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للدراسات اللغوية والأدبية

Teacher Training and Professional Development in King-Saud-UniversityGerman as a Foreign Language

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Abstract

This study aimed to provide insight on the current state of teacher preparation and professional development in Saudi Arabia with focus on GFL contexts. It explored this as part of Saudi Vision 2030 to highlight the crucial role that teacher training and professional development play in influencing the quality of GFL instruction. This study considered the quantitative methodology where data was collected from 30 GFL teachers from King Saud University using a close-open ended questionnaire. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the 30 GFL instructors from various Saudi Arabian areas and educational levels. Data analysis was done with the use of a statistical tool-SPSS. The study concluded that many teachers are remarkably ready and prepared to teach GFL. This was drawn from the positiveness of the preparedness factors for GFL teaching that were examined in this study; this includes their experience in teaching field, content of the training program, level of use of technological tools, as well as active participation in professional development programs. This study also recommends that cultural and context – sensitiveness be included in German Language programs. This study provided insights into culturally tailored professional development in meeting GFL instruction quality.

Keywords: GFL, GLT, Teacher development, Quality of teaching, Professional development.

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تدريب المعلمين والتطوير المهني في سياقات تعليم اللغة الألمانية باعتبارها لغة ثانية في جامعة الملك سعود

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ملخص:

أُجريت هذه الدراسة بهدف تقديم رؤية مُعمّقة حول الوضع الراهن لإعداد المعلمين وتطويرهم المهني في سياق اللغة الألمانية العامة في المملكة العربية السعودية. وتستكشف الدراسة هذا الأمر باعتباره جزءًا من رؤية المملكة العربية السعودية 2030، لتسليط الضوء على الدور المحوري الذي يلعبه تدريب المعلمين وتطويرهم المهني في تحسين جودة تدريس اللغة الألمانية العامة. واعتمدت هذه الدراسة على المنهجين الكمي والنوعي. جُمعت البيانات من 30 مُستجيبًا من مُعلّمي اللغة الألمانية العامة في جامعة الملك سعود، الذين أمضوا أكثر من 5 سنوات في مهنة تدريس اللغة الألمانية. واستُخدمت طريقة العينة العشوائية البسيطة لاختيار 30 مُعلّمًا من مُختلف المناطق والمستويات التعليمية في المملكة العربية السعودية. تكوّن الاستبيان من أسئلة مُغلقة استُخدمت لجمع معلومات ديموغرافية، وجوانب مُحددة لإعداد المُعلّمين ونموهم المهني. وتم تحليل البيانات باستخدام أداة إحصائية SPSS. وسُجِّلت النتائج في جداول وتكرارات ونسب مئوية. وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن عددًا من المعلمين مستعدون ومؤهلون بشكل ملحوظ لتدريس اللغة الألمانية. وقد استُخلص ذلك من إيجابية عوامل الاستعداد لتدريس اللغة الألمانية التي تمت دراستها في هذه الدراسة؛ وهذا يشمل خبرتهم في مجال التدريس، ومحتوى البرنامج التدريبي، ومستوى استخدام الأدوات التكنولوجية، بالإضافة إلى المشاركة الفعالة في برامج التطوير المهني.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تعليم اللغة الألمانية، تطوير المعلمين، جودة التدريس، التطوير المهني.

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1.0 Introduction

German Language has grown to become not just a subject required for passing in schools, but has also a necessary requirement needed to succeed on the world stage. It is one of the most fundamental languages when it comes to international trade, diplomacy, and communication, thus, language mastery contributes to international competitiveness (Al-Hoorie& Al-Ghazo, 2018; Al-Seghayer, 2015). Responding to this demand, education stakeholders and policymakers in Saudi Arabia have been compelled to equip their citizens with the linguistic skills essential for theirsuccess in the world. Consequently, more emphasis has been given to the acquisition of German language, particularly in higher learning institutions (Arab News, 2019). In Saudi Arabia, where the goal is to produce highly competent German-speaking students, basic attention must be given to the professional growth and to the training of GFL teachers (Al-Qahtani, 2019). The process of teaching German to non-native speakers requires not only language knowledge but also substantial body of knowledge about second language acquisition theories, efficient pedagogical approaches, and pertinent teaching strategies (Al-Khatib, 2016). Understanding the dynamics of teacher preparation and development is crucial because GFL teachers must be equipped to meet the provisions of the present-day educational requirements. Despite the existence of professional development programs among GFL teachers at King Saud University (KSU), it has become apparent that there is a need to have a more systematic and comprehensive approach towards the improvement of these programs, in general. Aligning professional development initiatives with teachers' specific needs, providing continuous support, and fostering a culture of lifelong learning among educators are essential components for improving the quality of GFL instruction (Al-Qahtani, 2019; Alshumaimeri, 2017b). Further, it should be determined by the government and learning institutions whether the existing training programs are useful with regard to incorporating modern teaching methodologies, using modern technological applications, and being reflective of real-life classroom experiences (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2013).

