CHAPTER ONE

Introduction
Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

The Republic of Yemen (RoY) is one of the important desert countries in the Middle East, strategically located in the Arabian Peninsula with a long history of civilization, traditions, ideals and beliefs. For any kind of research project related to Yemen and its people it is imperative that the reader must understand the brief history, the genesis and transition of the struggle into RoY, the political system and so on. With the introduction of Yemen to the reader as an objective, this chapter has been divided into two parts. The first part introduces the reader with the country, Yemen. In this part, more information about the historical backdrop that led to establishment of Yemen, the genesis of the political system, geographical location and the demography will be highlighted. In the second part, an overview of the study will be presented. It includes the importance of the study, the motivation for conducting this research, the problem encountered by Yemeni learners, the purpose of the study and the questions posed for the survey.

1.1 History of Yemen

Yemen is one of the oldest centers of civilization in the Near East. Between the 12th century BC and the 6th century AD, it was part of the Minaean, Sabaean, and Himyarite kingdoms, which dominated the lucrative spice trade. Later, it came under Ethiopian and Persian rule. In the 7th century
A.D., the Islamic Caliphs began to exercise control over the area. After this caliphate broke up, the former north Yemen came under control of Imams of various dynasties, most importantly the Zaydi sect, who established a theocratic political structure that survived until modern times. (Dresch, 2000).

1.1.1 The former North Yemen

The Ottoman control was largely confined to cities with the suzerainty of Imams over tribal areas. The Turkish forces withdrew in 1918, and Imam Yahya consolidated his control over north Yemen. It became a member of the Arab League in 1945 and the United Nations in 1947 (Dresch, 2000).

Imam Yahia was killed during an unsuccessful coup attempt in 1948 and was succeeded by his son Ahmad, who ruled until he died in September 1962. Imam Ahmad's reign was marked by growing repression, renewed friction with the United Kingdom over the British presence in the south and growing pressure to support the nationalist objectives of Arab League charted by Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser.

Shortly after assuming power in 1962, Ahmad’s son, Badr, was deposed by revolutionary forces, which took control of Sana’a and created the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR). Egypt, due to its proximity, assisted the YAR with troops and supplies to combat forces loyal to the Imamate while Saudi Arabia and Jordan supported Badr’s royalist forces to oppose the newly formed republic. The conflict continued until 1967 when Egyptian forces withdrew. Finally in 1968, following the final siege of Sana’a, most of the opposing
leaders reconciled to the formation of YAR. Saudi Arabia recognized the Republic in 1970 (History of Yemen, 2004).

1.1.2 The former South Yemen

Going back in the history of colonization, the British influence had increased in the south and eastern portion of Yemen. After the British captured the port of Aden in 1839, South Yemen was ruled as part of British India until 1937, when Aden was made a crown colony with the remaining land designated as east Aden and west Aden protectorates. By 1965, most tribal states within the protectorates and the Aden colony joined to form the British-sponsored Federation of South Arabia.

In 1965, the two rival nationalist groups - the Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen (FLOSY) and the National Liberation Front (NLF) - took to terrorism in their strife to control the nation. In 1967, in the face of uncontrollable violence, the British troops began withdrawal leading to collapse of federal rule. The NLF elements took control after eliminating their FLOSY rivals. The Southern Arabia, including Aden, was declared independent on November 30, 1967 and was renamed People's Republic of South Yemen. In June 1969, the radical wing of the Marxist NLF gained power and changed the country's name to the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY). In the PDRY, all political parties were amalgamated into the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP), which became the only political party. The PDRY
established close ties with Soviet Union, China, Cuba, and radical Palestinians. (ibid)

1.1.3 Republic of Yemen

In 1972, the governments of the PDRY and the YAR declared that they approved a future union. However, little progress was made toward unification, and relations continued to be often strained. The simmering tensions led to fighting in 1979, which was resolved through mediation of Arab League. The northern and southern heads of state reaffirmed the goal of unity during a summit meeting in Kuwait in March 1979. However, in the same year the PDRY began sponsoring insurgency against the YAR. In April 1980, PDRY President Abdul Fattah Ismail resigned and went into exile. His successor, Ali Nasir Mohammed, took a less interventionist stance toward both the YAR and neighboring Oman. Abdul Fattah Ismail chose to come back from the exile. On January 13, 1986, a violent struggle erupted in Aden between his supporters and those of Ali Nasir Mohammed. It lasted for more than a month and resulted in thousands of casualties. Ali Nasir was ousted and Ismail was killed. Nearly 60,000 people including Ali Nasir and his supporters fled to the YAR.

