CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0. PRELIMINARIES

This is an introductory chapter. It is about the importance of the role that the processes of word-formation, especially affixes, play in the acquisition of English as a foreign language in teaching/learning English in the classroom for the Yemeni tertiary students of English. My focus is on the area of Affixes (prefixes and suffixes) in English language teaching. The study is confined to affixes and their importance in acquiring EFL in TLE in classroom. The work highlights the teaching/learning of vocabulary. The study intends to investigate the problems, difficulties, needs and interests of the students of the first and second year of the bachelor level, Department of English, College of Education-Zingibar, University of Aden, Yemen, in the area of affixes, and their importance in acquiring EFL in TLE in classroom. The study emphasizes the importance of affixes in ELT.

The chapter discusses the problem of the study. It defines the purpose of the work. It introduces the research questions and spells out the hypotheses as well. Moreover, it highlights the scope and limitations of the study. Further, the chapter states the aims, objectives and goals of the study. It provides the research methodology and sheds light on the value of the research as well. In addition, it explores the rationale and significance of the work. The chapter offers the profile of the students of English of the Yemeni tertiary level and the background of the status of English and English language teaching in Yemeni education system in Yemen. Finally, there is a description of the organization of the thesis as well.

1.1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Researcher is a member of the Teaching Staff at the Department of English, College of Education-Zingibar, University of Aden, Yemen, since 1994. He has observed that the learners of the Department face problems and difficulties in the area of affixes involved in building and forming words in learning English. Affixes are problematic for students and one of their major difficulties is the recognition and the production of them. The students encounter difficulty in perceiving and recognizing them in their learning of English. They make errors in the usage of them. They cannot produce new words by adding either prefixes or
suffixes. And they cannot use it effectively. They are unable to use them correctly and appropriately. They cannot attain mastery and command of them in daily life interaction, communication, the academic subjects and requirements. They do not recognize, for example, the different pronunciations of the suffix (-s) and the suffix (-ed) at the end of the words. They find difficulty in realizing the affixes that make change in meaning, class, sound, spelling and stress. Affixes create problems for students.

Mc Carthy (1990:4) states:

*Sometimes, recognizing morphemes is not so easy. When morphemes combine to form words, sound changes and / or spelling changes can disguise them, making their presence less obvious to the untrained ear or eye.*

He also points out:

*When we separate the words into the morphemes that compose them, we can consider what problems of analysis, or recognition, or of relating them to other forms of the same word a learner might have with them.*

Kruse (1979:209): states:

*The ability to recognize component parts of words is probably the single most important skill a student of reading in EFL can have. It substantially reduces the number of completely new words he will encounter and increases his control of the English lexicon.*


Students' knowledge and background is poor in the area of affixes. Their competence and proficiency is generally less than required in this area. Their standard and performance in the field of affixes is disappointing. This is due to the negligence of affixes and processes of word-formation, in general, in the syllabus in TEFL classroom and teaching methods and teaching materials in Aden University, as a result of negligence of vocabulary as a teaching item in the curriculum, despite their importance in acquiring EFL in teaching/learning English in classroom, and priority being given to the rules of sentence construction or language form and structure.
Carter (1987:145) observes:
*For many years vocabulary has been the poor relation of language teaching. Its neglect is in part due to a specialization in linguistic research on syntax and phonology, which may have fostered a climate in which vocabulary was felt to be a less important element in learning a second language.*

Tickoo (2003:1989) points out:
*For more than a quarter century, lexicologists and language educators failed to pay adequate attention to vocabulary. A main reason was the widespread belief among linguists that knowing a language was the same as being able to use its sounds and structures.*

Mary (1985: 183) raises the question:
*How many words do students learn per lesson, on average?* Then, she continues: *This is possibly a question that many teachers have never asked themselves because vocabulary is no longer seen as a very important aim in syllabuses.*


The study attempts to survey the problems and difficulties of the learners in the area of affixes and bridge the gap between the learners' needs and interests in this area and the current teaching methods, teaching materials and syllabus design. The Researcher has noticed that the present syllabus, the current ways of the teaching, practicing skills and techniques and the choosing and designing of the teaching materials at the Department of English, College of Education-Zingibar, Aden University, for the teaching of affixes do not match, meet and fulfill the needs and interest of the students in the area of affixes. Due to this problem, the students are not motivated and stimulated in the area of affixes. They are not able to study and practice affixes effectively and productively in a proper way.

