Chapter Six

Remedial Action
6.0 Overview

This chapter suggests pedagogically based remedial action for overcoming the learner problems of learning English as a foreign language. In particular, it offers ameliorative action for redressing the state of low competence in English. This remedial action would presumably be applicable to the whole population of student-teachers in the departments of English in the faculties of Education in Yemen. It also throws up suggestions for further research in the area of enquiry.

6.1 A Summary of The Findings

This study focuses on the different factors affecting the student-teachers' oral communicative behaviour in English in the Faculty of Education at Hodeidah University. To investigate such factors, many research instruments are used (see 4.1). Quantitative as well as qualitative data have been collected. Analyzing the data of the study has led to many findings concerning the different factors hypothesized in this study (see 3.1.6). The previous chapter presents all the findings the researcher has arrived at but we need to list here the most distinct and important findings related to the most effective factors that have to do with the student-teachers' oral communicative performance in English. The findings are as follows:

1. The students' gender is associated with many factors such as the students' personality traits, e.g. anxiety and motivation. According to this we have found the following:

   a) Many of the boy-students suffer from language anxiety.

   b) Many of the girl-students are instrumentally motivated although it is very difficult for them to get jobs in such a man-dominated society.

   c) Students who never participate in the classroom using English are female. See table no. (37).
d) Male students, unlike female students, command quite a good amount of vocabulary. See table no. (80).

e) The majority of the student-teachers, 98 (81.67%) to be precise, is instrumentally motivated, see table no. (17), i.e. they select English to study in order to get jobs, not necessarily teaching jobs. Students’ responses in the interviews indicate that some students do not have much interest in their training programmes because they have to wait for years to get jobs in government schools and they would consequently forget what they have learnt during their training period.

f) 109 student-teachers have a positive attitude towards learning English. See table no. (21). Positive attitudes are expected to result in positive results. However, there could be other factors, which come in the way. This is why even with a positive attitude students perform the way they do viz. both well and badly. This means that attitude to English-learning has nothing to do with performance in English. Little, it seems, will be achieved through attempts to modify the students’ attitudes towards learning English.

g) Language anxiety has a great role in impeding the oral communication in English of both boy and girl students. See table no. (31 & 34). Therefore, some students avoid the classroom discussions in English classes, see table no. (36), and some others ask their classmates to ask teachers or to translate unclear points into Arabic (see table no. 35). Two main reasons have been found causing such anxiety. They are:

a) Students are afraid that their answers would be wrong so their classmates would make fun of them.

b) Students do not have sufficient vocabulary to use in the classroom. See table no. (32).
h) Since students avoid participation in the English classes (see table no. 36) they decrease the opportunities of risk-taking in English and allow inhibition to take over completely.

i) There is no sufficient exposure to English since it mainly takes place only in the classroom where the English materials and the teachers’ language are the only sources of English input and few students speak English. Few opportunities exist for the student-teachers to communicate genuinely, resulting in lack of communicative need to urge students for using English exploiting limited linguistic resources. However, mass media e.g. newspaper, magazines, TV and English movies become accessible to all categories of people, student-teachers do not exploit such resources to improve their language. Many students in their interviews complain that they do not use English at home, they rarely listen to the English programmes in the radio. They insist that they need to practise English, using it everywhere. Thus, lack of exposure to English is one of the main factors affecting students’ oral communication in English.

j) According to a significant number of the students’ responses, we have found that student-teachers do not have sufficient knowledge of English i.e. linguistic or functional competence. See 5.4. Their responses to the test and the questionnaire show that they really lack vocabulary to express their ideas. This lack of vocabulary has created language anxiety in some of them. Moreover, their answers to the test items emphasize that majority of them is unable to transfer their understanding of grammar rules and their control of structures to real communicative situations. See table no. (75). This happens because, as Ingram (1980) points out, “second language teaching which focuses on words, discrete sentences seems to produce learners unable to handle texts, obsessed with discrete words and unable to grasp lines of argument” (as in Kumar 1985: 64). Also, Taylor (1983) points out that students need all structures simultaneously to meet the ‘real’, everyday communicative needs.
k) Most of the teachers in the English Department, Faculty of Education are specialized in ‘Literature’ and ‘Linguistics’. See table no. (52). They are more interested in literature and linguistics than ELT. They certainly lack the knowledge of the theoretical bases of the approaches they adopt for their teaching. Consequently, they do not keep themselves abreast of the recent developments in the fields of teaching and learning without which it is difficult to train their students to teach, using different teaching aids and methods in day-to-day teaching.