In May 1988, the YAR and PDRY governments struck a reconciliation chord which reduced tensions. Few important agreement of national significance were made including renewal of discussions concerning unification, establishment of a joint oil exploration area along their undefined
border, demilitarization of the border to allow unrestricted crossing of border by Yemenis on the basis of national identification card.

In November 1989, the leaders of the YAR (Ali Abdullah Saleh) and the PDRY (Ali Salim Al-Bidh) agreed upon a draft unity constitution which was originally drafted up in 1981. Consequent to unification of former Yemen Arab Republic (North) and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South), the Republic of Yemen (ROY) officially came to existence on May 22, 1990. Ali Abdullah Saleh became the President, and Ali Salim Al-Bidh became the Vice President (ibid).

1.1.4 Description

Yemen is a developing country with modern tourist facilities widely available only in major cities. The Islamic and traditional beliefs, ideals and practices provide the foundation of customs and laws in ROY.

1.1.5 Location

It is located in the southern Arabian Peninsula, in the Middle East between latitudes 12° and 20° N and between longitudes 41° and 54° E. It is bounded by Saudi Arabia in the north, the red sea in the west, Oman in the east and Gulf of Aden and Arabian Sea in the south.
1.1.6 Area and Population

It has a land area of 555,000 square kilometers with a coast line of 2000kms. The population is approximately 24 million. Its political capital and largest city is Sana’a and Aden is the economical and commercial capital of Yemen. The national flag of the Republic of Yemen is as follows (in red, white, and black).
The flag of Yemen was adopted on May 22, 1990, the day that North Yemen and South Yemen were unified. The flag is essentially the Arab Liberation Flag of 1952, introduced after the Egyptian Revolution of 1952 in which Arab nationalism was a dominant theme. The Arab Liberation Flag served as the inspiration for the flags of both North and South Yemen prior to unification, and the current flags of Egypt, Iraq, Sudan, and Syria.

According to the official description, the red stands for the bloodshed of martyrs and unity; the white for a bright future; black for the dark past. Islam is the state religion and Arabic is the official language.

The administrative division of the Republic of Yemen contains 21 governorates in addition to the secretariat of the capital.

1.1.7 System of Government

The Republic of Yemen has the Republican and Democratic system of governance in which people were the owners of power and its source. They exercise directly through referendums and general elections, as practiced by an indirect way through the legislative, executive and judicial authorities or through elected local councils. The political system of RoY is based on political pluralism and parties and is trading power and participation peacefully through the general elections. (National Information Center ‘n.d’. Yemen).
1.2 Arabic Language

Arabic, the language of written communication, is most commonly used for oral communication by speakers of Arabic dialects ranging from Morocco to Iraq. Arabic language referred to any of the largely nomadic Semitic inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula. In the modern usage, it encompasses all Arabic-speaking people living in the vast region from Mauritania on the Atlantic coast of Africa, to southwestern Iran, including the entire Maghrib of North Africa, Egypt, Sudan, the Arabian Peninsula, Syria and Iraq, (Dalby, 2006).

Among Muslims, Arabic is considered sacred since it is the language through which the Qur’an is believed to have been revealed. With the rise of Islam as a dominant religion, after AD 622, Arabic became the most widespread of the living Semitic languages. It is classified as South Central Semitic and is related to Hebrew, spoken in Israel, and Amharic, spoken in Ethiopia, as well as to the ancient Semitic languages. Arabic inscriptions of the era as early as 4\textsuperscript{th} century AD are found in the Arabian Peninsula, (Katzner, 2002). Today, Arabic is a powerful and significant unifying factor among Arabs, and it is the liturgical language of Muslims in Asia, Africa, Europe, America and Australia.

Many dialects are spoken in different parts of the Middle East which are interrelated. These dialects differ from standard Arabic and from one another in pronunciation, vocabulary grammar and are usually labeled according to major
geographic areas, such as North African, Egyptian, and the Gulf. Within these broad classifications also, the daily speech of urban, rural, and nomadic speakers is distinctively different. The illiterate speakers from widely separated parts of the Arab world may not understand one another, yet each one is speaking a version of Arabic.