The Research tries to identify the extent and levels of deficiencies in affix teaching in TEFL in classrooms, and recommend remedial procedures for the improvement and development of the students in the perceiving, recognizing, producing and using affixes in learning English, in daily life interaction and communication and the academic subjects and requirements. The study will find the ways of overcoming the students' problems and difficulties in the area of affixes.
The main reason of the study is that the importance of affixes in acquiring EFL in teaching/learning English in classrooms for the Yemeni tertiary students of English has not been explored so far.

1.2. RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As a teacher at the Department of English, College of Education-Zingibar, Aden University, since 1994, the Researcher noticed that affixes, despite their importance, are neglected in TLEFL in classrooms, as a result of neglecting vocabulary and processes of word-formation as teaching items in TEFL. There are no studies available in the area of affixes in TEFL for Yemeni tertiary students of English. Therefore, the main aim of the present study is to focus on the affixes. It is hoped that it will prove a kind of guidance to the Yemeni tertiary teachers and students in the area of affixes. The feedback of the study is expected to be highly appreciated by those who are concerned with the teaching and learning of EFL in the Yemeni tertiary level.

The significance of the present study lies in offering the following contributions:

(1) This study represents the first attempt at investigating empirically the importance of affixes in acquiring EFL for the Yemeni tertiary students of English.

(2) The study may be of great importance for students, teachers, scholars, syllabus designers and educationists in improving, developing and selecting their teaching materials and teaching methods for teaching and learning affixes.

(3) The study will add empirical support for the literature reviewed in Chapter Two regarding affixes.

As a matter of fact, the study will be of great significance to all who are involved in learning and teaching EFL. Firstly, the feedback of the study will provide an important help to Yemeni tertiary teachers of English, as it identifies the area of problems and difficulties in affixes. It focuses on and determines teaching techniques and technology which may overcome such problems and difficulties. The feedback will also provide teachers and students' needs and interests in affixes, as it recommends remedial procedures for improving the ability, competence and proficiency of students in affixes. Secondly, the study is expected to be of immense benefit to syllabus designers, producers of ELT
materials, curriculum developers for learning and teaching affixes in EFL to Yemeni tertiary students of English.

The results and findings of the study will provide useful information to researchers for investigating phenomenon of teaching and learning affixes in EFL classrooms.

1.3. STATEMENT OF AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The present study has following aims and objectives:

(1) To survey the needs and interests of the students in the area of affixes.
(2) To investigate the problems and difficulties of the students in the area of affixes and to find out skills and techniques to overcome them.
(3) To suggest effective and appropriate methods of teaching affixes and to design the materials according to these methods.
(4) To reinforce the acquisition of affixes to encourage students to use productive affixes that have been introduced to them to help in learning English better.
(5) To make students familiar with the affixes involved in building and forming words and be trained and to practice enough to be able to recognize and produce them and realize their meanings easily.
(6) To help for expanding and improving students' vocabulary by introducing to them the affixes involved in word-building and word-forming with their meanings.
(7) To enable students to attain mastery and command of affixes to use words effectively and productively in interaction and communication in daily life and in the academic subjects and requirements, and also to be competent and proficient in English language.

1.4. STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

For a systematic analysis of the research findings, the study hypothesizes the following:

1. The present syllabus, teaching methods and teaching materials in use at the English Department, College of Education – Zingibar, Aden University, do not match and meet the needs and interests of the learners of the Department in the area of affixes. There is a gap between them.
2. The time allocated for studying and practicing affixes in the classroom for the learners is not sufficient to make them study and practice affixes effectively and productively.

