of teachers as to personal and methodological effectiveness (Brandl

2000; Mousavi 2007), particularly in the field of EFL (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope 1986; Eslami & Fatahi 2008). By contrast, there is a substantial amount of research regarding teacher performance, objective measures of competencies, and alternative teaching methodologies. The question of teachers' subjective perceptions seems to be undervalued in considering factors that impact these other topics. Of course, every piece of research that deals with that question moves in the direction of filling the gap between the two different angles on training and methodology. More such research is still needed toward that end.

The existing literature establishes a number of relevant problems that can begin to be addressed by new research into teacher perceptions in general and in EFL education in particular. For present purposes, the term "teacher perceptions" about EFL will include beliefs about learning foreign language at an early age, EFL curriculum, challenges, beliefs about self-efficacy, beliefs regarding the value or effectiveness of defined training and teaching methodologies, measures of self-esteem, personal judgments of competence or language ability, and experience with stress in teaching and training environments. The concerns suggested by the existing literature relative to these topics principally include the question of what general effect there is of teacher perceptions on those teachers' behaviors and their training. More specific questions include the effect of stress, the role of self-esteem, the relationships among teacher perceptions, students, and institutional policies, and the potential impact of perceptions on training methodology. While there is some overlap among these categories, they can roughly be divided into those that speak to evident teacher needs and those that indicate necessary or persistent challenges that must be overcome by teachers themselves.

Teacher perceptions and Attitudes. Ajzen (1988) defined attitude as a positive or negative evaluation of an object or event. Studies have demonstrated through the years that

attitudes are precise and measurable. They reflect and shape our experiences of the world. Eagly and Chaiken (1993) stated that “attitudes cannot be directly observable but can be inferred from observable responses” (p. 2). Ultimately, attitude is information, much like the content of a lesson plan. Attitude is evaluated subconsciously and continually by students. For these reasons, teachers should attend to their own attitudes as much as the subject matter and material that goes hand-in-hand with curriculum and instruction. Researchers have deconstructed studies of attitude into clusters of beliefs created by a person. Mueller (1986) stated that “Attitude is (1) affect for or against, (2) evaluation of, (3) like or dislike of, or (4) positiveness or negativeness toward a psychological object” (p.3). Attitudes are typically long-lasting beliefs that form automatic responses to exposure to information. They are attached to information processing so that people formulate the same attitudes when exposed to the same material.

Research studies suggest that attitudes can be measured through a variety of scales and assessments. It is measured through beliefs and values covering a variety of subjects. The instructional merit of a teacher is informed by the generation of attitudes. This attitude generation in the instructional setting relates to a variety of information, ranging from individual students, to the classroom setting, to the instructional material and administration. The theory of attitudes is crucial to understanding teachers’ beliefs, and should be studied more carefully to determine overall impacts.

The current study is especially interested in the impact of attitudes and perceptions upon the four defined domains in early second-language introduction, English curriculum, teacher needs, and teacher challenges. Of course, the relationship between these domains and the perceptions regarding them cannot be assumed to be unidirectional. An investigation of teacher perceptions will ideally reveal significant information about teacher reactions to policies and

procedures as they contribute to each of these domains. In other words, teacher perceptions can be expected to be connected to teacher positions on subjects of current debate in the field of education, and the policy outcomes of these debates can in turn contribute to formation of additional teachers' perceptions.

Learning Second Language at an Early Age

The framework of this part of this study is based on two critical theories, and by fully understanding both of them, the reader can better understand the nature of learning second language at an early age. These two theories are the Theory of Language Development, and the Critical Period Hypothesis. In addition, it will be beneficial to elicit understanding of the nature and influence of cultural and linguistic conflict, and EFL practice in Kuwaiti culture.

Theory of language development. Noam Chomsky claims that “language learning is not really something that the child does; it is something that happens to the child placed in an appropriate environment, much as the child’s body grows and matures in a predetermined way when provided the appropriate nutrition and environmental stimulation” (as cited in Hoff, 2009, p. 18). It is important to keep this perspective in mind when approaching a classroom of young learners. Piaget pointed out that kindergarten students are in the preoperational stage of language development, which is defined as occurring between the ages of 2 and 6. It is during this stage that young children begin to conceive the world and their surroundings in their own terms, with their own interests and their own theories (Gauvain & Cole, 1997). During this stage, young children show development in their phonics and semantics, and they are able to get their ideas across in words; however, their grammar is not accurate, their pronunciation may not have been mastered, and their ability to combine many words is limited.

By kindergarten, children are typically in their late preoperational stage and shifting towards the concrete operational stage of development in which children learn a series of skills including seriation, classification, and reversibility. This stage is generally between the ages of 7 to 11 years old. It is for this reason that concepts such as word problems, mathematics, and writing are developed during these years; because this is when their cognitive functioning is equipped to perform such tasks (Lightfoot, Cole & Cole, 2008).

Therefore, there is a particular potential during the late preoperational stage to introduce youth to a second language as they are learning the basis of speaking their primary language. This is because they are at a stage where they do not yet comprehend the structure of the language beyond a narrow range of words they have thus far been exposed to; and even these words are often not mastered (Lightfoot, et al., 2008). For example, a five-year-old child may always use the words “him” and “her” to describe others, instead of accurately applying “he” and “she” in proper contexts. Due to the fact that their minds are free of the difficulties that arise when the entire structure of one language has been cemented in one’s memory, there is potential for students in the late phase of their preoperational stage to both better understand and better develop skills in their native language, in addition to beginning learning of another language.

Critical period hypothesis. One of the more heated debates within the educational community relates to the question of age – or more specifically, at how young an age second language instruction should begin. It is widely believed that younger is better (Krashen, Long, & Scarcella, 1979) because early exposure to a second language takes advantage of a young child’s natural language learning ability, lack of preconceptions, and strongly developing neural pathways. At the same time, integrated learning is appropriate at the primary grade levels where the experience is often student-centered. However, the topic of early introduction of second

language instruction is not without debate, and there are significant contrary opinions about its appropriateness and effects.

Critical period hypothesis claims that there is “a biologically determined period of life when language can be acquired more easily and beyond which time language is increasingly difficult to acquire” (Brown, 2007, p. 57). Lenneberg (1967) suggested that critical period hypothesis could be extended to the second language acquisition. According to Du (2010), this means that the ultimate attainment that a student is able to achieve in a second language is largely determined by the age at which that student is first exposed to the language. If correct, this theory strongly suggests that it is preferable to begin second language acquisition at the elementary level and perhaps even in kindergarten. In fact, Long specifically asserts that “the ability to attain native-like phonological abilities in an SL[second language] begins to decline by age 6 in many individuals,” and that “native-like morphology and syntax only appear to be possible for those beginning before age 15” (as cited in Bongaerts 2005).

This theory aligns naturally with the theory of language development to suggest that children would achieve better outcomes in second language acquisition if their experience with that second language began with the preoperational stage and proceeded through all the same stages of natural acquisition that lead to mastery of a first language. Of course, the truth of this claim relies on the accuracy of the associated theories. But Du (2010) pointed out that over the course of decades, the results of most studies testing the critical theory hypothesis do uphold its claims.

However, research has suggested popular agreement with the dominant scholarly opinion. A study conducted by Al-Jarf (2004) aimed to survey parents’ perceptions of second language acquisition and its effect on simultaneous first language acquisition and academic achievement.

The results showed that many participants in this study believed that the weakness of middle school or high school students in the English language arises from the fact that they did not start learning English in kindergarten or first grade. Moreover, in a study by Addamigh (2011) in Saudi Arabia, the results showed that 90% of the parents of sixth grade students in public schools want their children to be taught English from the first grade.

In light of support from the public and from prominent researchers, policies introducing language at early levels should be effective and fairly easy to integrate. At these stages, the integration of core subjects and second language literacy is easier because the students are open to new experiences. The early integration of second language learning also has the benefit of adding additional out of class time for second language use, practice, and thus, learning. These broader experiences tend to solidify language acquisition, and are particularly important when the target language is used in the student's community at large (Lessow, 2008).

However, research also shows that the issue of age is far more complex than initially expected. Older students, for instance, often make faster initial progress than younger students, perhaps because of the sophistication they have achieved with grammar and vocabulary. Older students have the benefit of more well-developed first language literacy skills, which tends to facilitate increased literacy development in a second language. Studies show this is particularly true in languages that are typologically similar, as with French, Spanish, and English.

Cultural and linguistic conflict. Opponents of beginning foreign language learning at an early age argue that learning a second language at that point has negative effects on learning a native language. Al-Ghamdi (2003) pointed out that there are many articles in Arabic newspapers and magazines that claim that the Arabic language would be affected if it was taught together with English as a foreign language (p. 3). Some academic studies also suggest that

learning foreign languages at the primary school level can cause neglect of the native language, or lead to different languages overlapping in the mind of the child. Syria is considered to have been the first Arab country to decide to cancel teaching foreign languages as part of the elementary school curriculum, arguing that teaching foreign language at this stage hampers the child's mother tongue (Al-Shereef, 2011). In addition, Younis, as cited in Al-Shereef (2011), confirmed that the learning of foreign languages at a young age leads to confusion of concepts from the first and second languages, especially if the foreign language is significantly different in form and substance from the primary language. Younis says, "For example, if I asked a child for number typed in Arabic "seta" (which means six in English) and asked him: Say this figure, the child often says "six" instead of "seta" because of the dominance of foreign language over the Arabic language in the primary stages of learning, which leads to confused children, impairs learning, and often leads to poor control of the child's national and foreign language, so that the child will not master both languages" (Al-Shereef, 2011).

Al-Saied agrees with Younis that teaching foreign languages at a young age has a negative impact on the mother tongue, especially in the core content, and that the child must master his first language before learning other languages (Al-Shereef, 2011). Moreover, Al-Dubeab (2002) has the same notion that language is not taken alone, but comes with many ideas and cultural perceptions, which affect the loyalty of the child to his language and culture, causing him or her cultural and emotional confusion. In addition, Al-Owaisheg (2009) asserts that foreign studies that conclude there is no effect of second language learning on first language learning have ulterior motives including the dissemination of the English language and the blockage of authentic culture. The same author believes that the most effective method of teaching English is not through public education, but in preparing an intensive course study for

two years after high school for those who need it in their work or to continue their studies. Zughoul (2003) stated that “Teaching English as a second language anywhere in the Arab World would give it a freehand to intrude into the territory of Arabic and such a practice will have its impact on identity and culture. It will also impede the development of the Arabic language and its wide scale use in different fields of life” (Implications, para.5). Bilal Al-Bodour, the Chairman of the Arabic Language Protection Society also pointed out that the Arabic language is the most important component fueling the concept of national identity and that the presence of the English language as another language in teaching and everyday life will affect identity, heritage, and basic stock of child language (as cited in Kredeh, 2009).

EFL practice in Kuwaiti culture. Despite these concerns, EFL has long been implemented in Kuwaiti school systems. Although Arabic is the official language in Kuwait, English is widely spoken, and is becoming increasingly integrated into societal communication, such as on street signs and in business settings. Thus, Kuwait is increasingly becoming a hybrid society with expectations of Arabic and English literacy, striking a debate regarding the appropriate age to introduce students to EFL (Mohammad, 2008, p. 3). The most significant concern regards whether or not introducing EFL to kindergarten students will adversely affect the development of their Arabic language literacy. However, many scholars suggest that it will be beneficial for both Arabic and English language development if EFL is introduced in kindergarten.

In a study conducted by Al-Rasheed (1998) in Kuwait, he drew the following conclusions: the learning of English does not adversely affect the learning of Arabic, and the learning of English does not give pupils the customs and values of that language, and thus, students do not conform to those foreign customs and values, but maintain their present ones.

Furthermore, EFL does not result in youth alienation and does not negatively affect social interaction within the community. Vygotsky addresses this idea: "...a foreign language facilitates mastering the higher forms of the native tongue. The child learns to see his language as one particular system among many, to view his phenomena under more general categories leads to awareness of his linguistic operations" (as cited in Kecskes, 2009, p. 380).

In another study focused on the impact of the introduction of the English language to primary education in Kuwait, Essa and Al Mutawa (1998) compared the results of pupils in the second grade before and after the introduction of the English language and distributed a questionnaire to Arabic language teachers to survey their opinions. They came to various conclusions. The two researchers found that the level of pupils' competency in Arabic language literacy was not affected by the introduction of the English language in the second grade, but they found that the pupils in the first grade were more competent in Arabic language literacy after the introduction of the English language compared with the pupils who did not study English in the first grade.

Taresh (1995) surveyed the views of teachers, advisors, and administrators about teaching English language in primary school in Kuwait. The results showed satisfaction of members of the sample regarding the teaching process of English language and its program in Kuwait. There are many benefits to linguistic skills gained from the given English program in Kuwait, such as oral communication, understanding, comprehension, reading, and writing. Additionally, the teaching of EFL enriches students' overall knowledge.

In keeping with positive views about EFL education, Fares (2008) agrees with each of the above observations and uses them to advocate for a return to policies focusing on foreign language education at early levels. He believes that it is inevitable that there will be academic

interest in learning foreign languages, in spite of their negative cultural beliefs since they advance the goals of encouraging openness to different world cultures, promoting cultural communication with the countries and peoples of the world, and facilitating the economic, scientific, and cultural development of society.

Hussein (2000) asserts that foreign language study is important as a means of persuasion. “It is difficult to engage in effective dialogue without knowing the culture and background of the people with whom you are communicating” (p. 165). Al Ghamdi (2003) similarly believes that the ultimate purpose of teaching a foreign language is to enable the learner to benefit from the knowledge of speakers of that language and communicate with them. If the learner is not familiar with the culture of the speakers, s/he cannot understand the literature or communicate effectively (Al-Ghamdi, 2003, p. 2). In Jordan, two researchers, Nasr and Smadi (1995) carried out a study on the relationship between the teaching of English and of Arabic that focused on the impact on English learning of distinct approaches to teaching Arabic. Their sample population consisted of pupils at the fifth grade level. The study showed that progress in linguistic skills in Arabic would lead to self-development of pupils in the area of English language learning. In addition, some positive impacts of education in both languages could be attributable to effects they have on student study habits. A study by Al-Khoury (2001) indicated that an Arab who reads in his mother tongue makes a single effort to understand content, whereas when reading a scientific book in a foreign language, he makes double efforts, first to understand the vocabulary and grammar of the language, and then to understand the content. In this way, the notion of self-development among dual-language students may be applicable to other subjects in addition to Arabic and English languages. Looking beyond the current study, broader research may thus be

concerned with questions of how general curricula ought to be designed in light of changes to the nature of English language curricula.

Foreign Language Curriculum

Presently, foreign language curriculum and specifically EFL curriculum, generally appears to be inconsistent in character and effectiveness. This is true not only across cultures, but within individual systems of education where uniform policies can either benefit or suffer according to variables including what materials are available, the quality of teacher training, type of pedagogy, student demographics, and teacher perspectives on the curriculum and the given methods of its application. Indeed, as broadly understood, curriculum can be said to include some of these things. Tucker (2011) pointed out that the term “curriculum” can mean different things in different contexts. On one hand, it might refer solely to the text materials used in a particular class, but in a larger sense it can include the entire experience of the individual learner (p. 11).

The subject of teaching materials is the main concern when it comes to understanding existing curriculum and working to improve upon it. Thus, the main concern of this part of this literature review regards current curriculum and principles for curriculum reform, but the broader sense of “curriculum” is important, too, particularly insofar as it relates to the interplay among texts, instructional practices of teachers, and policies at administrative and government levels. Problems with one of these aspects are likely to affect the others, and solutions that apply to one ought to go hand-in-hand with solutions directed at other aspects of curriculum.

Textbook quality. The overall literature suggests a number of areas that might be points of focus for such improvements. These include the extent of teacher reliance on textbooks, the function of communicative methods of instruction, student engagement, and the role of

technology in the digital age. However, problems can be expected to begin with issues relating to actual teaching materials, and they can begin to be addressed through improvements to the same. EFL textbooks stand as an example of the overall inconsistency in EFL curriculum. Their quality and the quality of their application seem to vary widely from place to place and from class to class. Ur Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) recommended that “The textbooks should highlight the modern concept of English language teaching with well-planned and properly graded material... By doing so, the students would be able to acquire the knowledge of English with a great deal of efficiency to meet their specific needs” (p.118).

Zoubov (1998) uses one method to compare the quality of textbooks based on the criteria of quantity and distribution of new words (p. 122). He finds significant discrepancies, but also finds that it is relatively easy to run such a comparison in order to make an informed decision as to which text is preferable for the curriculum (p. 132). Williams (1983) runs a different comparison, identifying four criteria: completeness and appropriateness of items; activities; vocabulary sequence; and relevance of contextual material. He similarly finds inconsistencies of quality and provides a sample checklist that might be used, though perhaps with modifications, to select the best text to match overarching curriculum (p. 252). Wang, Lin, and Lee (2011) add that a standardized checklist of textbook criteria would be crucial in instituting curriculum reforms within a given educational context (p. 95).

This perception is easy to understand, and it speaks to the fact that inconsistencies of textbook quality are precursors to inconsistencies of educational outcomes. Rahimpour and Hashemi (2011) point out that textbooks serve to give students a sense of progress and achievement, provide resources for self-directed learning, guide teachers in their instruction, and so on. They also claim that textbooks support less experienced teachers (p. 62), but this point

contradicts points made by other researchers. Williams (1983) claims that teachers who are least qualified to interpret the intentions of the textbook and evaluate its content and methods will also tend to rely on the textbook most heavily (p. 251). Askildson (2008) further warns that reliance on textbooks as the entirety of curriculum can lead to de-skilling of teachers (p. 21).

In light of all of this, it is clear that effective curriculum must take into account teacher skills as a way of both selecting high-quality teaching materials and executing their objectives. Unfortunately, sometimes choices of these materials are constrained by outside factors such as higher costs for quality books from foreign publishers (Chelliah, 2001, p. 173) or cultural inputs like the long-standing central control of textbook selection in Taiwan (Jia-Ying, 2011, p. 136). These are issues to be resolved as matters of economic or social policy, but assuming the presence of real textual alternatives, teacher training can contribute to the selection of appropriate classroom materials. This is an aspect of the broader understanding of “curriculum.” Williams (1983) encourages both individual teacher and departmental input in judging the validity of his proposed checklist, and he pointed out that teacher training and practice in analyzing textbooks serves to improve general teaching skills, as well. In other words, better choices of materials lead to better overall curriculum, and better overall curriculum leads to better choices of materials. Al-Mekhlafi and Ramani (2009), however, research the correlation in Oman between teachers’ attitudes towards foreign language curriculum and key demographic categories, and find no differences according to nationality, age, level of experience, qualifications, or level taught (pp. 150-154). If these results are assumed to not be unique to their research environment, it suggests that differences in broad teacher attitudes are not attributable to such general variables, which would be nearly impossible to control for.

Broader curriculum. This raises the question of what constitutes better overall curricula. There are several answers. Rahimpour and Hashemi (2011) observe that among the identifiable problems with textbooks they reviewed, many lacked elements that added appeal for students, such as colorful images and relevant contextual situations (p. 64). According to Askildson (2008), such relevance and appeal is important to the EFL learning environment, so much so that it may even be allowed to come at the expense of realism in situations presented by the text (p. 153). Adding to the general notion of student-appeal, Williams (1983) asserts that ESL/EFL teachers must address linguistic and cultural challenges specific to the exact language groups to which they teach. All of this falls under the rubric of “student-centered” classrooms, which Tucker (2011) found to be the main theme of ESL student feedback to his inquiry into what those students want in English curricula (p. 11).

This is perhaps a constant concern with regard to curriculum design and teaching methodology. Other desired innovations emerge as generational concerns. This is the case with the issue of technology, which arises in several items of the present literature. Wang, Lin, and Lee (2011) advocate for teacher training in internet-integrated and other technologically-aided instruction. They claim that computer mediated communication leads to collaborative dialogue, which leads to improved language learning (p. 92). Mollaei (2013) stated that “The interactive environment supported by computer technology is an authentic learning tool... A better understanding of the process that teachers go through to incorporate technology into their teaching will benefit not only other teachers, but also the students who will be learning in those classrooms” (p.22). Such technological enhancements are evidently things sought after by students and teachers alike. Tucker (2011) states that surveyed students reported a desire for more multimedia materials (p. 14). Meanwhile, Askildson (2008) asserts that teachers would use

various technologies if they were provided the appropriate equipment and training (p. 170). Thus it can be seen that in at least some cases teacher attitudes toward potential classroom methodologies align both with student-desired curriculum changes and advocacy grounded in research and theory. These factors can influence choices from among recognized EFL teaching techniques.

EFL teaching techniques. Ur Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) assert that “Teachers should think of new methodologies for classroom interaction, and these methods will have to depend on techniques which will enable the students to enjoy their English language classes” (p.116). There are various techniques recommended by studies which have proven to be efficient models for teaching EFL to Arab learners. Some examples include targeting motivation, using diagrams to teach language construction, using dramatic facial expressions, providing positive and constructive feedback, having class discussions to boost self-esteem and confidence, and using creativity to learn via games, projects, and real-life communication scenarios. There are a wide range of techniques to employ which cater to all different types of learners: visual, audio, kinesthetic, reading/writing. By incorporating multiple methods, teaching EFL can yield more successful results (Marin, Vinicio, Cansino, Carina, 2012, p. 39).