1.2.1 Arabic as a National Language

Arabic is the official language in many countries, including Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Morocco. Arabic is also the language of the Qur’an. Hence Muslims of all nationalities are familiar with it. There are many Arabic dialects, but there is only one version that is taught in schools and used by the media across the Arab world.

Within each country, often in quite small areas, a wide variety of colloquial dialects have developed, differing from one another, not only in pronunciation, but also in common lexical items and to some extent, in structure. The differences from one country to another are more marked by the dialect of Arabic than those between UK, US and Australian that speak English, (Swan & Smith, 2001).

As it is a Semitic language, its grammatical structure is very different from that of Indo-European languages. This aspect becomes particularly significant when Arabic speaking students communicate with foreign students.
1.2.2 Arabic sounds

Arabic sounds are divided into consonants and vowels. A consonant is a speech sound which obstructs the flow of air through the vocal tract. A vowel is the class of sound which makes the least obstruction to the flow of air. Vowels are almost always found at the center of a syllable, and it rare to find any sound other than a vowel which is able to stand alone as a whole syllable (Roach, 1992). There are 28 consonants, including all the Semitic guttural sounds produced far back in the mouth and throat. Each of the three vowels in standard Arabic occurs in a long and short form, creating the long and short syllables (Katzner, 2002). The Vowels in English and Arabic have similarities and differences. They are different in number; English has more vowels than Arabic. They also differ in distribution; English words can begin with vowels, whereas Arabic words can only begin with consonants. English has a larger vowel system containing about nine simple vowels and seven longer vowels, Arabic has only three short and three long vowels. (Kara, 1976).

The Arabic alphabet has been adopted by non-Semitic languages such as modern Persian or Farsi, Urdu, Malay, and some West African languages such as Hausa (Dalby, 2006). Over 1400 years, the use of verses from the Qur’an in Arabic script has led to development of different decorative calligraphic styles which is the high art form in the Arab world. The long history of Arabic includes periods of high development in literature.
1.2.3 The Three-Consonant Root in Arabic

The basis of Arabic language is the three-consonant root. A notion such as writing, cooking or eating is represented by three consonants in a particular order. Therefore there is a large potential for errors of interference when Arab learners produce written or spoken English.

All words (parts of the speech) are formed by combining the three-root consonants with fixed vowel patterns and sometimes an affix. The Arab learners are most likely to be confused by the lack of patterns in English that would allow them to differentiate nouns from verbs or adjectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Root</th>
<th>/k/ /t/ /b/</th>
<th>“writing”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A person who does this for a living</td>
<td>Kateb</td>
<td>“a writer”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past participle (passive)</td>
<td>Maktoob</td>
<td>“written”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present tense</td>
<td>Yaktubuh</td>
<td>“He writes”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3 Education in Yemen

It is important for the reader to understand the education system in RoY to appreciate the peculiarities. The education system in the north adapted 6-3-3 (6 years of primary school, 3 years of preparatory, 3 years of secondary). The south also adapted the same education system; however, it changed to 8-4 (8 years integrated school, 4 years of secondary school). The secondary education had a choice of academic, vocational, technical or teacher training education. Since unification, the two different school systems have been integrated into one system: 9 years of basic education, and 3 years of secondary education.
1.3.1 **Education Management in Yemen**

The system is ruled by several ministries that are responsible for managing the education system at different levels. The General education is under the purview of Ministry of Education (MoE) whereas the Vocational schools and Community Colleges are managed by the Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training (MoTEVT). The university education is regulated by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR).

1.3.2 **The Basic Education**

The basic education comprises of 9 years of basic compulsory education for children from the age of 6 to 15. English is being taught to Yemeni students as a compulsory subject. Students start learning English when they enter the seventh grade, usually at the age of 12/13, and they continue studying it for six years until they graduate from high school.

1.3.3 **The Secondary Education**

After the first nine years of basic education, students receive Intermediate School Certificate and attend the secondary school for three years. The secondary education is imparted in the schools in which they prepare for university. The secondary education is also imparted in technical secondary schools, Vocational Training Centers, Veterinary Training Schools, Health Manpower Training Institutes and several Agricultural secondary schools.
In the secondary schools, the students have a common curriculum in the first year. Thereafter they opt for either the scientific or literary lines. After successful completion of the three years of secondary education, the students are awarded the 'Al Thanawiya' (General Secondary Education Certificate).

