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INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Yemen is located on the South –West corner of the Arabian Peninsula, between 12-20 North of the Equator and Longitudes 41-54 East of Greenwich. It is bordered by Saudia in the North, the Arabian Sea and Gulf Aden in the South, the Sultanate of Oman in the East and the Red Sea in the West.

AREA AND POPULATION:

The area of Republic of Yemen is 555,000 km excluding Al- Rub AL- Khali (the empty quarter desert). The Population is 15,831,131 according to 1994 Census.

The Sebans had built the most ancient Dam in the world. It is in Marib city, it was the biggest Dam of that era, it contributed to agricultural development. The ancient Yemeni civilization started to decline after collapse of the Marib Dam with its great irrigation system and the Roman discovery of route trade to India. In the seventh century Yemen had become part of the Islamic Central State ruled from Madina during the life of the Prophet Mohamed.

Formal Public Education in Yemen is 36 years old, dating back to the Revolution of September 26, 1962. Modern education system was developed in 1963 A. D. under the Ministry of Education. In the initial stage, the curriculum was confined to the religious Kuttabs and some schools. The purpose of the government educational policy was to provide a minimum basic education to the largest possible number of students.
English language is taught from level seventh of the basic education. In the past, the teaching of English has swung from one method to another, but now a days, it is generally agreed that the teaching of English lies between traditionalism, behaviourism and cognitivism in Yemen. The current English curriculum is built on Communicative Approach. The teacher cannot use modern methods and techniques due to many obstacles and factors which prevent him. One of them is the crowded classrooms. English language is a foreign language taught in basic education and secondary schools in Yemen. Students study English for three years, but their competence in language skills is far from desired. It is, therefore, most of them feel they need of relearning what they had learnt.

However, it was the purpose of this study to identify advantages and deficiencies of English language teaching curriculum in the basic education schools in Yemen, and to suggest practical steps for betterment of English curriculum.

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS LITERATURE:

The researcher has gone through all the relevant literature in the form of research studies leading to Ph D. and books. These have been written in summarized form.

CHAPTER ONE: HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVES

This chapter deals with the location of Yemen, the area and population as has been mentioned earlier, it also provides with historical background of Yemen. This handles with many reasons and theories about Yemen
regarding the derivation of the word, such as Yemen was known in the Greek era as “Eudaimon Arabia” and Roman called it “Arabia Felix” until it became Islamic country and it was called “AL-Yemen AL- Said”-fortunate Yemen. This chapter also offers a brief idea about Yemeni civilization before Islam and during the rule of dynasties who ruled Yemen after Islamic Central State started weakening intermittently. However, this chapter also reveals the development of education before the Revolution of 1962 A.D. Imam’ regime pursued a strict policy of isolating the country. The isolation policy had led the country to become a victim of diseases, illiteracy and poverty. This new system kept the country away from achieving the developments and changes that were surrounded with it. This isolation policy also led to confine the education in certain places.

THE PURPOSES OF EDUCATION BEFORE 1962 A.D. :

i) Reciting the Quran;
ii) Acquiring the basic skills of reading, writing;
iii) Necessary mathematics;
iv) Studying religious Sciences; and
v) Acquiring Arabic grammar and poetry.

This chapter includes a glance on history of development of education since the breaking out of the September 1962 A.D. The principles of educational policy reflected the aims and the principles that adopted by Revolution. They were as follows:

i) Achieving Social efficiency;
ii) Achieving Social equity;
iii) Achieving economic efficiency;

iv) Ensuring popular participation in Planning, Financing and implementing educational plans;

v) Adopting a Scientific Approach in research planning and implementation of educational plans and programmes.

It has been mentioned earlier, that English language is the only a foreign language taught in Yemeni schools, therefore, this chapter deals with the significance of it. This chapter also provides us with a good idea about the history and the role of English language in Yemeni society.