l) Many teachers have joined English Department recently between 2000-2002. These teachers are experienced in teaching English as an SL, as in India. But they are not familiar with the problems and difficulties of teaching English as an FL, as in Yemen. This unfamiliarity of teaching English as an FL influences the teachers’ teaching. For example, it is found that some teachers follow a traditional method of teaching. They talk so much and write everything on the blackboard. They rarely give students a chance to search for information from different references/resources. See 5.6.

m) Teachers’ responses to the questionnaire indicate that although all the teachers are in favour of communicative activities since they believe that communicative activities are essential in learning and teaching processes, many of them may not use them in their classes. It is because these activities, e.g. group works, need a long time to organize and give students a chance to use Arabic. This is supported by the responses of a significant number of the students. Majority of the students, see table no. (45), observes that their teachers do not give them sufficient communicative activities in which they can practise English. Therefore, students’ lack the communicative activities in which they would be involved to practise certain communicative skills they need in real-life later.
n) A significant number of the students’ responses to the questionnaire indicates that teachers do not deal with students as independent individuals: topics to learn are imposed on them. See table no. (47). The students’ opinions about their needs are neglected and rarely/never appreciated by the teacher. This is congruent with 46% of the teachers’ responses to the questionnaires since they distrust students to decide what they need or the content of the communicative activities used in the classrooms.

o) According to the responses of the students and the teachers in the interviews, we have found that most of the teachers believe that literary materials do not ensure the effective use of English since most of the literary texts students study are outdated and full of archaic words which students do not use in actual speech. See 5.5.

p) Although the majority of the students had got good grades in the last year-- 16.67% of them had got ‘very good’ grades and 43.33% of them had got ‘good’ grades (see table no. 27) -- some teachers thought that the three-hour written examination at the end of every semester is an unreal measurement of the students’ actual use of English because the students’ skills of rote learning rather than their actual performance of English is what is assessed in the exams. See 5.2.2.

q) Students are aware of the importance of the speaking skill in English since ‘107’ students have evaluated it as the most important skill. See table no. (22). They also estimate the ability to talk to foreigners as the ‘first subskill of the speaking skill’. See table no. (23). However, students rarely communicate in the Yemeni context, which is an FL situation. This evaluation might be due to their awareness of their insufficient competence to talk to foreigners.

r) The student-teachers are aware of their difficulties and problems they encounter while communicating in the target language. They express their need to improve their spoken skill in English because it is the most
important as well as the most difficult skill for them, which causes a lot of embarrassment. See 5.5. This finding appears to corroborate other studies that focus on the students’ communication breakdowns at the tertiary level in Yemen. Al-Shamiry (2000), for example.

To sum up:

We can say that all the factors are effective. However, they have different degrees of effectiveness. Some of them do not have a strong effect on the students’ oral communicative competence e.g. attitudes, learning strategies and extroversion/introversion personality traits. Whereas other factors play a great role in affecting students’ oral communicative competence or proficiency in English such as gender, language anxiety, exposure to English, lack of linguistic competence, teachers’ methodology and materials used to teach English.

