

A Qualitative Case Study of Male Teachers' Challenges Teaching Reading in Elementary Classrooms in KSA (Part 1)

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LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviewed the theoretical and research literature related to teaching reading in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). This chapter presents an overview and history of education in the KSA, discusses previous research on teaching reading in the KSA, and outlines reading components. Finally, a summary of the chapter is presented.

* Introduction

Reading is the most important skill for a student's academic success (Kamil, 2003). A skilled reader is able to comprehend and learn from a

variety of texts, narrative as well as expository (Koda & Zehler, 2007; Piper, 2016). Scholars have suggested that students' academic failure can be attributed to low reading proficiency (Ehri, 2006; Endress, Weston, Marchand-Martella, & Martella, 2007; Schwanenflugel, & Knapp, 2016; Wulanir, & Pandjaitan, 2017). Consequently, teaching children to read at an early age plays a crucial role in their future learning (Kamil, 2003; Tong, Deacon, & Cain, 2014). A lack of ability in comprehension and fluency may result in an overall

weakness in reading and learning (Rasinski, 2012; Rasinski, 2016).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is a country that has invested significant resources into their education at both the public school and university level. In fact, KSA has spent approximately 27% of its annual budget on education (website of Ministry of Education, 2017). Although there has been a large educational investment with a focus on reading, students are still not at acceptable reading levels (Alduraby & Liu, 2014; Almoaiqel, 2014; Alnassar, 2000; Al-Qahtani, 2016; Thouqan Saleem Yakoub, 2015). Therefore, this literature review examined and synthesized research centered on teaching reading in KSA schools.

*** Overview of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's education is housed under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, who is the minister appointed by the King of the country for a duration of four years. The Ministry of Education was established in 1957 (Alrobaee, 2004) and oversees three different types of education: (1)

public education, including pre-school programs, elementary, middle, and high schools; (2) higher education, including 33 universities; and, (3) technical institutions across the country (Alrobaee, 2004; Website of the Ministry of Education, 2017).

In the KSA, there are four overall goals of education: (1) to teach the Islamic religion in a comprehensive manner; (2) to give students varied required skills and knowledge; (3) to provide the students with ideal values that will make them productive members of society; and (4) to develop their conduct in a constructive direction to help improve the society economically and culturally (UNESCO, 2011).

Almost all students, including non-citizens, participate in 12 years of public or private school education. Consequently, all children who live inside the KSA border have a school available to them if they are within the school-age range. Across KSA, there are 42 educational districts that supervise all schools under their jurisdiction. Education in KSA is based on gender separation for all levels, with an exception in medical

colleges only (Website of the Ministry of Education, 2017).

Higher education for students in KSA generally lasts four years. Additionally, some major universities offer masters and doctorate degrees. The number of universities is growing rapidly because of the high demand for higher education degrees. There are over 35 private and public universities. At some point, the government could not meet the demand of higher education, which led decision makers to create a scholarship program to enable certain number of students to study abroad as a way to learn current knowledge, intended to help improve and advance some parts of the country (Website of the Ministry of Education, 2017).

*** History of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

Education in KSA officially began in the 1930s, with the founder of the third KSA government, King Abdul-Aziz (Wynbrandt, 2004). Prior to the 1930s, there were a few informal schools scattered across the country. These schools used to teach religion and basic knowledge, like reading and writing. Few formal schools were

created, mostly by volunteers, from inside or outside the country. For example, according to Wikipedia, an Indian woman created a formal school in Makkah, which is a city in KSA, in 1860s called Alsoltia School. This school was operated for around 150 years.

In the 1960s, KSA was classified as one of the poorest countries in the world. However, at that time, the government prioritized the education sector increasing access to schools, made a significant difference in the whole country had a positive impact on other sectors of the government in less than forty years (Alrobaee, 2004). For example, in 1951, there were 266 schools in KSA. Today, the number of schools is more than 30,000 nationwide (Tarabishi, 2002). The difference between the two numbers demonstrates not only the expansion of education in the KSA, but also the importance the role of education began to play in the country.

In the 1960s, the Ministry of Education created a general office for females' education. This office was responsible for developing programs and curricula focused on educating

females, which was absent prior to the expansion. This office helped to advance females education (UNESCO, 2011).

In 1962, the Ministry began special education services for male students. Initially focusing on services for the blind male. In 1964, the government added special education services for females as well (Aldabas, 2015; Al-Mousa, 2010; Alnahdi, 2014). That initiative were the foundation of special education services. At present, services for special education students are provided to all 13 known categories in special education; the categories are similar to those in the United States under IDEIA, ranging from autism to visual impairment (Aldabas, 2015; Al-Mousa, 2010; Alnahdi, 2014).