English language was first introduced in the Northern Governorates in academic year 1964-65. The curriculum was "Progressive Living English For Arab World" as the textbooks accompanying with "The Green Island Prisoners and Detectives from Scotland Yard" as supplementary textbooks which was taught in all Arab countries at that time. While English in the Southern Governorates, during the British occupation, was such as any other Arab country which was occupied by Britain. English language was taken care of more than the remaining subjects during the British occupation.

The purpose of education was to produce graduates to be clerks, typists and officials who could speak with British airforces, so the citizens emphasized on learning English because it was the instrument of surviving at that time.

CHAPTER TWO: CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

This chapter includes the concept of curriculum according to the educators and English language specialists' opinions. Most educators agreed that the curriculum means all learning experiences planned or unplanned inside or outside schools. It is characterized by flexibility and
comprehensiveness, thus, it leads towards the students integrative growth. This chapter also includes types of curriculum, such as, subject matter, core curriculum, activity curriculum, hidden curriculum and so on. It also includes factors affecting curriculum, such as learners because the student is the major untapped resource in curriculum planning. Students are in the best position to explain many of the advantages and deficiencies of the present curriculum. Decisions need to be made about the general aims which schools are to pursue and about the more specific objectives of instruction. The major subjects of the curriculum must be selected as well as the specific content to be covered in each. Choices must be made about the type of learning experiences with which to implement both the content understanding and other subjects and so on. It also displays some models of curriculum development such as Tyler Rationale, Taba model, Wheeler model and so on. In addition to this, the researcher suggested phases in preparation of ELT curriculum for Yemeni schools. At the end it deals with curriculum elements in detail, such as the objectives, content, some methods of teaching English etc.

CHAPTER THREE: DESIGN OF RESEARCH

This chapter consists of the following:

1. Need of the Study:

The British control remained in Southern sector for 128 years. During this period, English language was used as the official medium of communication in all aspects of official activities, so English language was ranked as the second official language next only to Arabic language. But, it was not taught in the Northern sector till 1962 Revolution. The Revolution in 1962 made Yemen democratic country and science then education developed and English language is taught from the level seventh
onwards in government schools. But in most private schools English is taught from kindergarten stage. It is also medium of instruction in some private schools.

English language is taught in Yemen as a foreign language and it is introduced as a subject in the national curriculum with a purpose to enable students to cope up with general English communicative demands of the English courses and to enable them to equip themselves with spoken and written English for interaction with foreigners in Yemen or overseas. However, in Yemen English language is not used in daily life officially. It is used in classrooms which are very crowded with students. Today, in Yemen, English language has become one of the urgent requirements more so with the approach of the twenty-first century. In Yemen, English language is used in many domains for instance; Scientific and Technical Colleges, Tourism, Airports, Diplomatic relations, Commerce (Imports and Exports) and International Banks etc.

Republic of Yemen is developing very rapidly in all aspects of life. In order to cope up with the world around it, people must learn English to communicate with the world to acquire different experiences. But English teaching encounters many obstacles and problems which affect the proficiency and achievement levels of the basic education students in English language learning and their level became low and unsatisfactory. The basic education students spend three years at schools learning English, but most of them cannot speak or write even simple sentences correctly. This was noted by the researcher when he visited most of the basic education schools as curriculum specialist in the Ministry of Education. The researcher, therefore, has conducted this study to substantiate the observation objectively.
2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is noted that the final results of the English language in the basic education stage is deteriorating, educators and parents complain of this. It seems English language curriculum is not suitable to the level of the students or there is something wrong with it. If any one looks at the final results of the English in the basic education level since 1990 till today, he will find that the results are going down. This is a great national loss and the educational authorities should realized that the future of Yemen lies in the students’ hands. English communication is a great stumbling block in the progress of students. However, it is imperative in the best interest of the country to survey the perception and beliefs of English inspectors and teachers about English curriculum.

