TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND LEVELS OF USE IN THE ADOPTION OF THE STUDENT-ACTIVE LEARNING APPROACH IN EFL CLASSROOMS IN OMAN

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by

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LIST OF ABBRIVIATIONS

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
SAL	Student-Active Learning
CsoT	Colleges of Technology
LoU	Levels of Use
LoU-SA	Levels of Use Self-Assessment
LoU-IS	Levels of Use Interview Schedule
MoMP	Ministry of Manpower
GFP	General Foundation Program
PFPs	Post Foundation Programs
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
ELC	English Language Center
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
TPB	Theory of Planned Behavior
CBAM	Concern Based Adoption Model
SoC	Stages of Concerns
IC	Innovation Configurations
ICC	Innovation Configuration Checklist
DIM	Diffusion of Innovation Model
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TP	Tahap Penggunaan
PAP	Pemelajaran Aktif-Pelajar

KEPERCAYAAN GURU DAN TAHAP PENGGUNAAN KAEDAH PEMELAJARAN AKTIF-PELAJAR DI BILIK DARJAH EFL DI OMAN

ABSTRAK

Matlamat utama kajian ini adalah menyelidik kepercayaan guru dan Tahap Penggunaan (TP) kaedah Pemelajaran Aktif-Pelajar (PAP) di bilik darjah EFL di Oman. Kajian ini juga turut menyelidik cabaran yang dihadapi oleh para guru dalam merealisasikan kaedah PAP. 505 orang guru daripada tujuh buah kolej teknologi di Oman. Bagi pengumpulan data, kaedah kajian tinjauan dan temu bual secara mendalam digunakan. Instrumen pertama yang digunakan adalah soal selidik untuk memperoleh suatu gambaran yang menyeluruh tentang kepercayaan guru dan TP mereka dalam melaksanakan kaedah PAP. Temu bual pula digunakan untuk memperoleh maklumat lanjut berkaitan dengan TP dan juga cabaran yang mereka hadapi dalam merealisasikan kaedah PAP. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa para guru mempunyai kepercayaan yang positif dalam merealisasikan kaedah PAP. Berdasarkan soal selidik, majoriti guru berada pada tahap Kehalusan (IVB), dan selebihnya adalah pada tahap persediaan (II), tahap mekanikal (III), dan tahap rutin (IVA). Dapatan soal selidik juga menunjukkan bahawa majoriti daripada guru tinggal di kawasan kelas pertengahan dan terbahagi secara sama rata pada tahab mekanikal (III), tahab rutin (IVA) dan tahab Kehalusan (IVB). Ditemui juga bahawa terdapat perkaitan yang positif di antara kepercayaan guru dan ciri demografi kecuali hubungan yang negatif dengan pengalaman mengajar. Di samping itu, terdapat perkaitan yang positif di antara TP dan ciri demografi. Terdapat perkaitan yang positif di antara kepercayaan guru dan TP. Para guru mendapati enam cabaran utama yang terpaksa mereka hadapi dalam merealisasikan kaedah PAP, iaitu saiz kelas, perbezaan individu, bahan pengajaran, pengurusan bilik darjah, aspek pengalaman dan kekangan masa. Hasil kajian itu akan menjadi sumbangan sebagai penting untuk meningkatkan kesusasteraan dalam menerima pakai pendekatan PAP, dan memberikan gambaran keseluruhan penggunaan pendekatan PAP di bilik darjah EFL di Kolej Teknologi di Oman.

TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND LEVELS OF USE IN THE ADOPTION OF THE STUDENT-ACTIVE LEARNING APPROACH IN EFL CLASSROOMS IN OMAN

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the teachers' Beliefs and their Levels of Use (LoU) in the adoption of the Student-Active Learning (SAL) approach in their English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in Oman. It was also aimed to investigate the challenges encountered by the teachers in the adoption of the SAL approach. 505 teachers from seven Colleges of Technology (CsoT) across Oman participated in this study. It employed the survey research method and interview for data collection. The first instrument used was the questionnaire, to obtain a holistic picture of the teachers' beliefs and their LoU in the SAL approach adoption. The Levels of Use Interview-Schedule (LoU-IS) was also used to elicit further information related to their LoU and the challenges encountered in the adoption of the SAL approach. The findings show that the teachers possessed positive beliefs on the adoption of the SAL approach. They also show that the majority of the teachers were at the Refinement Level (IVB), and equally at the Preparation Level (II), the Mechanical Use Level (III) and the Routine Level (IVA) based on the LoU-SA questionnaire. Based on the LoU-IS, the findings show that almost all of the teachers were in the middle area and equally distributed at Mechanical Use Level (III), the Routine Level (IVA) and Refinement Level (IVB). It was also discovered that there were positive relationships between the teachers' beliefs and their demographic characteristics, except a negative relationship with teaching experience. There were also positive relationships between the teachers' LoU and their demographic characteristics. There was a positive relationship between the teachers' beliefs and their LoU. The teachers encountered six major challenges in the adoption of the SAL approach adoption including class size, individual differences, teaching materials, classroom management, experiential aspects, and time constraints. The findings of the study would serve as significant contributions to increase the literature in the adoption of the SAL approach, and provide an overall picture of the SAL approach adoption in EFL classrooms at the Colleges of Technology (CsoT) across Oman.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

A number of claims have been made on the value of adopting student-centered educational philosophy in English as Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2005). Learning instruction must be centered on the student and an ongoing process grounded in experience (Andresen et al., 2000; Watkins et al., 2007). Students, not the subject matter, must remain the focus throughout the educational system (Rinaldo, 2004). Students must be the core component in the learning process, and should be engaged in critical thinking activities (Prince, 2004). These activities involve crucial new approaches and explorations, such as solving complex, real-world problems (Marlowe & Page, 2005; Tempelaar, 2006).