From the mid-1970s to 1987, the Ministry of Education began its first scholarship program for students in higher education. This program required higher education students to attend university programs around the world, with the expectation that they would acquire and bring back knowledge that would improve the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. These

changes in the acquisition of knowledge began to have an impact in the 1980s and 1990s in numerous sectors in the KSA (Alrobaee, 2004).

In the 1990s, the government continued to expand education across the Kingdom by opening teachers' colleges throughout the country. These efforts eventually prepared educators to teach in Saudi schools and replaced the large numbers of non-citizen teachers employed at public schools at that time. The teaching profession was considered one of the most prestigious jobs in the country due to a teacher shortage between the 1950s and 1995 (Alrobaee, 2004). Conversely, decades later, the number of employed teachers in the KSA is nearing six hundred thousand (Website of the Ministry of Education, 2017). There are numerous qualified educators who cannot find teaching jobs. As a result of the saturated teacher job market, one of the challenges the Ministry of Education currently faces is the large number of unemployed, qualified teachers.

In 2004, there was a developmental project to improve education called Tadweer, improvement in Arabic. This plan

spanned a ten-year period between 2004 and 2014. The overall goal was to provide students with the necessary knowledge and skills to compete internationally in both science and technology (UNESCO, 2011). Another objective was to use education to improve an individual's standard of living, and consequently, the social and economic development of the community (UNESCO, 2011). In this plan, the emphasis was on technology and science, with no attention to literacy or reading improvement (UNESCO, 2011). Excluding literacy improvement resulted in a failure on the PILRS test; Saudi students could not pass the intermediate level, which is discussed in detail under the section of international reading studies about the KSA (Mullis, Martin, Foy, & Drucker, 2012).

In summary, the greatest improvements in education for the KSA have occurred in the last seven decades. These improvements in education have raised the economic and educational status of the country in comparison to other countries that have similar situations and resources in the Middle East and Africa. However,

reading and literacy remain a challenge for the country. (More detailed information about education in the KSA is available at the United Nations website UNESCO, 2011).

*** Components of Reading**

Reading is a complex process that requires several basic skills to help the reader gain understanding of the written text. Reading involves coinciding proficiency in the basic skills to help understand the printed text. Foundational reading skills include phonics, phonetic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. These skills work together to help the reader build reading. These skills are taught at different levels of complexity beginning with preschool level and continuing through elementary school, until the end of fourth grade (Berkeley, & Taboada Barber, 2015; Templeton, & Gehsmann, 2014).

Proficient readers master the reading basic skills throughout the first several years of pre- and elementary schools (Grainger, 2010). In contrast, inadequate learning of basic reading skills at the elementary level could lead to struggling readers who meet

with academic failure (Ehri, 2006; Endress, Weston, Marchand-Martella, & Martella 2007; Schwanenflugel, & Knapp, 2016; Wulanir, & Pandjaitan, 2017). Because of the integral nature of how reading skills support literacy, the following paragraphs will discuss and highlight their importance. The following are discussed: (1) phonics, (2) vocabulary, (3) fluency, (4) phoneme awareness, (5) reading comprehension, (6) reading proficiency assessment, and (7) teaching struggling readers.

(4-1) Phonics

Phonics, or phonological knowledge, involves the ability to connect sounds with letters (Bowers, & Bowers, 2017; Rycik, & Rycik; 2007; Schaars, Segers, & Verhoeven, 2017). It has been known as a basic teaching skill in reading for more than 150 years (Sprague, 2015). The National Reading Panel found that understanding phonics is important for the students to progress in reading. The report said that phonics is more effective when it is taught at an early age. In addition, it helps to minimize the challenge of reading difficulties

and increases students' reading comprehension (NRP, 2000).

Shoaga, Akintola, & Okpor (2017) found that teaching phonics at elementary schools improved students' reading ability by 96.7%. In addition, children with disabilities who were trained using a phonics curriculum outperformed the students who did not receive any training (Ahlgrim-Delzell et al., 2016). In teaching phonics explicitly and systematically, several instructional approaches have been used. These include synthetic phonics, analytic phonics, embedded phonics, analogy phonics, onset-rime phonics, and phonics through spelling (NRP, 2000).

* **Phonemic Awareness**

Phoneme awareness refers to the ability to identify speech sounds or the awareness that speech is made up of individual sounds (NRP, 2000). Phoneme awareness is the ability to control and influence sounds (Glaser & Moats, 2008). The goal of phonemic awareness is to increase a student's cognizance that words are comprised of sounds. A student who masters this skill understands that words are made up of individual

sounds. Students who can compare sounds in different words, pronounce separate sounds of words, blend sounds together to make words, break words into sound components, and manipulate the sounds in words by adding or changing sounds to make new words have demonstrated phonemic awareness.