According to the data generated by this study, it appears that the students’ lack of exposure, lack of linguistic competence, language anxiety and gender, respectively, are the most effective factors that cause the students’ inadequate oral communicative competence in English and that result in communication breakdown. However, the students’ low communicative competence comes out from a collection of all these factors. We can say, as does Roy (2003), that “the problem is related partly to the students themselves, partly to the teachers, partly to the teaching methodology.” The researcher has also discovered some other factors that are not studied or researched in this study but are elicited from the teacher as well as the students. The next section makes a mention of them.
6.1.1 Other Factors

6.1.1.1 Lack of Adequate Provision of Physical Facilities such as Libraries, Reading Rooms and Language Laboratory

Most of the student-teachers complain that the library of the English Department in the Faculty of Education is small and all the books and references are outdated. However, teachers rarely involve student-teachers in library work, e.g. ELT projects or assignments, which urges the students to read, write notes, synthesize and summarize. If some teachers engage their students to look and read up some books, the library is not large enough for them to read and the books are not sufficient. Therefore, the students and the teachers need reading rooms, (Roy 2003). In reading rooms students will find a lot of personal computers (PCs), references, textbook collections, journals, photocopies, scanning copies, microfiche-catalogues and electronic full-text journal collection. PCS in the reading rooms running with windows, offer easy access to various programmes. Students and teachers can know all the recent development in any field, e.g. ELT, through on-line articles/journals.

Since most of students have a lot of difficulties in 'pronunciation', it is clear from their oral responses to the interviews, a language laboratory is needed. In a language laboratory, a teacher can use the speech recordings to practise students the different sounds, structures and rules.

6.1.1.2 Large Classes

Fourth year students are divided into two groups: A and B, according to the alphabetical order of their names. Every group includes upwards '60' students since the number of the students may exceed '60', taking into consideration those students who failed in last year. We can say the classes are large according to the number of students. This is not only for the English classes, but also for all the other classes e.g. Arabic classes and Chemistry classes.
In the interviews with the teachers, they have complained that ‘it is difficult to teach large classes’, ‘we cannot pay individual attention to the students because of the large number of each class’, ‘my explanation might be unclear for the students who are sitting at the back of the classrooms’ and ‘it is difficult to employ communicative activities in our classes because of the large number of the students’, teachers said. Also some students viewed large classes as obstacle for them to communicate in English. Some students suggested that ‘we can use English in the classroom, if we are few.’ See Appendix E.

Thus, large classes can be considered as one of the factors affecting students’ oral communication in English in the Department of English at the Faculty of Education.

6.1.1.3 Lack of Communication Strategies

A significant number of students’ responses indicates that the most frequent communication strategy, which students follow to solve their oral communicative problems when communicating with proficient speakers in English, is avoiding communication with others in English.

27% of the students keep silent in the classrooms, See table no. (35), and 20% of them prefer to avoid classroom discussion so as not embarrass themselves in front of their classmates, see table no. (36). 26% of them rarely speak English in the classrooms, 4.17% of them never speak English in the classrooms (see table no. 37), 19.17% of them rarely speak English after the class and 7.5% never speak it outside class-hours. Thus, students really lack the different communication strategies that may help them to fill in the gaps in their linguistic competence. See 2.7.1.5.
6.2 Remedial Action Suggested

Since this study investigates the different factors that are related partly to the student-teachers, partly to the teachers and partly to the education-courses in the faculties of Education, it has brought up different suggestions for all of them viz. faculties of Education, teachers of English as well as students of English in the English departments.

6.2.1 For The Faculties of Education

Institutions of teacher-education are the earliest established systems for the proliferation and dissemination of knowledge. They are recognized to certify one as a qualified teacher. They have always been the focus since they have a responsibility of “preparing the individual for the reciprocal union with society” (Harris 1835-1929, as cited in Aggrawal 2002: 6). When one comes to teaching English to students for four years and finds that teaching does not bring about a satisfactory level of proficiency, one first attribute it to the lack and need of such institutions of teacher education. This study starts its suggested remedial action with such institutions of teacher-education, namely the faculties of Education, whose function is to produce effective teachers.

1. Faculties of Education should make the necessary provision for continual growth and development of the students and of the teaching staff too. They should have a provision for the physical facilities: big libraries, reading rooms, language laboratories and access to newspaper, internet, games, recreation and competitions.