3. In Yemen, students start learning English at the age of thirteen, i.e. from Class Seven. They learn it as a single subject, so their competence and proficiency in English at the tertiary level of Bachelor Degree is less than required. It is assumed that this study will help to develop knowledge and background of the learners in the area of affixes.

4. Students do not participate in the process of choosing the course, the materials and the syllabus designing according to their needs and interests.

5. There is a gap between the previous teaching methods of affixes and the recent technology and techniques of the modern teaching of affixes which is done according to the needs and interests of the learners. It is assumed that this study will help to fill the gap.

1.5. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to point out the importance of affixes in acquiring EFL in TLE in classrooms. It is an attempt to tackle the problems and difficulties that the students encounter in this area and their needs and interests. The purpose of the study, then, is two-fold:
Firstly, to focus on affixes to show their importance in acquiring EFL for students to improve and expand their vocabulary to attain mastery and command of language for interaction and communication in daily life and the academic subjects and requirements. Secondly, to identify the problems and difficulties that students face in the area of affixes and to find out ways of overcoming them in a diagnostic attempt to remedy the deficiency.

In other words, the purpose of the present study is to investigate into the nature of the affixes and the different ways of mastering them and to suggest authentic ways of incorporating study of affixes in the syllabus, teaching methods, teaching materials and the curriculum.
1.6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present research attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What is meant by affixes?
2. What are the needs and interests of the students in the area of affixes?
3. What are the problems and difficulties that students of English encounter in the area of affixes?
4. What are the factors that have contributed into these problems and difficulties?
5. How can affixes be important in acquiring EFL in TLE in classrooms?
6. What are the ways of overcoming them?
7. Do the current syllabus, teaching methods, teaching materials, aids, techniques and technology in the Department of English, College of Education- Zingibar, Aden University, fulfill, match and meet the students' needs and interests in the area of affixes in TLEFL in classrooms?
8. Is there a gap between the needs and interests of the students and the current syllabus, teaching methods, teaching materials, aids, techniques and technology in the Department in the area of affixes?
9. How can this gap be bridged?
10. What are the best methods, materials, aids, techniques and technology for teaching affixes?
11. Is there sufficient time allotted for studying and practicing affixes in the classroom for students?
12. Are the students motivated and stimulated to learn affixes?
13. How can affixes be meaningful, helpful and useful in increasing, expanding and improving students' vocabulary to use words effectively and productively to attain mastery and command of language for interaction and communication in daily life and the academic subjects and requirements for being competent and proficient in English?
14. How to make students familiar with the affixes involved in building and forming words to be able to recognize and produce them and realize their meanings easily?
15. Are students tasked with affixes?
16. What kind of exercises need to be designed to reinforce the acquisition of affixes to help students in learning English?
(17) Are there qualified and experienced teachers at the Department?
(18) Are there enough prescribed textbooks, curricular text materials and references available at the Department and the College Library?

1.7. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study focuses on the teaching of vocabulary. It is confined to affixes and their importance in acquiring EFL in TLE in classrooms. It is limited to Yemeni tertiary students of the First and Second Year of the Bachelor level, Department of English, College of Education-Zingibar, Aden University, as sample, because the Researcher has been a teacher of English at the Department since 1994. The study investigates the problems, difficulties, needs and interests of the students of the Department in the area of affixes in TLEFL in classrooms. Thus, the study is limited, microscopic and focused.

1.8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The instruments employed in gathering the data of the present study are students' questionnaire, teachers' questionnaire, classroom observation forms and pre-test and post-test. The research methodology of the study is based on two main experiments. The first one is conducted in the data description of the students' questionnaire, teachers' questionnaire, and classroom observation forms. The second experiment is concerned with the teaching period of the model course for the experimental group and the results of the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group and the control group. The instruments have been used to investigate the problems, difficulties, needs and interests of the students in the area of affixes in TLEFL in classroom.