Also, mastering phoneme awareness has been a way to distinguish good readers from poor readers. According to Glaser and Moats (2008) good readers are able to identify, separate, and blend the single phonemes in words well enough to understand how letters represents those sounds. Also, good readers associate the sound of the word to the correct meaning, while poor readers, who do not sound out or pronounce words correctly, might associate wrong meanings to words. Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs, and Barnes (2007) also agree that children with reading difficulties usually lack sufficient phoneme awareness. Meaning, they cannot connect sounds to make words, break words into their sounds, or manipulate sounds (Fricke, Bowyer-

Crane, Haley, Hulme, & Snowling, 2013).

*** Vocabulary**

Vocabulary refers to the words that the student knows and understands during oral communication and reading written materials (Glaser & Moats, 2008). Vocabulary acquisition is an important skill for reading for several reasons. First, there is a connection between vocabulary knowledge and overall cognitive ability. Meaning, vocabulary is linked to intelligence (Glaser & Moats, 2008). Another reason is there is a strong relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension; when readers' have a large vocabulary, their comprehension levels are maximized. Moreover, vocabulary development and enrichment both lead to higher levels of learning while reading (Berkley & Barber, 2015; Glaser & Motas, 2008; Torgeson, 2005). On the other hand, a lack of improving vocabulary will have a negative impact on students' overall learning and academic performance (Lesaux & Marietta, 2012; Lesaux, Galloway, & Marietta, 2016).

* **Fluency**

Fluency refers to reading accurately with speed and prosody. Speed is determined by how many correct words a student can read per minute. Reading fluency can be measured by counting the number of words read correctly within one-minute (WCPM). High levels of fluency are another indicator of good readers. If a reader has poor fluency skills, comprehension is inhibited (Rasinski, 2012; Rasinski, Chang, Edmondson, Nageldinger, Nigh, Remark, & Rupley, 2017). Furthermore, Pikulski and Chard (2005) believe fluency is the link between word recognition accuracy and text comprehension. Another essential component of fluency is automaticity. Automaticity refers to the ability to recognize words automatically or effortlessly. It improves the decoding process and makes it an automatic practice that needs minimal attention (Griffith & Rasinski, 2004). Prosody, the ability to read with expression, also connects fluency with comprehension.

Fluency skills are highly affected by other reading components

such as phoneme awareness and word recognition. If the reader cannot sound out words or recognize vocabulary, he or she will not attain fluency (Glaser & Moats, 2008).

* **Reading Comprehension**

Reading comprehension is a dynamic process that needs attention from the reader before, during, and after reading. Reading comprehension also includes an interaction and thinking process, while reading (Klingner, Vaughn, & Boardman, 2007; Nichols, 2013). Comprehension skills lead to understanding, which is the main reason for learning to occur (Edmonds et al., 2009). Conversely, reading comprehension is affected by other basic reading skills such as fluency, vocabulary, and phonics in both directions positive or negative (Chard, Vaughn, & Tyler, 2002; NRP, 2000; Joseph & Schisler, 2009). Another important factor that affects reading comprehension is prior knowledge or knowledge base. Students who have knowledge base comprehend text better in comparison to those who do not (Deshler, Ellis, & Lenz, 1996; Goldman & Rakestraw, 2000).

Reading comprehension strategies support readers as they read and navigate texts. These strategies include thinking aloud, drawing a map and visualizing the ideas, rewriting the ideas into a graphic organizer, framing questions, predictions, recognizing the text structure, and viewing the text features such as pictures, headings, subheadings, or bold words (Berkeley & Barber, 2016).

Other examples of reading comprehension strategies include (1) Questioning requires readers to ask and answer questions while reading; this technique helps the reader to engage with the text, gain better understanding, and improve self-regulation (Berkeley, King-Sears, Vilbas, & Conklin, 2016); (2) Drawing relationships is when readers draw relationships between ideas that are presented in the reading or when readers visualize written texts or using mind maps (Berkeley & Barber, 2015; Ellis & Howard, 2007); and (3) Summarization is a skill that leads to comprehension because when the reader summarizes passages in his or her own words that creates a link

between words and the reader's minds (NRP, 2000).

*** Reading proficiency assessment**

Assessments include all the information that the teacher has gathered about each student, which allows him to determine reading levels, progress, and needs (Flippo, 2003). The information includes tests, observations, and oral readings. Determining a child's reading level requires an appropriate assessment to know his or her proficiency. The assessment process includes four steps: identifying what to assess, gathering evidence, analyzing the evidence, and making a decision. The purpose of a reading assessment is to identify the reader's level and document the student's progress throughout the school year (Caldwell, 2002).