As one example, Vygotsky addresses the ways in which play introduces literacy concepts and abilities to young children that allow them to see perspectives of others. He says, “[this] process promotes their literate thinking through more complex social exchanges. In pretend play, young children conform their social actions to their peers and use literate ways of thinking, literacy knowledge, tools, scripts, and skills” (Saracho, Spodek, 2006, p. 710). This creates the opportunity to improve student’s confidence in their L1 and L2 commentaries as they develop social skills and gain a positive perception of their learning environment. Play allows children to

explore literacy in a form of practice, such as through an activity, strategy, or interaction with a peer or adult. The literal world is not designed with letters, words, sentences, paragraphs, and other literary structures; it is comprised of images, emotions, and experiences, all things that can be found in interactive settings so that students can learn English at the conscious and subconscious level (Rabab'ah, 2005, p. 181). This type of approach helps teachers to achieve the objective listed by the Kuwait government to improve students' worldview through expanding their knowledge and learning experience.

Communicative learning. Zughoul (2003) pointed out that “Teaching English as a language of globalization necessitates changes in the older approaches for the teaching of the language” (para. 2). Standing as the basis for another set of EFL techniques, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a teaching model that involves encouraging students to participate in various organized class activities in which play is integrated into language learning acquisition. It is articulated that this method can be very challenging in kindergarten settings since students have very limited English awareness; however, since this is an age of introductions to English, it is recommended to integrate some of the L1, Arabic, into the setting, and to establish a particular theme or task to keep play focused on the class content. “In CLT, students are exposed to appropriate samples of English and given relevant activities to help them learn... [a]ctivities in the communicative approach are often carried out by students in small groups. Students are expected to interact with one another...a highly competent and imaginative teacher is a major requirement for the successful application of the approach” (Qbeita, 2011, p. 1440). This latter remark points to the idea that teacher attitudes regarding appropriate curriculum and techniques may be an element of the teacher's overall competence and his or her

capacity for success. After all, successful application of a particular approach is not very likely if the teacher does not firmly believe in the potential for its success.

In some cases, if a teacher does not recognize that potential, she is at odds with much of the research community. The existing literature almost uniformly expresses the importance of communicative-based teaching strategies as an aspect of good curriculum. Chelliah (2001) pointed out that U.S. and U.K.-published English guidebooks tend to be better than those published in India in part because they are written for institutions that stress interaction, as opposed to examinations (p. 162). Jia-Ying (2011) identifies the same problem in Taiwanese EFL, where emphasis on examinations has a negative impact on more practical speaking and listening skills (p. 134). As an alternative to this, communicative learning techniques “supplement and make up for still-developing skills,” helping to develop students’ abilities to ascertain meaning from context, to paraphrase, summarize, and inquire for additional information (Matsuda & Friedrich 2011 p. 339).

Shawer (2010) gives Egypt as an example of a region where communicative learning techniques were emphasized as policy. There they were found to significantly improve both language usage and motivation in students (p. 348), but teachers were largely unfamiliar with the techniques or little able to implement them, and tended to revert back to traditional teaching methods (p. 334-5). Shawer concludes that innovations in EFL curriculum must include both communicative learning techniques and teacher training in those techniques. Meanwhile, there is evidently little doubt about the usefulness of these strategies. Tucker (2011) even finds that in a survey of ESL students in South Korea many of them expressed definite interest in more communication within the classroom (p. 15).

Shawer implies that the same is true of ESL teachers, as the case studies he presents describe teachers who possessed highly positive conceptions of communicative learning. Nevertheless, it was observed that not all such teachers are equally able to implement communicative learning curriculum (p. 351). This is a noteworthy contrast. It suggests that while teacher attitudes alone are not sufficient for improved outcomes, the alignment of teacher attitudes with established best practices is a necessary first step in the adoption and effective implementation of improved curricula.

Teacher Needs

Generally speaking, “teacher needs” refers to the conditions that can be created by the policy environment, by administrative structures, or by teacher training, in order to foster better outcomes or a more favorable classroom experience for the individual instructor. On one hand, these might be material resources and other such elements that make the efficient performance of educational responsibilities possible. On the other hand, and more relevant to the topic of this study, they may involve input that distinctly contributes to positive attitudes and perceptions on the part of the teacher, in turn making for higher levels of competency and commitment.

Conditions for self-esteem and self-efficacy. Among those perceptions that can be affected by outside factors are teachers’ self-esteem and their sense of self-efficacy, or belief that they are personally capable of changing student engagement and classroom outcomes. Bandura (1977) stated that “positive attitudes can be predicted by perceived self-efficacy” (p.119). Chacon (2005) investigates the case of teacher self-efficacy in Venezuelan English language classrooms, and she comes to a number of significant conclusions about the sources of perceptions of efficacy, as well as its effects on teaching methods and effectiveness of training. Similar to above observations about the relationship between language proficiency and ability to

cope with stress, Chacon finds that teachers' self-reported proficiency in several areas, including reading, writing, and speaking, is connected to a sense of efficacy for instructional strategies. Additionally, management efficacy is connected to high reported proficiency in writing (p. 265). Since these figures were self-reported, it says more about the effects of teacher self-esteem than it does about actual teacher ability, although self-esteem is almost certain to increase as demonstrable ability improves.

The implication that self-esteem predicts a sense of efficacy is important in light of the rest of the findings reported by Chacon. These include the observation that a sense of personal efficacy correlates with greater receptiveness to methodological innovation, and that a greater sense of personal efficacy and efficacy for the teaching profession in general predicts support for teaching strategies that promote student autonomy (p. 259). At the same time that high efficacy predicts that a teacher will be more open to innovation, high instructional efficacy also correlates positively with a high sense of efficacy with respect to both communicative and grammar-based strategies. That is, level of teacher efficacy does not influence which basic methodology is chosen (p. 265). Taken together, these observations have potentially significant implications for teacher training in that they suggest that the more confident a teacher feels in his own ability, the more receptive he or she will be to certain types of training.

However, Chacon found some obstacles exist regardless of level of teacher efficacy. In her sample, she found that EFL teachers with both high and low efficacy tended to keep away from communicative language teaching, despite it being arguably more effective than grammar strategies and drilling (p. 268). She concluded that the teachers she observed were more comfortable with grammar than with speaking and that weaknesses in English speaking

objectively constrain the teacher's ability to engage in communicative teaching. Consequently, training in all skills is essential to making the better strategy available to all teachers.

Still, in light of the other observations, such training must be partly aimed at promoting self-esteem and a sense of self-efficacy. Chacon observes that teacher beliefs, such as beliefs about efficacy, which are established earlier, are harder to alter (p. 257). This seems to imply that low self-confidence in teachers can be self-perpetuating. However, this works in the other direction as well, since Chacon finds that among teachers with more classroom experience, their beliefs about personal teaching efficacy are more resistant to change. It may be appropriate, then, to consider areas such as early classroom experience to be needs, precisely in the sense that they instill greater confidence and more persistent positive attitudes in the minds and instruction methods of teachers who benefit from such things.

Eslami and Fatahi (2008) broaden the topic of teacher self-efficacy to the case of Iranian education. They concur with Chacon that the more efficacious a teacher feels, the more receptive he will be to methodological innovation and that it doesn't influence their actual preference for one strategy over another (p. 5). Their survey of non-native English speaking teachers uncovers familiar self-doubts regarding proficiency. Eslami and Fatahi find that 72% of teachers report that these problems interfere with their teaching (p. 2). They also support what was suggested in Chacon, in that they find that self-efficacy ratings are correlated with self-reported proficiency, but not necessarily with actual proficiency in reading (p. 13). Their findings with regard to outcomes are thus a function of confidence much more than any objective qualities of teacher skill. The researchers thus claim connections between self-efficacy, teaching confidence, and actual classroom outcomes (p. 2).

Eslami and Fatahi also asked their research subjects to make subjective rankings of possible changes in the classroom and in their training. When presented with potential innovations to adopt to their own teaching, subjects found them to be easier to implement and more important if they felt they were congruent with their own teaching practices. Conversely, if the innovations seemed very different, they were ranked as both more difficult to implement and less important (p. 3). Once again, this points to two meaningful observations about EFL teacher training and teacher perceptions: subjective perceptions can significantly affect the outcomes of training programs, and these effects tend to be firmly established in the character of the teacher and are difficult to overturn after early stages of training. It also provides some clear insight into what is needed in training and policymaking in order to make chosen innovations practical within the context of a particular teacher's classroom.

Wang (2008) further broadens the context to English education in Taiwan, and touches upon the same issues of efficacy and self-esteem, but prominently connects these to the larger issue of teachers' perceptions about policy implementation and training in their teaching environments. His research shows what teachers need from their institutions and communities by painting the picture of a context in which teachers overwhelmingly support the goal of teaching English at the primary school level (p. 42), but suffer from a dearth of confidence in their own teaching abilities, as an extension of their lack of confidence in the training system that inadequately prepared them for their positions (p. 49). By far, the most common comment made by interviewees in Wang's study regarding teacher training was that there was a need for more assistance and support from the Ministry of Education. This disconnect apparently results in a lack of emphasis on adequate qualifications in Taiwanese English teachers, as evidenced by the fact that of respondents to Wang's study, only 66% indicated that they had majored in English,

and 25% admitted to having neither a primary teaching qualification nor an English teaching qualification (p. 40). In spite of this, Wang pointed out that teachers seem prone to overestimating their own proficiency, which may be a separate challenge that teachers must compensate for on their own.

In light of the studies cited above, there may be a highly challenging layer of complexity to the issue of self-esteem in EFL education. That is, a lack of training might have the effect of raising confidence, but at the expense of actual language proficiency and, therefore, teaching proficiency. What's more, while a sense of efficacy and self-esteem grounded in effective training appears to make teachers more responsive to innovation, the situation in Taiwan appears to have the opposite effect. Wang (2008) finds that only 62% of respondents employed a communicative approach to their teaching (p. 210), despite the fact that the state endorses such an approach. Although the state advocates for that approach, it does not precisely define what it consists of (p. 5). Perhaps as a direct consequence of this, the teachers themselves are frequently unable to articulate what the principles of a communicative approach would be, even though they claim to be able to apply those principles (p. 17). This suggests an incompleteness of teacher perceptions in absence of adequate training, which in turn indicates a need for both thorough training and the presence of clarity on the part of policymakers in defining preferred approaches to EFL teaching. It also points to the significant relationship that exists between this training and communication on one side and teacher perceptions on the other.

Perception matching. Similarly, communication and effective relationships between the teacher population and the institutions can contribute to broad attitudes being shared among them. Gonzalez (2003) undertakes a qualitative study of the perceptions of teachers in Colombia of their education training programs, and finds that large portions of the body of teachers object to

being left out of the process of developing educational agendas (p. 162). Their perceptions and the possible neglect of those perceptions by trainers and policymakers seemingly lead to a situation in which teachers gravitate towards other means of learning in lieu of formal, state-run training. Gonzalez indicates that, for instance, at educational conferences, “teachers value the opportunity to use English, learn new things, share experiences, obtain materials for their lessons, and be in contact with experts in the field” (p. 165). These opportunities are viewed as not being available on a long term basis in university settings and since this is reported as problematic it is evident that the presence of such opportunities is regarded as a teacher need. One of Gonzalez’ primary conclusions is thus to promote continuing education programs that value teacher input and demonstrate willingness to learn from their experiences and adjust or re-articulate in-service training practices accordingly.

Teacher-training context. The effects of communication between teachers and institutions extend to the context of earlier training as well, which benefits greatly from understanding the needs of the associated teachers-to-be. Al-Hazmi (2003) pointed to the observed problems of EFL teacher training programs in his research environment of Saudi Arabia. He describes those programs as non-systematic and inadequate (p. 341) and highlights the effects of growing demand, which diminished the quality of educators who were hired in absence of adequate qualification, and which necessitated the hiring of non-Saudi educators (p. 342). In light of the needed change, Al-Hazmi recommends that current and future training policies take into account factors that include teachers’ competence levels and their beliefs about education (p. 343). He also advocates for EFL teachers to remain involved in the reform process (p. 344). The two recommendations go hand in hand, as the effectiveness of teacher involvement depends very much on the level of interest that institutions take in their teachers’ perceptions. On the other

hand, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2009) “No matter how good pre-service training for teachers is, it cannot be expected to prepare teachers for all the challenges they will face throughout their careers. Education systems therefore seek to provide teachers with opportunities for in-service professional development in order to maintain a high standard of teaching and to retain a high-quality teacher workforce” (p. 49).

Qbeita (2011) indicates that some research shows a connection between teachers’ beliefs and their practices (p. 1439). She adds to the sense of an imperative for shared attention to perceptions between individuals and institutions, in that she claims that teachers must be aware of their own beliefs, and maintain or adjust them according to the needs of their training (p. 1442). Qbeita suggests the topic of self-esteem once again when she pointed out that “teachers with developmentally appropriate beliefs felt more in control of instructional planning and implementation.” Presumably, a greater sense of control predicts a greater sense of efficacy and self-esteem, making them potentially more responsive to their training. This is important in light of Qbeita's further observations about the unreliability of certain teacher perceptions. Specifically, she finds that teachers perceive themselves as focusing on language usage more than they actually do (p. 1445). This implies that as much as appropriate teacher perceptions can positively influence their outcomes, there are instances in which it is the duty of training to compensate for perceptions that are in error.

It seems, then, that there is a balance to be struck between respect for and resistance to teacher perceptions with regard to EFL education. Brandl (2000) suggests as much by emphasizing the need for effective training, but pointed out that effective training is defined by a measure of teacher autonomy. Brandl’s research into teacher perceptions of EFL training for

teaching assistants shows that their receptiveness to feedback is improved if it comes from persons with lower or equal status, and if the recipient has some level of control over the feedback mechanisms (p. 356). A number of other factors are also found to affect teacher preferences with regard to training processes. These preferences tend to differ according to departmental background and the number of years the subject has taught, indicating that there might be cause for a close level of scrutiny over implementation of training methods in specific groups (p. 360). Perceptions proved relatively fragile in Brandl's study. Thus, observations were viewed as good means by which to reflect on performance, but if the observer was a supervisor, the method could cause amplified stress (p. 364). Also, student evaluations could be both instructive and confidence-building if there was a deliberate balance of positive reinforcement and critique (p. 365). That aside, the study indicated specific rankings of training methods, with informal discussions, end of course student evaluations, and small group student interviews being rated highest. In a separate group category, the highest ranking went to pre-service training (p. 355).

Brandl (2000) shows that there are general teacher preferences with regard to training methods, but also that receptiveness to implementation can vary according to specific factors.

Teacher Challenges

Perceptions have an essential relationship with the topic of teacher challenges, as well, though it is somewhat different from the relationship between perceptions and teacher needs. Needs are largely filled by external factors, whereas challenges may exist regardless of the input of policy, administrative structures, or training. This is not to say that challenges cannot be improved by changing external conditions, but that may be impractical or it may be an excessively long-term solution, such that it is more worthwhile to focus on overcoming and

compensating for challenges, rather than filling a specific set of needs that removes those challenges. As an example, it is theoretically possible to create a stress-free environment for EFL teachers, but this would be so complicated that stress can never be realistically expected to leave the teaching environment, so instead it stands as a constant challenge that each individual teacher must work to personally remove in whatever measure is possible. Fittingly, this can be said to be a function of each teacher's attitude toward his or her challenges.

Teacher stress. "Teaching English as a foreign language is intellectually, emotionally, and physically challenging work" (Ur Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013, p. 115). Several authors have explored the nature, extent, and impact of stress on teachers, particularly in the field of EFL education. They have done much to establish the importance of the topic to practical concerns for English-teacher training. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) emphasize the seriousness of stress concerns in the specific context of foreign language education. They point out that the basis for all such education, the actual learning of the foreign language which one is to teach, is a "profoundly unsettling psychological proposition," in that it can upset the learners' sense of self (p. 125). Their research consequently focuses on the experience of stress among students of a foreign language, rather than among nonnative speaking teachers. But the content of their research is every bit as relevant to EFL teachers who share their students' non-English-speaking background, because every such teacher must have been a foreign language student at one time. Indeed, insofar as improving language competence is a goal of ongoing training, nonnative EFL teachers remain foreign language students well into their careers, thus subjecting them to the same stresses highlighted by the researchers, in addition to the ordinary stresses of classroom teaching.

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope point out that foreign language anxiety is manifested in the same physiological symptoms as with any other anxiety, and they indicate that in classroom contexts it can result in contradictory problems for different students. Some might attempt to compensate with over-studying, whereas others may cope with stress by avoiding studying and even cutting classes. The authors also point out that students with particular anxieties might place unrealistic demands upon their own competencies and fear negative evaluations from their peers. They also give special emphasis to “communication apprehension,” suggesting that stress over speaking in the target language is particularly common and severe. In fact, they point out that it is characterized by a need for risk taking that is absent in ordinary, first-language conversation, and can result in “reticence, self-consciousness, fear, or even panic” (p. 128). On the other hand, Machida (2011) conducted a study of teacher anxiety among Japanese teachers of EFL. The study deals with self-reports of teacher anxiety with regard both to personal proficiency in the target language and the individual’s ability to effectively instruct students in that subject. The result of this study showed that “77.4% of teachers were anxious about their own English proficiency, and 90.2% of them were anxious about teaching English, and the sources of anxiety included lack of experience and training for teaching English and lack of confidence in English communication” (p. 75).

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope argue that teachers must identify the most anxious students and help to “overcome anxiety as a factor in shaping student experience” (p. 132). The same can be said of teacher trainers and their need to identify the most anxious EFL educators and compensate for the tendency of anxiety to shape teachers’ experiences in the classroom. Lynch (1996) also contributes to understanding of anxiety issues among foreign language students, and from her research she derives suggestions as to how to alleviate such anxiety. In this case also,

the results are likely applicable to the needs of teacher trainers, as well. Lynch reiterates the suggestion of identifying the most anxious students, and adds that teachers might be able to do so by utilizing a survey tested in her research. She also recommends fostering class cohesion, providing for students to utilize self-talk as a way of overcoming stresses and developing strategies, using group work, and developing a classroom atmosphere that works to combat students' negative beliefs (p. 8). In each of these cases, it is easy to imagine how similar strategies could be applied to reducing anxiety among teachers instead of students. Self-talk, for instance, could be adopted as a means of developing beneficial teaching strategies, as well as learning strategies. The applicability of all of this, of course, depends on the significance of language learning stresses to those more advanced learners who are tasked with teaching the foreign language.

Mousavi (2007) also explores this topic, turning the focus of educational stress research towards the teacher instead of the learner. His findings parallel the above findings in some important ways. For instance, he indicates that student evaluations are ranked as very important by EFL teachers, just as peer evaluation is recognized as a major source of student stress by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope. Mousavi contributes other findings to suggest that teacher stress is equally as important to classroom outcomes as student stress. She claims that "teaching is one of the most stressful jobs in comparison to other occupations" (p. 33), and draws out the ways in which these stresses are amplified in the case of EFL education. Teachers in that context regarded their own needs as being as important as those of students (p. 35), and 87.5% of non-native-English speaking teachers claimed they did not know enough English, while experiencing more stress than their native-speaking counterparts as a result of various factors, and perceiving a reduction in the status of English teaching, which native-speakers had not perceived (p. 36).

This last observation crucially suggests the potential for experiences of classroom stress to affect beliefs and other perceptions as they relate to the teacher's profession.

Mousavi also finds that few non-native teachers reported a sense of freedom in choosing teaching materials, but that all felt a sense of freedom in choosing methodology (p. 37). This is arguably the opposite of the situation that should be fostered, assuming that some methodologies have demonstrated effectiveness and some do not. Other researchers suggests that this is the case, such as Britten (1988), who pointed to the danger of teachers reverting to older trends despite training that had encouraged different alternatives (p. 6). Mousavi also indicates that issues for native-speaking teachers differ from those cited by non-native speakers. These tended to be grounded in external causes like relations with colleagues, management issues, timing of lessons, and classroom technology (p. 37). If, as is implied, the difference in stress levels of teachers with native and non-native backgrounds is the reason for these differences in classroom experience, it highlights the importance of such teacher perceptions by suggesting their potential to influence teacher performance and classroom outcomes.

Attitudes towards policy and training. Whether teachers complain about perceived deficiencies in government policy and administrative support structures, or whether they take all of the responsibility for poor outcomes onto themselves and exhibit it in the form of stress, the general impression presented by the various situations referenced above is that teachers themselves are often aware of the inadequacy. There is a danger of that kind of awareness contributing to negative attitudes within the teacher. This, therefore, is another topic of teacher perceptions that could be of significance to ongoing research in the field of EFL education. That is, the attitudes of teachers are essential for creating a positive pedagogical environment in which

students are poised to succeed. Of course, the task of promoting such attitudes requires recognizing and compensating for any roadblocks that impede their development.