There are many reasons for this low proficiency and achievement levels of the students. This can be attributed to many factors which may include teacher preparation, administration, school environment, students motivation, parents and English curriculum. Therefore, priority in this respect is given to study English curriculum because it has been prepared for Gulf countries where schools have good facilities, while Yemeni schools have not the same facilities. However, the outcome will help the educational authorities in the following ways:

i) To reconstruct the basic education English curriculum to be suitable to students needs;

ii) To adopt proper teaching methods in implementation of the target curriculum;

iii) To select suitable facilities.
3. DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMS

The researcher has provided working definitions of some of the terms which have been used in formulating the problem.

4. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is specifically to survey views of inspectors and English teachers towards the basic education English curriculum. The research had set forth the following objectives:

1. To investigate English language teaching objectives in Yemen.

2. To study the history of the English language teaching (ELT) in Yemen.

3. To determine the role of the English language in daily life in Yemeni society.

4. To study curriculum development.

5. To survey some methods of teaching English in English.

6. To examine the achievement of the basic education students of level nine in English language.

7. To determine the factors which affect the basic education ELT curriculum.

5. SPECIFIC QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY TO BE ANSWERED

In order to know the basic education English curriculum status, the researcher wanted to answer the following questions:

1. What are the objectives of teaching English language in Yemen?
2. What is the role of English language in daily life in Yemeni society?

3. Does the basic education English curriculum accomplish the target objectives?

4. Does the basic education English curriculum fulfil students needs?

5. What are the most important factors which affect the basic education curriculum?

6. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study was confined to the basic education schools in the Capital Secretariat, Aden Governorate (urban) and Sana’a Governorate (rural). These two cities and country—side are representative sample comprising of male, female, urban, rural, students, inspectors, and teachers.

7. POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of the study was to discover the principles that have universal application. But to study a whole population to arrive at generalization would be impossible because some populations are so large that their characteristics can not be measured.

The main purpose of the study was to discover the principles that can not be measured.

Republic of Yemen consists of eighteen Governorates. There are thousands of basic education schools, in these Governorates more than a million students are studying in schools. So it is difficult to survey this complete population: inspectors and teachers in addition to administer the
test to all students of level nine. Therefore, the researcher decided to select a sample from this large population to administer the research tools precisely.

8. SAMPLE

In order to get rid of extraneous variables, such as experience, age, language of instruction etc., it is very necessary to have a homogeneous sample. A sample is a small proportion of a population selected for study. However, a sample is a group selected from the complete population to make the task of surveying more manageable. Therefore, the researcher selected three Governorates randomly. He selected Aden to represent South of the country. Capital Secretariat to represent the North. Both two Governorates are urban. He also selected Sana’a Governorate to represent rural, so that the researcher can generalize the research results in all the parts of the country.

9. PREPARATION OF THE TOOLS

An appropriate method for studying English curriculum in Yemen was the survey to get the facts about the situation a picture of conditions that prevailed or that are developing.

Surveys are probably the most common form of research method for this type of research. The main purpose of survey is to collect data and information which can be analyzed to produce conclusions and results. Keeping in mind all the important aspects of the survey method. Therefore, the researcher found it suitable method for the purpose of this study and
he decided to use it for accomplishing this research. In the light of above the following tools were prepared:

i) PREPARATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

In order to elicit the information regarding the English curriculum elements, questionnaires were prepared. These questionnaires were for the English language inspectors and teachers who were teaching in the basic education schools. This kind of instrument was selected for fulfilling the survey purpose because questionnaires are extremely flexible and can be used to gather information on almost any topic from large or small number of people. The questionnaires consisted of two parts, the first part focused on curriculum. This part included (47) statements (closed items) and two open questions about the factors which affect English curriculum and suggestions for improving the target curriculum. The second part consisted of (8) statements (closed items) about background of inspectors and teachers; and an open question was asked for comments or suggestions which they had not already given on the questionnaire.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