There is a need to conduct an in-depth study of the effects of cultural and contextual factors on the design and delivery of professional development programs. Recognizing the importance of cultural sensitivity in preparing GFL teachers may bring about a more effective, and individually designed training program to target the specific challenges of teaching German in Saudi Arabia. This process may influence the policies and procedures that can be used to enhance the general level of GFL teaching within the Saudi education sector, with students being the ones who will be positively affected, and their employability in the global labor markets being boosted (Alshahrani, 2018; Al-Seghayer, 2015). The present study evaluates the situation of GFL teacher preparation and professional development in Saudi Arabia, which will be useful information to policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders. It discusses the existing teaching procedures, outlines the

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problems associated withteacher training, and suggests measures that should be taken to enhance different training programs. In addition, it investigates the implications of teacher training on the future employment of students and the ways in which they may prevail in the globalized world. However, there is no updated and culturally competent teacher education program that would address the interests of both educators and learners in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, in light of these facts, it can be said that this study is applicable to addressing the current gap in the literature regarding the functioning of teacher development programs in the context of Saudi GFL.

2.0 Literature Review

The most critical factors in any education system in a language learning are education teacher training and professional growth. In the teaching of GFL in Saudi Arabia, this is particularly the case, as the importance of foreign language skills continues to increase steadily in alignment with the national Vision 2030. The status of the GFL education programs proposed at the present moment must be periodically modified in consideration of the evolving demands of the student and teacher populations (Al-Arabiya, 2020). Based on these reforms, the preparation of teachers, current pedagogical strategies, and the use of technology throughout the GFL courses have become some of the pivotal areas (Al-Harbi, 2016; Al-Qahtani, 2019). The global trend toward improving education cannot be ignored, which underscores the high relevance of that area of research.

The use of technology in language learning has received a strong campaign in Saudi Arabia, making its impact felt across the world in the field of language learning research (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2013). To illustrate, the British Council in Saudi Arabia has made a considerable contribution towards offering professional development to teachers, and provided additional support in enhancing their language proficiency and teaching methods (British Council Saudi Arabia, n.d.). To this end, Alshahrani (2018) and Alshumaimeri (2017b) identify the necessity to incorporate digital tools and resources to make the language lessons more fun and interactive. Such observations can also be supported by the claims of Al-Mansour (2014) who suggests that technology can allow access to real learning resources, which can contribute to making the students more competent in their languages.

Pedagogically, it has been found that the Saudi teacher training program form mostly uses conventional, lecture-based forms of teaching, which negatively affects the acquisition of communicative competence. On the one hand, Al-Khatib (2016) and Alshahrani (2018) recommend a student-based learning, communicative-focused approach, task-based language teaching (TBLT), to make learning more engaging and help students acquire language skills. Al-Hoorie and Al-Ghazo (2018) further suggest that teachers must

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exercise cultural sensitivity in their training to reflect cultural diversity in Saudi students, so that they will be prepared to address cultural needs within the teaching environment.

It has also been noted by Alshumaimeri (2017a) that the cultural awareness and technology included in teacher training should be contextualized to local settings. These observations are important in improving the Saudi Arabian teacher preparation programs to ensure they comply with the ever-changing educational standards around the world, which strive to create effective educators capable of addressing the multifaceted needs of language learners in an increasingly globalized world.

2.1 Saudi Arabian GFL Educational Context

The rise in the use of the German language in international trade, diplomacy, and communication in Europe has prompted Saudi Arabia to significantly invest in the development of the German language, especially at KSU (Al-Seghayer, 2015). The Saudi government has recognized the importance of German in its vision 2030 framework, which aims to enhance the country's global competitiveness. To achieve this vision, Saudi Arabia introduced German language learning at an early stage in educational cycle, aligning with the global demand for multilingual individuals in the workforce (Al-Arabiya, 2020). Nevertheless, this heightened attention to German has required that the quality of GFL teaching, particularly in teacher training and learning materials, has to be brought to the forefront (Alshahrani, 2018).