1.3.4 The University Education

The University education is for four years except for Engineering and Medicine, which are for five to six years respectively. There are eight public universities in Sana’a, Aden, Hodeida, Taiz, Ibb, Dhamar, Hadramaut (Mukallah) and Amran and ten private universities and religious universities. There are three community colleges in Sana’a, Aden and Abs in Hajjah province. English is added to the university colleges as a compulsory subject for one year.

Table 1-2 Names of the public universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>The name of the university</th>
<th>The date of foundation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sana’a University</td>
<td>1970/1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aden University</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Taiz University</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hadramaut University</td>
<td>1996/1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Hodeidah University</td>
<td>1996/1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dhamar University</td>
<td>1996/1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ibb University</td>
<td>1996/1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Amran University</td>
<td>2007/2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the year 2008, it was decided to establish five universities in five provinces to expand the university education and facilitating higher education to all secondary school graduates. The result of Thanawiya examinations is very important for seeking admission into university and the required score varies depending on each discipline sought.

In 2001, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research was established to fulfill the demands of social development. The higher education in Yemen is still in its infancy and has a long way to go. Notwithstanding the high investment, impediments like the disproportionate and unfavorable staff-student ratios, paucity of equipment and learning resources; high rate of absenteeism among professors; lack of systematic process to review and update the curricula; shortage of laboratories and computers for engineering students are preventing the higher education to become effective.

1.3.5 Girls’ Education

The enrollment of girls for education is the lowest in Yemen among all Middle Eastern countries and there is a huge disparity between boys and girls, and between those of urban and rural areas. The poor participation of girls in education is attributed to several socio-cultural factors. The tradition of early marriage in rural areas hinders schooling of girls and leads to high dropout rates. The puberty of girls has great importance in rural areas; therefore, most parents do not send girls to mixed gender schools. In addition, negative social attitude towards education of girls is compounded by lack of female teachers to
low female enrollment. The limited number of schools, meager employment opportunities, overcrowding and low quality of education also discourage parents from sending their female children to school.

1.4 The situation of English Language in Yemen

English is the language which commands great respect in Yemen as it is considered to be the language of the educated people. Teaching English commenced in 1950s. After the Revolution of 26th Sept. 1962, the Ministry of Education was supported by Educational delegation from Egypt to manage the education. The first course of English taught in Yemeni school was Egyptian course called *The Nile Course of English*, (Al-Mekhlafy 1999). By 1970, the Egyptian course was replaced by another course, which was taught in the Gulf countries, namely *The Progressive Living English for the Arab World* (ibid).

In 1980s, the course was modified with the help of the British Council in Yemen and the course was named *English for Yemen*, and this course was designed to suit the convention, culture and tradition of the Yemenis.

The Students start the first level of this series when they enter the seventh grade, usually at the age of 12-13, and continue using it for six years until they graduate from high school. They are exposed to English five hours a week, in a classroom of not less than fifty students. The teachers stress upon the grammatical aspects of the language besides reading comprehension, which is based on skills such as scanning and skimming.
The outcome of the "English for Yemen" proved to be unsuccessful. The students graduated from high school with very weak English skills, which prevented them from being able to read, write or speak the language. Most of them couldn't even utter a single correct sentence in English. This problem became a great obstacle in their university education, especially for those who major in fields of medicine, engineering, and commerce, in which English is an indispensable part of the studies.

The teachers came to realize that during the six years when students were exposed to English, they had been teaching them all about the language, not the language itself. This drawback was caused by the complete negligence of spoken English and called for a new and more effective curriculum by using new teaching strategies and techniques.

In 1995 the Ministry of Education introduced a new syllabus called "Crescent English Course for Yemen" (Al-Mekhlafy, 1999) in which the text is interesting, suitable, useful, attractive and better than the old syllabus in all respect. It encouraged interaction between the teachers and the students, whereas students were a mere audience while teaching the old syllabus. It provided the students with a lot of communicative activities, focusing mainly on the spoken aspect of the language. There was no emphasis on translation or literature as was done in the past. The mother tongue was neither to be used by the teacher nor the students. Grammar was taught through the language, unlike earlier the language was taught through grammar.
The only problem with the new curriculum was that it required an ideal class and ideal length of time. This was in contrast with the situation at schools especially in large cities where classrooms were small with a large number of students and a short class period. Hence, teachers were not able to achieve all the objectives of the lesson and they would switch over from English into Arabic and vice versa.