The present study is simultaneously concerned with the question of how teachers perceive the challenges they face and the question of how those challenges influence teacher perceptions. As it relates to both of these lines of inquiry, one crucial issue is the extent to which negative perceptions are reinforced within the classroom. Capella and Folger (1977) described the notion of cuing as having an impact on the formulation of attitudes. Cues are strands of information that are retrieved from memory upon exposure to other, consistent information. Cues can be collected over time while they inform beliefs and contribute to attitude formation regarding the related information. For example, a student who maintains negative attitudes about math may transfer this attitude to other classes. Consistent validation of these attitudes over time can make them difficult to reverse.

This is certainly true with teacher attitudes, which may be hardened over time due to a variety of factors. Negative attitudes from teachers can be cultivated through negative experiences with students or with administration. Most importantly, attitudes impact the experiences of students (Altan, 2006). In this way, attitudes can be infectious within the classroom, with teachers' exhibitions of their attitudes creating circumstances that promote similar attitudes in students. When attitudes are long-term and intransigent, they can frame the learning experiences of students (Qbeita, 2011). This can lead to potentially negative consequences for students, even when an instructor is well-intentioned. In turn, an environment shaped by negative attitudes can present a serious challenge to teachers, whether instructing English in kindergarten or any other subject, at any other grade level. What's more, because

experiences may shape attitudes, this problem can prove to be self-perpetuating in absence of effective interventions.

Challenges of Arab learners of EFL. One of the pieces of information that contributes to cuing and helps to validate student attitudes, and by extension teacher attitudes, is actual student performance. The learning difficulties faced by EFL students are the most essential challenge that must be overcome by EFL teachers (Ganschow & Sparks, 2001). Andarab and Buyukyazi (2013) stated that “Non-native EFL teachers who share the mother tongue of their students and who may have worked through similar problems in learning English... are better prepared to deal appropriately with those specific learners’ problems” (p.4). Considering that the applied study will be conducted in Kuwait for Arabic students learning English, it is essential to scrutinize research on existing EFL programs for Arabic-speaking students, as well as assessments and explanations of their levels of performance and motivation. There are various common lexical, grammatical, spelling, phonological, morphological, and syntactical errors made among Arabic learners of EFL (Ghwai, 2005; Rabab’ah, 2005). There are arrays of factors affecting these common results, including: “lack of pertinent information..., school and English language department curricula, teaching methodology, lack of the target language environment, and the learners’ lack of motivation” (Rabab’ah, 2005, p. 184). Additionally, students often express difficulty and lack confidence in accurately conveying their thoughts in English in settings outside the classroom (Ghwai, 2005; Rabab’ah, 2005).

Al-Haaj and Al-Mutawa (1986) conducted a study on students in a college of sciences in Kuwait University, and came to several conclusions, but the most significant found that teaching science in the English language negatively affects the level of academic achievement of students.

The researchers suggested that if those students had studied English at an early age it may have helped them at higher levels of education.

In Egypt, Mousa (1985) conducted a questionnaire for public secondary students to know the extent of their desire to learn English. Half of the participants in this study expressed interest in learning a foreign language, while the other half was not interested in EFL. The disapproving half mostly held their views for reasons related to approach of teaching, curriculum, and the number of pupils in the classrooms. This supports the pertinence of the general learning environment in affecting students' acquisition of EFL (Matsumoto, 2012). Al-Jazeera newspaper conducted a questionnaire that included 100 Saudi Arabian high school graduates to discover to what extent they benefited from English language courses during the years of their study. The result of this study found that 87% of them did not benefit, 9% did benefit from their studying English because of external factors that helped them, and 4% left school because of their failure in English language (Al-Faisal, 2005). In the same newspaper poll, Al-Ahaideb the dean of the Language Teaching Institute in Saudi Arabia stated that if students do not benefit from studying English it is due to many reasons: (1) Lack of sufficient motivation for most students to study English; (2) Obvious weakness of most English language teachers; and (3) Insufficient number of class periods to teach this language, with this number having decreased from 12 class periods to 4 and 2 classes per week (p. 16). Moreover, Fareh pointed out some of the challenges of EFL programs in the Arab world and these are: 1) Improperly trained teachers or inadequate teaching methodology, 2) Teacher-centered rather than learner centered activities, 3) Students' aptitude, initial preparedness and motivation: School and university, teachers often complain of the low proficiency of their students. They also claim that students are not motivated to learn, 4) Compartmentalization vs. whole language approach, 5) Lack of emphasis

on developing skills— emphasis is rather on rote learning, 6) Textbooks and teaching materials, 7) Assessment methods, and 8) Exposure to English (as cited in Ur Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013, pp. 114-115).

The role of teacher weakness in creating these outcomes speaks to what may be the most basic ways in which existing challenges of student failure can be overcome. Al-Ahaideb also stated that English teachers in Saudi Arabia need in-service refresher training courses in two areas: (1) the English language itself and (2) methods of teaching English. On the other hand, Al-Rasheed (1998) believes that the success of learning a foreign language depends on several factors, such as the existence of a development program to teach the foreign language, and the education environment that students are in. According to Ur Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) “There are three core areas one EFL teacher should pose: 1) Proper knowledge of English language, 2) Well aware of how to teach English, and 3) Understands how his or her students learn and what it takes to reach them effectively” (p. 116). In Egypt, Ahmad (1996) conducted a field study to survey teachers’ and school supervisors’ views regarding teaching English in fourth and fifth primary grades. The results showed that although up to 60% believe that pupils benefited from teaching English in acquiring some English linguistic skills, only 10% want the English program to continue in primary schools because of the inappropriateness of the curriculum and the lack of a sufficient number of teachers in schools.

Saigh & Schmitt (2012) determined that “learners often transfer their first language (L1) processing routines over to the second language (L2) in their attempt to process the L2 forms, whether those routines are appropriate to the L2 form system or not” (p. 25). Thus, it is common for students to apply basic rules of Arabic in an attempt to understand and learn English, as opposed to approaching the new language with a blank slate. Saigh & Schmitt report that an

extensive literature review and personal research indicate that Arabic students taking ESL frequently have difficulty with word form. More specifically, the difficulty lies in understanding English vowels, a term they describe as “vowel blindness.” In their original study that explored the difficulties Arabic-speaking ESLs have with short and long vowels, they found that short vowels are more challenging to adapt to than long vowels. Further, the study has found that the students can “somewhat better” identify when a vowel is completely missing from a word. The example they provided is “conclasion”; however, the most difficulty lies in using the correct vowels, an example provided is “imprave” (which is supposed to be “improve”). As described by Saigh & Schmitt, had the students already developed receptive/aural skills in Arabic dialect of their heritage culture, then it would have steered the course both of their Arabic understanding, and then later, of their English learning. As Arabic native speaker from my own experience and observation in communicating with native-Arabic speakers who learned English in their secondary or tertiary school years, I can vouch that such conclusions regarding verb confusion are true, and rather prominent.

A particular theoretical issue pertains to the use of the Arabic language (L1) to teach the English language (L2). Halliwell and Jones (1991) articulate that to overcome this challenge, L2 needs to be learned in as normal and realistic communication scenarios as possible. MacDonald as cited in Al-Nofaie (2010) advocates that a focus on second language when teaching EFL can increase communication abilities and stimulate both conscious and subconscious learning (p. 66). Yet, on the contrary, “an initial period of education is necessary for success in both advanced proficiency in L2 and better academic achievement in school subjects. Lack of using L1 as a medium of instruction has been found to negatively affect students’ academic achievement in

school subjects (Ghawi, 2005, p. 1). Children have an innate ability to learn language, a skill that disappears in adulthood (Al-Nofaie, 2010).

Perception mismatch. Furthermore, and of concern regardless of cultural context, earlier introduction of foreign language education allows more time for the development of positive student attitudes as to the subject matter. After all, one of the important issues with respect to attitude formation in a classroom environment is the extent to which they are reshaped over time. This includes the questions of how they are changed and how frequently this process occurs. If attitudes of learning are malleable, can teachers in a classroom count on their own positive attitudes influencing the attitudes of students? Conversely, do conflicting attitudes on the part of teachers and students mutually influence each other or do they impede communication and the formation of common ground?

Gonzalez (2003) indicated that there was need of perceptual matching between teachers and their institutions, and that problems could easily arise from mismatch between them. Brown (2009) pointed out the additional problems that can arise from mismatch between the perceptions of teachers and students. He thus introduces a topic which is similar, yet fits better in the category of challenges, since changes to policy or administrative structures could not reasonably be expected to bring about perennial alignment between the perceptions of teachers and their changing groups of students. Brown analyzes situations in which teachers demonstrated belief in the value of communicative strategies, but their students did not (p. 53). Brown argues that comparisons of these attitudes “can improve the understanding of each group’s perspective on the L2 classroom.” He adds, “Not only can teachers and students benefit from this increased awareness, so too can basic language directors, administrators, and teacher trainers” (p. 55).

There is a need for teachers to seek out and engage with student perceptions, and it rather directly parallels the need for trainers to seek out and engage with teacher perceptions.

Context of the Study

All this provides substantial justification for the study of teacher perceptions, the factors that influence them, and their effects upon outcomes and the overall character of the educational environment. However, the demonstrated relevance of the four above domains does not encompass the entire groundwork for it. It remains for the proposed research topic to be understood from the perspective of reliability and effectiveness of the data to be gathered.

Effects and consistency. Thompson (2009) finds that in at least some relevant circumstances, both student and teacher perceptions can be judged as accurate. Specifically, he compares student and teacher self reports about their own and each others' use of first language and target language in the classroom. Thompson concludes that both parties were accurate in their assessments of teacher language use in all capacities, but could not accurately gauge student language use (p. 546). The probable conclusion for the larger topic at hand is that teacher perceptions are trustworthy in some situations, but external observations remain necessary as a counterbalance for situations where subjective perceptions are flawed.

Greenwald, Rudman, Nosek, Banaj, Farnham & Mellott (2002) suggest that it may be possible to anticipate where this counterbalance will be needed. They find that in general psychological research, consistency is found amidst attitudes, self-esteem, and self-concept in cases of objective measurement, though not in cases of self-reporting (p. 3). Presumably, then, given proper resources and focus from trainers, administrators, and observers, it is possible to anticipate some teacher perceptions, even among those for which self-reporting cannot be utilized. It should come as no surprise that there are some topics within the category of teacher

perceptions where teacher self-awareness cannot be relied upon. Britten (1988) emphasizes that teachers tend to “bring with them deeply rooted preconceptions about language teaching derived from their own experience as learners,” and that these preconceptions can be so deeply ingrained as to prompt some teachers to revert to them in spite of the influence of training. Britten further emphasizes the role of pre-service training as a means of counteracting these preconceptions because of its capacity for focusing attention on the development of a new teacher’s attitudes and perceptions. That may stand out as a practical consequence, but what it is important to understand for present purposes is simply that such perceptions are of genuine importance in the first place.

In light of all of the research cited above, there should be little doubt of the importance of teacher perceptions to research regarding foreign language education and related training. The simple fact of that importance is the most basic thing that this literature review establishes. It also suggests several particular observations, as well, which could constitute the groundwork for some form of future study on the topic.

Some of the given literature speaks to the apparent interconnectedness of different specific elements of teacher perceptions. Because these various factors can be shown to also be connected to certain indicators of actual teacher performance, commitment, or responsiveness to training, they can each be recognized as contributors, in some degree, to student outcomes. This in turn speaks to the practical importance of recognizing teacher perceptions in the formulation of training strategies and in the process of engaging teachers in strategy implementation. That kind of engagement is of great importance in light of the fact that some of the referenced literature shows that negative perceptions can be self-reinforcing if not counteracted by effective training. Finally, and most important to the newly proposed research, the specific impact of self-

esteem and efficacy add an additional sense of importance to the goal of improving teacher performance by way of improving language proficiency.

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

This chapter is organized around the methods and procedures that guide this research study. First, I provide the demographic information of this study. Then I provide a description of the procedure that was used to select participants and describe the measures that were utilized to ensure ethical treatment of the research participants. Next, I describe the research approach that was used in this study. In addition, I provide a description of the data analysis procedures and statistical tests that were used to interpret and draw conclusions from the study.

Demographic Information

The purpose of this study is to examine Kuwaiti kindergarten teachers' beliefs and perceptions toward introducing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to kindergarten curriculum. This study relies on data gathered in Kuwait directly from native teachers who have had initial experience with a new kindergarten program that includes EFL. Demographic information provided in this section for the referenced school districts and teachers was provided by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education (MOE). All data were gathered during the 2012-2013 school year. Kuwait is divided into six governorates. In each governorate there is one school district that serves students from kindergarten through grade 12. The Ministry of Education introduced the English program to five kindergartens in each district, for a total of 30 kindergartens across the country. The total number of Kuwaiti kindergarten teachers in these 30 schools, not including supervisors, is 775. Kindergarten classrooms occupy their own buildings, separate from elementary schools. There are 7,273 kindergarten students in the 30 schools that were subject to the pilot program, which was spread over 289 classes (Ministry of Education, 2012, 2013).

Sampling Methods

This study uses as broad a sample as possible, inclusive of each of the 775 teachers introduced to the new program across all six districts. This sample encompasses the entire population of interest, which consists of each Kuwaiti kindergarten teacher who is subject to a policy of English curriculum at kindergarten level.

Table 1

Sampling Method used for the Study

District	Mubarak						Total
	Al-Jahra	Al-Asimah	Hawalli	Al-Farwaniyah	Al-Kabeer	Al-Ahmadi	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Teachers	133	112	95	132	127	176	775

Development of the Instrument

Kuwaiti Kindergarten teachers are faced with the challenge of teaching EFL for kindergarten students without having received enough preparations to prepare them to do so. I became aware of the problem at the local level through informal conversations with my colleagues and discussions through several forums on Kuwaiti kindergarten teachers websites. Pursuing a deeper understanding of the problem, I conducted some informal interviews with my colleagues in Kuwait by phone. The data from the discussion and informal interviews helped me to understand the nature of the problem as described by Kuwaiti kindergarten teachers, which helped me to select an appropriate literature linked to this issue and create the survey questions for this study. Therefore, I used the questionnaire as an instrument in this study.

From the data that I gathered through informal interviews by phone and discussions through several forums on Kuwaiti kindergarten teachers websites and after reviewing related

literature and analyzing of survey theory, I decided to develop my own survey to fit the Kuwaiti kindergarten teachers' situations. The questionnaire consists of three sections:

1. *Participants' demographic information*: name of the school district, educational degree, years of experience and pre-service and in-service teachers' preparation and training in teaching EFL.
2. *Survey questions addressing four domains*:
 - A. Teachers' beliefs toward learning a second language in early childhood (ages 3½ - 6)
 - B. Teachers' views about the English curriculum (content, manual, textbook).
 - C. Teachers' needs in order to achieve the goal of teaching English
 - D. Challenges that kindergarten teachers face in teaching English.
3. *Teachers' recommendations and suggestions* to improve the quality of the English program in Kuwaiti kindergartens.

Variables of the Study

First: Independent variables

- 1- Number of years of experience in the field of kindergarten teaching. This has three levels: (Less than 5) years, (5-10) years, and (More than 10) years.
- 2- Academic qualification. This has three categories: Diploma, Bachelor degree (Kuwait University- College of Basic Education), Master degree.
- 3- School District. This has six categories: 1) Al-Jahra school district, 2) Al- Asimah school district, 3) Hawalli school district, 4) Al-Farwaniyah school district, 5) Mubarak Al-Kabeer school district, and 6) Al-Ahmadi school district.

Second: Dependent variables

Kindergarten teachers' perceptions toward teaching English in kindergarten in Kuwait.

Survey Scale

According to Losby & Wetmore (2012), "Likert scales may meet your needs when you have attitude, belief, or behavior items [as part of your study]" (p. 4). In this study I used a 4-point Likert Summated Ratings Method Scale for each item in the questionnaire, ranging from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 4 = *Strongly Agree*. According to Losby and Wetmore (2012) there are advantages of using a 4 point scale instead of a 5 point scale, in that because it "forces people to choose, people may be more discriminating and more thoughtful, and [it] eliminates possible misinterpretation of mid-point." (p.14). Respondents may indicate their own perceptions by checking the degree of agreement or disagreement with particular statements.

When the data and respondents' answers were entered into computers, choices were turned into numbers. Respondents' answers were measured using a four point scale in which the lowest score was given to (Strongly Disagree) which is one score, (Disagree) two scores, (Agree) three scores and (Strongly Agree) four scores. Therefore, scores given to the choices were (1, 2, 3, 4) respectively.

The range was calculated, where:

The range= largest value – lowest value = 4 – 1 = 3

In order to determine the level of the *Mean* of the kindergarten teachers' scores using the study instrument, this range was divided into three equal periods.

$$\text{Period Length} = \frac{4-1}{3} = 1$$

Accordingly the following standard was adopted for the classification of the *Mean* for the purposes of analyzing the results:

- 1- *Mean* of (1.00 - less than 2.00) indicates a low level of kindergarten teachers' agreement regarding what the item discusses.
- 2- *Mean* of (2.00- less than 3.00) indicates moderate level of kindergarten teachers' agreement regarding what the item discusses.
- 3- *Mean* of (3.00- 4.00) indicates a high level of kindergarten teachers' agreement regarding what the item discusses.

Research Questions and Related Items

1. What are Kuwaiti kindergarten teachers' perceptions toward the different research domains:
 - A. Learning a second language in early childhood (ages 3 ½ -before 6)?
 - B. English curriculum (content, manual, student's book)?
 - C. Teachers' needs in order to achieve the goal of teaching English?
 - D. Challenges that kindergarten teachers face in teaching English?
2. Is there any significant difference among teachers' perceptions toward the research domains (A - D) among six different school districts?
3. Is there any significant difference among teachers' perceptions toward the research domains (A - D) due to graduate institution (Kuwait University, College of Basic Education)?
4. Is there any significant difference among teachers' perceptions toward the research domains (A - D) due to years of experience?

5. What measures can teachers recommend to the policy makers and curriculum designers in order to address these needs and challenges?

The questionnaire composed of 34 items is divided into four domains. Table 2 lists the related items for each of the four domains.

Table 2

The Research Domains and Its Related Items

Domains	Related Items
1- Teachers' beliefs toward learning a second language in early childhood (3 ½ - 6)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
2- Teachers' views about the English curriculum (content, manual, textbooks)	12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
3- Teachers' needs in order to achieve the goal of teaching English	19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24
4- Challenges that kindergarten teachers face in teaching English	25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32,33, 34

In addition, the questionnaire contains an open-response section about teachers' needs and suggestions to improve the quality of English programs in Kuwaiti kindergarten.

Quantitative Research

I adopted a quantitative research approach in this study, and the data from the questionnaires was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The quantitative data of this study were obtained through questionnaires that included every relevant teacher (except those absent that day) from the population of interest. Therefore the results obtained can be generalized to a larger population of kindergarten teachers in Kuwait. Data from the survey in this study will be used to identify teachers' beliefs and perceptions toward introducing EFL in kindergarten curriculum.

Data Analysis and Statistical Tests

In this study I entered the data from the questionnaires into the statistical program SPSS (v. 21) for the data analysis. The following statistical tests were used:

1. Pearson's correlation coefficient to identify the reliability of the tool.
2. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient to indicate the internal consistency of the instrument, and was established by using the pilot study to measure the internal consistency of the items within one domain.
3. The descriptive statistics were used to determine and report the item levels of agreement, such as Frequencies, Percentages, Mean and the Standard Deviation to identify the degree of agreement regarding the various items of the tool and to answer the questions of the study.
4. One-way MANOVA test was used to test the significance difference of overall domains of the respondents' answers corresponding to the variables of years of experience, academic qualification and school district at the level ($\alpha = 0.05$).
5. One- Way ANOVA test was used to test the significance of differences among the means of the respondents' answers according to the variables of years of experience, academic qualification and school district at the level ($\alpha = 0.05$).
6. Scheffe multi-dimensional comparisons test was used to identify the sources of differences in mean scores.

Validity of the Study

There are two types of *content-related evidence of validity* that are particularly relevant to this study. Content validity is meant "to assess whether the items adequately represent a

performance domain or construct of specific interest” (Crocker & Algina, 1986, p. 218). In this study I used two sources of evidence for content validity:

Link to literature. The first source, which pertains to the four domains, comes from reviewing literature related to the study in the field of EFL. The items that make up the domains are based upon research that concludes there are a variety of aspects that aid in forming individual beliefs about children learning a second language, especially in early childhood, about EFL curriculum, about EFL teachers’ needs, and about EFL teachers’ challenges. Thus, the 34 items created for this survey domain are written in order to capture all of these aspects that make up one’s perceptions as accurately and completely as possible.

Expert judgments. Experts from the University of Arkansas with 25, and 10 years of experience in the field of ESL and experts from Kuwait University with 30 years experiences in the field of EFL validated the instrument to test the extent to which a question reflects the specific domain of content, and experts in educational statistics and research methods from Kuwait University agreed that these items were based on the appropriate categories of each domain.

Instrument Reliability

The reliability of the instrument was examined following two methods: The first one was (test-retest). And the second method was (Cronbach Alpha) in order to test the reliability coefficient which shows the extent of the internal consistency of the different domains of the instrument.