In particular, the Student-Active Learning (SAL) approach has been widely evident and is significantly important for the mastery of various skills, enabling students to think critically, solve complex problems, and progress onwards to course completion (Prince, 2004; Braxton et al., 2008). Adopting the SAL approach is viewed to be a critical factor, which enables students to show their underlying capabilities and upgrade them gradually to facilitate engagement in the process of acquiring knowledge rather than placing undue emphasis on the completed product (Rinaldo & Denig, 2009).

In Oman, the Colleges of Technology (CsoT) are equipped with the latest EFL teaching and learning facilities. This enhances effective adoption of the SAL approach as well as its ongoing professional development programs, which are designed for teachers (Ministry of Manpower, 2009). However, there is no assurance that the SAL approach would be effectively adopted in EFL classrooms (Ministry of Manpower, 2011).

There are various factors, which could influence successful SAL approach adoption. Factors such as teachers' beliefs can influence teachers to adopt or not adopt the SAL approach. This is because teachers' beliefs are powerful mediators of decision-making and actions (Sherin, 2002, cited in Nathan et al., 2010), and the key area in any context of educational innovation adoption (Woolfolk-Hoy et al., 2006). In time, these beliefs may positively or negatively relate to the teachers' Levels of Use (LoU) of the innovation of the SAL approach (Straub, 2009). The LoU is a method that is used to observe the extent of innovation use and measure the extent of actual individual's use of that innovation (Hord et al., 2006). Both teachers' beliefs and their LoU may have relationship with the teachers' demographic backgrounds (Ghodousi, 2008; Lockhart, 2008; Chan, 2008; Rahimi & Fatemeh, 2012).

1.1 Background of the Study

English language is used as the medium of instruction in all programs offered in CsoT including Business Studies, Engineering, Applied Sciences, Pharmacy, Information Technology, Photography, and Fashion Design (Al Hinai, 2011). Nevertheless, English is not the native or the primary language in Oman (Al Jadidi,

2009) taking into consideration the widespread use and the importance of this language in today's world (Faber, 2010).

In this regard, EFL teaching and learning is one of the most critical areas, which are given importance by CsoT. This is due to its potential in enhancing students' knowledge and preparing them to be capable of communicating in English among speakers of other languages within a work atmosphere. This is because English is considered as an important resource for nationwide development and as the means of broader communication within the worldwide society (Ministry of Manpower, 2009).

EFL teaching and learning in Oman, which is the focus of this study, is included as a priority element of the General Foundation program (GFP) by CsoT across the country. This is in order to enable students to undergo subsequent specialized programs, which are all taught in the English language towards efficient utilization in the working field (Ministry of Manpower, 2007). Since English is not the primary vehicle for conversation and conveying messages in Oman, it is vital that the teaching and learning of such language should be given sufficient attention by CsoT stakeholders, especially teachers.

In addition, the CsoT system, including EFL classroom instruction, must also be adapted to deal with the requirements of the labor market in Oman. Graduates of CsoT are expected to have good interpersonal skills, think critically, solve complex problems, and be able to use English in authentic communications, as well (Ministry of Manpower, 2007).

From this point of view, employers of CsoT in Oman are recruiting employees who have such skills in the hope of easily adapt to innovation adoption and to be acquainted with improvement. Therefore, employers require a more appropriately competent workforce who can observe their actual work in order to properly develop and improve it. They expect graduates who are collaborative, team-workers, peer-learners, negotiators, interpreters, and evaluators who can acquire information, self-learn, reason and solve problems (Rice & Wilson, 1999, cited in Castronova, 2002).

Such expectations, hence, will only be achieved by using up-to-date EFL teaching and learning methods, which are in line with employers' aforementioned requirements. Teachers will thus have full awareness of the importance of these methods in refining the capabilities and talents of students in various areas related to CsoT, especially in EFL classrooms. This paradigm shifts away from using the traditional methods, which fundamentally focus mainly on the teacher while ignoring the student, towards the usage of more innovative student-centered methods, which focus upon regard for the student rather than the teacher. Such innovation-based teaching is fundamentally equipped to promote students' creative thinking. Thus, innovative teaching is primarily geared towards enhancing students' critical thinking to prepare them to be more autonomous, life-long learners (Tsui, 2002; MacHemer & Crawford, 2007).