The first step of the first experiment was to design and construct two questionnaires and an observation form. One of the two questionnaires was for the students and the other for the teachers. Each questionnaire consisted of four sections of the same type and number of questions. The second step was to examine the validity and reliability of the questionnaires by a panel of ELT experts and professors in India and Yemen. The next step was to administer the students' questionnaire on twenty students of English of the First and Second year of the Bachelor level as a sample to check if there are any difficulties or incomprehensible ideas or questions and to put a cross to mark the situations of difficulties. Then it was administered on one hundred students of the First and
Second Year of the Bachelor Level of the Department of English, College of Education – Zingibar, University of Aden. At the same time, the teachers’ questionnaire was distributed among twenty teachers of the same Department. At the end of the administration process, the two answered questionnaire forms were collected to be analyzed and discussed. The questionnaires were used by the Researcher to investigate the students' problems, difficulties, needs and interests in the area of affixes.

The same steps of the questionnaire forms were followed with the classroom observation forms for validity and reliability. The forms consisted of thirty-five items. The Researcher observed eight English lectures in the classes from the First and Second Year as a sample. At first the Researcher observed four lectures of the First and Second Year, i.e. two lectures of each year. Then he observed the same lectures of the same teachers again. Then the result of the two different observation sessions were compared, calculated and analyzed. The observations were carried out by the Researcher to observe closely and directly the methods, materials, programs and activities used in teaching/learning affixes in the English classes at the Department. Moreover, the Researcher wanted to find out whether whatever had been reported in the questionnaires by the students and teachers was being followed and reflected in the classrooms or not.

The first step of the second experiment was to design a syllabus of the model course depending on the respondents’ needs, desires and answers in the questionnaire according to the items in the questionnaire. The Researcher prepared a pre-test and post-test according to the respondents’ needs and desires in their answering to the items in the questionnaire. The test was validated by expert teachers in Aden University and the Department of English, College of Education-Zingibar. Then it was administered to the Experimental Group and Control Group. The two groups consisted of 30 students each (15 of the First Year and 15 of the Second Year each). At first the pre-test was given to the two groups. The second step was the designing of the syllabus of the model course units. The model course units were designed and taught to the Experimental Group for one semester (i.e. for three months= 12 weeks, and it was four hours a week, i.e. 48 hours). The units were designed according to the answers, needs and desires of the students. The third step taken by the Researcher was to finalize the empirical study and the teaching period by a post-
test for the same two groups and make a comparison between the results of the present and the results of the post-test of the two groups.

1.9. VALUE OF THE STUDY

The study is an attempt to provide a detailed analysis and description of the affixes in order to emphasize the important role they play in the acquisition of EFL in TLE in classrooms. On the practical side, the study has been carried out through fieldwork and an extensive survey to identify the problems and difficulties that the students of English of the tertiary level encounter in the area of affixes and find ways of overcoming them, in addition to the students' needs and interests in such area as well. This would be useful for the improvement of the present methods of affixes and designing the materials according to these improvements. It will help to develop a better understanding in Yemeni students, teachers, scholars, syllabus designers and educationists about the importance of affixes in TLEFL in classroom. The study will help to understand the causes of the failure in the recognition and production of the affixes by the students of English of the tertiary level. They fail in perceiving and using affixes and realizing their meanings. In the light of this, the study will make teachers modify their teaching methods. Accordingly, teaching materials will also undergo a change. In other words, the study will enable the teachers of English of the tertiary level to be in a better position to diagnose the causes and to offer appropriate treatment. Thus, students, teachers, scholars, syllabus designers and educationists can use the present study for various pedagogical purposes, including assisting tertiary students of English for attaining better mastery and command of affixes. Therefore, the study will add a new dimension to the understanding of affixes. Hence, the current study is valuable.