Internal consistency reliability. In order to test the internal consistency reliability of the instrument, I conducted Cronbach’s alphas for overall instrument reliability across the pilot study. The pilot study investigated the following: (a) Whether the Arabic version of the

questionnaire included any unclear or confusing items, (b) To check how much time participants required to complete the questionnaire, and (c) To get additional information about potential practical problems and difficulties during administering the questionnaire at school. The pilot study was carried out at one public kindergarten with 30 participants. I conducted the pilot study two times for the same sample to find the correlation coefficients between the first and second applied survey. The first study was applied in December 24, 2012, and after three weeks the second study was applied in January 13, 2013. The coefficient values were high, and all of them were statistically significant at level (0.001). Table 3 defined the Reliability Coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) between the two studies, as well as the correlation coefficient between the participant response of each item and the overall instrument.

Table 3

The Cronbach's Alpha and Correlation Coefficient of the pilot Studies

Domain	Number of items	Reliability Coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha)	Correlation coefficient	Statistical significance Level
First domain: Teachers' beliefs toward learning a second language at early age.	11	0.96	1	0.001
Second domain: Teachers' views about the English curriculum.	7	0.94	0.99	0.001
Third domain: Teachers' needs in order to achieve the goal of teaching English.	6	0.68	0.95	0.001
Fourth domain: Challenges that kindergarten teachers face in TEFL.	10	0.87	0.99	0.001
Overall instrument	34	0.93	0.99	0.001

Table 3 indicates high values and a high stability of the instrument as a whole for its four domains. The correlation coefficient values were high and this supports the reliability of the instrument, and this indicates that the tool is practicable and reliable to achieve the objectives of

the study. Therefore, I can apply the instrument, and the results can be relied upon to collect the data required for the study.

Translation of the Survey

The survey was translated into the Arabic language because it is the official language of the targeted population. I translated each item in Arabic with feedback from bilingual speakers. Also a member of the dissertation committee whose first language is Arabic approved and validated the translation of the survey. Finally, I developed the final draft of the survey of this study. (See Appendix F for the English version of the survey and see Appendix G for the Arabic version of the survey).

Access to the Kindergartens

Following the policies of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) on the use of human beings as research subjects, I submitted the protocol form and the questionnaire to the IRB at the University of Arkansas for official approval. After receiving the IRB approval (See Appendix A1& A2) I went to Kuwait to implement the protocol I had laid out. To gain access to the participants, I obtained official permission letters from: 1) the College of Education at Kuwait University (See Appendix B), 2) the Educational Research and Curricula Sector of the Kuwait Ministry of Education (See Appendix C1- C6), and 3) the superintendents of each district in which I planned to conduct research (See Appendix D1- D6). After receiving permission, I met with teachers in each of the pre-selected schools. As Kuwaiti kindergarten teachers meet in groups with their supervisors every two weeks, I met with teachers on the same day whenever possible, and made alternate arrangements with the teacher herself when necessary. In these meetings I discussed the purpose of the study, its significance, why their participation is needed, and how their honest responses may help to address the challenges they face in teaching English.

In addition, I explained the ethical elements that I must follow as a researcher, and that their participation and perceptions would in no way affect their employment. At that time, the teachers who agreed to participate were issued the questionnaire.

Ethical Considerations in the Study

I sent the questionnaire to the IRB at the University of Arkansas for official approval. I received the acceptance letter by email from the IRB office. The following ethical elements were specified: There were no risks anticipated with this study; a cover letter of informed consent was included with the participants' surveys; surveys were coded by school district only; teachers' names were not recorded; and the school coding was destroyed once the study was completed (See Appendix E).

Timeline

I executed a first pilot study on December 24, 2012, and the second pilot study on January 13, 2013. The main survey was conducted in March 2013. In April 2013, the data were analyzed. After that, in April and May 2013, chapters four and five of this study were completed. Finally, in June, 2013, I defended.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

This chapter presents findings and data analysis from participants' responses to the teacher perceptions questionnaire. The purpose of this study was to investigate Kuwaiti kindergarten teachers' perceptions and beliefs toward implementing English as a foreign language (EFL) in the kindergarten curriculum. The associated survey was completed by 631 kindergarten teachers, drawn from 30 geographically diverse kindergartens in Kuwait. The following research questions were investigated in this research study:

1. What are Kuwaiti kindergarten teachers' perceptions toward the four research domains:
 - A. Learning a second language in early childhood (ages 3 ½ -before 6)?
 - B. English curriculum (content, manual, textbooks)?
 - C. Teachers' needs in order to achieve the goal of teaching English?
 - D. Challenges that kindergarten teachers face in teaching English?
2. Is there any significant difference among teachers' perceptions toward the research domains (A - D) among six different school districts?
3. Is there any significant difference among teachers' perceptions toward the research domains (A - D) due to graduate institution (Kuwait University, College of Basic Education)?
4. Is there any significant difference among teachers' perceptions toward the research domains (A - D) due to years of experience?
5. What measures can teachers recommend to the policy makers and curriculum designers in order to address these needs and challenges?

Data Analysis

A questionnaire was distributed among all selected kindergarten teachers across the six school districts in Kuwait at the beginning of the second semester of the academic year 2012-2013. A total of 775 questionnaires were distributed, and after three days 645 were recovered. Of these, 14 were incomplete. Thus a total of 631 valid questionnaires were analyzed. This represents the number of the respondents to which the instrument has been applied. Table 4 shows the distribution of the sample according to the variables of the study.

Table 4

Sample Demographic Description

	Variable	Frequency	Percent
Academic Qualifications	Diploma	12	1.9
	Bachelor's degree/ Kuwait University	264	41.8
	Bachelor's degree/ College of Basic Education	349	55.3
	Master's degree	6	1.0
	Total	631	100
Years of Experience	Less than 5	244	38.7
	5 – 10	180	28.5
	More than 10 years	207	32.8
	Total	631	100
School District	Al-Jahra	100	15.8
	Al-Asimah	100	15.8
	Hawalli	86	13.6
	Al-Farwaniyah	104	16.5
	Mubarak Al- Kabeer	110	17.4
	Al-Ahmadi	131	20.8
	Total	631	100

Note: Sample Descriptive (N = 631)

Table 4 indicates that about 55.3% of kindergarten teachers hold Bachelor's degree from the College of Basic Education and about 41.8% of kindergarten teachers hold Bachelor's degree from Kuwait University, the remaining 2.9% hold either Master's degree or Diploma. In addition, 39% of teachers have less than five years' experience, and 28% teachers have five to ten years' teaching experience, while the remaining 33% of teachers have more than ten years' teaching experience. The demographic data indicate that there is no significant difference in the sample of teachers with regard to their teaching experience. Also, the highest number of the questionnaires was collected from the Al- Ahmadi school district, and the lowest number of the questionnaire was collected from the Hawalli school district, and that did not affect the participation level in this study, but because the highest population has the highest sample and the lowest population has the lowest sample.

Pre-service and In-service Teachers' Preparation and Professional Development

To investigate certain components of both pre-service and in-service programs and training of kindergarten teachers tasked with teaching English to Kuwait kindergartners, percentages of kindergarten teachers' responses on the fourth item of the demographic information were calculated as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Teacher Responses of Pre-service and In-service Teachers' Preparation and Training

Item	Yes/ No	Percent
4a- Did you study second language acquisition theories in the pre-service educational preparation?	yes	23.9 %
	no	76.1 %
4b- Did you study methods of teaching second language in the pre-service educational preparation?	yes	11.7 %
	no	88.3 %

4c- Did you study methods of second language assessments in the pre-service educational preparation?	yes	5.5 %
	no	94.5 %
4d- The Ministry of Education offers enough training courses to prepare kindergarten teachers for teaching the English language.	yes	17 %
	no	83 %

Table 5 shows that the pre-service English-language preparation programs for kindergarten teachers do not include sufficient coverage of theories of foreign-language acquisition. 23.9% stated that they studied theories that explain mechanisms of English-language acquisition by kindergarten-age children. Meanwhile, 76.1% indicated that they did not study these theories. In addition, the results for question (4b) indicate that the preparatory academic programs for kindergarten teachers prior to commencing their service did not assist them in teaching English at the kindergarten level. These programs largely did not include the study of effective teaching methods, which might have increased the teachers' ability to instruct kindergarteners in English. Only 11.7% stated that they studied English-language teaching methods for kindergarten-age children. Meanwhile, 88.3% indicated that they did not study these methods.

With respect to the academic preparatory program of kindergarten teachers before commencing their service, the result shows that the program did not call for them to study methods of assessing acquisition and teaching English language in kindergartens. Programs evidently failed to make note of varied and effective assessment methods that might have contributed to improvement of teacher abilities to identify degrees of achievement by English language students at the kindergarten level. Only 5.5% indicated they studied these kinds of methods. 94.5% indicated that they did not. Moreover, this table indicates that teachers widely felt that the Ministry of Education in Kuwait did not provide sufficient training courses following

their graduation from academic preparation institutions which enable them to teach English language in kindergartens. 17% of the respondents indicated that the Ministry provided enough such training to enable kindergarten teachers to teach the English language at the kindergarten stage. 83% of respondents indicated that the Ministry did not sufficiently contribute to achieving this objective.

Research Question #1

The first question of the present study asks: What are Kuwaiti kindergarten teachers' perceptions toward the four domains of the study, namely: A) learning a second language at early childhood; B) English curriculum; C) teachers' needs; and D) teacher challenges? In order to answer this question, frequencies, percentages and arithmetic means of survey responses were calculated regarding statements of the various domains of the questionnaire. Results were identified in the following tables (9-12):

A- Teachers' beliefs toward learning a second language in early childhood (3 ½ - 6)

To identify the kindergarten teachers' beliefs about learning English at early childhood, frequencies, mean and percentages of their responses were calculated regarding statements related to the first domain. They are identified in Table 6 and as follows:

Table 6

Teacher Responses to Statements of the First Domain

Item*	<u>Responses</u>								Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranking
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree				
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
1	49	7.8	90	14.3	281	44.5	211	33.4	3.04	.89	9
2	43	6.8	106	16.8	302	47.9	180	28.5	2.98	.85	11
3	44	7.0	74	11.7	289	45.8	224	35.5	3.10	.86	6
4	19	3.0	78	12.4	234	37.1	300	47.5	3.29	.80	1
5	20	3.2	76	12.0	266	42.2	269	42.6	3.24	.78	2

6	26	4.1	82	13.0	306	48.5	217	34.4	3.13	.79	3
7	25	4.0	101	16.0	294	46.6	211	33.4	3.10	.80	7
8	18	2.9	99	15.7	314	49.8	200	31.7	3.10	.76	8
9	22	3.5	85	13.5	312	49.4	212	33.6	3.13	.77	4
10	50	7.9	122	19.3	161	25.5	298	47.2	3.12	.98	5
11	69	10.9	77	12.2	244	38.7	241	38.2	3.03	.97	10
Total		5.5 %		14.3 %		43.3 %		36.9 %		3.12	High mean
Weighted mean											

*These are the items of the research questionnaire (see appendix F)

Results stated in Table 6 indicate that kindergarten teachers' beliefs about teaching the English language in Kuwaiti kindergartens were highly positive, based on the value of the arithmetic mean which reached (3.12) out of (4). Such an arithmetic mean is high and is equivalent to 78%. The kindergarten teacher' agreement on the statements related to the first domain had arithmetic means ranging between 2.98 and 3.29, which are equivalent to a range of 74.5% to 82.25%. The highest agreement was on statement number (4), "Teaching English in kindergarten is becoming a contemporary necessity required in the globalized world," which had an arithmetic mean of 3.29. It was followed by their agreement on statement (5), "Younger children are more efficient at second language learning than older children." This had an arithmetic mean of 3.24. According to the classification of arithmetic means levels adopted by the researcher, these means are of a high level. In the tenth place (penultimate) came the respondents' agreement on statement (11), "Introduction of teaching English in the kindergarten is an excellent decision." The arithmetic mean of responses to this statement was 3.03, which is also of a high level. In the last place came statement (2), "Learning English in kindergarten will not negatively affect students' Arabic language development." With an arithmetic mean of 2.98, these responses rated at a moderate level mean.

B- English curriculum

To identify the kindergarten teachers' views on the English curriculum in kindergarten in Kuwait, the frequencies, percentages and arithmetic means of their responses to the statements related to the second domain were calculated. They are identified in Table 7 as follows:

Table 7

Teacher Responses to Statements of the Second Domain

Item	Responses								Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranking
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree				
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
12	49	7.8	152	24.1	339	53.7	91	14.4	2.75	.80	4
13	53	8.4	157	24.9	343	54.4	78	12.4	2.71	.79	5
14	49	7.8	143	22.7	351	55.6	88	13.9	2.76	.79	3
15	85	13.5	183	29.0	281	44.5	82	13.0	2.57	.88	7
16	32	5.1	147	23.3	347	55.0	105	16.6	2.83	.76	1
17	28	4.4	155	24.6	351	55.6	97	15.4	2.82	.74	2
18	41	6.5	198	31.4	321	50.9	71	11.3	2.67	.76	6
Total	7.6 %		25.7 %		52.8 %		13.9 %		2.73	moderate mean	
Weighted mean											

Results in Table 7 show that the overall views of kindergarten teachers regarding the English curriculum in Kuwaiti kindergartens demonstrate moderate agreement on the comprehensiveness and quality of this curriculum. This is based on the arithmetic mean of all answers given by respondents to statements of the second domain. This figure amounted to 2.73 out of 4.0, which is equivalent to 68.25% agreement overall. The kindergarten teachers' agreement on the statements of this domain had arithmetic means ranging between 2.57 and 2.83. As percentages, this range is between 64.25% and 70.75%. The highest agreement was on statement number (16), "The Student Workbook is fitted with the current English language objectives," which had

an arithmetic mean of 2.83. The second highest level of agreement came on statement (17), “The student's workbook contains the necessary knowledge and activities for children to learn English.” The arithmetic mean of responses to this was 2.82. According to the classification of levels of arithmetic means adopted by the researcher, these means are of a moderate level. In the sixth place (penultimate) came the respondents’ agreement on statement (18), “The current English language objectives focus on the cognitive, affective aspects and psychomotor skills in an integrated manner.” The arithmetic mean in this case was 2.67, which is also of a moderate level. In the last place came statement (15), “The current English language assessment is useful to indicate my students’ achievement.” Here the arithmetic mean was 2.57, which is also of a moderate level.

C- Teachers’ needs in order to achieve the goal of teaching English

To identify kindergarten teachers’ needs to achieve the objectives of teaching English in kindergartens in Kuwait, the frequencies, percentages and arithmetic means of their responses to the statements related to the third domain were calculated. They are identified in Table 8.

Table 8

Teacher Responses to Statements of the Third Domain

Item	<u>Responses</u>								Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranking
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree				
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
19	36	5.7	37	5.9	119	18.9	439	69.6	3.52	.84	1
20	46	7.3	118	18.7	299	47.4	168	26.6	2.93	.86	3
21	130	20.6	222	35.2	224	35.5	55	8.7	2.32	.90	5
22	18	2.9	37	5.9	197	31.2	379	60.1	3.48	.73	2
23	176	27.9	261	41.4	167	26.5	27	4.3	2.07	.84	6
24	116	18.4	234	37.1	228	36.1	53	8.4	2.35	.87	4
Total	13.8 %		24 %		32.6 %		29.6 %		2.78	moderate mean	
<u>Weighted mean</u>											

Results in Table 8 show that teachers' needs in order to achieve the goal of teaching English in Kuwait demonstrate moderate agreement based on the arithmetic mean, which amounted to 2.78 out of 4.0. It is an arithmetic mean of a moderate level, which is equivalent to a percentage of 68.25. The kindergarten teachers' agreement on the statements of this domain had arithmetic means ranging between 2.07 and 3.52, which are equivalent to 51.75% and 88%. The highest agreement was on statement number (19), "Allocate English language specialist in the classroom," which had an arithmetic mean of 3.52. This was followed by their agreement on statement (22), "Limit the number of children in my classroom." This arithmetic mean was 3.48. According to the classification of levels of arithmetic means adopted by the researcher, these means are of a high level. In the fifth place (penultimate) came the respondents' agreement on statement (21), "The Ministry of Education provides appropriate means and equipment for teaching English." This arithmetic mean was 2.32, which is of a moderate level. In the sixth and last place came statement (23), "The kindergarten administrative supervisor in my district offers specialized academic workshops on second language assessment methods." The arithmetic mean in this case was 2.07, which is a moderate level mean.

D- Challenges that kindergarten teachers face in teaching English

To identify challenges facing kindergarten teachers in Kuwait while teaching English, the frequencies, percentages and arithmetic means of their responses to the statements related to the fourth domain were calculated. They are identified in Table 9.

Table 9

Teacher Responses to Statements of the Fourth Domain

Item	Responses								Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranking
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree				
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
25	22	3.5	112	17.7	238	37.7	259	41.0	3.16	.84	1
26	44	7.0	108	17.1	216	34.2	263	41.7	3.11	.93	2
27	56	8.9	125	19.8	236	37.4	214	33.9	2.96	.94	4
28	31	4.9	111	17.6	315	49.9	174	27.6	3.00	.81	3
29	138	21.9	284	45.0	144	22.8	65	10.3	2.22	.90	10
30	52	8.2	198	31.4	259	41.0	122	19.3	2.71	.87	6
31	33	5.2	162	25.7	276	43.7	160	25.4	2.89	.84	5
32	57	9.0	191	30.3	258	40.9	125	19.8	2.71	.88	7
33	94	14.9	241	38.2	196	31.1	100	15.8	2.48	.93	9
34	44	7.0	222	35.2	246	39.0	119	18.9	2.70	.85	8
Total	9 %		27.8 %		37.8 %		25.4 %		2.79	moderate mean	
Weighted mean											

Results from the fourth domain (Teachers challenges) demonstrate that there is fair agreement about a set of challenges faced by teachers of kindergarten-level English. The arithmetic mean of responses as a whole was 2.79 out of 4.0. This is equivalent to 69.75%, which places it at the moderate level. The teacher' agreement on individual statements in this domain had arithmetic means ranging between 2.22 and 3.16, which are equivalent to a range of 55.5% to 79%. The highest agreement was on statement (25), "The training opportunities provided for teaching English to kindergartners is not helpful." The arithmetic mean of responses was 3.16. Second-highest agreement came in response to statement (26), "From my academic preparation, I cannot develop the child's English language skills (listening, speaking, writing, and reading)." The arithmetic mean in this case was 3.11. These means are classified as being in the high level according to the survey scale. In the ninth place (penultimate) came the

respondents' agreement on statement (33), "The current English curriculum is long and intensive for children at this age." With an arithmetic mean of 2.48, agreement with that statement is of a moderate level. In the tenth and last place came statement (29), "I have difficulty using the supplemental technology in my classroom" This also ranked at the moderate level, with an arithmetic mean of 2.22.

Research Question #2

The second question of the study asked whether there are significant differences among teachers' perceptions toward the research domains (A- D) among the six different Kuwaiti school districts. First a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) is used to test the significance of four domains of the study across the school districts. The result is identified in the following table.

Table 10

MANOVA Comparison by Districts of the Four Domains

	Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.99	15366.68	4	622	.001
	Wilks' Lambda	.01	15366.68	4	622	.001
	Hotelling's Trace	98.82	15366.68	4	622	.001
	Roy's Largest Root	98.82	15366.68	4	622	.001
District	Pillai's Trace	.16	5.10	20	2500	.001
	Wilks' Lambda	.85	5.17	20	2063	.001
	Hotelling's Trace	.17	5.22	20	2482	.001
	Roy's Largest Root	.01	12.11	5	625	.001

Table 10 shows that there was a statistically significant difference in teacher perception on the four domains of the study, $F(20,2063) = 5.174$, $p < .0001$; Wilk's $\Lambda = 0.85$.

Second, four One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests were used to determine whether there are significant differences among teachers' perceptions toward the research

domains (A- D) among the six different Kuwaiti school districts. The results are listed in the following table.

Table 11

One-way ANOVA of Responses across Six Districts

Domain	Source of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
A-Teachers' beliefs toward learning a second language in early childhood	Between Groups	1323.89	5	264.78	6.48	.001
	Within Groups	25531.02	625	40.85		
	Total	26854.91	630			
B-Teachers' views about the English curriculum	Between Groups	398.70	5	79.74	4.23	.001
	Within Groups	11789.61	625	18.86		
	Total	12188.30	630			
C-Teachers' needs in order to achieve the goal of teaching English	Between Groups	88.54	5	17.71	1.92	.090
	Within Groups	5777.40	625	9.24		
	Total	5865.94	630			
D- Challenges that kindergarten teachers face in teaching English	Between Groups	1087.41	5	217.48	6.73	.001
	Within Groups	20193.52	625	32.31		
	Total	21280.93	630			

Table 11 shows the application of a one-way ANOVA test to calculate the significance of differences among school districts with respect to the mean scores of kindergarten teachers' responses to the four research domains. Results indicate that there are no statistically significant differences at level 0.05 in teachers' perceptions in different districts of what is needed to successfully begin teaching English in kindergarten. However, there are statistically significant differences (exceeding 0.05 variance) with respect to different districts' views about the appropriate age at which to begin teaching English, about English language curriculum, or about

the challenges teachers face in teaching that curriculum. To identify the sources of these differences, a *Scheffe* multiple comparisons test was used. The results therefore are shown in the following table.