The Saudi GFL learning environment will enable learning (proficiency) in the four major language skills—listening, speaking, reading and writing—through diversified chatter, communicative pedagogical approaches. Instructors use various materials, including conventional textbooks and web-based content, to make students interested and improve the educational process (Alshahrani, 2018). As an illustration, Al-Mansour (2014) referred to interactive whiteboards and education applications as the main technological options that facilitate language learning since it enables students to access authentic German materials, which also contribute to linguistic and cultural acquisition.

Furthermore, technology infusion has been the key feature of Saudi GFL education. Digital technologies such as language learning software systems and multimedia content have contributed to the elevated interactivity and participation within GFL classrooms (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2013). The study conducted by Alshahrani (2018) and Al-Seghayer (2015) supported the claim that the technology integration, including the use of language-specific applications, has truly boosted the level of student engagement and offered a more immersive learning experience.

A major strategy for guaranteeing quality instruction has been the professional development of instructors who teach GFL. The Saudi government has developed new workshops and training sessions to strengthen the pedagogical skills of teachers and learn how to incorporate new technologies into classrooms

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(Alshumaimeri, 2017b). Nevertheless, despite the significant progress achieved, further work towards creating more structured and coherent teacher training, in line with global best practices, is generally required to ensure the continued improvement of the quality of GFL educations in Saudi Arabia (Al-Qahtani, 2019; Alshahrani, 2018).

2.2 Saudi Arabian Teacher Training Programs

Various teacher training programs are being provided to pre-service and in-service GFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. Officer preparation is often carried out during pre-service in teacher-training colleges and universities, and in-service training is mostly conducted through the Ministry of Education and other educational institutions (Al-Jarf, 2018). These courses differ in length, content, and teaching methods. Although most of these programs emphasize the English language teaching, training is also provided in curriculum planning, lesson preparation, classroom management and the use of technology, each of which forms an important part of the GFL teaching. Nevertheless, there is a relevant loophole on these programs concerning their consistency with particular requirements of GFL teachers (Al-Qahtani, 2019). The influx of the foreign language education in Saudi Arabia, especially the German education, demands a transition to more specific education programs that would cover the peculiarities of GFL teaching. The design of these programs should focus on training teachers in the use of the language in addition to providing them with contemporary pedagogical approaches, like learner-centered instruction, task-based learning, and interactive teaching activities (Alshahrani, 2018). Extensive research has pointed out that the premises of traditional teaching commonly used in teacher preparation programs in Saudi Arabia are predominantly lecture-based and that there is a lack of more modern strategies such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and mutual learning (Al-Khatib, 2016).

One of the priority areas in teacher education is the persistence of the traditional approaches to teaching. Al-Khatib (2016) indicated that the conventional lecture-based approaches remain the most common, whereas more innovative approaches like CLT and task-based language teaching tend to be under-represented. Such a training gap is quite concerning, since these contemporary pedagogies are essential pieces to the puzzle of getting students engaged in language learning to the point of significance. In that case Saudi Arabian teacher training programs need to gear themselves towards creating a more active and interactive teaching methodology. The didactic approach, experiential learning, and reflective practices are the strategies that should be employed to help teachers reflect on the educational process and refine their pedagogical techniques (Alshumaimeri, 2017a). Moreover, inquiry-based learning is becoming popular because teachers are advised to conduct a study to help them develop their teaching strategies. Honey and Hilton (2011) noted

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that inquiry-based learning enables the teacher to be able to analyze critically his/her teaching methods and implement strategies that best suit the students' learning styles.

Technology Integration: The use of technology in the classroom is a worldwide education trend and Saudi Arabia is not an exception. The Ministry of Education has made considerable effortsto provide schools and universities with digital tools, including interactive whiteboards and online resources. Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2013) stressed that with the help of technology in language teaching, a more interactive and engaging learning experience can be created. Nonetheless, not all teachers of GFL have acquired adequate training on how to apply these tools in the classroom. To help fill this gap, professional development workshops with an emphasis on the integration of technology in GFL teaching are needed (Alshahrani, 2018). The role of teachers is a matter of providing them with skills to utilize online learning environments, digital assessment curricula, and multimedia resources to facilitate students' language acquisition of students and provide instant feedback on their progress.