Presently teaching English in Yemen is oriented on spoken English and has become more significant due to the growing need for communication as Yemen is opening itself to the world.

1.5 Introduction to the Research Study

English is taught as a foreign language in Yemeni schools starting at the seventh grade and continuing up to the twelfth grade. Students receive three hours and half of instruction weekly. The dominant method of teaching English in Yemeni schools (grades 7-12) is the communicative language teaching. The teachers of English are from Yemen. Arabic, the native language of Yemeni teachers of English, often interferes with their English teaching, causing many linguistic problems, which becomes conspicuous in the spoken or written usage of their students.

The main problem faced by Yemeni students learning English is interference caused by the Arabic language. Such mother-tongue interference can cause negative transfers. In this regards, Wilkins (1972) says:
When learning a foreign language an individual already knows his mother tongue, and it is this, which he attempts to transfer. This transfer may prove to be justified because the structure of the two languages is similar... in which case, we get “positive transfer” or “facilitation” ... or it may prove unjustified because the structure of the two languages is different... in that case we get “negative transfer” or “interference” (p. 199)

Thus, a great deal of interference from the learner’s native language becomes predominant particularly when the target language (English) is not used in the community.

Therefore, the foreign language teachers need to know the source-language (Arabic) systems as well as systems of the target-language (English). The Knowledge of the linguistic systems of both languages, native and foreign, helps teachers to identify the problem areas for more intensive study with students. Consequently, such concentration will help the students to improve their learning, for overcoming their language problems, and to reach high level of achievement more quickly.

A variety of problems faced by Arabic students can be found when one examines their written composition in English. They commit errors at different language levels such as syntax, semantics, morphology, and phonology. The Causes of such errors are attributed to several factors, one of which is the interference of their Arabic language.
Linguists have already shown that interference can be reflected in language levels viz. phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics (Richards, 1971; Weinreich, 1963). Since English and Arabic languages are completely different, the interference of Arabic, as well as influence of the forms of the target language (English) are expected.

To improve foreign language teaching/learning, it would be helpful to analyse, systematically, the errors committed by students in all linguistic levels of their product in the target language. This study focuses only on syntactic errors and more specifically their sources viz interlingual or intralingual.

Since this study proposes to investigate possible syntactic errors in the English writing of Yemeni students, it will add some knowledge to have similar studies done about the same phenomenon viz the mother tongue interference (interlingual interference) and intralingual interference. Therefore, it is hoped that the findings of this study will contribute to the improvement of standard of instruction of English as a foreign language (EFL) or English as a second language (ESL) in the Yemeni schools and universities. Furthermore, the findings can be used to provide guidelines for EFL teachers, and departments to prepare materials that help the students in the writing of English.

We can define good teaching as the application of appropriate methods and techniques to present new material. This must, however, be accompanied
by preventive teaching, occurring at the same time as the initial teaching of new structure and patterns in the foreign language. It stresses and explains what has proved to be difficult for previous learners in the hope that the present students can be prevented from making similar errors. Remedial teaching is that which is applied when a common error occurs in spite of good previous initial and preventive teaching. It still provides further explanations, more drilling and more exercise.

When we examine the interlanguage of students in grammar, we notice that most of the students make their own language with its structure and rules of grammar that are not related to the first language or foreign or second language. The interlanguages of students are different from one to another. So in this research, the interlanguages of different students must be illustrated to know what they are and what the reasons are beyond committing them.

The structural differences between Arabic and English could be a reason for the students to make some grammatical errors. Brown (2007) stated that an error is a noticeable grammar from the adult grammar of native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learners. These errors occur because of many things. Richards (1992, pp. 173-174) distinguishes three sources of errors:

(1) Interference errors occur as a result of the use of element from one language while speaking another. For example, a Yemeni learner while learning English says, “I student” because the equivalent sentence in Arabic is ana
Taleb. In Arabic language, ‘helping verb’ or ‘indefinite article’ are not required in such sentence.

(2) Intralingual errors reflect the general characteristics of rules of learning such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply.

(3) Developmental errors occur when the learner attempts to build up hypotheses about the target language on the basis of limited experience.

Written language is getting more and more essential today. It should be mastered in order to be literate. But, Yemeni students of senior high school commonly have very little enthusiasm for writing tasks. Whenever they have writing tasks, they feel it difficult to do. They should have strong foundation for their writing skill before entering a higher level of education. So, it is crucial for them to master this skill.