There are two primary types of assessments: formal and informal. Formal assessments are usually created by educational agencies. These kinds of tests are typically standardized and require careful directions for administering and scoring. Informal assessments are teacher made. Consequently, teachers

decide how they will evaluate their students' reading levels. For example, teachers may ask students to read a text or write an essay, and then evaluate students based on what they wrote or read. Teachers may also use other types of assessments such as screening, diagnostic, and norm referenced tests (Mckenna & Stahl, 2015).

Running records is also a widely used method to evaluate students' decoding skills and to analyze students' oral reading errors. With running records, teachers evaluate errors to understand the type, and then code them. Similarly, informal decoding inventory is known as IDI. Portfolios are also used as another method for evaluating students' reading progress. Maintaining portfolios includes collecting several artifacts, such as samples of daily work, charts of reading rates overtime, records of books that were read, writing journals, and tests results (Mckenna & Stahl, 2015).

*** Teaching struggling readers**

Struggling readers shows less proficiency in reading skills usage such as comprehension and fluency.

Additionally, poor readers have negative self-concepts, read less than good readers, and are less motivated than good readers (Berkeley & Barber, 2015; Templeton & Gehsmann, 2014). Teaching students who struggle to read involves several important aspects that teachers should be aware of. First, individualizing instruction to meet each student's specific needs is an important step that helps to increase the student's reading proficiency level; meaning, there is no one formula for all struggling readers because each student's needs differ from other students' (Stover, Sparrow, & Siefert, 2017). Another aspect to consider is the length of intervention. Intervention timeframe makes a significant difference in the student's ability to learn to read according to Miciak et al. (2018). Miciak et. al compared one year of intervention to two years for 484 fourth grade struggling student readers. There was a greater gain in fluency and word recognition for the students who received two years of intervention. However, there was no difference on the overall measurement for reading comprehension (Miciak et al., 2018). Furthermore, motivation is

also considered a key to success that increases positive attitude in students toward reading, which plays vital role in the students' reading abilities (Berekely & Barber, 2015). Another main aspect of teaching struggling readers, is using the data model with because the struggling students require intensive instruction which was built on the data of assessment. This means that the present appropriate assessment is an important tool to determine the students' needs, which is crucial for teaching struggling readers (Filderman & Toste, 2018).

*** Strategies for Teaching Struggling Readers**

Peer tutoring and story mapping are examples of the common teaching strategies used to teach struggling readers because they allow the students to learn from each other, and it helps them visualize the text (Grünke & Teidig, 2017). Reading interesting stories helps to increase the reading comprehension for struggling readers because it keeps their minds engaged. In addition, involving students in multiple reading activities such as reading clubs supports reading comprehension (Berekeley & Barber,

2015). Other ways to teach struggling readers include placing them in small group settings and modeling how to read different texts to them. Furthermore, using reading theater to make students play while reading makes reading an enjoyable task (Templeton & Gehsmann, 2014). Another example of teaching struggling readers is using response to intervention (RTI). RTI is a model that includes three main tiers known as tier 1, tier 2, and tier 3. Each tier has different instructions. In short, the student in tier 1 works in a small group within his classroom. This group receives more instruction from the classroom teacher. In tier 2, the students attend a small group outside the classroom and receive intensive instruction from a specialist in reading at a specific time during the week for an average of ten weeks. In tier 3, the students receive more intensive out-of-class instruction for longer periods of time (Johnson, 2017).

In summary, teaching struggling readers requires the teachers to be mindful of several aspects in the teaching process. These aspects include: individualizing instruction,

increasing motivation, length of intervention, accurate assessments, and teaching strategies. With these things in mind, teachers are well-equipped to help struggling readers progress.

*** Reading in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia students begin reading lessons in first grade and continue through the 12th grade. In the public-school system, students learn to read in the Arabic language. The Arabic language is 28 letters. It is read from right to left, which is different than the English language (Taha, 2013). Elementary teachers usually educate first, second, and third graders, which are considered primary years. During students' primary years, they only learn to read (Tarabishi, 2002) as well as learning other basics in math and science. Fourth grade begins students' upper grades. At this level, the teacher must be a specialist in the Arabic language to teach reading, as teaching the language becomes more specific from fourth through 12th grades.

Teaching reading is part of the Arabic language teacher's job. Arabic

language teachers are less flexible in teaching reading because they are required to use a mandated curriculum and teacher manual designed by the Ministry of Education and limited to using specific books (Tarabishi, 2002). In general, teachers are less prepared for teaching reading as a skill because teaching reading requires wide range of knowledge about the reading basic skills, reading strategies, evaluation, progress monitoring, and reading difficulties (Al-Jarf, 2007; Ismail & Tawalbeh, 2015).