2. It is recommended that the faculties of Education should provide remedial, need-based courses for student-teachers in an attempt to remedy their problems in spoken English. Yemeni student-teachers, for example, need a course which focuses on oral communicative and conversational skills. Or the faculties may extend teaching spoken English course to the third and fourth year students.
3. Since students-teachers’ use of English is restricted to the classrooms, the faculties of Education can help in arranging for the students some visits to some international organizations where there are native speakers of English, for example, the American Language Centers, the British Council, Oil companies and agricultural projects. Also, they may invite the teachers of English in the British Council, for example, to visit the departments of English in the faculties of Education.

4. In the selection of the teachers for the English departments, the faculties of Education should take into account that students need teachers who are good educators, instructors and trainers. Not all the teachers of different fields, e.g. literature, are effective trainers whose prior function is to develop student-teachers’ professional skills of teaching, students’ communication skills as well as their theoretical and linguistic knowledge.

5. The faculties of Education should familiarize the teachers and students with all the latest in education. They should also inculcate in the individual students an increasing desire for ‘continual growth’. They may, for example, support the students and the teachers to attend conferences and seminars on teacher-education and ELT to keep abreast of the new developments in these areas.

6. In an attempt to make the process of language learning a more motivating experience, faculties of Education need to develop programmes, which maintain students’ interest and have obtainable short-term goals. Berwick et al. (1989), as in Norris-Holt 2001, suggests that at the university level this may include any number of foreign language exchange programmes with other universities, overseas ‘home stay’ programmes or any other activities, which may help to motivate students to improve their target language proficiency.

7. It is recommended to prolong the duration of the practical and professional courses, namely microteaching and teaching-practice, and to engage every student in teaching different lessons to real students in the
government schools of different levels. This may help student-teachers to develop their teaching skills as well as to improve their target language that should be clear while presenting the items of their lessons.

8. The student-teachers’ oral performance should be one of the bases for assessing their level in English at the end of every semester. In other words, the student-teachers’ effective oral communicative behaviour in English should be the main criterion for certifying student-teachers as good teachers graduating from the faculties of Education in the English departments. See 5.2.1.8 and 5.2.2.

9. Since it cannot be denied that the greater the range of technical resources available in any institution, the greater are the chances of satisfying the purposes and needs of the teachers and learners, and the fewer the constraints on the teaching. Also, today’s technology never remains static, but continues to add potential new resources for language teachers. Therefore, faculties of Education should provide the English departments with the different technological and technical equipment e.g. audio-visual aids: videos, overhead projector, tape recorders, cassettes and computers, to support teachers’ teaching. Accordingly, it is recommended that every faculty of Education should have an office of technology where a teacher can find a collection of technological aids and audio-visual specialist to help in using the teaching aids in the classrooms.

10. Training-programmes should be thoroughly planned well ahead of time. Advanced planning is recommended here. In other words, the faculties of Education should make the criteria of admission and eligibility clear before starting registration-procedures in every new academic year. This would help to avoid admitting students with ‘zero level’ in the English departments (Roy 2003). However, administrators conduct an entrance test for selecting eligible students, most of the students who join the English departments are not eligible because they have been recommended by other big people. The students’ experience and
knowledge of English, thus, is not the crucial criterion for admitting students to the English Department.

11. New ideas from foreign universities could be evaluated and an openness of mind should be encouraged. Also co-operation of the experts, e.g. ELT experts, from other universities should be allowed. In other words, faculties of Education in the Yemeni universities should utilize maximally their relationship with other universities that either inside Yemen or outside Yemen. University professors, experts of education and outstanding teacher educators should be invited as ‘resource persons’ and welcomed to either conduct or participate in workshops and short-term programmes. This may help in transmitting sound education to the student-teachers.

12. Faculties of Education in the Yemeni universities should organize conferences, workshops and seminars on ELT topics periodically.

6.2.2 For Teachers

A teacher is one of the human elements in teaching, who has great importance in facilitating both the learning and teaching processes. Therefore, much emphasis is to be laid on “the teacher who is always at pains to satisfy the needs of his students. The teacher must be given all the requirements that make him proud”, says Al-Assar (1994), as in Al-Harazy (2002: 308). The UNESCO-ILO document on Status of Teachers (1967), as cited in Aggarwal (2002:414), is worth mentioning here: “It should be recognized that the advance in education depends largely on the qualification and ability of the teaching staff in general and on the human pedagogical and technical qualities of the individual teacher.” This study has led to some concrete suggestions for teaching English as an FL in the English departments in the faculties of Education in Yemen. The suggestions are discussed here:
1. Teachers should sharpen their skills as 'diagnosticians' (Altman 1980). They need to be aware of diverse learners' differences and characteristics and of the likely impact of teaching strategies on the students with different interests and anxieties.