On the basis of the stratified random sampling used in the study to accomplish the survey of English curriculum, the questionnaires were prepared and administered in Capital Secretariat, Sana’a Governorate and Aden Governorate. The questionnaires were administered by the
researcher by visiting the English Departments in Inspectrate Administrations and selected schools in order to get back most the distributed (548) copies, but unfortunately he could get back only (200) copies, (15) from inspectors and (185) from teachers. The number of inspectors and teachers was considered adequate for the purpose of the study.

ii) PREPARATION OF ACHIEVEMENT TEST

In Yemen, English teaching could not attain the objectives of English language learning / teaching as a foreign language. Most of the educated parents and educators admit that the standards of the learning English language as a whole has gone down in recent years. Teaching of English in the basic education schools is unsatisfactory and ineffective. This problem needed confirmation or negation. Therefore, the researcher decided to administer achievement test to students level nine. The purpose was to examine English language proficiency of students. The researcher has prepared some items representing some aspects of English language learning.
THE CONSIDRATION IN THE SELECTION OF STUDENTS OF LEVEL NINE.

It was decided to administer an achievement test to the students of level nine. Level nine was selected for the following reasons:

1. The students who are at this level have to pass the central examination conducted by the Ministry of Education. This is a terminal level. After passing the examination a student can enter secondary stage.

2. The students who are at this level are those who have learnt English for three years as they start learning English from level seventh.

3. The new English language curriculum which has been introduced for the basic education demands focus on communicative skills. It is expected that those who go through this course have fairly good command on communicative skills.

4. The students at this level represent the population which might have achieved the aims of English language teaching at the basic education level.
VALIDITY OF THE TEST

A test is valid if it measures what it claims to measure. Therefore, it was better to get the content validity of the test confirmed by experts. The researcher circulated the test among twenty English teachers who were teaching in the basic education schools to confirm the validity. They approved the content validity of the test.

THE TRY-OUT (PILOT STUDY)

In order to obtain a group of the rationally representative average students of level nine, September 26 school was selected randomly for the try-out of the test.

RELIABILITY OF THE TEST

There are many methods in which test reliability may be estimated. The most popular and probably the best technique is to retest the same individuals with the same test and if the results of the two administrations were highly correlated, it could be supposed that the test has stability.

The researcher administered the test to the students selected for the try-out. The students were given the test in October 23, 1997, they were selected again and testing was carried out after an interval of fifteen days, that was in November 8, 1997, believing that this time was sufficient to reduce the factor of memory. Therefore, the reliability coefficient of the
test was (.95). This means that there was a high level of consistency in the students' responses to the test items. Then, it was concluded that the test had an acceptable level of reliability for the purpose of the research.

THE FINAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE TEST

It has been mentioned earlier, that the purpose of the test was to make it part of the survey of English curriculum in the basic education, it required a representative sample in order to generalize the research results in all the parts of the country. But it was impossible to cover all the basic education schools of remote parts of the country due to the meagre resources of the researcher and limited time for accomplishing the research. Therefore, in Capital Secretariat he selected eight Govt. schools, four schools were of boys and the same number of schools were of girls. They were selected at randomly from different neighbourhoods. He also selected eight private schools four schools were for boys and the same number of schools were of girls. They were selected by the same procedure of selecting as was done in case of Gov. schools. In Sana’a Governorate, the researcher selected sixteen schools, eight schools were for boys and the same number was of girls’. They were also selected randomly from different villages. In Aden, the researcher selected eight schools, four schools were for boys and the same number of schools were of girls. They were selected by the same procedure as was done earlier for selecting Capital Secretariat schools. The
administration of the test commenced on November 11, 1997. Tests were administered during the academic year 1997-98. The number of students who took the test was 1522 students.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

This chapter deals with analysis of questionnaires for inspectors and English teachers with interpretation of data. It also deals with the analysis of achievement test of students of level nine. This chapter also provides statistics in tabular form. It offers the factors which affect the ELT curriculum used in the basic education schools.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS:

Based on the results of the questionnaires and the test, the major conclusions were derived.

This chapter also includes the recommendations for improvement of ELT Curriculum in Yemen and suggestions for further