Al-Jarf's (2007) study of the K.S.A.'s first through sixth grade reading curriculum revealed the process for how educators have used the Ministry's materials. Teachers used basal reader books to improve the student's capability of reading at the elementary school level. The teachers used the same national books that were approved by the Ministry of Education for all students across the country; meaning all teachers had the same reading lesson plans and employed the same teaching methods. Al-Jarf (2007) outlined the reading objectives in the teaching manual book and he criticized the Saudi curriculum as not clearly

defined. She noted that basic reading skills, such as reading comprehension and fluency were not mentioned. The study also analyzed the KSA's reading books. She found that basic reading skills exist, but it is not clear outlined as a targeted skill. For example, there is an emphasis on word identification and language acquisition. Another finding was that reading classes ignored the needs of the individual because the teacher had to finish the designed curriculum in the specified time set in the teaching manual. Additionally, no supporting tools or sources were provided to deepen students' learning and there is no national test to assess how well elementary students have learned to read. The researcher suggested that future research explore teachers' perspectives on teaching reading, in addition to an examination of the problems and effectiveness of their teaching methods; this type of research is expected to help improve teaching reading in the KSA (Al-Jarf, 2007).

*** Research on reading in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

There has been a significant amount of research conducted

regarding the teaching of reading in the KSA. Seminal studies are classified as the following: research on students, research on teachers and preparation programs, common factors among the studies, and the conclusion of this section.

*** Research on Student**

Taibbah and Haynes (2011) conducted a quantitative, cross-sectional investigation of elementary students' phonological awareness, phonological memory, and fluency skills in Arabic. Participants in Jeddah City included 237 kindergartens through third grade students at four elementary schools. The researchers used tests that were developed and translated previously to Arabic in the area of literacy, such as word recognition and word decoding. Specialists who were trained on these tests examined the children individually in a quiet room in different sessions. Second and third graders were examined in their schools for a session of 35 minutes. The time was divided into two sessions for kindergarteners and first graders. After examining the children, the researchers used an ANOVA test to find the

differences and the correlation between each grade. The results of the study indicated that in each grade level there was a significant connection between phonological processing abilities and all reading skills. This finding indicates the importance of using modern practices in teaching reading in Arabic. Also, the researchers suggested that it is necessary to investigate similar reading skills with higher grade levels beginning with fourth grade (Taibbah & Haynes, 2011).

In a similar study, Seraye (2015) researched fourth-grade students' reading comprehension, by comparing their use of short vowels to word familiarity. This study was conducted in the KSA. The participants included 1141 male students randomly chosen from three elementary schools in Riyadh. After applying pre- and post-reading test for the students, the final participation number was 141 students. Each student was asked to read two different passages. Then, the student was given a multiple-choice test. The result of the study found that the variable that had the largest effect on the students' reading process and

comprehension is word frequency. In addition, the study found that fourth-grade students took a longer time reading the passages that had approximately 10% of low-frequency words.

Alduraby and Liu (2014) also conducted a study in the KSA that examined the effectiveness of the branching-story tool. The purpose of their study was to increase students' interest in reading. The branching-story tool is a type of graphic organizer that serves to create an interactive narrative. Through Power Point pictures and graphs, the interactive story is designed to guide the learner as he or she selects different choices that help develop different scenarios of a story. The study was conducted in Riyadh's elementary female schools. The participants included 20 fourth-grade female students. The researchers found that students' reading interest increased, as well as their motivation levels. However, this study also revealed two challenges with reading in the Arab world, specifically the KSA: (1) there are a lack of reading resources, and (2) students lack reading motivation. Furthermore,

Alduraby and Liu (2014) noted that the KSA's students lack motivation to read because they were not encouraged to do so during childhood. Instead, students connected the notion of reading with the notion of studying. Overall, Alduraby and Liu (2014) recommend that using technology inside Saudi schools as a solution that will help to increase students' reading interest levels.

Alshumaimeri (2011) conducted a quasi-experimental design method to examine the effects of different reading methods on Saudi students' comprehension performance. The participants were 145 Riyadh high school students. The participants were divided into three groups. Students read three different passages using three different reading methods: oral, silent, and sub-vocalization. The researcher used an ANOVA statistical analysis to determine the differences among the groups in using the three different reading methods. The result was significant toward the oral reading method in comparison to the silent-reading method and sub-vocalization method. Additionally, the researcher suggested that Saudi students should

be taught the abovementioned reading strategies at earlier ages, while studying reading in Arabic at the elementary level (Alshumaimeri, 2011).