2. Since students of English encounter a lot of problems and difficulties of spoken English, teachers have to concentrate on empowering their students with the oral skills, which are necessary to meet their educational, occupational and social needs.

3. Concentrating on the students' oral skills that enable them to communicate in English in different contexts does not mean that teachers neglect their linguistic knowledge. Teachers should keep in their minds two dimensions within which a teacher would be of a greater help to the students: developing communicative competence (knowing what to say) and perfecting their linguistic competence (knowing how to say it).

4. For developing students' communicative competence, teachers should conduct conversations in particular ways through using communicative activities in which spontaneous communication is promoted. See 2.9.2. Rosen and Rosen (1937) suggest the more flexible eclectic approach to develop the learners' communicative competence:

"This kind of competence (communicative competence) has also to be learned and is no less complex than linguistic competence and our point was that some part of this competence can be learned in school, not by teaching rules of conversation but by conducting conversation in particular ways. Just as grammatical competence need not be made explicit, communicative competence need not. Similarly, as a child can derive his grammar from what he hears so he can derive his communicative competence from taking part in talk" [as in Brown et al. (1984: 262)].

5. Teachers should make students feel a strong communicative pressure to convey information and to get things done in English. According to Swain's Comprehensible Output Hypothesis, learner's output should be
“pushed towards the delivery of a message that is not only conveyed, but
that is conveyed precisely, coherently and appropriately” (Swain 1985:
249). See 2.8.3.5. Also, Rosen and Rosen (1937), as cited in Brown et al.
(1984: 262), emphasize that teachers need to “... create situations which
exert the greatest pressure on them (the learners) to use their latent
resources, to provide those experiences which urge them towards the
widest range of language use.” Ellis has also made the pressing need to
communicate as a very important condition for the acquisition process,
“the acquisition process seems to depend on a pressing need to
communicate, results in learners not getting opportunities to use
language for a wide variety of speech acts” (Ellis 1984: 129).

6. Speech is the fundamental mode of knowing a language and speaking a
language is a skill. Any skill needs practice to develop. The purpose
of teaching a language should therefore be communication and this purpose
can be achieved through extensive practice in using the language. Palmer
(1971), as cited in Al-Harazy (2002: 307), states that the ultimate goal of
language learning is communication. Therefore, Classroom presentation
“should, from the outset, be directed toward the development of
communication skills. Learning requires practice, but this practice should
be communication practice, not mere pattern practice.” Practice of English
offered in an FL classroom is inadequate so the teachers should give
students a sufficient practice of English use. Teachers should stimulate
oral production of the students and ensure that all the students have the
opportunity to utilize their potential to the maximum.

7. A teacher should know what kind of communicative activities students
actually need, how to plan them, what to do first and how to lead the
students into performing the target language and how to make them
freely and actively involved since most of the student-teachers are at a
disadvantage because of their lack of self-confidence and control of
language anxiety.
8. For alleviating the students' language anxiety, a non-restrictive, anxiety-free and supportive atmosphere is necessary for the students to make use of whatever opportunities may be available to them. A teacher may try these suggestions to create such an atmosphere:

a. A teacher may talk or chat with the students informally, as a friend, to make the atmosphere so relaxed. Such as atmosphere would encourage students to interact freely and spontaneously with the teacher as well as with each other.

b. A teacher should select the topics, which are meaningful, interesting and relevant to the students in an attempt to increase their motivation, arouse their interest and stimulate their oral production of English.