Table 12

Results of Scheffe Comparisons: Significant Differences in Mean Scores across Districts

Domain	Mean School District (A)	Mean School District (B)	Mean Difference (A – B)	Sig.
A-Teachers' beliefs toward learning a second language in early childhood	Al-Asimah 35.58	Al-Ahmadi 32.67	2.91	.040
		Al-Jahra 33.05	3.90	.004
	Hawalli 36.95	Mubarak Al- Kabeer 33.70	3.25	.030
		Al-Ahmadi 32.67	4.28	.001
B-Teachers' views about the English curriculum	Hawalli 20.59	Mubarak Al- Kabeer 17.94	2.66	.003
D- Challenges that kindergarten teachers face in teaching English		Al-Asimah 26.95	2.77	.038
	Al-Jahra 29.72	Mubarak Al- Kabeer 26.72	3.00	.013
		Al-Asimah 26.95	2.99	.016
	Al-Farwaniyah 29.94	Mubarak Al- Kabeer 26.72	3.22	.004
		Al-Ahmadi 27.30	2.64	.029

Table 12 examines the difference in mean scores of teacher responses, organized according to school district. This serves to explain the sources of significant differences in perception as follows:

- With respect to the kindergarten teachers’ perceptions about teaching the English language at an early age (3.5- 6 years), results show that teachers in Al-Asimah and Hawalli school districts have higher levels of belief in teaching English at an early age than kindergarten teachers’ perceptions in the rest of the school districts in Kuwait.
- With respect to kindergarten teachers’ views on the English language curriculum of kindergartens, the results indicate that teachers in Hawalli school district have higher views about the English curriculum than kindergarten teachers’ views in the rest of the school districts in Kuwait.
- With respect to perceived challenges facing teachers, it was identified that kindergarten teachers in Al-Jahra and Al-Farwaniyah school districts have higher levels of challenges than kindergarten teachers’ challenges in the rest of the school districts in Kuwait.

Research Question #3

The third research question asks whether there are significant differences among teachers’ perceptions toward the different research domains (A - D) due to graduate institution (Kuwait University, College of Basic Education). Again, a MANOVA approach was used to test the significance of four domains of the study across teachers’ qualification. The result is listed in the following table.

Table 13

MANOVA Comparison by Teachers’ Qualification of the Four Domains

	Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.90	1362.08	4	623	.001
	Wilks' Lambda	.10	1362.08	4	623	.001
	Hotelling's Trace	8.74	1362.08	4	623	.001
	Roy's Largest Root	8.745	1362.08	4	623	.001

Qualification	Pillai's Trace	.007	.358	12	1875	.977
	Wilks' Lambda	.993	.357	12	1648.60	.978
	Hotelling's Trace	.007	.356	12	1865	.978
	Roy's Largest Root	.004	.593	4	625	.668

Table 13 indicates that there was no statistically significant difference in teacher perception on the four domains of the study, $F(12,1648.6) = .357, p < .978$; Wilk's $\Lambda = 0.993$. A one-way ANOVA test was used to answer whether there are significant differences among teachers' perceptions toward the different research domains (A - D) due to graduate institution (Kuwait University, College of Basic Education). The result is listed in Table 14.

Table 14

One-way ANOVA for Responses from Graduates of different qualification

Domain	Source of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
A-Teachers' beliefs toward learning a second language in early childhood	Between Groups	26.40	3	8.80	.21	.893
	Within Groups	26828.5	627	42.79		
	Total	26854.9	630			
B-Teachers' views about the English curriculum	Between Groups	24.628	3	8.21	.42	.736
	Within Groups	12163.68	627	19.40		
	Total	12188.30	630			
C-Teachers' needs in order to achieve the goal of teaching English	Between Groups	6.236	3	2.10	.22	.881
	Within Groups	5859.70	627	9.35		
	Total	5865.94	630			
D- Challenges that kindergarten teachers face in teaching English	Between Groups	10.64	3	3.60	.10	.957
	Within Groups	21270.28	627	33.92		
	Total	21280.929	630			

Table 14 shows the result of a one-way ANOVA test to identify the significance of differences among kindergarten teachers' mean scores according to the academic qualification variable. Results indicate that there are no statistically significant differences (variance exceeding 0.05) among their perceptions about teaching children the English language at an early age, about views on the English language curriculum in kindergartens, about their needs for the sake of effectively beginning the teaching of English in kindergartens, and about the challenges they are facing in this regard.

Research Question #4

The fourth question of the study asked whether there are significant differences among teachers' perceptions toward the research domains (A - D) due to number of years of experience in teaching in kindergartens. MANOVA approach is used to test the significance of four domains of the study across the level of teaching experience. Results were identified in Table 15.

Table 15

MANOVA Comparison by Teaching Experience of the four Domains

	Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.99	14995.87	4	625	.001
	Wilks' Lambda	.01	14995.87	4	625	.001
	Hotelling's Trace	95.97	14995.87	4	625	.001
	Roy's Largest Root	95.97	14995.87	4	625	.001
Experience	Pillai's Trace	.04	3.104	8	1252	.002
	Wilks' Lambda	.96	3.119	8	1250	.002
	Hotelling's Trace	.04	3.134	8	1248	.002
	Roy's Largest Root	.04	5.666	4	626	.001

Table 15 indicate that there is a statistically significant difference in teacher perception on four domains of the study, $F(8,1250) = .3.12, p < .002$; Wilk's $\Lambda = 0.961$. A one-way ANOVA test was used to answer whether there are significant differences among teachers'

perceptions toward the research domains (A - D) due to number of years of experience in teaching in kindergartens. The result is listed in the following table.

Table 16

One-way ANOVA of Responses According to Level of Teaching Experience

Domain	Source of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
A-Teachers' beliefs toward learning a second language in early childhood	Between Groups	424.60	2	212.30	5.04	0.007
	Within Groups	26430.31	628	42.09		
	Total	26854.91	630			
B-Teachers' views about the English curriculum	Between Groups	19.742	2	9.87	0.51	0.601
	Within Groups	12168.56	628	19.38		
	Total	12188.30	630			
C-Teachers' needs in order to achieve the goal of teaching English	Between Groups	20.4	2	10.2	1.1	0.335
	Within Groups	5845.54	628	9.31		
	Total	5865.94	630			
D-Challenges that kindergarten teachers face in teaching English	Between Groups	93.50	2	46.75	1.39	0.251
	Within Groups	21187.43	628	33.74		
	Total	21280.93	630			

Table 16 shows the result of a one-way ANOVA test to identify the significance of differences among kindergarten teachers' mean scores according to the variable of number of years of teaching experience. Results indicate that there are no statistically significant differences, exceeding 0.05, among kindergarten teachers' perceptions about teaching English curriculum in kindergartens, about their needs in order to effectively begin teaching English in kindergartens, and about the challenges they are facing in this regard. However, it was identified that there are statistically significant differences regarding their perceptions toward teaching children the English language at an early age.

To identify the sources of these differences, a *Scheffe* multiple comparisons test was used. Results are as shown in Table 17.

Table 17

Results of Scheffe Comparisons: Significant Differences in Mean Scores across Experience

Levels

Domain	Mean Experience(I)	Mean Experience(J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
A-Teachers' beliefs toward learning a second language at early age	5 – 10 years 35.49	Less than 5 years 33.48	2.01	.007

Table 17 shows that the differences among teachers' mean scores regarding teaching the English language at an early age were concentrated between teachers with 5 to 10 years of teaching experience, and teachers with less than 5 years of teaching experience. Results indicate that teachers with 5 to 10 years of teaching experience were more likely to approve of teaching English at that level than were teachers with less than 5 years of experience

Research Question #5

The fifth question in this study was: "What measures can teachers recommend to the policymakers and curriculum designers in order to address these needs and challenges?" In this section, the answers for the open-ended question have been classified into suitable categories in order to analyze the data. Four categories were identified and are given in Table 18.

Table 18

Categories of Kindergarten Teachers' Responses of the Open-Ended Question

Category	N
Allocate English language specialist teacher in the classroom.	253

Specialized in-service training and workshops.	117
Reduce the number of children in classroom.	36
Provide a special EFL teacher's Guide.	9

Note: Categorization of answers reflects duplicates and omissions. Not all participants offered answers to open-ended questions. Others gave answers fitting more than one category.

Summary of the Results

The most obvious findings can be expressed through the overall mean of teachers' scores on a four-point scale regarding their agreement to questions in each domain:

- Mean level of agreement about the teaching of English to children between age three-and-a-half and six was high, at 3.12 out of 4.0.
- Mean level of agreement with positive statements about the current kindergarten English curriculum was 2.73, which is a moderate level.
- Mean level of agreement with statements about the fulfillment of teacher needs under the current program was 2.78.
- Mean level of agreement with statements about the presence of teacher challenges was 2.79.

These figures may allow for some very basic conclusions about the views of the teachers concerned. But much more is implied by the specific findings within each of those domains, especially in context of the background information that was also gathered by the study's survey:

- Above three quarters of participants (79.1%) indicated that they did not receive pre-service or in-service training in second language acquisition theories.
- Almost 90% said that they did not receive pre-service instruction in methods of teaching second languages.

- Nearly all of the participants (94.5%) indicated that they did not study methods of assessing second language acquisition.
- More than 80% of respondents indicated that the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education does not offer enough preparation to prepare kindergarten instructors for the teaching of English.

Despite this, answers to questions of the first domain (learning English at kindergarten age) indicated strong, if wary, agreement with the notion of teaching English to children of kindergarten age:

- The survey registered strong level of agreement (78%) with the statement that it was appropriate to teach English to children at this age.
- There was even stronger level of agreement (84%) with the claim that English is a growing need in the modern world.
- There was significant, but lesser agreement (76%) with the idea that teaching English would not interfere with a young student's development of Arabic language skills.
- Many respondents expressed belief in various positive effects of English language education, including increased confidence, cultural understanding, social skills, later academic achievement, and motivation to learn language.
- The vast majority of respondents (85%) also agreed that kindergarten-age children could learn language more efficiently.
- However, many respondents (73%) also showed concern for the increased teacher workload of English language instruction.

Within the second domain (English curriculum), mean scores and percentages of agreement were largely similar across each of the seven questions. There is only moderate agreement on the domain as a whole, and this alone can be taken as the basis for any major conclusions about

teacher views and perceptions as to the present English language curriculum. Specific details of their views as to the kindergarten English program as a whole depend on responses to the third and fourth domains. On the topic of teacher needs:

- Participants showed the highest level of agreement (91%) with the idea of limiting classroom size.
- Close behind that was agreement (88%) with the idea of having an English language specialist in the classroom.
- There was comparatively less agreement (74%) with the idea of expanding training practices.

In the fourth domain (teachers' challenges), teachers expressed concern with a number of difficulties, ranging from limitations in their own ability, to problems originating outside the school structure:

- Participants expressed widespread agreement (79%) with the statement that current training practices are not helpful.
- Large numbers of participants (71%) said that they had difficulty forming sentences in English.
- Large numbers (77%) said that they were uncertain of effective ways of teaching the language.
- Fewer, though still a large majority (61%), stated that some students seemed uninterested in learning English language.
- Many teachers (69%) indicated that parents provided little support for English language learning.

Very many of these results showed similar views across all demographics. Most of the demographic differences that were observed related to the district in which different teachers worked:

- Teachers from certain districts expressed different levels of agreement about the appropriateness of teaching English to kindergarten-age children.
- However, these differences did not apply to the first domain (learning English at kindergarten age) in general.
- For instance, there was no significant difference in perception of the growing importance of English in the modern world.
- On the other hand, some districts showed wide-ranging differences in their responses to statements about the current English curriculum.
- Others showed differences in perceptions of the presence of teacher challenges.
- The only other observed demographic variations dealt with teaching experience and perceived appropriateness of early childhood English education. More experienced teachers were more likely to agree with statements of that appropriateness.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate Kuwaiti kindergarten teachers' perceptions toward implementing English as a foreign language (EFL) in the kindergarten curriculum. The research study investigated the following questions:

1. What are Kuwaiti kindergarten teachers' perceptions toward the four research domains:
 - A. Learning a second language at early childhood (ages 3 ½ -before 6)?
 - B. English curriculum (content, manual, textbooks)?
 - C. Teachers' needs in order to achieve the goal of teaching English?
 - D. Challenges that kindergarten teachers face in teaching English?
2. Is there any significant difference among teachers' perceptions toward the research domains (A - D) among six different school districts?
3. Is there any significant difference among teachers' perceptions toward the research domains (A - D) due to graduate institution (Kuwait University, College of Basic Education)?
4. Is there any significant difference among teachers' perceptions toward the research domains (A - D) due to years of experience?
5. What measures can teachers recommend to the policy makers and curriculum designers in order to address these needs and challenges?

The results of this study serve to demonstrate essential teacher perceptions towards the newly created kindergarten English language program in Kuwait. These results have several implications. They suggest the extent of teacher readiness for instruction in this new program and they point towards the strengths and weaknesses of the program and its curriculum. They also allow for assessments and basic rankings of the challenges that teachers perceive themselves as facing in this newfound role. From all of this we can hope to gain a better understanding of

the prospects for English language education among Kuwaiti kindergartners, and in so doing we can hope to design appropriate evidence-based solutions to the problems identified.

Because the sample for this study was diverse, comprising 631 kindergarten teachers from six disparate districts in Kuwait, it is hoped that conclusions and recommendations will be applicable throughout the Kuwaiti education system. That is, differences in questionnaire responses have been identified according to levels of teaching experience and location of teaching environment. Where there are such substantive differences, separate recommendations may prove to be appropriate. On the other hand, the results do show agreement across these demographics on many topics within the purview of the study. This discussion will therefore make an effort to identify and emphasize those points wherein a recommendation can be made to be applicable in many circumstances of Kuwaiti kindergarten education.

English Language Preparation and professional development for Kindergarten Teachers

The most obvious conclusion derived from the results of this study is that there is substantial need for improvement of the English language program for Kuwaiti kindergarten students. Even before the analysis of any teacher perceptions and views, this need is demonstrated by the results of the inquiry into the levels of participants' pre-service and in-service training related to the English language. Four items on the first part of the questionnaire (Demographic Information) asked about the presence of topics relevant to English-language instruction in participants' preparation and professional development programs. Question 4a, "Did you study second language acquisition theories..." received the highest percentage of positive responses, with 23.9% saying that they did and 76.1% saying they did not. The other three questions about training produced an even higher percentage of negative responses. A

remarkable 94.5% of participants said they did not study second-language assessment methods in pre-service preparation.

The overwhelmingly negative response to these questions makes it clear that insufficient preparation in foreign language education is currently given to Kuwaiti kindergarten teachers. Preparation programs evidently lack coverage both of theories clarifying how children learn languages and of means by which progress in such learning can be understood by teachers. Of course, as this study explicitly deals with the subject of teacher perceptions and views at the kindergarten level, these data might indicate only that kindergarten teachers overwhelmingly perceive their preparation as inadequate. This is not absolute proof that the preparation is inadequate. After all, something must account for the presence of a minority of positive responses to these questions. It could be that certain institutions and training programs included these foreign language elements while others didn't. Since this study found few significant differences between the views teachers from different educational institutions, it seems that the differences must be explained by subjectivity.

Nevertheless, the high reality of the inadequacy of preparation in English language education for kindergarten teachers remains as a valid conclusion. For one thing, the large difference between the positive and negative responses to the four preparation-related questions gives much greater weight to the negative view. But more importantly, as established in the previous literature review, teacher perceptions have a highly significant impact upon those teachers' classroom performances and their students' outcomes (Altan 2006; Babich 2010; Qbeita 2011). In other words, if teacher preparation programs fail to instill confidence and positive perceptions in the vast majority of teachers with respect to teaching English, then those training programs are inadequate in that regard.

The literature review has also revealed that the kindergarten English program was created only recently and arguably suddenly (Al-Darwish, 2013). This may partly explain the absence of adequate training outcomes. Prior to the establishment of the new program, English had not been part of kindergarten teacher preparation strategy. In fact, most teachers who are currently in service had been specifically prepared for the teaching of subjects other than English. On the other hand, English-language preparation programs already existed prior to implementation of the new program, but they were aimed at instruction at the middle and high school levels. This may indicate an initial failure of the Ministry of Education to recognize the need for a new language preparations program.

However, even if existing English language preparation was generally available to future kindergarten teachers, and even if they generally took that preparation, it would not necessarily provide optimal training. Acquisition theories, expected outcomes, and assessment methods may differ somewhat as the students' age. The expansion of English language education to Kuwaiti kindergartens opens up the need for entirely new training practices. If the program persists and kindergarten teachers' perceptions of it remain strongly negative, understanding academic preparation for English language instruction must become a critical priority. This will not only entail restructuring existing training programs so as to prepare a new generation of kindergarten-level English teachers. It will also involve professional development of the current generation of kindergarten teachers.

This may be a significant challenge, and if the Ministry of Education does not endorse it, there could be an imbalance between outcomes for teachers who benefit from new academic preparation programs and those who do not. This probability is supported by the fact that the results of the study showed no statistically significant differences in perception towards needs

and challenges they face based on levels of teaching experience. Simply being more experienced as a kindergarten teacher will not make a teacher more confident or capable of teaching the English language. The negative perceptions revealed in this study appear to be almost entirely the result of the absence of relevant preparation. If new academic preparation programs are instituted, it will mitigate those perceptions and their consequences for teacher performance, but only among teachers who receive that new preparation. If access to such preparation is limited to pre-service teachers, the vast majority of kindergarten teachers, including all of those with substantial classroom experience, will be at a disadvantage with respect to the teaching of English.

Professional development programs for current teachers are necessary to prevent the quality of kindergarten English instruction from being reduced to a sort of lottery system. In absence of such professional development programs, there will be vast, random differences in the quality of English language instruction across classrooms. Teachers who complete new pre-service preparation in English language instruction will, presumably, have far better perceptions and capabilities. Those who are already working as teachers will generally have worse perceptions and capabilities. We might expect that in this situation the minority of students who are instructed by new teachers will acquire better English language skills than the vast majority of students who are taught by more experienced but less well-trained teachers.

Professional development programs are necessary to balance this discrepancy unless the Ministry of Education decides to take another approach to delivering English-language instruction to kindergartners. The results of this study reveal that an alternative strategy might meet great approval from current kindergarten teachers. Answers to the fifth research question (Open-ended question) indicated that 253 of teachers were in favor of the introduction of an

English-language specialist to the classroom. This was by far the most popular category of answer, though 117 answers demonstrated support for the sort of specialized, professional development described above. Additional research will be needed to determine which strategy will ultimately be easier to implement and more beneficial to teachers and students. In the meantime, however, teacher perceptions suggest that both of these options are worth exploring.

A- Teachers' Perceptions towards Learning Second Language at Kindergarten Age

The results of this study affirm that teachers recognize the value of introducing the English language to students at an early age, namely between three and a half and six years old. 78% of research participants either agreed or strongly agreed that this is an appropriate age at which to start teaching English. This essential question from the first domain returned a mean score of 3.04 out of 4.0. The average for the entire domain was calculated to be even higher, 3.12. This reflects particularly strong agreement that the teaching of English is becoming increasingly necessary in the era of globalization. As indicated in the literature review, this is an observation that has already been made by academics and stakeholders within various educational systems. The mean response out of 4.0 on this topic was 3.29, the highest of any of the 11 questions in the first domain (learning second language at kindergarten age). Only 12% disagreed and only 3% strongly disagreed with the idea that English is a growing necessity.

It is noteworthy that overall there are favorable perceptions towards early childhood English education holds in spite of the fact that the lowest level of agreement came in response to the question of whether such early English education would interfere with the development of Arabic language skills. This is the only question in the first domain to which the mean response was less than 3.0, though it was very close at 2.98. The significant agreement and the relatively small amount of disagreement may inform the discourse on the problems surrounding the

teaching of English at an early age. The Kuwaiti Ministry of Education and all other educational stakeholders need to consider these concerns as the current program develops and becomes standard practice. It may be a topic for further research to find out whether these concerns about reduced Arabic language skills are justified. If they are, or if they might be, it will be the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and individual teachers to design classroom curriculum in a way that compensates for any negative effect.

At the same time, the other responses to first domain questions make it clear that these concerns are not sufficient reason to reverse the kindergarten English program or limit its implementation. Apart from widespread acceptance of the necessity of teaching English, many respondents recognize several positive effects of doing so. These include increased confidence in students, increased levels of understanding of other cultures, improved social skills and relationships, higher academic achievement later in life, and greater motivation for continued learning of languages. Furthermore, teachers recognize positive effects of early childhood upon the successful learning of English. 85% of participants claimed that children in the specified age group are more efficient at learning a foreign language. All of this points to widespread acceptance of the value of maintaining a program of English language education in Kuwaiti kindergartens, in spite of possible adverse effects on both students and teachers.