Recently, Ababneh (2016) found a similar pattern of low reading interest (Alduraby & Liu, 2014) and the effects of not learning reading strategies at an early age (Alshumaimeri, 2011), but with college-level students. Ababneh (2016) conducted a comparative study between the Arabic and English literacy practices of female university students north of Saudi Arabia. The study included 200 participants. The survey instrument focused on the availability of literacy sources at the students' homes and the students' literacy practices while using both languages. Students' questionnaires showed that they preferred to interact mainly using Arabic languages more than English during literacy practices. Results also showed that the majority of students described a lack of literacy sources availability in both languages at their homes. Although, the students indicated that they had computers, internet access, and some storybooks,

their answers reflect a habit of not using these sources to enrich the literacy practices (Ababneh, 2016).

*** Research on Teachers and Preparation Programs**

Alanasari (2008) examined first through third primary grade teachers' knowledge of teaching literacy, teaching literacy strategies, and professional programs. The study's setting was Riyadh in the KSA and the researcher used a survey. Of the 300 participants, 75% of the teachers were not specialist in the Arabic language; many teachers represented other majors, such as social studies and religions. Also, 66.7% of the participants were in public schools, while 33.3% were in private schools. Alanasari's study found the following: (1) Fifty percent of the participants did not know the new strategies for teaching literacy; (2) Between 24% and 35 % of the participants had not attended any professional development, such as lectures or read specialist books focusing on literacy; (3)The participants who attended training workshops reported that 41.7 % was highly beneficial for them; 37.2% said it was medium beneficial to

them; 13.9% gained a little of benefit; and 7.2% did not benefit at all; (4) Forty-two percent reported that they did not belong to any professional literacy organizations; (5) Thirty-five percent of the participants were not members of any academic literacy journals; (6) Twenty-nine percent had not participated in summer lectures or training related to teaching literacy, while 26.7% had not used or participated in websites that related to teaching literacy. As a result of this study, Alanasari (2008) has suggested that primary grade educators should be Arabic language teachers. Moreover, if the teacher was not an Arabic language major, then he or she should attend a training on how to teach literacy for at least six months (Alanasari, 2008).

Alsamadani's (2012) research explored Saudi English teachers' attitudes toward teaching reading strategies. The participants included 60 male teachers from the Makkah area. A survey was distributed, and an interview was completed with four teachers. A major finding from this study is that teachers tend to not teach reading skills or reading strategies to their students. In fact, one of the

participants of the study exemplified this result; he said that he tended not to teach reading strategies because it consumes time and the students are not motivated to learn. As a result of the findings, Alsamadani (2012) has suggested that teacher preparation programs be reformed and updated to include the most current and evidenced-based practices, such as teaching reading strategies and reading skills because both lead to and inform one another.

Thouqan Saleem Yakoub (2015) used a descriptive approach to study how Saudi teachers for English language perceive reading skills. His examination included 56 middle-school teachers. He found that teachers believe that teaching reading skills and reading comprehension to students is important. But, their beliefs were not demonstrated in their teaching; teachers did not use appropriate activities that would improve students' reading comprehension skills. Consequently, Thouqan Saleem Yakoub (2015) has suggested that further research be conducted to investigate the problem at different levels. Additionally, he recommended

that decision makers in the KSA provide current practices to preparation programs to support teachers' classroom instruction.

Al-Qahtani (2016) explored the reasons behind Saudi students' poor reading skills. The study included 90 students in middle schools, eight teachers, and six supervisors. The researcher used a survey and interview with the students and conducted an interview with teachers and supervisors. Forty percent of the students reported that they did not read at home, while 60% reported that they read once per week. On the other hand, several teachers stated that students exhibit poor reading skills, such as reading comprehension, which led to problems with students' reading and overall learning. Some teachers related students' poor reading skills to their extensive technology use and noted this as a reason outside of the school's control. Teachers also indicated that their training programs are not enough. Other teachers blamed children's families for students' poor reading skills. For example, they noted that families do not read to their children at an early age; parents lack motivation;

and families do not collaborate with teachers. Similarly, the supervisors reported that the students' reading comprehension skills were extremely poor and below the expected level.

The study concluded with several recommendations at different levels: (1) Teachers must make reading an enjoyable task and fun activity for students; (2) Teachers should help the students to create a reading culture in the students' daily lives; (3) Reading basic skills must be taught at early grade levels; (4) Training and professional programs are required to improve reading skills and overall performance levels; and, (5) There is a need for future research to investigate students' reading skills at multiple levels (Al-Qahtani, 2016).