In composing a good writing, some aspects should be noticed. Grammar is one important aspect that should be mastered in order to make a well structured writing. But, writing in different language is not always as easy as writing in our own language since there are different rules in the writing systems and these differences sometimes make us commit errors. That is why; it is chosen to analyze inter-language of students in grammar through their writing.
1.5.2 Importance of English language

It became highly essential for everyone to know English for communication since it is the most popular language. In this computer age, English is the only language that dominates in all spheres of life. We have to learn the language for gaining fluency. Graddol (2000, p.8) specifies the following domains of English in the international arena:

1) English is the working language of international organizations and conference.

2) English is the international language of science and technology.

3) English is used in international banking, economic affairs and commerce.

4) Advertising for global brands is done in English.

5) English is the language of audio-visual and cultural products.

6) English is the language of international tourism.

7) English is the language of tertiary education.

8) English is the language of international safety in the fields of aeronautics and sea.

9) English is the language of international law.

10) It is a relay language in interpretation and translation.

11) It is the language of technology transfer.

12) It is the language of internet communication.

It is amply evident that English has assumed the dimension of one of the international languages and is being used as a lingua franca in all spheres of
activity and it can be claimed that, it has developed a ‘special role’ that is recognized by every country.

1.5.2 Grammar

The word ‘grammar’ has several meanings. Different experts define the term grammar differently. There is no fixed definition of grammar.

Leech, Deuchar & Hoogenraad (1982, p.3) has defined grammar as something in reference to the mechanism according to which language works when it is used for communication with other people.

Harmer (2001, p. 12) has defined grammar as the description of the ways in which words can change their forms and can be integrated into sentences in that language.

Gerot & Wignell (1994, p.2) has stated that grammar is a theory of a language, of how language is put together and how it works.

Having by and large understood the definition of grammar, it is not hard for us to comprehend why grammar is useful and important. Without knowing the grammar, one cannot say to have learned the language. Besides, it does not seem to be possible to learn a language without learning the grammar because it tells him how to use the language.

The mechanism of grammar cannot be visible overtly, because it is abstractly represented in the human minds. We know it is there because it works. One way of describing this mechanism is by means of a set of rules which allow us to put words together in certain ways which do not allow
others. The meaning of a message conveyed by language has to be converted into words put together according to grammatical rules and these words are then conveyed by sound.

1.5.3 Writing

Writing involves more than just producing words and sentences. To be able to produce a piece of writing, we should be able to write a connected series of words and sentences which are grammatically and logically linked, so that the purpose we have in our mind is understood and appreciated by the readers. In this way, it is meant that the style of writing a language, designed for layman and people not so well educated, should be different from the one designed for educated people e.g., students, teachers, doctors, professors, etc. Therefore, in presenting a piece of discourse we should consider the correctness of form, the appropriateness of style, and the unity of topic (Harmer, 2004, p. 2). The writing should be designed with the understanding from the past, in order to inform and express what had happened. It should be well-organized and laid out to be understandable to the readers (Harmer, 2004, p. 3).

1.5.3.1 Speaking and writing

Just like speaking, writing is a way of communicating a message to an audience. It is a means of expressing thoughts, ideas, and feelings. By writing we may flow out a burden occupying our mind, offer our ideas and concepts to others, and share our knowledge and experiences. However, different from
writing, much of our speaking is spontaneous, noncomplex, and linked to a particular situation in hand. Speech is ephemeral. It lasts not longer than the moment of speaking. It is gone as soon as it is uttered. In some cases, especially in informal situations, a speaker pays a little attention to the conventions of speaking such as the composition of talk, the organization, development, and the articulation. However, it does not reduce the comprehensibility of the nuances delivered by the speaker to the audience.

Writing is more than just public communication; it is also a way of thinking. Writing involves a range of consciousness of the writer. When we sit down, holding a pen and a piece of paper to write, apparently we are engaging ourselves in more than just one act of consciousness, such as the contents of thoughts, the style, the organization, the purpose and so on. These acts lead us to create a good and careful thinking which is strongly needed when we want to produce a good writing.