Cultural Sensitivity: No aspect of the Saudi Arabian context related to GFL education is more distinctive than the role of cultural sensitivity. Saudi Arabian teachers have to deal with students of different cultural backgrounds; therefore, it is necessary that teacher training programs contain modules about cultural awareness and sensitivity (Al-Hoorie& Al-Ghazo, 2018). The addition of cultural aspects during GFL teacher training not only enables teachers to better understand their students' needs, but also provides them with the opportunity to establish a welcoming and inclusive classroom atmosphere. A teacher preparation program should include workshops, discussions, and activities addressing cultural differences and biases (Alshumaimeri, 2017b). Multicultural resources that teachers should actively utilize include literature, videos, and music to present their lessons on a much higher level and develop a deeper sense of cultural diversity in their students.

International Context: Related trends in teacher training, especially those regarding the incorporation of technology and culturally responsive teaching, are found in international studies as well. As an example, Germany gives priority to the incorporation of technology into foreign language education, where it has been found that digital technology can support language learning, as it helps students gain language exposure that reflects the authentic language in the real world (Kukulska-Hulme, 2012). Additionally, research done in the UK and the US has pointed out the importance of cultural competence during teacher training programs, especially in diverse settings (Gay, 2010). There are international views that argue the Saudi GFL teacher training programs must pursue more modern, evidence-based methods,placing greater emphasis on technology, teaching, and cultural understanding.

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2.3 Initiatives for Professional Development:

Professional development programs for GFL teachers in Saudi Arabia should be designed to address their specific needs and challenges. A collaborative approach, involving teachers, administrators, and policymakers, is crucial for the successful implementation of effective professional development initiatives (Alshumaimeri, 2017). However, obstacles like time restraints and a lack of pertinent resources can make it difficult to put successful professional development programs into action. Thus, teacher training and professional development play crucial roles in enhancing education quality and teacher effectiveness in any educational context.

Professional development for GFL educators includes possibilities for continued study in addition to initial teacher preparation. In Saudi Arabian GFL contexts, where German language instruction is an integral part of the curriculum, it is imperative to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of teacher training programs and professional development opportunities provided to German language teachers. The Saudi Arabia government has overtime implemented various initiatives to enhance the professional development of English Language teachers. These include programs offered by institutions like the English Language institute at King Abdulaziz University and King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals as well the National Center for Professional and Educational Development. Furthermore, organizations like the Saudi TESOL and the British Council in Saudi Arabia offer training courses, workshops, conferences and online resources focused on improving teaching skills, classroom management and language proficiency.

This study examined the present methods, issues, and offer suggestions for improvement in the following sections as it delves deeper into the various facets of teacher development and training in Saudi Arabian GFL environments.

2.4 Research Questions

This study examines the current approaches, problems, and prospective solutions for advancing German teacher professional development. All these factors, among others, are what the study intends to explore while answering the following research questions:

1. Are GFL teachers in Saudi Arabia (KSU) professionally and regularly trained to support the country's educational development and achieve its international objectives?
2. What content is included in GFL training provided to the teachers?
3. Is there a need to modify these GFL training programs?

3.0 Methodology

This study employed the quantitative research approach to evaluate the professional developmental and teacher training environmentin GFL Saudi Arabian contexts. The main data collection tool was a

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questionnaire that helped collect information of a wide range of GFL instructors in a systematic manner. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The initial part consisted of demographic questions designed to identify the background of the participants. It included five close-ended questions concerning their gender, age, experience years, and education level. The second part was devoted to teacher preparation and professional development and had twelve close-ended questions that dealt with the kind of training provided, perceived efficacy, the use of technology in classrooms, and the level of satisfaction with the training programs. The third part addressed the cultural sensitivity in teacher training where five close-ended questions and one open-ended question was to be used to ascertain the degree to which the teacher training embraced cultural diversities. A simple random sampling method was adopted to select 30 GFL instructors from various regions across Saudi Arabia. Since the sample was representative, the study allows for generalizing the results to a greater size of GFL teachers in the country (Al-Qahtani, 2019). The participants had at least five years of experience in the field of teaching and therefore, they demonstrated understanding of the field of GFL teaching.