c. According to Wörde's study (2003), it appears that an anxiety-free atmosphere is likely to be related to how the teacher conducts the class. There is a connection between language anxiety and the teacher's behaviour inside the classroom. Having a more 'personal relationship' with the students is helpful. 'The teacher's personality is what makes the class', said one student. Students are less anxious with the teacher who 'makes the class more animated', 'makes it interesting by using interesting situations'. The majority of the students has averred that 'not being put on the spot' in class would help them to be less anxious.

d. Teachers should not make students conscious of the errors all the time because if that happened, they would not be able to express their ideas in real communicative situations. Also, the emphasis in the language classroom on the correct use of the language forms leads to what Dakin (1973), as in McDonough (1981: 20), refers to as a 'strange language-like performance' or 'structure speech', which is correct drill performance but not real communication. Therefore, teachers should neither insist on 'error-free' communication nor ignore
all the students’ errors. But they may interfere and correct the errors if their communication gets meaningless or ‘nonsense’.

e. Teachers should encourage their students through employing non-threatening teaching method and use appealing. They may do a short talk on anxiety, from the outset of the classes to let students know that it is a common problem for all since they are not alone suffering from anxiety and they can overcome it.

f. Teachers should hear and appreciate the voices of their students for valuable insights, ideas and suggestions. To say that they should encourage their students to say ‘I think and I do not think’.

9. Teachers should encourage their students to look for learning resources outside the classrooms, e.g. to join libraries as the library of the British Council, to listen to an international news as BBC world news.

10. Students should be given a chance to communicate with the visitors to the English departments especially the native speakers of English.

11. Teachers should realize the futility of taking extreme positions in selecting a teaching approach i.e. to select neither an approach that focuses on the language structures nor an approach that ignores the language structures. An eclectic approach is recommended here. It is more practically related to the realities of the classroom. “Teaching, like life ... it integrates for its needs and it should not bother language teachers whether they are clear enough to draw theoretical lines around”, Blinger (1971), as in Saraswathi (1981: 87). It is a heterogeneous method due to it is a combination of other methods and a teacher can adopt the best techniques in the teaching and learning of various methods. Using an eclectic approach thus ensures the use of a variety of techniques that may suit students’ different needs.
12. All the teachers especially those, who are specialized in the fields other than ELT or Education e.g. Literature of Linguistics, should know the general principles of language teaching and learning, the use of teaching aids, the different methods and techniques of teaching and testing. They should keep abreast of whatever is new in teaching, exploit the new technologies, e.g. using the audio-visual aids to support their teaching. In other words, they should always develop their theoretical knowledge as well as their professional skills of teaching.

13. Since the student-teachers in the English Department at the Faculty of Education are instrumentally motivated, what may be profitable to do is to exploit the instrumental orientation to learning English by highlighting the utilitarian value of English for education and employment. This can be done by the contextualization of exercises and other classroom activities so that English is practised in situations that realistically reflect the use of English in the world outside. Through this way, the teacher could stimulate and sustain an interest in the utilitarian value of English and so maintain motivation (Chandrasegaran 1981).

14. Teachers should delegate the responsibility of learning to the students. In other words, teachers should gradually 'wean' them away from being dependent. They must not do whatever should be done by the students. Students should take notes, analyze, summarize, synthesize and search for and check different references.

15. Most of the girl-students cannot participate in the classroom because of the presence of the boy-students (see 3.2.1- D). So a teacher should be aware of this. How a teacher goes about rectifying this?

   a. A teacher should encourage female students to participate in the classroom by intentionally directing questions towards them and grouping them with other females so they would be forced to participate (Ambatchew 1993).
b. A teacher should select tasks and activities that appeal to both male and female students.

c. S/He may engineer situations that give equal opportunities for both boy- and girl-students, trying to achieve gender parity between girls and boys, "rejecting the idea of amending English syllabuses to accommodate boys’ needs and skills, condemning it as a process of 'dumbing down'”. “English teachers need to avoid polarized literary focus for girls and boys and rather than plan for curriculum to be made accessible and enriching to all” (as cited in Al-Zabidy, 2003: 153).

d. Students (girls and boys) might be willing to talk using English inside the classroom if their materials and topics are drawn from instances related to actual life in their society because they are inextricably bound up with their community at large, having knowledge on what is going outside and they can transfer their personal opinions to the classroom using English.

e. A teacher should realize that boys are proficient in attracting the teachers’ attention and dominate turn-taking, so the teacher should not give the boys a chance to dominate the turns all the time and should not create a polarized focus on the boys’ speech because girls would feel frustrated, more inhibited and suffer from “a lowering of self-esteem as they receive less attention” (as in Al-Zabidy, 2003: 154).

f. Involving students, both boys and girls, in a competitive work that reflects their broader abilities, may teach them how gender differences access to powerful success.