Teachers will then be more aware of the need to effectively guide EFL teaching and learning in order to provide aspects of integrated experience for their students suitable to their level and the characteristics of their development towards the workforce atmosphere. This should also be relevant to their specific needs and

problems. Students have to be more open-minded in acquiring the skills and attitudes that would enable them to think properly, work continuously, and persist in creativity. This can only be achieved if learning is practiced actively (Ministry of Manpower, 2007).

1.2 Geography of Oman

Oman is located in the Middle East. It is in the south east of the Arabian Peninsula and in the south west of the Asian continent. It has a total land area of 309,500 square kilometers with a breathtaking coastline, which stretches for over 1,700 kilometers. In Oman, each governorate has regions, which are far away from each other (Ministry of Information, 2012). Colleges of Technology (CsoT) are located in different regions across Oman. They are located in Shinas, Al Musanna, Muscat, Ibri, Nizwa, Ibra, and Salalah (Figure 1.1).

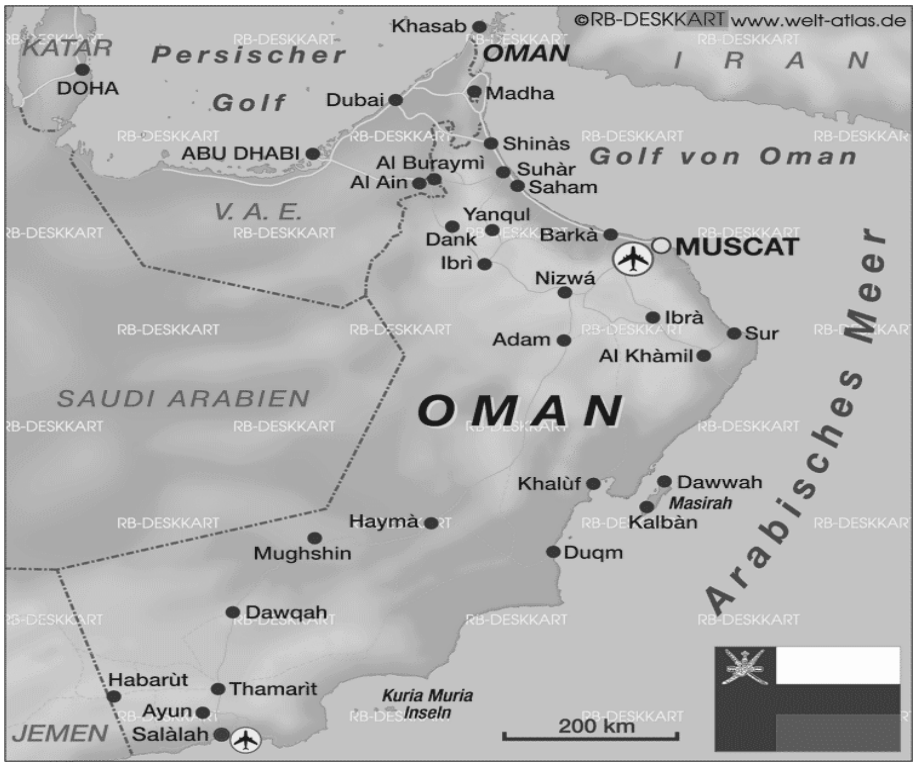

Figure 1.1: Map of Oman

1.3 Technological Education in Oman

The Ministry of Manpower (MoMP), represented in the General Directorate of Technological Education, has proposed, and implemented standard labor regulations aligned with nationwide social and economic goals. It provides technological higher education for Omani students through the Colleges of Technology (CsoT) across Oman (Ministry of Manpower, 2007). These CsoT aim to provide knowledge and skills needed by the Omani public society in general and required mainly by the private sector. Therefore, they conduct an ongoing evaluation on global changes that affect the required knowledge and skills in Oman, modern methods used in technological programs, and the latest educational training techniques.

From this standpoint, CsoT work constantly to develop their curricula and teaching methods in order to upgrade them, so that they can provide knowledge and skills according to the needs of the labor market and put forward the future vision 2020 of the economy in Oman (Al Balushi, 2008). Accordingly, the Ministry of Manpower (2007) tries to apply, follow, and monitor the right move of labor laws and guidelines, focusing attention towards effective co-ordination with the concerned authorities. Moreover, the MoMP supports the national efforts to provide technological education, raise awareness on the importance of work, and promote the spirit of individual initiatives.

1.3.1 Colleges of Technology

There are seven Colleges of Technology (CsoT) in Oman. These CsoT are located in seven different regions across the country. They are run under the MoMP as public

colleges. These colleges offer EFL teaching and learning based on two main levels: the General Foundation Program (GFP), and the Post-Foundation Programs (PFPs).

The first level is the General Foundation Program (GFP). It is overseen and reformed by the Ministry of Higher Education and Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (2010). The GFP is effectively structured to help prepare students for their further specialized studies, and support them in achieving the mandated study outcomes based on four components including English, Computing, Mathematics, and Study skills.

The Post-Foundation Programs (PFPs) comprise the second level. This includes different academic specializations such as Business Studies, Engineering, Applied Sciences, Pharmacy, Information Technology, Photography, and Fashion Design.