In order to achieve reliability and validity of the questionnaire, appropriate testing was carried out. The instrument reliability was determined by employing Cronbach Alpha which is a standard co-efficient in assessing internal consistencies. The computed value of Cronbach's Alpha was 0.85, which showed that the items of the questionnaire had a high internal consistency. This finding indicates that the content of the questionnaire generates recurrent answers amongst participants and, therefore, makes the instrument reliable in collecting data (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2013). Regarding validity, there were two subtypes, including content validity and construct validity. Content validity was achieved by presenting the questionnaire to a panel of experts in GFL teaching and professional development. The specialists reviewed the instrument to make sure that it covered all available domains in teacher preparation, professional development and cultural awareness. According to their responses, some items were fine-tuned to enhance intelligibility and applicability (Alshahrani, 2018). Factor analysis was used in testing the construct validity which was performed on the information obtained through the 30 GFL teachers. The factor analysis results demonstrated high factor loads on items within the three categories, including demographics, teacher preparation, and cultural sensitivity, which proved that the questionnaire performed well in assessing the intended constructs (Alshahrani, 2018).

The data obtained via questionnaire was analyzed by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The data came as frequencies and percentages; a clear and objective picture of the situation of teacher preparation and professional development in the Saudi GFL environment appeared (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2013). The necessary trends and areas to be considered in training GFL teachers could be

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determined with the help of this strategy, developing a policy in accordance with the identified trends and areas which have to be considered (Alshahrani, 2018).

4.0   Results

4.1   Gender of German Teacher Participants

Table 1

Gender of German Teacher Participants

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	12	40
Female	18	60
Prefer not to say	-	-
Total	**30**	**100%**

Regarding the question on gender, the demographics showed that 40% of the respondents were males, while a higher percentage of the population (60%) were females. This is a consistent pattern with the findings of Alshahrani, (2018), who also found a higher percent of the female population involved in language teaching research. The higher proportion of females in the sample may indicate broader education statistics, as women have typically been observed to be more prevalent in the teaching field, including language teaching.

4.2 Age of Participants

Table 2

Age of Participants

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Under 25	2	6.7
25-34	12	40
35-44	7	23.3
45-54	6	20
55 and above	3	10
Total	**30**	**100**

The age distribution of participants shows that the majority (40%) of respondents were between 25-34 years, indicating a youthful and dynamic group of teachers actively engaged in their careers. Teachers in the 35-44 age group ranked second with 23.3%, followed by 6.7% of respondents who are below 25 years. Respondents aged 55 and above were only 10%. This interprets that teachers aged between 25 and 44 years,

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which are usually deemed the prime age of teaching career, participated actively, in line with findings from other studies on professional paths in teaching (Al-Hoorie& Al-Ghazo, 2018).

4.3 Participant's Level of Education

Table 3

Participant's Level of Education

Education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bachelor's Degree/NCE	6	20
Master's Degree	17	56.7
Ph.D. Degree	7	23.3
Total	**30**	**100**

The results in Table 3 show that the majority of respondents (56.7%) hold a Master's degree, indicating a highly educated group of GFL instructors. A further 23.3% of respondents have a Ph.D. degree, highlighting the presence of advanced academic qualifications among the participants. Only 20% of the respondents have a Bachelor's degree or NCE, suggesting that a significant proportion of teachers in this study possess higher education qualifications. This is consistentwith the findings of Alshahrani (2018), which highlight the importance of advanced education for teachers in specialized fields like GFL.

4.4 Experience in the Teaching Field

Table 4

Teaching Experience

Years	Frequency	Percentage
0-5	8	26.7
6-10	12	40
11-15	6	20
Above 15	4	13.3
Total	**30**	**100**

Data from the table above indicates that 8 of the respondents have 0-5 years of experience in GFL or related fields, 12 respondents have 6-10 years of experience, 6 respondents have 11-15 years of experience, while the remaining 4 respondents have above 15 years of experience in GFL or related fields. Many of the teachers are considered to have a considerable experience in the teaching field considering that they have been teaching for over 5 years, 22 (73.3%). Having an extensive experience in the teaching field can bring several benefits to GFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. Teachers with over 5 years of experience have had ample time to refine their teaching techniques and strategies.

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4.5 Formally or Informally Trained

Table 5

Trainee Status of Participants

Training Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Formally trained	20	66.7
Informally trained	10	33.3
Total	**30**	**100%**

In the training status, 66.7% of the respondents reported that they had received formal training, and 33.3% cited having informal training. Formal training normally entails organized courses provided by universities or government entities and may be contrasted with less formal training, often self-educated or obtained as a result of workshops or on-the-job training.