16. A significant number of the student-teachers comments that the literary materials, which are given to them are full of archaic words. Students just memorize them for the sake of final examinations then they forget them. They do not use them in their actual communication in English so they are asking ‘what is the use of them?’ Teachers can therefore select up-dated,
modern and contemporary literary texts that are full of meaningful and effective vocabulary, which can be used in real-life communication.

17. The student-teachers’ lack of vocabulary is one of the main reasons that hamper their oral communication in English. In an attempt to remedy this, a teacher should urge students to read so many books/stories to enrich their vocabulary. A teacher of literature may select two texts: one to follow up and explain in the classroom and the other one to read at home within the semester i.e. for extensive reading. Questions on the both texts should be included in the students’ final examinations.

18. The high number of students in one classroom seems to be a factor affecting the students’ communicative behaviour in the classroom as well as teachers’ teaching. A teacher can divide the classroom into groups. For example, if the class consists of 60 students, a teacher may divide them into ten groups i.e. each group includes six students. Each group should have a number. The responsibility of every group, i.e. talking on the behalf of others, should respectively be delegated to each student of the group in every class. Thus, all students would participate using English in the classroom.

19. Since Yemeni students are not equipped with the communication strategies that enable them to communicate successfully with competent speakers in English, teachers should develop their students’ knowledge of the different communication strategies and train students to use them in real communicative situations.
6.2.3 For Students

A learner is the most important human element whose presence is the only justification for the existence of the language programmes. Learners’ learning is the only valid criterion for successful teaching. All the types of teaching, evaluation and courses center around the learners.

Since this study focuses on the students’ perceptions, views, difficulties and suggestions, i.e. learner-centered study, it is necessary to come with some practical and functional suggestions for the student-teachers whose inadequate oral communicative competence is the problem of this study to help them improve their communicative competence of English. The suggestions are:

1. Student-teachers should utilize the opportunities, which are provided by the teachers through participating in the classroom discourse. They should therefore ask and answer questions, seek clarifications and try to interact freely and spontaneously.

2. They should realize that they are responsible for their learning of English. Teachers may help them and provide them with different opportunities but they should make self-improvement their concern and always evaluate their English and then remedy their problems of oral communication.

3. Students should be aware that errors are positive signs of learning and no one can learn without committing errors. So they should involve them in English discussions and participations in different contexts and shouldn’t bother themselves about errors.

4. Yemeni student-teachers should realize that successful oral communication not only involves how accurate the speakers are, but how clear they make themselves. For example, a speaker may sometimes say an incorrect sentence but the listener still understand what the speaker intends to say because it is clear.
5. Student-teachers in the faculties of Education should develop their theoretical knowledge of teaching and learning English, e.g. the general principles of learning and teaching English, the different ELT methods/approaches, the different techniques of teaching and testing and the professional skills and strategies of teaching e.g. how to introduce new language items, how to teach grammar and vocabulary practically and effectively.

6. Most of the student-teachers do not have sufficient vocabulary so they avoid communication with competent speakers. They should therefore try to expand their vocabularies through extensive reading, e.g. reading stories, magazines, newspapers and plays. Here, we mean they should read extensively for entertainment at leisure. In other words, more is the time spent in learning English, the greater is the success in mastering English.