Writing as one of the four language skills, in real world contexts, is not a solitary enterprise, it is a social act. It is not an activity in its own right but one which serves the other skills. So, writing has a strong and uncompromising relation with grammar, reading, listening, and speaking. Most students find writing a foreign language difficult; they will rarely be required to write in adult life, so the amount of their writing will decrease. Rivers as quoted by Swarbick (1994, p.142) describes five stages of development which students need to go through to become competent writers. Those stages are copying, reproduction, recombination, guided writing, and free writing.
1.5.4 The importance of the study

Analyzing the errors committed by learners of foreign language in learning English can offer great insight into difficulties faced by them in learning the rules of the target language. So, this study aims at identifying the basic difficulties faced by the students from first to fourth levels, in grammar. The importance of this study stems out from the belief that identifying the basic difficulties of the Yemeni students, in learning English grammar will make it easier to circumvent them by improving the material and the performance of English teachers. If the learners of English know the grammatical rules well, they will speak, read and write without or with least number of errors. In addition, if the teacher teaches well and drills the patterns of the new language efficiently, there will be no reasons for the learners to commit any errors at all. One way to do this is by collecting samples of learner language and analyze them carefully. An analysis of these samples will provide evidence of what the Arabic learner of English knows about this new language they are trying to learn.

1.5.5 Aim of the study

Based on the problem statements above, the aims of the study are

1. Identifying, describing, categorizing, and diagnosing inter-language of the students.
2. Providing a theoretical background for analyzing inter-language of the students.
3. Covering the implications of the findings for teaching ESL/EFL.

1.5.6 Hypothesis

The following are the hypothesis framed for this study:

1. There are different types of errors committed by Yemeni learners.
2. There are many sources of errors committed by Yemeni learners.
3. There are differences in the inter-language, between level one and level four.
4. There is an improvement in the language of level four students.

1.5.7 The Research Questions

To make a systematic approach in solving the problem, the researcher formulates the research question as follows:

Q1- What kinds of errors do the University students commit in their writing?
Q2- What are the sources of errors committed by Yemeni students?
Q3- Are there any differences between the students of first and fourth levels interlanguage?
Q4- Is there any improvement in the language of level four?

1.5.8 Significance of this Research Study

Though scholars have undertaken research study previously, there has been no study undertaken with the sole purpose of analyzing the errors related to English as a Foreign Language by the Yemeni students. Therefore, this study
will be a means to identify and study the errors committed by the students. All the previous studies focus on the recurrence of errors, but do not focus on the causes in order to help students get rid of those errors. This study focuses on the language formed by the student as interlanguage, with his own rules and by linking them with each of the first language i.e., Arabic as one of the sources of errors and the second language i.e., English as another source of errors.

1.5.9 Limitations of the study

Due to the nature of the present study, its limitations are as follows:

First, the researcher limits the discussion on the students' interlanguage alone using written assignments.

Second, this study aims to investigate errors committed by the Yemeni university EFL learners. The scope of the study is limited to only grammatical errors, while there may be other types of errors (e.g., lexical and semantic errors) which are equally important in providing valuable information and insights concerning the state of the learner’s knowledge.

Third, this study is limited only to first and fourth level of Yemeni university students.

Finally, this study is limited to university of Hodeidah and University of Amran to see if there is any differences in the language of students.
1.6 Outline of the research methodology

1.6.1 The Design

The study in its nature is descriptive as well as analytical. It aims at investigating the causes leading to the committal of the syntactic errors by the Yemeni university students. It does not take into account the errors in the lexis, orthography and phonology.

The data have been collected from guided, written compositions developed by the learners. These students are provided with the topics; ‘What are your plans for the future?’ and ‘What are your suggestions to improve the way of learning a language?’ The written compositions are collected from the students of the department of English Colleges of Education, from Amran and Hodeidah Universities.

1.6.2 The Subjects

The subjects of this study are fifty students from level one and fifty from level four in each college. They are both male and female of Arabic speaking undergraduate students. They share the same language background and language experience. The level one students have been studying English for six years while those of level four have been studying English for six years before joining the university and three years in the university. English has been a compulsory subject in the school curricula.
1.6.3 The Procedure

Before asking students to write, they are asked to write biographical notes about themselves such as (their sex, age, place of studying General Education). A total of 200 written compositions were collected. After collecting the sample of learners’ language, errors have been identified, described, explained and finally evaluated by the researcher. The syntactic errors committed by the students are classified according to the types and the sources of errors. Contrastive analysis of Arabic and English is discussed wherever necessary.