The CsoT are the main academic technological colleges, which provide both administrative and technological knowledge for students (Ministry of Manpower, 2007). According to Al Husseini (2004), CsoT adopt the same language and technological teaching programs with the same course content, textbooks, and assessment system. Furthermore, the students share the same background characteristics. Therefore, each of the colleges can represent the others in terms of philosophy, objectives, needs, content, students, and teachers.

1.3.2 English Component of the General Foundation Program

The English component of the General Foundation Program (GFP) is taught in the English Language Center (ELC) at the seven CsoT. It is an obligatory entrance

prerequisite for any degree program in Oman. Figure 1.2 shows the English component structure of the General Foundation Program (GFP).

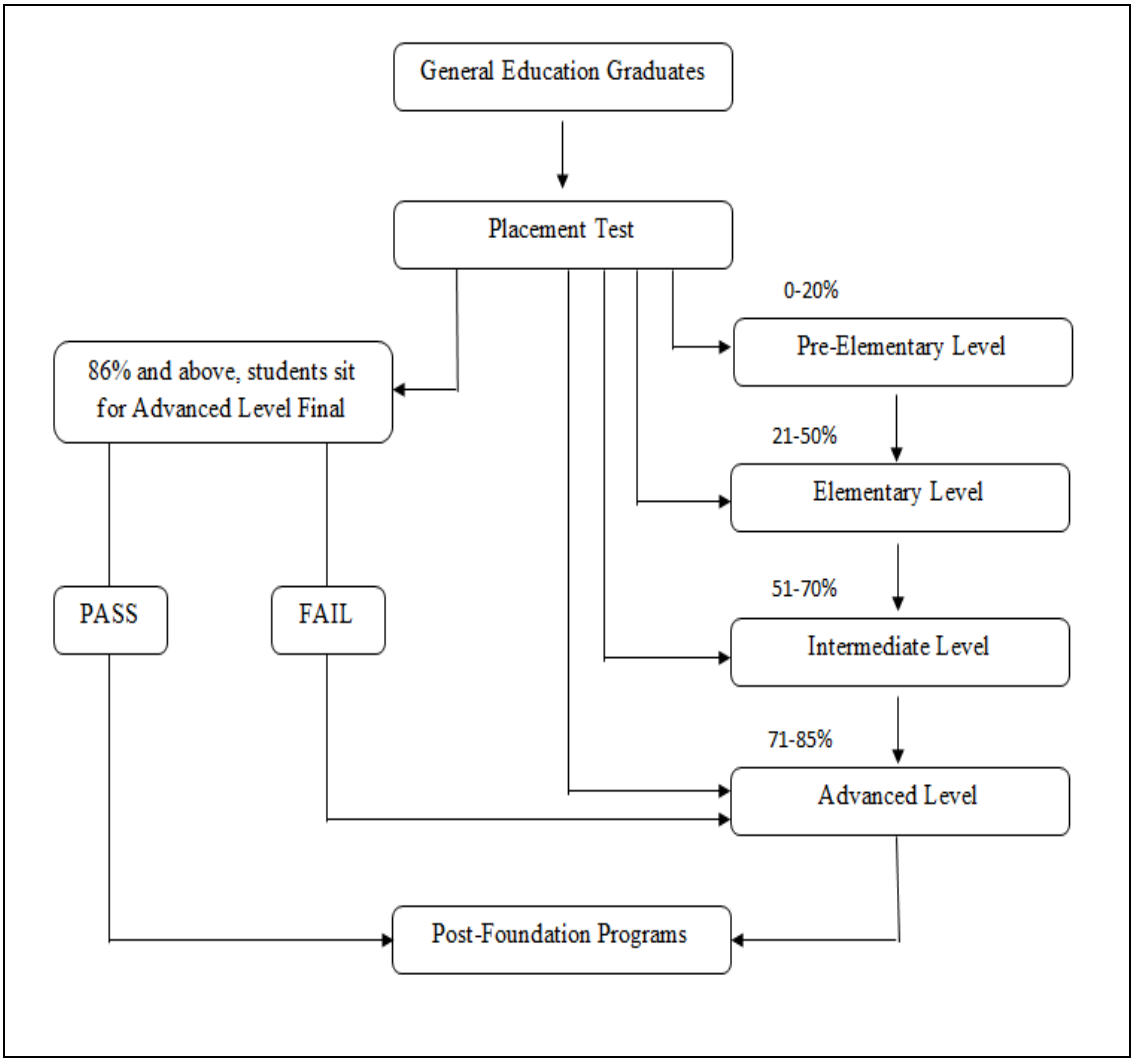

Figure 1.2: The English Component Structure of the General Foundation Program

English language, as stated by the Ministry of Manpower (2007), is the main and the most important component of the GFP. It is a level-based component, which involves students in four different levels: Pre-Elementary Level (1), Elementary Level (2), Intermediate Level, (3) and Advanced Level (4). Students are distributed at these levels based on their placement test, which takes place during the intake induction week. In these levels, students focus on learning the four language acquisition skills

including speaking, listening, reading and writing, as well as study skills such as decision-making, goal setting, and time management. Each level supports the next and what is taught in one level gets more practice in the next. This component is precisely structured to progress students to a level in which they become familiar with study skills needed through their studies as well as being able to authentically communicate and interact with others in English.