1.10. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This work is organized systematically into six chapters as follows:

**CHAPTER ONE:** It is introductory. It provides the status of English and English language teaching in Yemen and the profile of Yemeni tertiary students of English. It sheds light on the rationale and significance of the present study, the scope and limitations of the research and the area of the work. It states the objectives, aims and hypotheses of the research as well. It points out the
research problem and the place where this study has been conducted. In addition, it includes the research questions and methodology. The chapter also describes the purpose, value and organization of the work.

CHAPTER TWO: It gives a general survey of the theoretical framework and reviews the available relevant studies and literature. It states the approaches for teaching vocabulary, processes of word-formation and affixes and their status as teaching items in TEFL and teaching materials in the classroom in the curriculum. It deals with the classroom methods, materials, techniques and technology for teaching affixes. It also states the importance of affixes in acquiring EFL in TLE in classrooms. It gives methods, goals, strategies and activities of teaching affixes.

CHAPTER THREE: It is devoted to spelling out the details of the research methodology of the study. It discusses elaborately the scheme of the fieldwork and the steps and phases the Researcher has performed in his empirical study in collecting the data. The chapter gives an account of the rationale and modus operandi of the instruments employed in gathering the data, which are students' questionnaire, teachers' questionnaire, classroom observation forms and pre-test and post-test. In addition, the chapter states the samples of the instruments and the place of the fieldwork. The research methodology of the study is based on two main experiments. The first one is conducted in the data description of the students’ questionnaire, teachers’ questionnaire and classroom observation forms. The second experiment is concerned with the teaching period of the model course for the Experimental Group and the results of the pre-test and post-test of the Experimental Group and the Control Group. The instruments have been used to investigate the problems, difficulties, needs and interests of the students in the area of affixes in TLEFL in classrooms.

CHAPTER FOUR: It provides analysis and the interpretation of the questionnaires and classroom observation forms of the data collected and obtained in the empirical study. The statistical methods and techniques are used for the analysis. The items of the questionnaire instruments were analyzed on the basis of percentages (%) and quantitative analysis. Tables and figures have been used also. The items of the observation form have been analyzed on the basis of
the percentages (%) by using Cooper's formula. Two of the hypotheses of the study (No.1 and 2) have been proved.

**CHAPTER FIVE:** It is about statistical analysis of the pre-test and post-test which were given to the two groups. It provides a comparison of the results of the two groups in the two tests by using the SPSS program. The Mean (X) and the Standard Deviation (SD) have been used to describe the scores of the students of the two groups in the two tests. Tables and figures have been used as well. The comparison of the results of the two groups in the pre-test and post-test shows that there is a clear difference in the results in the post-test for the Experimental Group which has been taught the model course. This proves that the teaching of the model course for the Experimental Group is effective and the level of the students is improved in the area of affixes. In other words, three of the hypotheses of the study (No. 3, 4 and 5) have been proved. Therefore, the results of the two tests are translated into the major conclusions and recommendations of the study.

**CHAPTER SIX:** It puts forth the major findings of the research. It presents the conclusions, recommendations (pedagogic implications) and some indications for further studies.

**1.11. IMPORTANCE OF AFFIXES IN TLEFL**

Despite their importance to the foreign learners, processes of word-formation are often neglected in TEFL in classrooms and teaching materials. This is a result of negligence of vocabulary as a teaching item in the curriculum and priority given to the rules of sentence construction or language form and structure. Linguistics theories, in general, have not focused on the aspect of the processes of word-formation and their importance in acquiring EFL. Moreover, very little research has been done on the pedagogic state of the processes of word-formation.

However, a growing number of scholars have realized the importance of the processes of word-formation in the acquisition of EFL. Educationists, in general, have come to the conclusion that vocabulary is very important in effective social interaction and communication and the academic subjects and requirements.
Mastery of vocabulary is essential for good communication and when it is FL, the requirement of the command of language is most needed. Hence teaching of vocabulary is important. Vocabulary learning begins from the very first day of one's learning and it continues throughout one's life career. We do vocabulary learning whenever we come in contact with a new language. We start using these new words as soon as we get them. We are considered good users of language when we are capable of using words effectively and productively.