1.6.4 The Data analysis

Analyzing the errors is a work procedure with certain steps to be taken. These steps are called as methodology of error analysis. According to Ellis (1985, pp. 51-52), there are five steps to be taken in an error analysis.

1. Selecting a corpus of language including the activities of deciding the size of the samples, the data to be sampled, and the homogeneity of the samples.
2. Identifying the errors in the corpus by searching any parts of the expressions in the corpus that deviate from the language rules.
3. Categorizing the errors by classifying them into groups formed based on proper criteria.
4. Explaining the errors using the psycholinguistic cause of the errors.
5. Evaluating the errors which involve an assessment of the seriousness of each error in order to take accurate decisions for reducing and even preventing the same errors repeated in the future.

1.7 The Structure of the Thesis

The research study is presented in the form of this thesis which laid out in five chapters. In the first Chapter, the researcher provides with an overview of the research study including the motivation for conducting the research, the problems Yemeni learners encounter, the purpose of the study, the research questions posed for the survey, the importance of the study and lastly the definitions of important terms. Outline of the research methodology is also introduced.

In the second Chapter, the researcher presents a general review of the literature concerning contrastive and error analysis, interlanguage and a summary review of the similarities between first and second language acquisition and between second and foreign language. The comparison of errors and mistakes that are interlingual and intralingual are highlighted. The previous studies about non-Arab and Arab students are mentioned.

In the third Chapter, the researcher deals with the methodology that is used in this research. He introduces a complete description of the methodology of the study, the population, the sample, the instrumentation, a description of the diagnostic test used in the study and the research design.
The purpose of Chapter Four is to identify, analyze and classify errors in grammar committed by the Yemeni EFL learners at the first and fourth levels. This chapter also introduces the statistical treatment of the results and interpretation of the results.

In Chapter Five, the researcher summarizes the findings obtained from the study. It discusses the limitations of the present study and puts forward some suggestions for the further study on interlanguage.

1.8 Definition of some Basic Terms:

Grammar: According to *Longman dictionary of contemporary English*, the study and practice of the rules by which, words change their forms and are combined into sentence.

Transfer: The carrying over of learned behavior from one situation to another system (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 561). On the hand, the influence of the mother tongue on the learners’ performance.

Language Acquisition: Language acquisition is a selective process whereby the child sets the values of parameters on the basis of the linguistic environment (Guasti, 2002, p. 19). According to Krashen (2009), acquisition is “a process similar to the way children develop ability in their first language” (p. 10), which is a subconscious process. Other ways of describing acquisition include implicit learning, informal learning and natural learning.
Language Learning. It is the result of direct instruction of the rules in the language. Learning is referred to as ‘conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them’ (Krashen, 2009, p. 10), which is usually an explicit, formal and instructed way of developing language competence.

Contrastive analysis: It is the comparison of the linguistic systems of two languages; for example, the sound system or the grammatical system (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 130).

Developmental Error: It is an error in the first or second language of the learner which is the result of a normal pattern of development and which is common among language learners (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 164).

English as a foreign language: It is the role that English plays in countries where it is taught as a subject in schools but not used as a medium of instruction in education nor as a language of communication within the country (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p 191).

Error: In the speech or writing of a second or foreign language learner, it occurs when a linguistic item (e.g., a word, a grammatical item, or a speech act) is used in a way in which a fluent or native speaker of the language regards as showing faulty or incomplete learning.

Error Analysis: It is the study and analysis of the errors made by second and foreign language learners.
Analyzing Students’ interlanguage  Chapter one

Interlanguage: A term coined by Selinker (1992) to refer to the systematic knowledge of L2 that is independent of both the target language and the learner's own language.

Interlingual errors: Errors that occur as a result of the use of elements from one language while speaking another (Ellis, 1997, p. 58).

Intralingual error: It is an error which results from faulty or partial learning of the target language. Intralingual errors may be caused by the influence of one target language item upon another. (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p 267).

Language Transfer: It is the effect of one language on the learning of another. Odlin (1994) defines transfer as “the influence resulting from the similarities and deferences between the target language and any other language that has been previously acquired” (p. 27).

Overgeneralization: It is a process common in both first and second language learning in which a learner extends the use of a grammatical rule or linguistic item beyond its accepted uses.

Syntactic Error: It is an error that is unacceptable grammatically, even if it is understandable semantically by a native speaker.

Syntactic Structure: The way that the words and morpheme are arranged into phrases, clauses and sentences.