By successfully completing the Advanced Level, students are eligible to proceed to the Certificate, Diploma, Higher Diploma, and Bachelor levels in the Post-Foundation Programs (PFPs) within the specialized academic programs.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Since the establishment of the Colleges of Technology (CsoT) in the 90s, their aim has been to upgrade their status and to grow rapidly through the application of contemporary methodologies (Ministry of Manpower, 2009). This is a consequence of expanding communicative contexts and being actively engaged in global communication (Al Jadidi, 2009). Therefore, each college mainly focuses primarily on EFL teaching and learning as well as students' support services. This is done by establishing guidelines stating the importance of adopting innovations in EFL classrooms.

One of such guidelines is the commitment to adopt the Student-Active Learning (SAL) approach to promote a high quality student-centered education (Ministry of Manpower, 2011). This is because the SAL approach has become one of the newly adopted ways of teaching, which stimulates students' self-exploration as well as self-

expression (Van De Bogart, 2009) while they are engaged in the whole learning process (Zepke & Leach, 2010). The approach also provides students with opportunities for evaluation, self-reflection, synthesizing, and communication based on the information presented in lectures (MacHemer & Crawford, 2007). The approach indicates the shift of emphasis from the teacher to the students as the core of the learning process.

In adopting the SAL approach in EFL classrooms, learning determines the need for experience and the need to transform teachers in order to educate their students (Watkins et al, 2007). It also calls upon active engagement of the students to enhance the learning process (Barkley, 2009).Teachers are also likely to be enthusiastic learners, create new noticeable skills, be more responsible and fully recognize the value of innovativeness in various types of work done by the CsoT.

To promote the adoption of the SAL approach, ongoing extensive professional development activities have been conducted to help teachers to cope with the rapid changes in EFL teaching and learning methodologies (Ministry of Manpower, 2009). Such activities include in-house and external pre-service and in-service training sessions.

In addition, resources, academic support, teaching materials, and suitable environment, have also been provided for teachers to practically adopt contemporary EFL classroom approaches (Oman Academic Accreditation Authority, 2012). Teachers can easily access the available library as well as the e-library to benefit

from the materials related to EFL classrooms tools, such as new textbooks, journals, magazines, and CDs.

Despite all the guidelines, expectations and support offered, there are some problematic issues, which emerged. One of them is that many CsoT teachers still appear to resist in dealing with such change. Teachers often remain quite traditional in their EFL classrooms (Porcaro, 2011). They would much prefer to keep on using teacher-centered approaches in their instruction as well as the lecture method where the students are just listeners and remain comparatively more passive.

Another problematic issue as mentioned by McLean (2011), based on the report done by Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (2010), is that students studying at CsoT have an extremely low level of proficiency in the English language. Moreover, the report indicated that the students' competency in English is well below the level that is needed in the English-medium instruction for science majors in specialization programs. The students are also weak in independent thinking skills and problem-solving skills. Students' weakness in English language competency and other life skills will affect their future employment. Students' low fluency in English is a barrier to workforce participation (Al Ali, 2006; 2008, cited in Mashood et al., 2011).

In scrutinizing potential factors, it is presumed that teachers in each of the seven colleges may have their own rationale to either adopt or not adopt the SAL approach. The most common factor to resist the adoption of the SAL approach is the teachers' beliefs on the importance of this approach (Ministry of Manpower, 2009).

Teachers' beliefs may also be related to the teachers actual Levels of Use (LoU) in their classrooms (Chan, 2008; Mansour, 2009). Both the teachers' beliefs and their LoU may also be related to the teachers' demographic characteristics (Ghodousi, 2008; Lockhart, 2008; Chan, 2008; Rahimi & Fatemeh, 2012). These demographic characteristics are predicted to be related to the teachers in forming their beliefs as well as their LoU (Kumar et al., 2007; Meelissen & Drent, 2008; Salvano-Pardieu et al., 2009). Demographic variables such as gender, age, experience, qualification, and nationality were researched as affective factors related to the teachers' beliefs and their LoU.

In light of the above discussion, this study considers the need to effectively adopt the in-trend SAL approach in EFL classrooms in CsoT in Oman, as encouraged by the Ministry of Manpower (2009; 2011). This is essential in order to assist students in participating in the classrooms and lead them towards becoming more active and effective in their learning process, and thus acquiring the skills necessary for their learning. This requires students to re-activate the knowledge they have gained previously in new learning contexts (Loyens et al., 2007).

Accordingly, it is essential to conduct this study to investigate the teachers' beliefs and their LoU in relation to their demography and to investigate the challenges that affect the teachers' adoption of the SAL approach in their EFL classrooms.

1.5 Rationale for the Study

The study was undertaken for various reasons. First, it was carried out to investigate the teachers' beliefs and their Levels of Use (LoU) with the purpose of having a better understanding of these beliefs and LoU towards effective future planning.

Second, it is to meet the need of the government of Oman in assigning major and recognized roles for graduates to build the country and to develop its economy. Education has both economic as well as social benefits. The establishment of CsoT is an example of one of the methods followed by the government of Oman to support these goals. In this regard, teachers' duty is to support such efforts and address the issues set by the government through academic skills and interests where they occur in the field of specialization.