Consequently, no one can deny that the processes of word-formation are very important in learning/teaching EFL. They are important in acquiring EFL. Word formation is becoming a matter of great interest for linguists because of the light it throws on other aspects of language. The significance of the study of word-formation is increasing day by day.

There are many ways (processes) of word formations. The most important among them are: affixes (prefixes and suffixes), compounds, blends, reduplications, conversions, clippings, acronyms and back-formation.

The present study focuses on the area of **Affixes (prefixes and suffixes)** and their importance in acquiring EFL in TLE in classrooms. In other words one can say that the study focuses on teaching/learning of vocabulary. A very little work is available today which investigates the importance of affixes in TLEFL. Sinclair et al (1991) in the introduction, comment on the importance of vocabulary and affixes in learning English as follows:

*Once you have built up a basic vocabulary of English, you can begin to say what you want to. As you add more and more words to your vocabulary, you are able to express a greater range of ideas or talk about a wider range of topics, and one of the ways of increasing your vocabulary is by describing the patterns involved in building words, i.e. prefixes and suffixes.*

Nattinger, (1988:66), in his analysis of current trends in vocabulary teaching, presents a number of classroom techniques for vocabulary development. For example, he presents techniques of teaching word-morphology:

*Learners can be taught to extend their vocabulary by mixing and matching word stems, prefixes and suffixes.* (See Nunan, 1991:121).

Kruse, (1979:209), suggests that students should be taught to use a range of cues to determine meaning. He says that the student’s ability to recognize
component parts of words is essential. The following is one of his suggestions regarding word-elements.

He says:

*The ability to recognize component parts of words is probably the single most important skill a student of reading in EFL can have. It substantially reduces the number of completely new words he will encounter and increases his control of the English lexicon.* (Nunan, 1991:121)


1.11.1. NEED FOR TEACHING ENGLISH AFFIXES

There are many important reasons for teaching English affixes and vocabulary. Firstly, English is an international language and it is used as the medium of communication almost throughout the whole world. It is the language of science, technology, internet, computer and so on. So, the students have to be exposed to English vocabulary and affixes in order to be able to use words effectively and productively to attain mastery and command of the language for interaction, communication and academic requirements. Secondly, affixes are problematic for students in recognizing and producing. So, students have to be trained to practice and drill to recognize, perceive, produce and use affixes properly and appropriately to improve their vocabulary. Thirdly, the competence and proficiency of the students of the tertiary level are less than required. They have poor background and knowledge of the language. They have inadequate and insufficient acquisition of English vocabulary and affixes. So, students’ vocabulary and acquisition of affixes have to be reinforced in learning EFL to have competence, proficiency and knowledge of the language. Finally, learners in Yemen now have perceived the importance and necessity of English language. It is studied by a large number of students in private schools, institutes and colleges in the state. Yemeni students want to improve their English language competence, proficiency and knowledge in order to meet the massive need in the present life. They are looking forward to getting jobs as English teachers in the state and private institutions. They want jobs in the companies, and in different fields such as medicine faculties, technology faculties, science faculties, and so on which use English as the medium of instruction.
1.12. SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND IN YEMEN

1.12.1. UNIVERSITY OF ADEN

Yemen witnessed the dawn of higher education in the beginning of 1970's, with the establishment of the College of Higher Education. This institution was the first genuine step towards a socio-educational change in the country, and the starting point in the establishment of Aden University. This venture opened new vistas of education and in 1970 the University of Aden flourished with various disciplines like medicine, agriculture, law, economics, engineering, etc. The University of Aden, during the 1990's underwent considerable changes and made profound extensions that resulted in crucial developments in all aspects of academic and administrative fields. Postgraduate and research centers were established to meet the scientific and social needs of the society.