The potential adverse effects upon teachers, as identified in this study, included increased workload. When asked whether English language education would lead to such an increase, participants agreed in large numbers. The mean response for that item was 3.12, with nearly half of participants strongly agreeing. While the emotional context of those responses is beyond the scope of this study, it seems fair to assume that this level of agreement implies a certain amount of anxiety about the prospect of teaching English as part of the new kindergarten curriculum.

The fact that teachers expect their workload to significantly increase is yet another source of evidence that education programs need to be developed and enhanced for teachers currently in service. There is little doubt that more adequate preparation for the teaching of English would reduce the extent to which teachers perceive their workload as being increased.

B- Teachers' Views towards English Curriculum

Levels of agreement on the second domain (English curriculum) were notably lower than levels of agreement on the first. The overall mean score on the seven questions related to English language curriculum was 2.73. This places it in the moderate-level of agreement, whereas the 3.12 figure for the first domain had been classified as high-level agreement. The lower figure can generally be attributed to the fact that agreement with second-domain statements was comparatively weak. On six of the seven questions, over half of respondents gave a score of 3.0, indicating that they agreed with the favorable statement about English curriculum but did not strongly agree. This appears to indicate that teachers have more reservations about the present Kuwaiti program of English-language education than they do about the general idea of English-language education for kindergarten students.

Any collective opinion that these teachers express about English-language curriculum must be taken with caution, however, in light of their own lack of preparation relevant to that curriculum. They are, of course, not in a particularly strong position to decide what is and is not an adequate English-language curriculum. Yet the questions are tailored to reflect the teachers' understanding of students of the kindergarten age group and the way they learn. In fact, statement 12 explicitly says, "The current English curriculum is commensurate with the ways children learn at this stage." If the weak agreement (and weak disagreement) about this

statement reflects uncertainty, it is fair to assume that that uncertainty concerns the curriculum itself and not the general needs of students at the kindergarten stage.

A more complete picture of teacher perceptions of English-language curriculum could be obtained if those teachers were better trained on the topic of English-language education. In that case, they would know more about methods of teaching EFL and the means by which students acquire second languages. Thus, they would be in a better position to decide what alternative curricula could be adopted in place of the current curriculum for Kuwaiti kindergartens. In the meantime, however, we can take the general absence of strong agreement with that curriculum to mean that it does not fully live up to the image that trained and experienced kindergarten teachers have in mind. This ideal image might change to reflect new information about English- and second-language acquisition. But it cannot be expected to change completely, since current teacher perceptions already reflect a fairly high level of understanding about students' needs.

On the basis of this understanding, policymakers should explore teachers' views about modifying the current English-language curriculum. This only adds to the importance of improved English-instruction training for kindergarten teachers. Since teacher views affect teacher instruction and student outcomes (Babich 2010; Pickens 2005; Qbeita 2011), teachers should be encouraged to help with designing and critiquing existing curricula. Favorable views are more likely if teachers have such a direct role. But in order to let them fill that role effectively, these same teachers must have a solid understanding of the English language, and foreign language teaching and learning methods. In this way, training, curriculum design, and teacher perceptions are all the result of ongoing dialogue. Whether improved teacher perceptions bring about improved curriculum or vice versa, the two are interconnected.

On the other hand, a change of curriculum might take another form altogether. Instead of

working very closely with kindergarten teachers, policymakers could move English language teachers into a merely supportive role with regard to teaching English. This would be in line with the expressed desire for an English-language specialist within the classroom. In a certain sense, such a change of personnel would constitute a complete change of curriculum. Of course, an English-language specialist would still operate within the existing kindergarten classrooms, so teachers' views would remain important. Teacher contributions to curriculum should be expected even in this case, but teachers would then only be expected to comment on the general needs of their students. They would not strictly need to have high-level understanding of English teaching methods, as long as their English specialists did have this knowledge.

C- Teachers' Needs in Order to Achieve the Goal of Teaching English Language

Responses in the third domain make it clear just how much this English-specialist alternative is desired by current teachers. When specifically asked whether such a specialist was needed for the teacher to achieve goals in teaching English, 69.6% strongly agreed and 18.9% agreed. The level of agreement in that item reached 88% (see appendix H), the mean score for that item was 3.52, the highest out of every item on the questionnaire. The need for limiting the number of children in the classroom was a close second, with a mean score of 3.48 and the level of agreement in this item reached 91%. There was also high agreement that additional training was needed for goal achievement, but this agreement was weaker. Over one quarter of respondents strongly agreed with the statement, but nearly half merely agreed and gave the item a score of three. The mean for that item was 2.93.

These three items all potentially indicate that many kindergarten teachers feel overwhelmed now that they have been tasked with the teaching of English. Their responses indicate a desire for someone else to either share the burden or take it completely. At the same

time, they want that burden itself to be reduced by limiting the number of students in their classrooms. If this interpretation is correct, then the comparatively weak response to the item concerning additional training can be explained as indicating that many teachers feel ill-prepared to teach English on their own, and thus believe that additional training would be futile or would increase their workload beyond what they can handle.

Oddly enough, it is quite possible that upon actually receiving additional training, these perceptions might begin to change in order to favor still more training. It seems clear that under current circumstances, kindergarten teachers do not feel prepared to take on the role of teaching English to kindergartners. It is thus the responsibility of policymakers and training institutions to either make them see that they are prepared or to instead rely on different persons to teach English to children of that age. If Kuwaiti policy decides for improved academic preparation, professional development programs and works to make teachers feel more prepared, this will be reflected in teacher perceptions about their own preparedness.

It seems fairly clear that the Kuwaiti system of teacher preparation is not doing this so far. Indeed, this study shows general disagreement with the statement that the Ministry of Education provides appropriate means and equipment for teaching English. There is also general disagreement with the statement that the district administrative supervisor provides relevant specialized academic workshops. This perception of a lack of support can be expected to contribute to a more general perception of personal inability to achieve English-teaching goals. Teacher needs can be filled by multiple means, but they must be addressed, or else poor teacher perceptions may reduce classroom performance and outcomes.

D- Teachers' Challenges in Teaching English Language

Of course, the Ministry of Education and its teacher preparation programs are not solely responsible for the needs of teachers newly tasked with teaching English. An assessment of the perception of teacher challenges makes that clear. However, it also suggests that poor or no preparation is indeed the most important problem faced by those teachers. Of the statements in the fourth domain (teachers challenges), the highest mean scores go to those that refer to either poor training or the teacher's own lack of ability. Teachers overwhelmingly agree or strongly agree that existing training is not helpful and that it does not allow the teacher to develop the students' skills at reading, writing, speaking, or understanding English. 71.3% of respondents agree or strongly agree that they have difficulty forming sentences in English. 77.5% agree or strongly agree that they are not sure of the most effective ways to teach English (see appendix H). Improved professional development programs can reduce all of these problems, and in light of these numbers, it must be instituted to do so.

The mean scores for all of the other statements in the fourth domain rank at the moderate level. Some of these concern the English curriculum, but others concern outside factors. 60.7% of respondents agree or strongly agree that students sometimes appear uninterested in learning the subject. To make matters worse, 69.1% agree or strongly agree that parents do not cooperate with the school to improve children's English language abilities. These observations clarify the fact that there are multiple sources for the problems facing the new kindergarten English-language program in Kuwait. Certainly, teacher training will not eliminate all challenges, and some of the additional challenges are quite serious. But the greatest agreement in teacher perceptions remains focused around topics that relate to their training and English-language abilities. Policymakers would do well to recognize that every stakeholder in the education

system has a role to play in delivering good outcomes. This includes parents and students themselves. The Ministry of Education and individual school districts should do what they can to promote widespread cooperation, but the most important elements of kindergarten English instruction are also the elements that are most within policymakers' power to change.

Differences across the Six School Districts

There were no statistically significant differences found for the perception of teacher needs among different school districts. This is an interesting result that seems to indicate a certain unity of perspectives about the teaching of kindergarten. This may be an effect of universal standards and techniques for kindergarten professional development, or it may be an effect of similar experiences with kindergarten students regardless of the specific location of the classroom. In any event, if teachers' perceptions of their needs are credible, the consistency of these results has pragmatic value for any new professional development programs that the Ministry of Education might implement. The location of a particular teaching assignment likely will not affect whether the training is beneficial, as long as it addresses these needs. Thus, policymakers do not need to worry about tailoring training in English instruction to specific districts. Professional development programs will be easier to implement than it would have been if needs varied from place to place.

Despite this consistency of perceptions about teacher needs, there is some geographic variation in responses to other domains. Though school districts do not affect what a teacher needs in order to teach English to kindergartners, they may affect whether the teacher believes that it is appropriate for them to do so. Teachers in the Al-Asimah and Hawalli school districts were significantly more likely than teachers in other districts to say that it was appropriate to teach English to students between the ages of three-and-a-half and six. This difference may be

attributable to the fact that the Al-Asimah and Hawalli districts are more urban than the others. That is, teachers in those districts are likely to be exposed to more ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity. The local conditions of those districts may contribute to the perception that there are practical benefits to learning how to interact with people other than Arabic speakers and native Kuwaitis. At the same time, teachers of students in these districts likely recognize that students are exposed to the same environment. Thus, they may regard those students as being naturally more prepared to learn about the languages and cultures surrounding them. Finally, more urban settings tend to have more diverse economies. Teachers in such districts are likely to be more aware of the importance of international business relations, so they may be more likely to see early introduction to English as important for later success in life.

On the other hand, teachers in more tribal settings may not have this exposure. Thus, they might think that English-language education is not relevant to a young child's life, and they might doubt whether it will be relevant to his career success later on. At the same time, teachers in more rural areas may face more community resistance to the idea of teaching English because those areas tend to be more heavily dominated by conservative values and tribal traditions. For teachers in more rural areas, it may be beneficial for pre-service and in-service training to emphasize the growing importance of English-language education. For these teachers, professional development programs can compensate for their lack of personal experience, as compared to urban teachers.

However, this may not be necessary. After all, significant differences were not found among school districts on the topic of whether English is a growing necessity in the modern world. It is important, however, to recognize the non-specific phrasing of this question. It is entirely possible that teachers in tribal areas recognize the general importance of English, but do

not see it as being important to their own communities or their own students. Further research could explore the difference between these general and specific perceptions. This might also reveal meaningful data about teachers' expectations of their own students' likely courses through life. However, that question concerns the general value of education and is well beyond the topic of this study. But low expectations of student outcomes might provide another explanation for why teachers in tribal areas see it as less appropriate to teach English to kindergartners. If they think education is less effective in tribal areas or that students are less responsive to it, they may see English-language education as being a distraction or a lost cause. On the other hand, the differences in perceived appropriateness of English education may be solely the result of cultural pressures, even in spite of the recognized importance of that education. More research will be needed to determine the cause of the difference and to determine how to counteract it.

Some significant differences between districts were also observed among perceptions of the English-language curriculum. Specifically, positive differences were observed in the Hawalli district and negative differences were observed in the Mubarak Al-Kabeer district. That is, teachers in Hawalli were significantly more likely than others to approve of the current English curriculum and teachers in Mubarak Al-Kabeer were significantly less likely. Again, this may be attributable to the urban characteristics of the Hawalli district. In addition, there are large communities of expatriates living in that district. Teachers with experience in a diverse, urban setting may believe themselves to have a better understanding of English or of how foreign languages are acquired. On the other hand, their approval of the curriculum may reflect a stronger tendency to accept the expertise of outside agents. Since there are no significant differences with regard to perceived English-language ability of teachers, these perceptions cannot explain different views about curriculum. Greater or lesser approval must have to do with

cultural differences. This presumably relates to how the English language itself is perceived. Rural teachers may recognize the need for English language education but prefer less rigorous curriculum than urban teachers. In order to confirm this, it would be necessary to investigate what sort of curriculum would be preferred by teachers in districts that demonstrate less approval for the existing curriculum.

Different perceptions of teacher challenges may also have some effect upon perceptions of curriculum. This study uncovered a range of significant differences in that domain. Teachers in the Al-Jahra and Al-Farwaniyah districts reported facing greater challenges in the teaching of English. Teachers in the Al-Asimah, Mubarak Al- Kabeer, and Al-Ahmadi districts indicated that they were less challenged. This may be related to demographic differences among these areas. Al-Jahra and Al-Farwaniyah are notably tribal and Bedouin areas. Parents and other community members in these areas may thus be more resistant to the introduction of English to their young children's education. This resistance can present its own challenges by discouraging children from taking an interest in the study, and preventing them from having support in their learning outside of the classroom. Meanwhile, the same negative perceptions towards English language education might be shared by teachers who reside in these same regions. Keenness to preserve cultural traditions or lack of interest in foreign languages may prevent teachers from seeking out the skills needed to teach English effectively. The teacher thus maintains the high level of difficulty she faces in teaching that subject. Mandatory professional development programs can help to make up for the effects of this lack of motivation, but cultural resistance to English language education is a problem of its own.

Differences Based on Graduate Institution

There were no statistically significant differences found for the teachers' perceptions among the two different graduate institutions. The one-way ANOVA test indicates lack of statistically significant differences at level (0.05) between their convictions and views in this regard. This shows that there is no impact due to differences among academic preparation institutions. Such a result could be due to the level of academic preparation programs in the academic preparation institutions, which are almost identical. Consequently, there is a similarity among the graduates of these institutions in exhibiting similar teaching skills, cultural backgrounds, and perspectives on teaching English in kindergarten stage.

Differences Based on Years of Experience

Among teachers with different levels of teaching experience, this study found no significant differences in views towards English language curriculum, teachers' needs, or teachers' challenges. It did, however, find that there were significant differences with respect to the question of whether the kindergarten level was an appropriate age at which to begin English language instruction. Teachers with five to ten years of experience in teaching at the kindergarten stage were more likely to approve of teaching English at that level than were teachers with less than five years of experience.

One likely explanation of this difference is that teachers are personalizing the question and responding on the basis of whether they are comfortable with English being taught in their own classrooms. It might be assumed that experienced kindergarten teachers are more comfortable with their existing responsibilities. Therefore, they may feel better prepared to take on new responsibilities. By contrast, inexperienced teachers may be less optimistic about their own ability to handle the task of teaching English in addition to the topics they were formally

trained for. With less experience of student progress, they may also have more doubts about the ability of young children to adapt to new curricula and effectively learn new subjects. Naturally, we can expect that better training in English instruction might help to reduce feelings of anxiety over being tasked with the teaching of English. Consequently, inexperienced teachers who are better trained in this area may become just as likely to approve of the kindergarten English program as more experienced teachers.

Teacher-Recommended Measures

The current beliefs in inadequate English language preparation and professional development appears to be a source of various teacher perceptions, including their perceptions toward what might be done by policymakers and curriculum designers to address their needs and challenges. These include holding specialized professional development programs and workshops and introducing an aid to the classrooms who is specialized in teaching English. Both of these measures would clearly serve to address a lack of preparation. The first specifically fills the gap by providing the missing preparation through different means. The other makes up for the lack of preparation by relying on another person who has already obtained it.

Other recommendations offered by teachers address problems in their physical environment. One of these recommendations is to create a special hall for the teaching of kindergarten-level English, complete with resources that would help teachers in doing so. Another is to reduce the number of children in existing classes, presumably so that teachers can provide individual instruction and better monitor the progress of each student. These different approaches to recommendations show that there is more than one deficiency that needs to be addressed in teaching kindergarten-level English. However, smaller class sizes and dedicated spaces for that subject cannot be expected to be effective if the teachers in those classrooms are

not highly trained in their subject. Fittingly, many teachers' responses to this question addressed both the lack of preparation and the problems with the physical environment. Teachers seemingly realize the need for change in multiple dimensions. And since the largest number of responses dealt with lack of preparation, it is likely that teachers also recognize that that issue must be addressed first and foremost.

Suggestions and Recommendations

In light of the teacher perceptions revealed in this study, the following suggestions and recommendations are made. There is significant room for improvement in the delivery of English language education to kindergarten students in Kuwait, and these points would likely address many of the deficiencies implied by teacher experience. At the same time, implementing them may help to improve overall teacher perceptions, which can be beneficial to classroom performance. These different goals are of concern to different stakeholders in the educational system.

It is up to teacher trainers and educational policymakers to see that procedures are in place to promote the most beneficial teacher perceptions. The effect of these improvements upon actual classroom practice is a separate topic from that of deliberate, in-class practices aimed at improving educational outcomes. Some recommendations may address that regardless of teacher perceptions, or they may assume teachers are amenable to procedural changes in their classrooms. These can be implemented by teachers themselves, while other recommendations regard teachers as the object of the change, and not the agent of it. As such, the current recommendations are organized into three categories: those intended for policymakers, those intended for teacher trainers, and those intended for teachers themselves.

For the Ministry of Education and for Policymakers at the District Level

- Confirm that current kindergarten English curriculum matches with up-to-date research about how children learn and behave at this age. If it does, include that information in training programs and classroom texts so that teachers are fully aware of it.
- Introduce regular, objective assessments of teachers' English language skills.
- Hire and prepare teaching aides to provide kindergarten teachers with additional support specifically related to the subject of English.
- Provide kindergartens with modern educational technologies that will contribute to the teaching the English language to children at the kindergarten stage.
- Provide a language lab to practice English-language activities in kindergartens equipped with certain means, such as computer language programs to teach the English language.
- Reduce the number of children in each classroom.
- Appoint kindergarten teachers who are specialists in teaching the English at that level.
- Utilize public relations and community outreach strategies to assure that there is little parent or community resistance to programs for early introduction of English education.

For Teacher Training Institutions

- Hold specialized courses in second language education for teachers in their pre-service preparation. Include topics related to second language acquisition theories, practical training as to how to teach the English language, and methods of assessing progress in learning the subject.
- Hold similar workshops and professional development programs for teachers in-service.
- Give adequate focus to training teachers in appropriate assessment methods.

- Integrate English curriculum into teacher training, so that teachers have a chance to see the usefulness of the material, or at least to fully articulate their objections to it.
- Teach specific and diverse applications of English to convey its general importance.
- Provide relevant cultural and social contexts alongside instruction in the English language and related teaching methods.
- Demonstrate the practical significance of English education for all Kuwaiti students, so that teachers will have greater motivation to teach the subject to their own students.

For In-Service Teachers

- Provide stimulating educational English programs to attract the child's attention and enrich their language capacity so as to retain students' interest in the subject.
- Integrate English language curricula into general education, maintaining awareness of the good effects that this can have on students. Encourage young children's unique ability to efficiently learn foreign languages, and use English education to promote development of student confidence and success in other subject areas, as well as to increase their motivation for pursuing foreign language education at later levels.
- Make use of any professional development courses or in-service training exercises that come to be introduced by the Ministry of Education or by individual districts. If a shortage of these programs persists, lobby for the creation of more. Use these as means of decreasing the stress and long-term workload involved with teaching English.
- Similarly, utilize advanced educational technologies, or lobby for their installation.
- Remain engaged with the general community. Monitor reactions of parents and other stakeholders to the expansion of English language education. Communicate an

understanding of the value of this subject in the twenty-first century, and the ways in which it can positively affect educational outcomes.

- Engage with other teachers and faculty in order to both solicit and provide support. In absence of adequate professional development from the Ministry of Education, organize professional development on a small scale. Wherever possible, utilize guest teachers who have notably greater competencies in certain English language sub-topics.

Future Research

This section has already touched upon several subjects that might call for further research. In general, it will be worthwhile to clarify the reasons for certain teacher perceptions, especially where there are demographic differences in those perceptions. For instance, there is an open question as to why teachers in different districts have different perceptions towards the appropriateness of kindergarten English education. A number of possibilities have been presented, but research would have to be conducted to determine whether these differences reflect cultural resistance to English in certain areas or whether they reflect different ideas about kindergarten-level education in general.

Closely related to this, there is reason to investigate whether differences exist in teachers' general perceptions about English-language education and their perceptions about teaching English to students in their own areas and their own classrooms. This topic could have implications not just for English-language education but for kindergarten education in general. If there are different perceptions towards the teaching of English in different areas, it likely means that there are different perceptions about either the abilities of students in those areas or their possibilities for later careers and life experiences.

Of course, these potential perceptions may or may not be justified. That is its own topic for further research. This also applies to many of the perceptions uncovered in this study. The question may be particularly significant with regard to teachers' views about English education reducing students' skills in Arabic. It must be demonstrated conclusively whether or not these perceptions are justified. If they are, then it raises significant questions about whether and how young students should be taught English. If they are not, then training and public education should be used to eliminate these perceptions. If unjustified negative perceptions persist, they block support for English language education for no good reason.

Finally, further research is needed in order to establish how the above recommendations can be implemented. Different strategies have been proposed for improving teacher delivery of English education and student outcomes. Sometimes, these recommendations reflect multiple approaches to the same problem. For instance, the introduction of an English language specialist to classrooms and the creation of professional development programs for current teachers have both been proposed as ways of making up for the deficiencies of current English preparation for kindergarten teachers. It may not be necessary, desirable, or possible for both of these strategies to be implemented at the same time, but in order to determine which is the better option or how both strategies should be divided, it will be necessary to first understand the costs and consequences of each, as well as the perceptions of teachers and other stakeholders towards each option. After all, as this study demonstrated, the perceptions of stakeholders are important for the successful implementation of new education curriculum.