Third, it is to support the process of educational reform as an innovation that is vital at all levels to develop graduates, especially in terms of their future employment.

Fourth, it is to support the English component of the GFP in CsoT to adopt the SAL approach, as it is important to guide development and to prepare students who attend CsoT for their occupational life phase.

Fifth, it is to provide guidelines to the adoption of the SAL approach for teachers of CsoT towards the development of EFL teaching and learning.

Finally, it is to help the researcher and the participants to become more aware of the different concepts related to the SAL approach and their values. This is by reviewing the literature on the SAL approach and its implications.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The Student-Active Learning (SAL) approach has been widely explored and researched by various researchers as an effective approach towards students' learning (Van De Bogart, 2009). Teachers' beliefs and their actual Levels of Use (LoU) in the adoption of the SAL approach may differ by context. Both of them may be related to the teachers' demographic characteristics. Teachers may also be encountered by some challenges that hinder them to effectively adopt the SAL approach. However, studies on the teachers' beliefs, their LoU, and their demography characteristics specifically on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and Oman with regard to the SAL approach are very limited (Borg, 2008). Thus, this study aims to place a lucid and thorough investigation of the current teachers' beliefs, their actual LoU, their demographic characteristics, and their encountered challenges in the adoption of the SAL approach in the EFL context at Colleges of Technology (CsoT) in Omani. By achieving this, the study is significant in various ways.

The reviewed literature will contribute information on different aspects pertaining to this study: the application of the Theory of planned behavior (TPB) in investigating the EFL teachers' beliefs, and the application of the LoU construct of the Concerns based Adoption Model (CBAM) in examining the teachers' actual LoU at CsoT across Oman. This is supported by thorough discussion on the teachers' beliefs, their LoU, their demographic characteristics, the conditions to facilitate the adoption of

innovations, and the SAL approach as well as justifications for the variables under study. Thus, this study will contribute to future research in the EFL field by reviewing as much of the literature as possible, and presenting the prospective reader with a comprehensive overview of the current adoption of the SAL approach.

As it is mentioned in the statement of the problem that there are some teachers who still felt hesitant to adopt the Student-Active Learning (SAL) approach, which affects students' learning and their future employment, the researcher will recommend ways to enhance EFL teaching and learning at CsoT. This is concerning the adoption of the SAL approach based on the teachers' beliefs and their LoU on the adoption of the SAL approach. Appropriate guidelines can greatly support the teachers in achieving the needs of adopting the SAL approach in EFL context at CsoT across Oman.

This study will also provide CsoT in Oman with the current data that will aid them in making better decisions and applying educational strategies with greater certainty regarding the adoption of the SAL approach in EFL classrooms. It will also offer clarifications for them to facilitate the SAL approach adoption more effectively for the advantage of both the teachers and the students.

Moreover, this study will offer supplementary input to the existing studies on teachers' beliefs system on the adoption of the SAL approach. It will help the teachers to become more aware of the extent of the impact of their beliefs on interpreting their teaching contexts to reflect upon their behaviors and actions in their classrooms (Md. Zain, 2007). It will help the teachers to realize the importance of their beliefs towards innovation adoption and development process.

In addition, the study will offer information on the extent of the relationship between the teachers' beliefs, their LoU, and their demographic characteristics respectively. This will lead the officials at CsoT to propose and design effective professional development programs for teachers based on their demographic levels.

Furthermore, the study will contribute data on the challenges encountered by the teachers and facilitate them to overcome these challenges. This will then encourage the teachers who are still using traditional methods and help them to effectively adopt the SAL approach in EFL classrooms at CsoT in Oman in terms of planning and classroom application.

1.7 Objectives of the study

This study purposes to investigate the CsoT EFL teachers' beliefs and their Levels of Use (LoU) in the adoption of the SAL approach in their classrooms. It first examines the teachers' beliefs on the adoption of the SAL approach. The information obtained will then be analyzed in relation to the teachers' demography, i.e., gender, age, teaching experience, qualification, and nationality.

Secondly, this study examines the teachers' LoU in the adoption of the SAL approach based on the eight-level paradigms, which will then be analyzed in relation to the teachers' demography.

The third objective is to examine the relationship between the teachers' beliefs and their LoU in the adoption of the SAL approach in EFL classrooms.

Finally, this study would determine the challenges encountered by the teachers in the adoption of the SAL approach in their classrooms.

Specifically, this study aims to:

1. Determine the teachers' beliefs on the adoption of the SAL approach in their classrooms.

2. Determine whether there is a relationship between the teachers' beliefs on the adoption of the SAL approach and their gender, age, teaching experience, qualification, and nationality.

3. Determine the teachers' LoU in the adoption of the SAL approach in their classrooms.

4. Determine whether there is a relationship between the teachers' LoU in the adoption of the SAL approach and their gender, age, teaching experience, qualification, and nationality.

5. Determine whether there is a relationship between the teachers' beliefs and their LoU in the adoption of the SAL approach in their classrooms.