Based on the free responses, a number of teachers emphasized the need to integrate formal and informal training techniques. As one respondent suggested, *"I have received formal training which has given me the theoretical grounds but informal workshops have enabled me to implement these theories into the classroo*m scenarios." One of *the respondents said, "Most of us resort to informal training and peer-to-peer learning due to a lack of specialized GFL* training programs."

This suggests that although formal training offers a strong academic background knowledge, there is a significant desire to continue informal training aimed at improving more practical teaching skills, especially those related to the practicalities of teaching GFL in Saudi Arabia. Also, numerous educators stood out the importance of peer instruction and self-education in their professional development, demonstrating that informal learning is a compliment to formal training. The results indicate that a more blended model of teacher educating, including a combination of formal learning and informal learning, may be more useful in enhancing the performance of GFL teachers.

4.6 Satisfaction Level with Education Received

Table 6

Satisfaction Level with Education Received

Response	Frequency	Percentage%
Very Dissatisfied	1	3.3
Dissatisfied	1	3.3
Neutral	2	6.67
Satisfied	4	13.3
Very Satisfied	22	73.3
Total	**30**	**100**

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Table 6 indicates that majority of the respondents (73.3) were extremely satisfied with their education, and 13.3 of the respondents were satisfied. Personally, 6.67% of the respondents had a neutral stance regarding the training, only 6.6% were dissatisfied and 3.3% were very dissatisfied. Such a high rate of satisfaction indicates that the professional development programs of GFL teachers prove to be efficient, especially when it comes to responding to the needs and demands of most participants. These results align with a study that attributes high satisfaction and effective teacher performance to well-organized teacher training programs (Alshahrani, 2018). They also show that the majority of the teachers perceived the programs to be relevant and helpful in developing their skills and effectiveness in teaching German as a foreign language.

4.7 Level of Technological Tool Utilization

Table 7

Level of Technological Tool Utilization

Response	Frequency	Percentage
I use technological tools more than 50% of the time in classrooms	24	80%
I use technological tools less than 50% of the time in classrooms	6	20%
Total	**30**	**100%**

The responses in Table 7 indicate that the frequency of humble reported initiatives involving the use of technological tools in their classrooms was more than 50% of the time by 80% of the respondents, showing high integration of technology in their classroom practices. Only 1/5 of respondents work with technology less than half of the time. The fact that such a large proportion of teachers make extensive use of technology is impressive, given that many of them entered school during a time when such technology was still not widely used in the learning process. This indicates that the use of digital tools in the teaching process has shifted quite drastically. Such tools as interactive whiteboards, language learning mobile applications, and online platforms were also referred to, signifying the growing role of technology in improving education and engagement in language acquisition (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2013). These results are corroborated by the fact that there is a global trend to incorporate technology in the classroom in order to make education more interactive and efficient (Honey and Hilton, 2011). These findings combine with the fact that although there was initially no technology exposure during training of family founded teachers, the use of digital tools has become an inevitable aspect of modern GFL instruction.

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4.8 Cultural Sensitivity in GFL Teacher Training

Table 8

Extent of Cultural Sensitivity in GFL Teacher Training

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	1	3.3
Slightly	3	9.9
Moderately	2	6.6
Very much	4	13.3
Completely	20	66.6
Total	**30**	**100**

Data from table 8 shows that 1 (3.3%) of the respondents believed that cultural factors and sensitivities should not be considered in GFL teacher training and professional development, 3 (9.9%) agreed that it should be slightly included, another 2 (6.67%) of the respondents agreed that it should be moderately included, 4 (13.3%) agreed that it should be very much included, while the remaining 20 (66.7%) of the respondents agreed that it should be completely included.

5.0 Discussion

This section explains the results of the study, as the important conditions affecting the effectiveness of GFL teacher education and professional development in Saudi Arabia are noted.

5.1Enhancing GFL Teacher Preparation Programs and Career Development in Saudi Arabia

The findings of the study reported that, although GFL teachers were found to be adequately prepared, further improvements are still required in terms of teacher preparation programs. The educational reforming process is supposed to be more specific, as Alshahrani (2018) stressed, meaning that it is aimed at implementing new pedagogical approaches and an idea of cultivating professional growth. Current programs of teacher preparation in Saudi Arabia will focus mainly on traditional courses, and the latest trends in teaching languages, including communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language teaching (TBLT) are not common (Al-Khatib, 2016). In the course of this study, the importance of integrating contemporary teaching strategies in the teacher training process is justified. Likewise, what Alshumaimeri (2017) suggests should be adjusted to the realities of the modern education world, specifically, putting into practice CLT, which means learning how to communicate with the aim not merely at memorizing certain information mechanically, but at communicating with the actual world.