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Appendix A1

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval (1)



UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board

October 18, 2012

MEMORANDUM

TO: Kawthar Habeeb
Felicia Lincoln

FROM: Ro Windwalker
IRB Coordinator

RE: New Protocol Approval

IRB Protocol #: 12-10-151

Protocol Title: *Kuwaiti Kindergarten Teachers' Perceptions toward Introducing English as a Foreign Language at Kindergarten*

Review Type: EXEMPT EXPEDITED FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 10/18/2012 Expiration Date: 10/17/2013

Your protocol has been approved by the IRB. Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. If you wish to continue the project past the approved project period (see above), you must submit a request, using the form *Continuing Review for IRB Approved Projects*, prior to the expiration date. This form is available from the IRB Coordinator or on the Research Compliance website (<http://vpred.uark.edu/210.php>). As a courtesy, you will be sent a reminder two months in advance of that date. However, failure to receive a reminder does not negate your obligation to make the request in sufficient time for review and approval. Federal regulations prohibit retroactive approval of continuation. Failure to receive approval to continue the project prior to the expiration date will result in Termination of the protocol approval. The IRB Coordinator can give you guidance on submission times.

This protocol has been approved for 300 participants. If you wish to make *any* modifications in the approved protocol, including enrolling more than this number, you must seek approval *prior to* implementing those changes. All modifications should be requested in writing (email is acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact me at 210 Administration Building, 5-2208, or irb@uark.edu.

Appendix A2
Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval (2)



UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

*Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board*

March 29, 2013

MEMORANDUM

TO: Kawthar Habeeb
Felicia Lincoln

FROM: Ro Windwalker
IRB Coordinator

RE: PROJECT MODIFICATION

IRB Protocol #: 12-10-151

Protocol Title: *Kuwaiti Kindergarten Teachers' Perceptions toward Introducing English as a Foreign Language at Kindergarten*

Review Type: EXEMPT EXPEDITED FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 03/29/2013 Expiration Date: 10/17/2013

Your request to modify the referenced protocol has been approved by the IRB. **This protocol is currently approved for 800 total participants.** If you wish to make any further modifications in the approved protocol, including enrolling more than this number, you must seek approval *prior to* implementing those changes. All modifications should be requested in writing (email is acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

Please note that this approval does not extend the Approved Project Period. Should you wish to extend your project beyond the current expiration date, you must submit a request for continuation using the UAF IRB form "Continuing Review for IRB Approved Projects." The request should be sent to the IRB Coordinator, 210 Administration.

For protocols requiring FULL IRB review, please submit your request at least one month prior to the current expiration date. (High-risk protocols may require even more time for approval.) For protocols requiring an EXPEDITED or EXEMPT review, submit your request at least two weeks prior to the current expiration date. Failure to obtain approval for a continuation *on or prior to* the currently approved expiration date will result in termination of the protocol and you will be required to submit a new protocol to the IRB before continuing the project. Data collected past the protocol expiration date may need to be eliminated from the dataset should you wish to publish. Only data collected under a currently approved protocol can be certified by the IRB for any purpose.

If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact me at 210 Administration Building, 5-2208, or irb@uark.edu.

210 Administration Building • 1 University of Arkansas • Fayetteville, AR 72701
 Voice (479) 575-2208 • Fax (479) 575-3846 • Email irb@uark.edu

The University of Arkansas is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution.

Appendix B

Permission Letter from College of Education at Kuwait University

مكتب العميد The Dean's Office	كلية التربية College of Education	جامعة الكويت Kuwait University	
رقم الصادر:	2012/11/12		
الفاضلة الأستاذة: ابتسام الحاي			
مديرة إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي - وزارة التربية			
تحية طيبة وبعد،،،			
أرجو التكرم بالموافقة على تطبيق الاستبانة المرفقة للسيدة كوثر حبيب المعينة			
بقسم المناهج وطرق التدريس لتطبيقها على مدارس رياض الأطفال في المناطق التعليمية			
المرفق أسماؤها في خطابنا، لأطروحة الدكتوراه في التربية من جامعة أركنسا - الولايات			
المتحدة الأمريكية.			
وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام،،،			
أفرح عميد كلية التربية			
أ.د. عبد الرحمن أحمد الأحمد			

Appendix C1

Permission Letter from Curricula Sector of the Kuwait Ministry of Education for School
District 1

75 / 30 / EA0085698/05/5000

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
Educational Research and
Curricula Sector
EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

وزارة التربية
قطاع البحوث التربوية والمناهج
إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي

التاريخ / / 14
الموافق 3 / 12 / 2014 م

الرقم : وت /
مرفقات /

السيدة المحترمة / أ. رقية علي غلوم
مدير عام منطقة الجهراء التعليمية
تحية طيبة وبعد ،،،

الموضوع / تسهيل مهمة

تقوم الطالبة / كوثر حبيب المعيدة المسجلة علي درجة الدكتوراة في جامعة أركنسا بالولايات المتحدة الأميركية بدراسة بعنوان "آراء معلمات رياض الأطفال ومعتقداتهم نحو إدخال اللغة الإنجليزية في منهج رياض الأطفال في دولة الكويت".

فيرجى تسهيل مهمة المذكورة أعلاه بتطبيق أداة البحث (استبانة) المختومة صفحاتها من إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي على المعلمات في رياض الأطفال في المدارس التالية :

Schools' name was not disclosed by the researcher for the ethical consideration of the study

التابعة لمنطقتكم التعليمية ، خلال العام الدراسي الحالي 2013/2012م.

مع خالص التحية

مدير إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي بالإتابة

د/ سميرة محمد عبدالمصطفى

نسخه للملف
Nawara

ص. ب : 16222 القادسية - 20803 الكويت - تلفون : 4824204 - 4838321 - فاكس : 4837909 - 4842404
P.O.Box : 16222 - QADSI AH - 35853- KUWAIT- Tel. : 4842404 - 4838321 - Fax : 4837909 - 4842404

Appendix C2

Permission Letter from Curricula Sector of the Kuwait Ministry of Education for School
District 2

75 / 30 / EA0085698/05/5000

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
Educational Research and
Curricula Sector
EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

وزارة التربية
قطاع البحوث التربوية والمناهج
إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي

الرقم : وت /
مرهقات / ٨٨

التاريخ / / هـ ١٤
الموافق ٢٣ / ١٢ / ٢٠١٩ م

السيدة المحترمة / أ. يسري عبد اللطيف العمر
مدير عام منطقة العاصمة التعليمية
تحية طيبة وبعد ،،،

الموضوع / تسهيل مهمة

تقوم الطالبة / كوثر حبيب المعينة المسجلة على درجة الدكتوراة في جامعة أركنسا
بالولايات المتحدة الأمريكية بدراسة بعنوان "أراء معلمات رياض الأطفال ومعتقداتهم نحو إدخال
اللغة الإنجليزية في منهج رياض الأطفال في دولة الكويت".

فيرجى تسهيل مهمة المذكورة أعلاه بتطبيق أداة البحث (استبانة) المختومة صفحاتها من إدارة
البحوث والتطوير التربوي على المعلمات في رياض الأطفال في المدارس التالية :

**Schools' name was not disclosed by the researcher for the ethical
consideration of the study**

التابعة لمنطقتكم التعليمية ، خلال العام الدراسي الحالي 2013/2012م.

مع خالص التحية

عم مدير إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي بالإتابة
د/ سميرة محمد عبد الرضا
[Signature]

- نسخة للملف
- Nawara

ص . ب : ١٦٢٢٢ القادسية - ٣٥٨٥٣ الكويت - تلفون : ٤٨٢٨٣٢١ - ٤٨٤٢٤٠٤ - فاكس : ٤٨٣٧٩٠٩ - ٤٨٤٢٤٠٤
P.O.Box : 16222 - QADSI AH - 35853- KUWAIT- Tel. : 4842404 - 4838321 - Fax : 4837909 - 4842404

Appendix C3

Permission Letter from Curricula Sector of the Kuwait Ministry of Education for School
District 3

75 / 30 / EA0085698/05/5000

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
Educational Research and
Curricula Sector
EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

وزارة التربية
قطاع البحوث التربوية والمناهج
إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي

التاريخ / / 14 هـ
الموافق 3 / 12 / 2013 م

الرقم : وت /
مرسقات / ٨٧٧

السيد المحترم / أ. عبدالله هلال الحربي
مدير عام منطقة حولى التعليمية
تحية طيبة وبعد ،،،

الموضوع / تسهيل مهمة

تقوم الطالبة / كوثر حبيب المعيدة المسجلة علي درجة الدكتوراة في جامعة أركنسا بالولايات المتحدة الأميركية بدراسة بعنوان "آراء معلمات رياض الأطفال ومعتقداتهم نحو إدخال اللغة الإنجليزية في منهج رياض الأطفال في دولة الكويت".

فيرجى تسهيل مهمة المذكورة أعلاه بتطبيق أداة البحث (استبانة) المختومة صفحاتها من إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي على المعلمات في رياض الأطفال في المدارس التالية :

Schools' name was not disclosed by the researcher for the ethical consideration of the study

التابعة لمنطقتكم التعليمية ، خلال العام الدراسي الحالي 2013/2012 م.

مع خالص التحية

عن مدير إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي بالإتابة

د/ سميرة محمد عبد الوهاب

نسخة للملف -
Nawara -

ص. ب. ١٦٢٢٢ القادسية - ٣٥٨٥٢ الكويت - تلفون : ٤٨٢٣٢٢١ - ٤٨٤٢٤٠٤ - فاكس : ٤٨٣٧٩٠٩ - ٤٨٤٢٤٠٤
P.O.Box : 16222 - QADSI AH - 35853- KUWAIT- Tel. : 4842404 - 4838321 - Fax : 4837909 - 4842404

Appendix C4

Permission Letter from Curricula Sector of the Kuwait Ministry of Education for School
District 4

75 / 30 / EA0085698/05/5000

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
Educational Research and
Curricula Sector
EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION



وزارة التربية
قطاع البحوث التربوية والمناهج
إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي

التاريخ / / 14
الموافق 3 / 12 / 2013 م

الرقم : وت /
مرهفات / 881

السيدة المحترمة / أ. بدرية الخالدي
مدير عام منطقة الفروانية التعليمية
تحية طيبة وبعد ،،،

الموضوع / تسهيل مهمة

تقوم الطالبة / كوثر حبيب المعينة المسجلة على درجة الدكتوراة في جامعة أركنسا بالولايات المتحدة الأميركية بدراسة بعنوان "آراء معلمات رياض الأطفال ومعتقداتهم نحو إدخال اللغة الإنجليزية في منهج رياض الأطفال في دولة الكويت".
فيرجى تسهيل مهمة المذكورة أعلاه بتطبيق أداة البحث (استبانة) المختومة صفحاتها من إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي على المعلمات في رياض الأطفال في المدارس التالية :

Schools' name was not disclosed by the researcher for the ethical consideration of the study

التابعة لمنطقتكم التعليمية ، خلال العام الدراسي الحالي 2013/2012م.

مع خالص التحية

مدير إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي بالإتابة

د. سيرة محمد عيسى
مدير إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي بالإتابة

- نسخة الملف
- Nawara

Appendix C5

Permission Letter from Curricula Sector of the Kuwait Ministry of Education for School
District 5

75 / 30 / EA0085698/05/5000

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
Educational Research and
Curricula Sector
EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION



وزارة التربية
قطاع البحوث التربوية والمناهج
إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي

التاريخ / / 14 هـ
الموافق 2 / 12 / 2013 م

الرقم : وت /
مرفقات / ٨٧٨

السيد المحترم/ أ. طلق صقر الهيم
مدير عام منطقة مبارك الكبير التعليمية
تحية طيبة وبعد ،،،

الموضوع / تسهيل مهمة

تقوم الطالبة / كوثر حبيب المعيدة المسجلة علي درجة الدكتوراة في جامعة أركنسا بالولايات المتحدة الأميركية بدراسة بعنوان "آراء معلمات رياض الأطفال ومعتقداتهم نحو إدخال اللغة الإنجليزية في منهج رياض الأطفال في دولة الكويت".

فيرجى تسهيل مهمة المذكورة أعلاه بتطبيق أداة البحث (استبانة) المختومة صفحاتها من إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي على المعلمات في رياض الأطفال في المدارس التالية :

Schools' name was not disclosed by the researcher for the ethical consideration of the study

التابعة لمنطقتكم التعليمية ، خلال العام الدراسي الحالي 2013/2012م.

مع خالص التحية

عم مدير إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي بالإتابة

د/سمية محمد عبد الوهاب
شخصية

تسليمه لعماد
Newara

ص . ب : ١٦٢٢٢ القادسية - ٢٥٨٥٣ الكويت - تلفون : ٤٨٢٨٢٢١ - ٤٨٤٢٤٠٤ - فاكس : ٤٨٢٧٩٠٩ - ٤٨٤٢٤٠٤
P.O.Box : 16222 - QADSI AH - 35853- KUWAIT- Tel. : 4842404 - 4838321 - Fax : 4837909 - 4842404

Appendix C6

Permission Letter from Curricula Sector of the Kuwait Ministry of Education for School
District 6

75 / 30 / EA0085698/05/5000

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
Educational Research and
Curricula Sector
EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION



وزارة التربية
قطاع البحوث التربوية والمناهج
إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي

التاريخ / / 14 هـ
الموافق 3 / 12 / 2013 م

الرقم : وت /
مرهقات / 819

السيدة المرحمة / أ. منى خالد الصلال
مدير عام منطقة الأحمدى التعليمية
تحية طيبة وبعد ،،،

الموضوع / تسهيل مهمة

تقوم الطالبة / كوثر حبيب المعيدة المسجلة علي درجة الدكتوراة في جامعة أركنسا بالولايات المتحدة الأمريكية بدراسة بعنوان "آراء معلمات رياض الأطفال ومعتقداتهم نحو إدخال اللغة الإنجليزية في منهج رياض الأطفال في دولة الكويت".
فيرجى تسهيل المهمة المذكورة أعلاه بتطبيق أداة البحث (استبانة) المختومة صفحاتها من إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي على المعلمات في رياض الأطفال في المدارس التالية :

Schools' name was not disclosed by the researcher for the ethical consideration of the study

التابعة لمنطقتكم التعليمية ، خلال العام الدراسي الحالي 2013/2012م.

مع خالص التحية

عم مدير إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي بالإتابة

د. سميرة محمد عبد الوهاب
مديرة إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي

تنسخة الملف
Nawara

ص. ب : 16222 القادسية - 35853 الكويت - تلفون : 4842404 - 4838321 - فاكس : 4842404 - 4837909
P.O.Box : 16222 - QADSI AH - 35853- KUWAIT- Tel. : 4842404 - 4838321 - Fax : 4837909 - 4842404

Appendix D1

Permission Letter from School District 1 for Schools Access


 دولة الكويت State of Kuwait
 وزارة التربية والتعليم
 MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
 الإدارة العامة لمنطقة الجهراء التعليمية



Ref. : 011033 المرجع
 Date : 11 DEC 2012 التاريخ

السيدات المحترمات / مديرات رياض الأطفال الثانية :

Schools' name was not disclosed by the researcher for the ethical consideration of the study

السلام عليكم ورحمته وبركاته ...

الموضوع / تسهيل مهمة


إشارة إلى الموضوع أعلاه، واستجابة لكتاب مدير إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي رقم ٨٨٢ بتاريخ ٢٠١٢/١٢/٣.

نحيطكم علماً أن الطالبة / كوثر حبيب المعينة المسجلة على درجة الدكتوراه في جامعة أركنسا بالولايات المتحدة الأمريكية تقوم بإجراء دراسة بعنوان " آراء معلمات رياض الأطفال ومعتقداتهم نحو إدخال اللغة الإنجليزية في منهج رياض الأطفال في دولة الكويت".

فيرجى تسهيل مهمة المذكور أعلاه، من خلال تطبيق أداة البحث (استبانة) المختومة صفحاتها من الإدارة المذكورة على المعلمات في رياضكم خلال العام الدراسي ٢٠١٢/٢٠١٣.

هذا المعلم وللأزم.

مع خالص التحية ...


 مدير عام
 الإدارة العامة لمنطقة الجهراء التعليمية


 وزارة
 التربية
 الإدارة العامة لمنطقة الجهراء التعليمية


 مدير عام
 الإدارة العامة لمنطقة الجهراء التعليمية

نسخة لكل من:

- مكتب المدير العام.
- إدارة الشؤون التعليمية.
- المنفذ ٢٠١٢/١٢/١
- أ/م.

Appendix D2

Permission Letter from School District 2 for Schools Access



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
CAPITAL EDUCATIONAL AREA
Director Manager office



وزارة التربية
الإدارة العامة لمنطقة العاصمة التعليمية
مكتب المدير العام

التاريخ: 06 / 01 / 2013 م

الرقم: بـ ٥ / ط ف ل

١١ Schools' name was not disclosed by the researcher for the ethical consideration of the study

تسهيل مهمة
الطالبة/ كوثر حبيب المعيدة

بالإشارة إلى كتاب مدير إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي رقم (880) المؤرخ في 03 / 12 / 2012م، بشأن الموضوع أعلاه،،،

تقوم الطالبة/ كوثر حبيب المعيدة - المسجلة على درجة الدكتوراه في جامعة أركنسا بالولايات المتحدة الأمريكية بدراسة بعنوان - آراء معلمات رياض الأطفال ومعتقداتهم نحو إدخال اللغة الإنجليزية في منهج رياض الأطفال في دولة الكويت -

لذا يرجى تسهيل مهمة المذكورة أعلاه بتطبيق أداة الدراسة (استبانة) المختومة صفحاته من إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي على معلمات الروضة.

وذلك خلال الفصل الدراسي العالي 2012 / 2013م.

شاكراً من نفاؤكم

مدير عام
منطقة العاصمة التعليمية

ياسر بن محمد اللطيف العبدالله
مدير عام
الإدارة العامة لمنطقة العاصمة التعليمية



وزارة التربية
منطقة العاصمة التعليمية
المدير العام

لسخ

- مدير عام المنطقة
- مدير إدارة الشؤون التعليمية
- الملف
- السادة بـ ٥ / ط ف ل

www.moe.edu.kw

Appendix D3

Permission Letter from School District 3 for Schools Access

57/30/EA0092455/10/25000



وزارة التربية
الإدارة العامة لمنطقة حولي التعليمية
مكتب المدير العام



رقم : ٨٣١ /
التاريخ : ١٤ / ١٤ / ٢٠١٢

**نشرة عامة رقم (٦٨ / ٢٠١٢ م)
لجميع رياض الأطفال**

**السيدات المحترمات / مديرات رياض الأطفال
تحية طيبة وبعد ،،،**

الموضوع

تسهيل مهمة الطالبة / كوثر حبيب

يرجى التكرم بتسهيل مهمة الطالبة / **كوثر حبيب** من جامعة أركنسا بالولايات المتحدة الأمريكية المسجلة على درجة الدكتوراه ، لإجراء بحث ميداني وذلك كجزء من متطلبات مقرر بعنوان " **آراء معلمات رياض الأطفال ومعتقداتهم نحو إدخال اللغة الانجليزية في منهج رياض الأطفال في دولة الكويت** " والهدف من الزيارة هي تطبيق أداة الاستبانة على عينة من المعلمات في رياض الأطفال خلال الفصل الدراسي الحالي ٢٠١٢/٢٠١٣ م .

مع خالص التحية ،،،

مدير عام منطقة حولي التعليمية

عبدالله فهد المرزوقي
مدير عام منطقة حولي التعليمية

وزارة التربية
إدارة منطقة حولي التعليمية

نسخة لكل من :

- الوكيل المساعد للتعليم العام .
- مدير الشؤون التعليمية .
- مراقبة رياض الأطفال .
- الملف .
- ط. باسمه حسين *

Appendix D4

Permission Letter from School District 4 for Schools Access

75 / 30 / EA0028065 / 06 / 5000



وزارة التربية
الإدارة العامة لمنطقة الفروانية التعليمية
مكتب مدير إدارة الشؤون التعليمية

التاريخ: / / ٢٠٠
الرقم: و / ط / ل /

السيدات الفضليات مديرات رياض الأطفال

تحية طيبة وبعد ،،،

الموضوع : تسهيل مهمة

يرجى تسهيل مهمة الطالبة (كوثر حبيب) المسجلة على درجة الدكتوراه في جامعة أركنسا بالولايات المتحدة الأمريكية بدراسة بعنوان (أراء معلمات رياض الأطفال ومعتقداتهم نحو إدخال اللغة الانجليزية في منهج رياض الأطفال في دولة الكويت).
يرجى التكرم بتسهيل مهمة المذكورة أعلاه بتطبيق أداة الدراسة (استبانة) المختومة صفحاتها من إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي على عينه من معلمات رياض الأطفال التالية

Schools' name was not disclosed by the researcher for the ethical consideration of the study

خلال الفصل الدراسي الحالي ٢٠١٢/٢٠١٣م

مع خالص شكرنا وتقديرنا ..