1.12.2. ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (ELT) IN YEMEN

(A HISTORICAL SURVEY)

English language teaching, especially in the Southern part of Yemen, had to undergo many changes. The first change started from the British colonization and the last one is seen at present. The historical survey can be described as follows:

Great Britain seized Aden in 1839. So from that time Aden became a British colony and a refueling stop for the British ships going to India by way of the Suez Canal and Red Sea. Aden or South of Yemen was ruled by the British from 1839 to 1967. Independence was obtained after that and it became free from British Colonization. The modern education system was established during the British period. Between 1900-1940, a few missionary schools were opened in different parts of the protectorate. Also many primary schools and a few private schools were opened here and there.

After the Independence Day 30th November 1967, the southern Yemen witnessed many changes in all the aspects of life. Education was given greater consideration and the different education systems that were used in different parts of Yemen were united into one. The law of education was issued and the aims for education for the whole country were set to the education system. It was classified in the following stages; from level one to level six was called primary stage, from level seven to level nine was called preparatory stage, and from level ten to level twelve was called secondary school. Then, after the first and second
educational conferences that were held in 1975 and 1979, a new education system was introduced as follows; the primary and preparatory schools were replaced by the unity schools from level one to level nine (nine years), and the previous type of the secondary school was replaced by the new secondary school system from level ten to level twelve (3 years).

Meanwhile, on the side of the higher education the first college was opened in 1970 in order to meet the need for qualified and trained teachers. Then Aden University was founded in 1975; at the same time a number of students were sent abroad every year for higher studies. Finally, the education system during the Yemen unification, the union of south and north parts of Yemen, became one system and the curriculum was changed into one. Arabic language is the medium of instruction while English language is taught as a single compulsory subject from level seven in the unity school up to the last level of the secondary school, but in the university, English is taught according to the specialization requirement. Therefore, the education in the university nowadays consists of Bachelor, Master and Doctorate levels in different specializations.

Arabic is the mother tongue (henceforward referred to as MT) of the Arab world as a whole. It is used as the first language (henceforward referred to as L1) in professional and social Arabic, i.e. the language of the Holy Book "Quran" and the teachings of "Sun'na" of the Prophet Mohammed (MPBABUH). Certainly, all the speakers of Arabic as L1 are proud of it as it represents the language of their religion "Islam".

In Yemen, English is used as a foreign language as in all the Arab states. Therefore, it is used in very restricted settings in contrast to L1 (Arabic). All the professional and school subjects in basic and secondary education are taught in Arabic except one, i.e. English, which is taught from the VII\textsuperscript{th} class onwards. Hence, English has a limited exposure.

Nonetheless, many learners in Yemen have a strong desire to learn English, because they know its importance. This is evident from the fact that many students prefer to join English courses in state and private institutions in order to improve their English language proficiency.

Many applicants in different foreign language institutions prefer to join English language programs, because of its importance and wide use as an international language. Furthermore, it is a medium of communication between different cultures of the world and is of crucial importance in the modern context.
Therefore, English is not only important for Yemenis but practically for everyone all over the world.

In this respect, it may be pointed out that there is a difference in English language proficiency among the learners of different regions of Yemen. Obviously, this difference can be noticed between the settlers of the eastern and southern governorates on the one hand, and the settlers of the western and the northern governorates on the other. Such variation is ascribed to the influence of foreign occupation.

The occupation by Europeans, especially of the British, French and to a lesser degree the Italians of the Arab countries in the 18th and 19th centuries has had a tremendous impact on the various aspects of life (economic, political, social, etc.) in those countries. One of the facets of the impact was the domination of European languages in several Arab communities, as they became the official languages of the government and administration and media of instruction in schools. This linguistic impact did not cease with the departure of the European invaders and missionaries; rather it lingered on as the economic and political contacts between the Europeans and Americans on the one hand and the Arabs on the other hand, continued to flourish (Bahumaid, 1990:37-8).

The British ruled the southeastern area which was known as People's Democratic Republic of Yemen for about 128 years. During the period of colonization, English was used as a medium of instruction for professions and social contacts. In those days, many citizens acquired English as a second language (henceforward referred to as SL). This has resulted in many English words entering subconsciously in the vocabulary of those people and in turn affecting their linguistic ability.