Moreover, additional coherent and more consistent preparation programs that extend beyond early teacher preparation are necessary. Al-Qahtani (2019) notes that professional development should be aligned

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to the emerging needs of teachers and response of GFL education environment. Through the enhancement of teacher preparation programs, the Saudi education system will be capable of improving the quality of GFL teaching, as well as assisting in adapting teachers to the rapidly globalizing world. Constantly increasing, the findings of this study are consistent with the findings of Al-Harbi (2016), who demonstrated that educational reforms aligned with the global trends and giving teachers a chance for lifelong learning and development were required.

5.2 Training Programs and Pedagogical Methods

As the results of the study show, GFL teachers in Saudi Arabia undergo the process of training, but there is still a great need to improve their pedagogical techniques. The quantitative information indicates a predominance of lecture type teaching methods in GFL classrooms. It correlates with the results of Al-Khatib (2016) who believes that a traditional, teacher-centered style of teaching contributes to the impairment of communicative competence among learners. Conversely, research projects by Alshahrani (2018) and Alshumaimeri (2017) promote the incorporation of a broader range of student-centered strategies, including CLT and TBLT, that involve students in the real-life language use and development of critical thinking. These methods not only enhance acquisition of languages, but also equip students with the skills of real-life communication in German-speaking nations.

Furthermore, experiential and reflective learning measures is also important to the professional development of the GFL teachers. According to Alshumaimeri (2017), reflective practice aids teachers to critically evaluate their teaching methods and make adjustments that can better address the students' needs. As has been proposed by Honey and Hilton (2011), it is possible to use inquiry-based learning which enables teachers to conduct action research which, in turn, helps teachers get a better understanding of effective teaching tools and enhances the learning environment. That is why Saudi GFL teacher training programs have to focus on innovative pedagogical approaches that would allow focusing on comprehensive development of both teachers and students.

As per government standards, all educators throughout Saudi Arabia go through formal training and attain fundamental teacher training. Nevertheless, seeking further training is clued in the individual teacher. There are periodic training sessions provided by the government and educational institutionsto maintain quality educational standards in GFL classrooms (Alshahrani, 2018; Al-Qahtani, 2019). Saudi Arabia Ministry of Education offers in-service training to GFL teachers who are expected to enhance teaching skills, language knowledge and exposure to contemporary teaching strategies. Such programs also offer the latest information on curriculum reformations, assessment methods, and efficient methods of instruction in order to sustain the curricular quality of teaching German (Saudi Gazette, 2019). Moreover, although the British Council in Saudi

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Arabia provides TESOL courses mostly to English language teachers, the courses are focused on teaching methodologies and incorporating technology in teaching among other factors, which can also be applied by GFL teachers (British Council Saudi Arabia, n.d.). In GFL teachers, however, completely more targeted professional development programs are necessary that specifically address the issues GFL teachers face in teaching German.

5.3 Technology in GFL Instruction

Incorporation of technology in the GFL classroom has emerged as a driver of positive teaching and learning processes. The results of the study relate how 80% of respondents employ technological tools for over 50% of their teaching time in classrooms, and this correlates to the rising trend towards the digitalization of education all over the world. Etrmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2013) state that successful incorporation of technology improves student involvement and facilitates interactive learning moments. In addition, technologies like interactive whiteboards, language learning software, or online platforms provide GFL students with more access to authentic learning content that enhances their language competence (Al-Mansour, 2014; Alshahrani, 2018).

But even though these technological resources are available, there happens to be a missing piece when it comes to the training of GFL teachers on how to use them effectively. According to Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2013), even in cases where the digital tools are made available to teachers, they need to be taught on how to incorporate their teaching practices. This work highlights the necessity of professional development programs that should provide GFL teachers with the abilities to activate digital tools to use them in the classroom. According to Alshahrani (2018), technology training should be a fundamental aspect of continued professional development to bridge the gap created by the changing technological orientation in terms of education. The power of these tools is not fully realized without this type of training, and therefore cannot contribute much to student learning.