6. Determine the challenges encountered by the teachers in the adoption of the SAL approach in their classrooms.

1.8 Research Questions

In line with the above-mentioned objectives, the following are the specific research questions of this study:

1. What are the teachers' beliefs on the adoption of the SAL approach in their classrooms?

2a. Is there a relationship between the teachers' beliefs on the adoption of the SAL approach and their gender?

2b. Is there a relationship between the teachers' beliefs on the adoption of the SAL approach and their age?

2c. Is there a relationship between the teachers' beliefs on the adoption of the SAL approach and their teaching experience?

2d. Is there a relationship between the teachers' beliefs on the adoption of the SAL approach and their qualification?

2e. Is there a relationship between the teachers' beliefs on the adoption of the SAL approach and their nationality?

3. What are the teachers' LoU in the adoption of the SAL approach in their classrooms?

4a. Is there a relationship between the teachers' LoU in the adoption of the SAL approach and their gender?

4b. Is there a relationship between the teachers' LoU in the adoption of the SAL approach and their age?

4c. Is there a relationship between the teachers' LoU in the adoption of the SAL approach and their teaching experience?

4d. Is there a relationship between the teachers' LoU in the adoption of the SAL approach and their qualification?

4e. Is there a relationship between the teachers' LoU in the adoption of the SAL approach and their nationality?

5. Is there a relationship between the teachers' beliefs and their LoU in the adoption of the SAL approach in their classrooms?

6. What are the challenges encountered by the teachers in the adoption of the SAL approach in their classrooms?

1.9 Delimitations of the Study

The study focuses only on the GFP EFL teachers' beliefs and their LoU in the adoption of the SAL approach at CsoT in Oman, and the challenges encountered by

the teachers that affect them to adopt the SAL approach. In examining such issues, the limitations of this study are as follows.

This study is restricted only to the teachers' teaching beliefs on the adoption of the SAL approach in EFL classrooms; hence, it will not examine any other beliefs.

Finally, this study is restricted only to teachers instructing the English component of the GFP at the English Language Center (ELC) in CsoT in Oman. Therefore, the findings of the study are not proposed to be generalized to other teachers working in other departments or colleges. Likewise, the findings are relevant only to the Omani context and cannot be generalized to other settings in the Arab world or other EFL countries outside the Arab world.

1.10 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in this study is a synthesis based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985) and the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) (Hall et al., 1973). This research adopts only three belief-based constructs from the TPB, which are attitude towards behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control to measure teachers' beliefs. It also adopts only one construct from the CBAM, which is the Levels of Use (LoU). The framework explains the relationship between the teachers' demography, the teachers' beliefs, and the teachers' LoU in the adoption of the SAL approach in EFL classrooms in Oman.

Based on this conceptual framework, the main variables are the teachers' demography, which includes gender, age, teaching experience, qualification, and

nationality. These factors may relate to the teachers' beliefs and LoU in the adoption of the SAL approach in EFL classrooms in Oman. This means that these independent variables are predicted to be related to the teachers in forming their beliefs as well as their LoU. In turn, the teachers adopt in ways constant with their beliefs and LoU. Figure 1.3 shows the conceptual framework of the study based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM).