Alnassar (2000) investigated secondary school teachers' attitudes toward teaching reading in the content areas. The researcher compared male teachers to female teachers; middle school teachers versus high school teachers; and subjects taught, such as Arabic, math, and social studies. Furthermore, the researcher examined the relationship between attitudes toward teaching reading in the content

areas and the teachers' attitudes toward reading. Three-hundred and fifty teachers from Riyadh city in the KSA participated. A questionnaire with two parts was used: Part one included demographic information, and part two included two reading scales. The scales were the revised version of the Vaughan Scale and the Reading Attitudes Scale.

Alnassar found that all secondary school teachers had an average positive attitude toward content area reading according to the scales that were used. Also, there was a significant positive correlation between teachers' attitudes toward reading and teaching reading in the content areas. Furthermore, the study found that Arabic language teachers are more positive in relation to teaching reading than social science and math teachers. There was no difference between genders or between high schools and middle schools. As a result, Alnassar (2000) suggested the following: (1) Teachers should increase their learning positive attitude toward reading by learning more about reading skills and strategies; (2) Education leaders should consider the

teachers' attitude and create an appropriate training that will help teachers to increase the positivity which will increase students' classroom performances; (3) The education administration should create workshops centered on teaching reading skills for teachers in other majors as well; and ,(4) Future research should examine elementary teachers' attitudes and beliefs toward reading.

Aloqaili (2001) explored Saudi reading teachers' perceptions of related parts of schema theory in reading comprehension. Two-hundred and twenty-four middle and high school teachers participated. Aloqaili used a questionnaire to elicit responses, and he analyzed data using a two-way MANOVA test to run the statistics and test the hypothesis. Results showed that reading teachers in the KSA recognized the three parts of schema theory as important in teaching reading. The recommendation of the study was to investigate schema theory with elementary-level teachers. In addition, he recommended that workshops and training should be developed to

support teachers as they expand their knowledge about reading comprehension.

Similar to Aloqaili's (2001) study, Alelayan (2001) also compared both male and female reading teachers' perceptions of factors that affect elementary students' reading achievement. First, Alelayan identified six factors that affect reading achievement: (1) school size, (2) school library, (3) teaching methods for reading, (4) reading textbooks, (5) time on task, and (6) the teacher's role. Next, the researcher developed and used a questionnaire that was completed by 234 teachers in Riyadh city in the KSA. Of the participants, 118 were male, and 116 were female. The ANOVA analysis found there was no significance between male and female reading teachers in the KSA between the factors that affect reading achievements. Some participants pointed out other factors that were not mentioned in the questionnaire, such as intelligence and absence from schools.

Results also showed that participants viewed the teacher's role as the most important factor, while a school library

was the least important. Consequently, Alelayan (2001) made several recommendations. First, the Ministry of Education should develop training and workshops for this group of teachers that enhances their knowledge, since the teachers see themselves as the most important factor in reading achievement. Also, school-level administrators should consider these factors because they affect the students learning and achievements in general. The researcher also suggested the role of the library be considered and revised carefully, as the school library is determined to necessitate a larger role in reading achievement and learning. Finally, Alelayan has suggested that further research should be conducted with a focus on teachers' perceptions in other parts of the KSA.

Another study, Tarabishi (2002) compared pre-service teachers' attitudes toward reading. The sample included 482 pre-professionals in their fourth year located at three colleges in the western region of the KSA. Participants represented humanities and science majors. The researcher used the Teale-Lewis Reading Attitude

Scale to survey participants' perceptions. The scale consists of three main factors for measuring reading: (1) reading for enjoyment, (2) reading for self-development, and (3) reading for utilitarian. Utilitarian means the belief that reading is important tool for success in life and in school. The researcher found no significant differences between the candidates at the three colleges. However, there was a significant difference between humanitarian majors and science majors. Humanitarian majors' pre-service teachers were higher on the first factor, reading for enjoyment than the science majors. Additionally, science majors were higher on the third part, reading for utilitarian than the humanitarian majors. The researcher made two recommendations. First, he determined that in-service teachers require an assessment to evaluate their attitudes on reading, which will support appropriate training for them. Second, researchers should help enhance positive attitudes toward reading for both of teachers and students.

Most recently, the Ministry of Education has enforced a new teaching

model in the public schools. The new model, called the Integrated Model, includes all Arabic language subject classes: reading, writing, grammar, and literature. It is recommended that all four subjects be taught together, in one comprehensive class. This shift from teaching separate subjects to a comprehensive class model was effective beginning in 2010 in all schools in the KSA. As a result, Almoaiqel (2014) studied Saudi teachers' perceptions of teaching Arabic language arts after the Ministry of Education introduced the new teaching model.