مدير إدارة الشؤون التعليمية

مراقب شؤون التعليم
محافظة الفروانية التعليمية

نسخة لكل من :-

مدير الشؤون التعليمية

Appendix D5

Permission Letter from School District 5 for Schools Access

 <p>الجمهورية العربية الكويتية وزارة التربية والتعليم MINISTRY OF EDUCATION 1962 - 2012</p>	<p>الجمهورية العربية الكويتية وزارة التربية والتعليم MINISTRY OF EDUCATION</p>	
Ref. :	الرجوع :	
Date :	التاريخ :	
<p>نشرة خاصة رياض الاطفال</p>		
<p>سيدات الفاضلات / مديرات رياض الاطفال المحترمات</p>		
<p>Schools' name was not disclosed by the researcher for the ethical consideration of the study</p>		
<p>تحية طيبة وبعد...</p>		
<p>الموضوع / تسهيل مهمة</p>		
<p>تقوم الطالبة / كوثر حبيب المسجلة على درجة الدكتوراه في جامعة أركنسا بالولايات المتحدة الأمريكية بدراسة بعنوان - آراء معلمات رياض الاطفال ومعتقداتهم نحو إدخال اللغة الانجليزية في منهج رياض الاطفال في دولة الكويت - فيرجى تسهيل مهمة المذكورة أعلاه من خلال تطبيق أداة البحث (استبانة) على المعلمات في رياض الاطفال. خلال الفصل الدراسي الحالي ٢٠١٢/٢٠١٣ م</p>		
<p>مع خالص التحية...</p>		
<p>مدير عام منطقة مبارك الكبير التعليمية</p>		
 <p>وزارة التربية والتعليم الإدارة العامة لمنطقة مبارك الكبير التعليمية</p>	<p>بمصلحة تعليمية - المدير العام - مدير إدارة الشؤون التعليمية - مراقب رياض الاطفال - النقف ٢٠١٢/١٠/١٥</p>	
<p>ص.ب : ٧ الصفاة - الرمز البريدي ١٣٠٠١ الكويت P.O.Box 7 Safat - Code 13001 Kuwait www.moe.edu.kw</p>		

Appendix D6

Permission Letter from School District 6 for Schools Access

15/30/EA 0000388/08/2010

الوزارة التربية
الإدارة العامة لمنطقة الأحمدى التعليمية
مكتب المدير العام

التاريخ: 15/30/10
المراسل: رقم الاشارة:

Schools' name was not disclosed by the researcher for the ethical consideration of the study

تحية طيبة وبعد،،

الموضوع : تسهيل مهمة الأستاذة / كوثر حبيب المعينة - المسجلة على درجة الدكتوراه
- جامعة أركنسا بالولايات المتحدة الأمريكية

فيالإشارة إلى المذكورة أعلاه يرجى تسهيل مهمتها لتطبيق أداة البحث (استبانة) و المختومة صفحاتها من إدارة البحوث و التطوير التربوي وذلك على العلامات ليكم.

شاكرين حسن تعاونكم
وتفضلوا مع التحية

مدير عام منطقة الأحمدى التعليمية
C.14.114 112

الإدارة العامة لمنطقة الأحمدى التعليمية

السؤال
مراجعة رئيس المجالس
أستدريه 2010.12.11

عنوان: 1247، الرمز البريدي 50453 - أوكلاهوما، تكساس - 23923523 - 23923525 - 23923524 - 23923524

Appendix E
Informed Consent



Dear teacher,

The purpose of the enclosed survey is to identify Kuwaiti kindergarten teachers' beliefs and perceptions toward introducing English as a foreign language (EFL) in the kindergarten curriculum. I am inviting you to participate in this research study by completing the attached survey; I will use the data for my doctoral dissertation.

The survey consists of 34 items and will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. There are no risks anticipated with this study. The survey is voluntary and your individual responses will be kept confidential, and they shall be used only for the purposes of the research. **By filling out and returning the survey you indicate your willingness to participate in this study.**

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors. If you have questions or concerns about this study and your rights as a research participant, or if you would like to know the result of the study, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your cooperation

Sincerely,

Kawthar Habeeb, Graduate Student
Dept. of Curriculum and Instruction
Peabody Hall
University of Arkansas

Ro Windwalker, Compliance Coordinator
Research Support & Sponsored Programs/Compliance
irb@uark.edu
1-479-575-2208

Appendix F
English Version of the Survey

Dear teacher,

The purpose of the enclosed survey is to identify Kuwaiti kindergarten teachers' beliefs and perceptions toward introducing English as a foreign language (EFL) in the kindergarten curriculum. I am inviting you to participate in this research study by completing the attached survey; I will use the data for my doctoral dissertation.

The survey consists of 34 items and will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. There are no risks anticipated with this study. The survey is voluntary and your individual responses will be kept confidential, and they shall be used only for the purposes of the research. **By filling out and returning the survey you indicate your willingness to participate in this study.**

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors. If you have questions or concerns about this study and your rights as a research participant, or if you would like to know the result of the study, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your cooperation

Sincerely,

Kawthar Habeeb, Graduate Student
Dept. of Curriculum and Instruction
Peabody Hall
University of Arkansas

Ro Windwalker, Compliance Coordinator
Research Support & Sponsored Programs/Compliance

Part One: Demographic Information

Please fill in your personal information, put (X) next to each category that represents you.

(1) School District:

- | | | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Al-Jahra | <input type="checkbox"/> | Al- Asimah | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hawalli | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Al-Farwaniyah | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mubarak Al- Kabeer | <input type="checkbox"/> | Al-Ahmadi | <input type="checkbox"/> |

(2) Academic Qualifications:

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|-------------------|---|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Diploma | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bachelor's degree | → | Kuwait University | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Master's degree | <input type="checkbox"/> | | → | College of Basic Education | <input type="checkbox"/> |

(3) Years of Experience:

- | | | | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Less than 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5-10 | <input type="checkbox"/> | More than 10 years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|-------------|--------------------------|------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|

(4) Pre-service and in-service teachers' preparation and professional development:

a. Did you study second language acquisition theories in the pre-service educational preparation?

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|

b. Did you study methods of teaching second language in the pre-service educational preparation?

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|

c. Did you study methods of second language assessments in the pre-service educational preparation?

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|

d. The Ministry of Education offers enough training courses to prepare kindergarten teachers for teaching the English language.

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|

Part Two: Questionnaire

Indicate your opinion after each statement by circle the number that best indicates the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement.

No.	Statement	Agreement Degree			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Kindergarten age (3 ½ -before 6) is an appropriate stage to start teaching children English.	1	2	3	4
2	Learning English in kindergarten will not negatively affect students' Arabic language development.	1	2	3	4
3	Learning English at an early age will positively impact students' scholastic achievement in later years.	1	2	3	4
4	Teaching English in kindergarten is becoming a contemporary necessity required in the globalized world.	1	2	3	4
5	Younger children are more efficient at second language learning than older children.	1	2	3	4
6	Teaching children English in kindergarten increases their self-confidence.	1	2	3	4
7	Learning a second language in kindergarten increases the child's ability to develop social relationships with others.	1	2	3	4
8	Teaching children English in kindergarten increases their levels of motivation for learning languages in later stages of education.	1	2	3	4
9	Teaching children a second language in kindergarten improves their levels of understanding of other cultures.	1	2	3	4
10	Teaching English in kindergarten increases the workload of teachers.	1	2	3	4
11	Introduction of teaching English in the kindergarten is an excellent decision.	1	2	3	4
12	The current English curriculum is commensurate with the ways children learn at this stage.	1	2	3	4
13	The current English language objectives are linking students' lives with curriculum	1	2	3	4

No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
14	The English language curriculum is commensurate with the characteristics of children's age in this stage.	1	2	3	4
15	The current English language assessment is useful to indicate my students' achievement	1	2	3	4
16	The Student Workbook is fitted with the current English language objectives.	1	2	3	4
17	The student's workbook contains the necessary knowledge and activities for children to learn English.	1	2	3	4
18	The current English language objectives focus on the cognitive, affective aspects and psychomotor skills in an integrated manner.	1	2	3	4
19	Allocate English language specialist in the classroom.	1	2	3	4
20	I could benefit from additional specialized training sessions to develop my capacity to teach English.	1	2	3	4
21	The ministry of education provides appropriate means and equipment for teaching English.	1	2	3	4
22	Limit the number of children in my classroom.	1	2	3	4
23	The kindergarten administrative supervisor in my district offers specialized academic workshops on second language assessment methods.	1	2	3	4
24	There are useful technologies in my classroom that can help me in teaching English.	1	2	3	4
25	The training opportunities provided for teaching English to kindergartners is not helpful.	1	2	3	4
26	From my academic preparation, I cannot develop the child's English language skills (listening - speaking - writing - reading).	1	2	3	4
27	I have difficulty with making sentences in English.	1	2	3	4
28	I'm not sure of the most effective ways to teach English.	1	2	3	4
29	I have difficulty using the supplemental technology in my classroom.	1	2	3	4
30	The current Teacher's Guidebook is not helpful for teachers in teaching English.	1	2	3	4

No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
31	Parents do not cooperate with the school to improve their children's English language ability.	1	2	3	4
32	Some children do not appear interested in English.	1	2	3	4
33	The current English curriculum is long and intensive for children in this age.	1	2	3	4
34	I do not know enough about cultures in English-speaking countries.	1	2	3	4

Part Three: Teachers' suggestions.

- From your point of view what is the most important suggestion or recommendation you would give to improve the quality of English language program in Kuwaiti kindergarten?

Thank you very much for your participation in this study. Your responses are valuable and important to me.

Researcher: Kawthar Habeeb

Appendix G
Arabic Version of the survey

عزيزتي المعلمه،

ان الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو استطلاع آراء معلمات رياض الأطفال ومعتقداتهم نحو إدخال اللغة الإنجليزية في منهج رياض الأطفال بالكويت. أَدعوكن للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة البحثية من خلال استكمال الاستبيان المرفق، وسوف تستخدم البيانات لأطروحة الدكتوراه.

الاستبيان يحتوي على 34 سؤال، و سوف يستغرق ما يقارب من 10 إلى 15 دقيقة للإكمال. لا توجد مخاطر متوقعة في هذه الدراسة. مشاركتكن في هذه الدراسة ماهي إلا تطوعا، واجاباتكن الفرديه ستكون سرية. الاستبيان سوف يستخدم الترميز للمنطقة التعليمية فقط ، حيث إنه لن يتم تسجيل اسماء المعلمات. وسيتم التخلص من البيانات بعد الانتهاء من الدراسة. تعبئة وإعادة الاستبيان يشير إلى موافقتكن للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة.

أشكركن على مساعدتكن لتحقيق المساعي التربوية. إذا كان لديكن تساؤلات أو أية مخاوف حول حقوقكن كمشاركات في هذه الدراسة، او إذا كنتن ترغبن في معرفة نتائج الدراسة، لا تترددن في الاتصال على الهاتف المذكور ادناه. أشكركن على تعاونكن .

الباحثة،

كوثر حبيب، طالبة دراسات عليا

قسم المناهج وطرق التدريس

جامعة أركنسا

رو- ويند والكر، منسق الابحاث

قسم رعاية ودعم الأبحاث الأكاديمية

جامعة اركنسا

الجزء الأول: معلومات ديموغرافية

يرجى ملأ المعلومات الشخصية الخاصة بك، بوضع علامة (X) بجانب العبارة التي تمتلك.

(1) المنطقة التعليمية

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | الجهراء | <input type="checkbox"/> | العاصمة | <input type="checkbox"/> | حولي |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | الفروانية | <input type="checkbox"/> | مبارك الكبير | <input type="checkbox"/> | الأحمدي |

(2) المؤهل الأكاديمي

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | دبلوم | <input type="checkbox"/> | بكالوريوس | <input type="checkbox"/> | جامعة الكويت |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | ماجستير | <input type="checkbox"/> | | <input type="checkbox"/> | كلية التربية الأساسية |

(3) سنوات الخبرة

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------|--------------------------|--------|--------------------------|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | أقل من 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10 - 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | أكثر من 10 سنوات |
|--------------------------|----------|--------------------------|--------|--------------------------|------------------|

(4) الإعداد والتدريب قبل وبعد الخدمة

أ- هل درست نظريات اكتساب اللغة الأجنبية في مرحلة الإعداد الأكاديمي قبل الخدمة؟

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|-----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | لا | <input type="checkbox"/> | نعم |
|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|-----|

ب- هل درست طرق تدريس اللغة الأجنبية في مرحلة الإعداد الأكاديمي قبل الخدمة؟

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|-----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | لا | <input type="checkbox"/> | نعم |
|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|-----|

ج- هل درست طرق تقييم اللغة الأجنبية في مرحلة الإعداد الأكاديمي قبل الخدمة؟

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|-----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | لا | <input type="checkbox"/> | نعم |
|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|-----|

د- وزارة التربية وفرت دورات تدريبية كافية لإعداد معلمات رياض الأطفال لتدريس اللغة الانجليزية.

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|-----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | لا | <input type="checkbox"/> | نعم |
|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|-----|

الجزء الثاني: الاستبيان

بعد كل عبارته، اشيري إلى رأيك بوضع دائرة (O) حول الرقم الذي يشير الى درجة موافقتك او عدم موافقتك على العبارته.

م	العبارة	درجة الموافقة			
		غير موافقه بشده	غير موافقه	موافقه بشدة	
1	سن الروضة (3½-6) سنوات مناسب للبدء في تعليم الأطفال اللغة الإنجليزية.	1	2	3	4
2	تعلم الطفل اللغة الإنجليزية في مرحلة رياض الأطفال لن يؤثر سلباً على تعلمه اللغة العربية.	1	2	3	4
3	تعلم الطفل للغة الإنجليزية في سن مبكرة يؤثر إيجاباً على تحصيله في المراحل الدراسية اللاحقة.	1	2	3	4
4	تدريس اللغة الانجليزية في مرحلة رياض الأطفال أصبحت ضرورة في عصر العولمة.	1	2	3	4
5	تعليم اللغة الانجليزية بالسن الأصغر للأطفال أكثر فعالية من تعلمها بسن اكبر.	1	2	3	4
6	تعليم الأطفال اللغة الإنجليزية في مرحلة الرياض يزيد من ثقتهم بأنفسهم.	1	2	3	4
7	تعليم الأطفال اللغة الإنجليزية في مرحلة الرياض يزيد من قدرتهم على تكوين علاقات اجتماعية مع الآخرين.	1	2	3	4
8	تعليم الأطفال اللغة الإنجليزية في مرحلة الرياض يزيد من مستوى دافعيتهم للتعلم في المراحل التالية.	1	2	3	4
9	تعليم اطفال الرياض لغة ثانية يحسن من مستويات فهمهم للثقافات الأخرى.	1	2	3	4
10	تعليم الأطفال اللغة الإنجليزية في الروضة يزيد من عبء العمل لدى المعلمات.	1	2	3	4
11	إدخال اللغة الإنجليزية في رياض الأطفال هو قرار ممتاز.	1	2	3	4
12	منهج اللغة الانجليزية يتناسب مع طرق تعلم الأطفال في هذه المرحلة.	1	2	3	4

م	العبرة	غير موافقه بشده	غير موافقه	موافقه بشدة
13	الأهداف الحالية لمنهج اللغة الانجليزية مرتبطه بحياة الطفل.	1	2	3
14	منهج اللغة الانجليزية يتناسب مع خصائص المرحلة العمرية للطفل.	1	2	3
15	الوسائل التقييمية المستخدمة للغة الانجليزية تعطي مؤشرات مفيدة حول انجاز الطفل.	1	2	3
16	كراس الطفل يتناسب مع أهداف اللغة الانجليزية.	1	2	3
17	كراس الطفل يحتوي على المعارف والانشطة اللازمة لتعلم اللغة الانجليزية.	1	2	3
18	تركز أهداف اللغة الانجليزية على الجوانب المعرفية والوجدانية والنفس حركية بشكل متكامل.	1	2	3
19	تخصيص معلمة لغة انجليزية في الفصل.	1	2	3
20	يمكنني ان استفيد من الدورات التدريبية المتخصصة لتطوير قدراتي في تدريس اللغة الانجليزية.	1	2	3
21	وفرت وزارة التربية الوسائل والتجهيزات الملائمة لتعليم اللغة الانجليزية.	1	2	3
22	تقليل عدد الأطفال بالفصول الدراسية.	1	2	3
23	التوجيه الفني في منطقتي التعليمية وفرت الورش التعليمية المتخصصة في تقييم انجاز الطفل في اللغة الانجليزية	1	2	3
24	توجد تقنيات تكنولوجية مفيدة في الفصل تساعدني في تدريس اللغة الانجليزية.	1	2	3
25	الدورات التدريبية المتاحة غير مفيدة (من حيث الجودة) في تدريس اللغة الانجليزية.	1	2	3
26	إعدادي الاكاديمي لا يساعدني على تنمية مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية لدى الأطفال (الاستماع-المحادثة-الكتابة-القراءة).	1	2	3
27	أجد صعوبة في تركيب الجمل الانجليزية.	1	2	3
28	لست متأكدة من الطرق الأكثر فعالية في تدريس اللغة الانجليزية.	1	2	3
29	أجد صعوبه في استخدام الأدوات التكنولوجية في الفصل.	1	2	3
30	دليل المعلمه الحالي لا يساعد في تدريس اللغة الانجليزية.	1	2	3

م	العبارة	غير موافقه بشده	غير موافقه	موافقه بشدة	موافقه بشدة
31	أولياء الامور لا يتعاونون مع المدرسة لتحسين قدرة اطفالهم باللغة الانجليزية.	1	2	3	4
32	يظهر عدم اهتمام بعض الأطفال باللغة الانجليزية.	1	2	3	4
33	المنهج الحالي للغة الانجليزية يظهر طويل ومكثف للأطفال في هذا العمر.	1	2	3	4
34	لا اعرف بما فيه الكفاية عن ثقافات البلدان الناطقة باللغة الانجليزية.	1	2	3	4

الجزء الثالث: اقتراحات المعلمات

من وجهة نظرك ما هي أهم الأقتراحات أوالتوصيات التي من شأنها أن تحسن من جودة برنامج اللغة الإنجليزية في رياض الأطفال في الكويت؟

شكرا جزيلاً على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة، وجهة نظرك قيمة ومهمة بالنسبة لي.

الباحثة: كوثر حبيب

جامعة اركنسا- الولايات المتحدة الامريكية.

Appendix H
Descriptive Data for Item Levels of Agreement

No.	Statement	Level of Agreement
1	Kindergarten age (3 ½ -before 6) is an appropriate stage to start teaching children English.	78%
2	Learning English in kindergarten will not negatively affect students' Arabic language development.	76%
3	Learning English at an early age will positively impact students' scholastic achievement in later years.	81%
4	Teaching English in kindergarten is becoming a contemporary necessity required in the globalized world.	84%
5	Younger children are more efficient at second language learning than older children.	85%
6	Teaching children English in kindergarten increases their self-confidence.	83%
7	Learning a second language in kindergarten increases the child's ability to develop social relationships with others.	80%
8	Teaching children English in kindergarten increases their levels of motivation for learning languages in later stages of education.	81%
9	Teaching children a second language in kindergarten improves their levels of understanding of other cultures.	83%
10	Teaching English in kindergarten increases the workload of teachers.	73%
11	Introduction of teaching English in the kindergarten is an excellent decision.	77%
12	The current English curriculum is commensurate with the ways children learn at this stage.	68%
13	The current English language objectives are linking students' lives with curriculum	67%

14	The English language curriculum is commensurate with the characteristics of children's age in this stage.	70%
15	The current English language assessment is useful to indicate my students' achievement	58%
16	The Student Workbook is fitted with the current English language objectives.	72%
17	The student's workbook contains the necessary knowledge and activities for children to learn English.	71%
18	The current English language objectives focus on the cognitive, affective aspects and psychomotor skills in an integrated manner.	62%
19	Allocate English language specialist in the classroom.	88%
20	I could benefit from additional specialized training sessions to develop my capacity to teach English.	74%
21	The ministry of education provides appropriate means and equipment for teaching English.	44%
22	Limit the number of children in my classroom.	91%
23	The kindergarten administrative supervisor in my district offers specialized academic workshops on second language assessment methods.	31%
24	There are useful technologies in my classroom that can help me in teaching English.	45%
25	The training opportunities provided for teaching English to kindergartners is not helpful.	79%
26	From my academic preparation, I cannot develop the child's English language skills (listening - speaking - writing - reading).	76%
27	I have difficulty with making sentences in English.	71%
28	I'm not sure of the most effective ways to teach English.	77%
29	I have difficulty using the supplemental technology in my classroom.	33%

30	The current Teacher's Guidebook is not helpful for teachers in teaching English.	60%
31	Parents do not cooperate with the school to improve their children's English language ability.	69%
32	Some children do not appear interested in English.	61%
33	The current English curriculum is long and intensive for children in this age.	47%
34	I do not know enough about cultures in English-speaking countries.	58%