Roger (1969) assumes that,

\textit{The learning capacity increases and people learn more words when they contact each other in an open environment.}

Such improvement cannot be over-generalized to reflect the level of all the learners in basic and secondary education or even at the university stage. It has already been mentioned earlier that the teaching of English as a school subject starts from standard seven of the basic education in Yemen. Formerly, it was taught from standard five which was a bit better, because many recent learning theories have proved that the learning of a foreign language in the early stages
helps the learners to acquire the language better and faster which enables them to cope up with the prerequisites of higher education.

The English course in Yemen has been changed many times in the last two decades which indicates that the benefit and utility of such courses is still unsatisfactory.

As Al-Sohbani (1997) puts it:

*Unfortunately, English is introduced quite late in all Yemeni state schools at the age of thirteen grade seven of the basic education. This is not pedagogically sound. The earlier the learners are exposed to the target language the more easily they acquire it.*

### 1.12.3. STATUS OF ENGLISH IN YEMEN

English has an important place in the Yemeni education system, due to following reasons; firstly, south of Yemen was one of the British colonies and English language was the main medium of instruction, especially in Aden region, and it was, and still is, taught officially and is a compulsory subject in the schools and universities. Secondly, English is the language of technology, science, commerce, arts, and other aspects, not only in Yemen, but also throughout the world. Thirdly, English language nowadays is studied in a large number of private schools, institutes and colleges in Yemen in order to meet its need in the present life, e.g. the jobs which need English. The last reason is the teaching of English language as a compulsory subject at the Unity and Secondary schools and in higher studies in different specialization faculties at the university. These faculties are: medicine faculties, technology faculties, science studies, English Departments and others. They are using English as the medium of instruction so it is very necessary for those studies.

### 1.12.4. THE LEVEL OF LEARNERS

As stated earlier (1.12.2), English is used in Yemen as a foreign language. There is lack of exposure of English on the part of learners. It is also not used in real life communication. This situation is over-generalized in the countries of non-native speakers of English.

In Yemen, there is a noticeable difference between the levels of the learners in proficiency in English. This variation is influenced by many factors, which differ from one learner to another. For instance, the level of learners who come from
urban areas is different from those who come from rural areas. That is to say that the former is slightly better, whereas the latter has serious difficulties such as lack of many things like textbooks, comfortable accommodations, competent teachers, teaching aids, etc. Of course, such a situation is common for the learners of English as a foreign language in most of the Third World Countries.

It can be concluded that the standard of English of the learners in Yemen has also been affected by most of the factors mentioned above. Therefore, the students who go for higher education have considerable problems; therefore students should have a fairly good degree of competence in English.

1.12.5. PREVIOUS STUDY OF ENGLISH

It is necessary to focus on the previous competence of English of the students since there is a correlation between the previous level of competence in English and the topic of the present study.

A student's previous learning of English may influence the attitude of present learning. Where this learning has not been successful, there may be a negative feeling towards the past failure. This leads the designers to develop material, which is different from the type of learning experience the student has had in the past. This motivates the student and enables him to overcome his initial reluctance to study English.

As mentioned earlier, in Yemen, English is taught as a school subject for three years at the Basic education stage and three years at the Secondary education stage. However, all the other subjects of the two educational stages are taught in the official language of the country (i.e. the student's mother tongue, which is Arabic). Comparatively, in private schools most of the subjects are taught in English. Definitely, private education is better than the state education (Al-Sohbani, 1997:32). Unfortunately, majority of the students join state schools, because of their poor economic condition. Although, the students have studied English for six years at the two educational stages "Basic and Secondary", yet the standard of English proficiency in state education is unsatisfactory.

It is good that students cannot join university education immediately after they have passed the Higher Secondary Examination but have to have a gap. They utilize the period of gap for improving their proficiency in English.