5.4 Cultural Versus Context-Specific Sensitivity

Cultural sensitivity has been found as an important aspect among GFL teachers' preparation. According to this study, most of the respondents (66.7%) indicate that cultural factors must be well incorporated into GFL teacher training programs. This coincides with the findings of Al-Hoorie and Al-Ghazo (2018), who state that cultural competence is the vital skill a teacher should possess to address complex needs of his or her students. Saudi Arabia's educational context, characterized by its cultural and religious diversity, requires GFL teachers to develop an understanding of students' backgrounds and adapt their teaching approaches accordingly. Courses must, therefore, have sections that cover cultural difference and give

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teachers ideas on how they can develop an inclusive learning environment. As Alshumaimeri (2017) suggests, incorporating multicultural resources—such as literature, music, and films—into the curriculum helps teachers foster a more inclusive atmosphere. Moreover, contextual sensitivity, apparently, as Al-Homoud (2012) observes, is essential in the educational context of Saudi Arabia where an instructor should have knowledge about the distinctive socio-cultural factors that guide the learning of students. By incorporating such cultural dimensions in the GFL teacher training, teachers become equipped to orient themselves in the local educational environment and adequately address the various needs of their students.

5.5 Consistent Professional Training

Throughout this paper, the significance of professional development of GFL teachers has been highlighted. The numbers provided in both quantitative and qualitative results further support the importance of a continuous process of professional development in improving the proficiency and productivity of GFL teachers. Alshumaimeri (2017) emphasizes that professional development programs are to be adjusted to the teachers' demands and concentrated on the measures aimed at enhancing classroom teaching and systematic improvement. Under the same conviction, Al-Harbi (2016) adds that such structures should support peer-to-peer collaboration, mentorship, and lifelong learning, which form a culture of lifelong professional development. Also, it has been noted that more formal and systematic professional development is required. Professional development programs should be created in such a way that they offer practical skills to teachers, which they can implement in their classrooms at once, as Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2013) propose. This comprises pedagogical approach learning, technology incorporation, and strategies dealing with cultural diversity. By providing such training continuously, Saudi Arabia is able to make sure that the teachers under the GFL program will continue to be effective and adaptive to the changing needs of their students and the education system as a whole.

5.6 Policy and Practice Implications

The study results can provide helpful information to policymakers and educators in Saudi Arabia and other stakeholders in the GFL education system. The major recommendations of this study are to revise teacher training curricula, reflect new pedagogical practices and technology, and develop a culture of continual professional growth. Al-Qahtani (2019) emphasizes the importance of developing policies with the purpose of making teacher training consistent with international best practices whilst taking into account the local spectrum. Adoption of these recommendations will help the Saudi government to enhance the quality of GFL instruction and assure that teachers will be better prepared to address the requirements of an ever more global context of education.

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6.0 Conclusion

This paper highlights how teacher training and professional development are vital in the development of the quality of GFL teaching in Saudi Arabia, specifically at King Saud University. According to the study results, it can be concluded that although several GFL educators are professionally developed and actively involved in professional development activities, more all-encompassing, situationally cross-sensitive training is required, which would incorporate contemporary pedagogy, technologies, and cultural awareness. The results support the necessity to tailor the teacher development courses to the recent trends in teaching and shifting needs of teachers and students in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, the study recommends a more systematic and formal way of training that considers the cultural specifics of the Saudi students and the increased use of technology in teaching languages. Based on these findings, it is suggested that GFL teacher training programs in Saudi Arabia be improved through the inclusion of the integration of interactive teaching frameworks such as Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), as well as the increased use of technology to allow more stimulating and efficient language learning in Saudi Arabia. Also, incorporating lessons on cultural awareness to address classroom cultural diversity will contribute more towards the achievement of inclusive learning spaces which are fundamental to the success of students. The study also stresses on conducting a longitudinal study to see the long-term effects of such training programs on the teacher performance and student outcomes. By investing in a culture of continuous professional development and equipping GFL educators with the tools and knowledge necessary to increase the quality of German language education, Saudi Arabia can ensure long-term improvement of third-party settlement claims in line with its Vision 2030 objectives.

6.1 Suggestions for Future Research

Further empirical research should be conducted to understand the long-term impacts of technology integration, specific benefits of the different training activities, and how teacher professional development can impact student learning results. Exploring the possibility to implement more individualized, adaptive lessons might give rise to some valuable information on how to further improve the proficiency of GFL teachers.

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