Almoaiqel's (2014) research included a questionnaire that explored the teachers' perceptions about the Integrated Model. There were 190 participant teachers from throughout the KSA, of which 46% were male and 56% were female. An ANOVA test showed that 89.56% perceived the change to the integrated model as positive because it increased flexibility in their teaching. Additionally, teachers viewed this model as an improvement over the previous teaching model as it increased students' reading fluency, reading

comprehension, and reading achievement. Conversely, 73.71% of teachers saw the number of students in the classroom as the first obstacle. The second obstacle was school supplies. Almoaiqel (2014) made five recommendations: (1) the Ministry of Education should design a comprehensive training and provide workshops to teachers; (2) the Ministry of Education should provide school supplies to the teachers, such as DVDs, Computers, and extra reading materials; (3) the number of students in each classroom should be reduced; and (4) teachers should teach reading skills, such as fluency and other language skills; (5) researchers should consider language skills in general and teaching skills.

*** Common Factors and Findings Among the Discussed Studies and Conclusion**

After reviewing various types of research studies centered on reading in the KSA, several themes emerge. Most studies conducted regrading students' reading focus on elementary-aged students (Alduraby & Liu, 2014; Seraye, 2015; Taibbah & Haynes, 2011), with the exception of

Alshumaimeri (2011), whose study was centered on high school. This demonstrates a need for more student-centered research related to reading. Likewise, research focused on students' reading each demonstrates the importance of teaching reading components, such as phonological processing (Taibbah & Haynes, 2011) and word frequency (Seraye, 2015), showing that an understanding of reading components is not only integral for increasing reading skills, but also worthy of more research.

Many studies have been conducted that demonstrate educators' attitudes and beliefs about teaching reading (Alelayan, 2001; Almoaiqel, 2014; Alnassar, 2000; Aloqaili, 2001; Alsamadani, 2012; Thouqan Saleem Yakoub, 2015). Each study exemplifies teachers who value reading and see it as positive, but do not teach reading strategies for varied reasons, such as the time it takes in the classroom (Alsamadani, 2012) to not using appropriate activities for improving reading skills (Thouqan Saleem Yakoub, 2015). Furthermore, studies show contradictions in beliefs with practice. For example, Thouqan

Saleem Yakoub (2015) describe teachers who value teaching reading, but do not use strategies that are supportive for students' literacy. Similarly, participants in Alelayan's (2001) study note that reading is important, but they do not see the school's library as important.

Research conducted with teachers also reveals a lack of preparation for teaching reading, as well as a need for more professional development and research (Alanasari, 2008; Alnassar, 2000). Participants in Alanasari's (2008) study had no knowledge of the new methods for teaching reading and few had attended professional literacy conferences or read professional journals. Alnassar's (2000) research showed how important it is for teachers to be versed in Arabic, as these teachers hold a more positive attitude toward teaching reading than those who are not. Furthermore, Tarabishi (2002) showed that teachers' educational backgrounds might matter in how they perceive teaching reading, which may factor into how well students learn to read.

Other themes that emerged noted a lack of reading resources

(Alduraby & Liu, 2014; Almoaiqel, 2014). Several of the studies suggested that policy makers should help to improve the in-service teachers' practice, which would ultimately reflect on the students' reading achievement (Alelayan, 2001; Almoaiqel, 2014; Alnassar, 2000; Aloqaili, 2001; Thouqan Saleem Yakoub, 2015). Other scholars suggested that instruction should explicitly include reading skills and reading strategies (Almoaiqel, 2014; Alnassar, 2000; Alsamadani, 2012). Few results reflect the need for enhancing the reading culture and understanding students' motivation toward reading (Alduraby & Liu, 2014; Al-Qahtani, 2016). Though the only one, Al-Qahtani (2016) noted a possible correlation between students' families and schools, suggesting there should be collaboration to increase students' literacy. Finally, no matter what grade level teacher participants taught, each researcher recommend a need for further examinations on teacher perceptions focused on reading (Alelayan, 2001; Almoaiqel, 2014; Alnassar, 2000; Aloqaili, 2001;

Alsamadani, 2012; Tarabishi, 2002; Thouqan Saleem Yakoub, 2015).

Also worth mentioning is the type of research conducted with each study. Nearly all use quantitative methods, except for three which used mixed methods. Many of the studies reviewed used pre-post-tests, cross-sectional studies, questionnaires, and/or group comparisons. Additionally, each study's participants varied depending on the type and purpose of the study, with numbers ranging from 20 to 482. Finally, each study used assessment tools that were translated from other languages and adapted from other cultures. The influence of these translations on the results is not known.