7. Student-teachers should be aware that it is not so profitable to depend only upon the prescribed texts and materials of English used in their classrooms i.e. to depend on the amount of English that is restricted to the classroom. They should utilize the resources outside their classrooms. They should expose their ears to the English spoken by the native speakers on the radio e.g. the English used in the international BBC world news. They may also watch American or British movies and visit some of the academic and educational websites, which concern teaching English to overseas students e.g. <http://www.eslcafe.com>. In this website, students can find a ‘link’ called Quizzes that are related to grammar, idioms, slang, vocabulary, reading comprehension etc. (Viswanathan 2001). They can also chat with some native speakers through the chatting rooms, which are available in some websites, e.g. <listserv@latrobe.edu.au> through which students can contact each other and talk about subjects of mutual interests. Further, they can read different recent articles on learning/teaching English through visiting some on-line journals, e.g. <http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj>. In addition
to this, there are a lot of courses on English learning, with recording-cassettes for self-study, students can practise English and listen to the speech of the native speakers through the communicative activities in these courses.

8. Student-teachers should encourage themselves to speak English with their teachers, friends and classmates outside the classrooms and participate in the discussions, seminars and conferences that take place in their universities.

9. For reducing language anxiety, it is suggested that students get together outside the classroom and know each other personally. When the students feel alone, having no friends in the same classroom, they are 'more self-conscious'. Wörde (2003) suggests a lunch group as one way for students to interact. Working in groups or having study partners may alleviate anxiety for some.

10. Students should develop their communication strategies that help them to fill the gap of their insufficient linguistic competence. They should try the communication strategies other than avoiding communication in real communicative contexts, e.g. paraphrasing and adjustment of their messages (see 2.7.1.5).

11. Female Yemeni student-teachers should build their self-confidence, never feel inferior to male students and shy away from them. They should realize that women constitute half of the society. They should never forget the history of Yemen, which tells us about a broad-minded and wise queen called Sheba (Bilquis) who ruled the land of Saba (Yemen) and amazed all the kings since she could run the country from every side at that time (Al-Harazy 2002). Girl-students should thus feel proud of themselves and try to exceed the boy-students' oral output in English. They must make use of all the avenues and exploit all the opportunities to speak English inside as well as outside the classroom.
This disquisition hopefully substantiates the hypothesis and the assumptions that it has started out with, and helps us to arrive at a set of remedial suggestions for different teacher-education programmes, teachers and student-teachers of the English departments in the faculties of Education in Yemen. Although the suggestions above are based on the data obtained from the fourth year student-teachers in the English Department, Faculty of Education at Hodeidah University, they are extrapolatable to all the tertiary levels in Yemen.

6.3 Significance of The Study

This study has an importance, which is derived from it being a pioneer in trying to portray the situation of four-year teacher-education programmes in the faculties of Education in Yemen and, at the same time, to present a global picture of the different factors affecting the students’ oral communicative competence in English in such FL situation.

Its focus has led to some concrete suggestions and recommendations for teaching and learning English in the English Department in the Faculty of Education at Hodeidah University that can be generalized across all English departments in the faculties of Education in the Yemeni universities.

6.4 The Desiderata

There are many areas, issues and concerns, which need to be researched and about which urgent action is warranted. Some of such issues are:

- The effectiveness of the teachers’ methodology of teaching ‘Spoken English 1-4’ and ‘pronunciation’ in the first two-years in the English departments at the Yemeni universities

- Evaluation and assessment of the students’ English in the English departments at the Yemeni universities, i.e. identifying the tools of
measurement and examining the effect of such assessment on the students’ motivation and proficiency of English.

- Investigation into the difficulties of teaching-practice and microteaching courses for the student-teachers as well as the trainers at the pre-service teaching programmes to bring about some improvement in such courses.

- Measuring the undergraduate and advanced students’ oral communicative competence through administering some verbal tests/scales and suitable language aptitude tests to assess their speaking and communication skills in different situations.

- Investigation into the FL students’ systematic and contextual writing to identify the difficulties of learning English as an FL before remedial measures are suggested.

- Identifying the students’ communicative needs of learning English for specific purposes i.e. English for Special Purposes (ESP) in the different colleges in the Yemeni universities.

- Exploring the problems and difficulties of in-service English teachers in the Yemeni schools in order to develop some short-term courses for in-service teachers in the faculties of Education in order to refresh their professional skills.