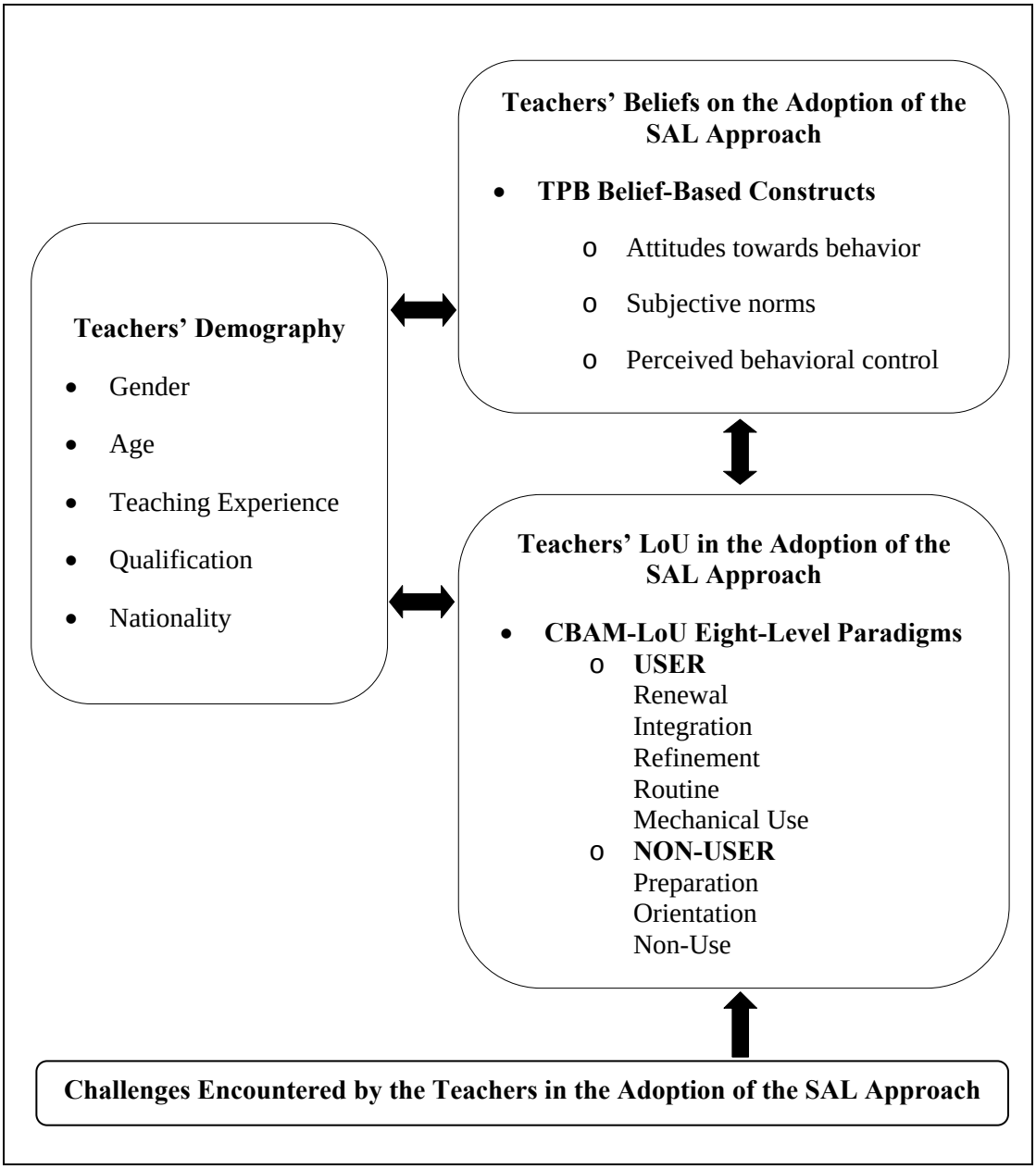

Figure 1.3: The Conceptual Framework based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM)

Based on this framework, the study aims to investigate the EFL teachers' beliefs and their LoU in the adoption of the SAL approach in their classrooms in Oman, delving into four domains:

1. The teachers' demography including gender, age, teaching experience, qualification, and nationality.

2. The teachers' beliefs on the adoption of the SAL approach in their classrooms.

3. The teachers' LoU in the adoption of the SAL approach in their classrooms.

4. The challenges encountered by the teachers in the adoption of the SAL approach in their classrooms.

1.11 Definitions of Key Terms

Definitions and terms may differ from one source to another. The terms, which are used in this study, were synthesized from varied contexts to appropriately achieve the requirements of this study. The following is the definitions of the key terms of this study.

Teachers' Beliefs

Teachers' beliefs, as stated by Ajzen (1985), are the self-probability of an individual to perform a given behavior resulting in a given consequence. In this study and based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the teachers' beliefs are measured based

on three belief-based constructs, including attitude towards behavior, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. Attitude towards behavior is the extent of performing a given behavior, which is positively or negatively valued by the teachers. Subjective norms are the teachers' perception of social influence to involve or not in the given behavior. The perceived behavioral control is the perception of control over performance of the given behavior.

Levels of Use

The Levels of Use (LoU), according to Hall and Hord (2011), are levels of the use of an innovation to describe the behavior of the users and the non-users regarding the innovation. The focus is not on how users feel, but on what they do or act regarding the innovation. In this study, they are levels of EFL teachers' use of the SAL approach in their classrooms. They are measured based on eight-level paradigms: Renewal, Integration, Refinement, Routine, Mechanical Use, Preparation, Orientation, and Non-Use.

Student-Active Learning Approach

The Student-Active Learning (SAL) approach is defined as any teaching approach that effectively involves students in the learning development process, which requires them to meaningfully learn and critically think towards their actual learning actions (Prince, 2004).

Innovation

Innovation refers to anything that is new for an individual. For example, practice, an idea, or an object (Rogers, 2003). In this study, the SAL approach is the innovation.

Adoption

Adoption is an individual's or an organization's decision to use an innovation (Rogers, 1995, cited in Frambach & Schillewaert, 2002). In this study, it is to adopt the SAL approach.

English as a Foreign Language

English as a Foreign Language (EFL), as defined by Quirk et al. (1985), is a language used by individuals for communication across frontiers or with others who are not from their country: listening to broadcasts, reading books or newspapers, engaging in commerce or travel, for example.

1.12 Summary

In view of the global challenges of the rapid educational innovation, there have been systemic efforts to develop the educational system in Oman. In the last twenty years, the MoMP has called for the innovation of EFL classrooms towards the adoption of approaches influenced by the notion of the student-centered educational philosophy. In this context, this study particularly focuses on the adoption of the SAL approach that makes educational effort in Oman represented in the MoMP more significant and urgent. More significantly, this study investigates the teachers' beliefs and their LoU in the adoption of the SAL approach in CsoT in Oman. In addition, it is a query into the relationship between the teachers' beliefs and their LoU. It is also a query into the relationship between the teachers' demographic variables, including gender, age, teaching experience, qualification, and nationality with the teachers' beliefs and their LoU. It is also to investigate the challenges encountered by the teachers in the adoption of the SAL approach.