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## ***THE LEARNERS' GRAMMAR AND THEIR SPOKEN ENGLISH COMPETENCIES : A PILOT STUDY***

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### **Abstract:**

The objective of this current study is to investigate the null hypothesis saying that the 4th level students of the English Departments, education faculty and arts college, Tamar University <Yemen>, have no meaningfully significant relationship in their grammar acquisition and their oral competencies. The total number of the sample of population was 105, 91 education faculty students and 14 arts college students. They were between 24 and 27 years old. The language which they speak is Arabic. The multiple-choice test is composed of the 27 grammatical items which were divided and categorized into 8 items, Wh-Word, Verb to Be, Verb to do, Perfect Tense, Modals, Future Tense, Clauses ( That-

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Clause, Complement Wh-Clauses ), Conditional Sentence. In addition to the performance of the multiple-choice test which is based on the grammatical and spoken tasks which were taught to the students at the first and second levels of the two academic years, 2002/2003 and 2003/2004, they were asked to describe the grammatical rule of each item of the test in order to see whether or not there was a correlation between the learners' grammar acquisition and their oral skills. Additionally, it was expected that the students could have learnt the English grammar successfully and in the meantime it was expected that they would have answered most, if not all, the 27 grammatical items of the multiple-choice test which they performed in the 1st semester of the academic year, 2005/2006. The findings of the grammatical rules description and the multiple-choice test accept and support the null hypothesis of the research whereas the t-test value ( $p. <0.05$ ) and F value ( $p. <0.05$ ) reject it and indicate that at the two English departments of the two faculties, the female students have achieved better results than the male students and the arts college students in fact proved that they are much more aware of the grammar usage in different social tasks and/or different social situations than the education faculty students.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Grammar and Teaching Materials

The communicative skills' development should contain not only language and study skills areas but also the improvement of grammatical competencies. When somebody knows a language, it is inferred that this person is able to produce correctly grammatical sentences in the target language. Basic interpersonal language skills are probably acquired very quickly whereas literacy- related language competencies which involve a wider and more acceptable manipulation of language structures take a longer time to evolve (Cummins, 1979). For this reason, one can expect difficulties particularly when L2 learners endeavor to understand and communicate effectively in the target language but discover themselves that they cannot do so because of inadequate knowledge of the English grammatical systems and how to use them.

In some language teaching and learning materials grammar to some extent is ignored when presenting other notional, functional and communicative class (Candlin and Edlho , 1982; Jones, 1981). It is sometimes practically assumed that the L2 learners have already learned basics of grammatical competencies and thus learning materials rely on the relevant communicative skills' development for differently specific purposes, for instance, Reading and Thinking in English (1980) for South American audience, and Skills for Learning (1980) for South-East Asia. Some books based mainly on structural bases claim that they include communicative and functional competencies presented through materials and learning tasks which depend largely on grammatical accuracy (Harmer, 1989; Huchminson, 1985; Swan and Walter 1989).

Like many scholars, Brown (1987) and Nunan (1987, 1989) have assisted to evolve the theory and practice of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. The L2 learner does not easily learn the language structures and grammatical rules. He is to learn how to apply the language properly. The CLT approach which is one of the most characteristic aspects of the communicative language teaching pays semantics attention to functional and structural features of language. In response towards the grammar translation and audio-lingual methods, the CLT approach stresses the communicative tasks engaging the real use of language in everyday social situations (Littlewood 1981).

Recent studies reveal that the main part of linguistic competence is innate but the grammar of the L1 should be learned (Humboldt, 1936). The L2 learner of a language has a device producing and interpreting a great number of grammatical sentences. This device which produces and interprets sentences will from now on be defined a grammar. The possible source of errors should be given a particular attention in language teaching. It is possible to avoid the interferences which analyze and classify errors systematically. This can be of greatly important benefit in expecting errors because of the interference. This type of errors can be considered when planning and writing curriculum underlying the

communicative skills (Nickel and Wagner 1988). Chomsky (1964) concludes that the L2 competent speaker should be able to recognize grammatical from ungrammatical sentences to produce and perceive unaccountable number of grammatically correct statements which include those which he has never pronounced or heard before. He should be able to determine which sentence is ambiguous and how ambiguous it is. He should know how various statements are connected when a statement is a phrase of another one and so forth. In case the L2 learner of a language has learnt all of the mentioned above and similar competences, it can be said that he masters the target language involved.

### **Grammar and Meaning**

Many linguistic scholars have endeavored to define what the word 'grammar' does mean. English Grammar is mainly syntactic rules determining the arrangement and models within which words are ordered in statements (Close, 1982). Grammatical rules work together to form a grammatical system giving clearly descriptive sentences which make up a language (Smith and Wilson, 1979). Grammar is likely better to look at the relationship of language and communicative abilities and at the meaning which is expected to be transmitted to use. In the definition of their communicative ability model, Canale and Swain (1980) present three elements which interact and influence each other as communicative ability parts; grammatical ability, sociolinguistic ability, and strategic ability. In describing grammar, Leech (1983) states that the elements of language use are separated and their interactions are presented. Accordingly, Canale and Swain as well as Leech say that grammar is separated from pragmatic and semantic forces which have an effect on grammar whereas Halliday (1970, 1973,1978) considers all these forces part of grammar. In Halliday's opinion, the ideational, textual and interpersonal functions are all grammatical aspects in which they arrange the form within which the words are integrated to transmit human message. In the case of modals, grammatical rules justify some shifts e.g. from the strong must to the weaker should. This type of grammatical rules usually gives semantic descriptions at sentence levels which suggest slight differences in meaning (see Table (1)).

Table (1): Description of probability and certainty

Study the examples in 1,2 and 3 below and then put in the letters (a) to (e) according to the descriptions in the box:

(a) It is Certain  
 (b) It is possible  
 (c) It is probable  
 (d) It is certain that ..... not .....  
 (e) It is unlikely

1 About the future

Degree of Certainty	Model	Examples	
Yes (100%)	Will ('ll)	He'll be home before 7, certainly.	(a)
Yes (75%)	Should	He should be home before 7, I think.	
Yes? (50%)	May	He may be home before 7, but I'm not sure.	
No (75%)	Might	He might be home before 7, but I doubt it.	
No (100%)	Won't (will not)	He won't be back before 7, I'm sure.	

Based on Shepherd, J., Rossner, R,& Taylor, J(1984).

The importance of grammar is presented in the two following contexts: He's been living in Yemen for two months.

He's lived in Yemen for two months.

The choice of one of these two statements is based on the terms of semantic distinction. In other words, the selected statements either the progressive or the non-progressive form is based mostly on the speaker's attitude towards the time spent in Yemen. Therefore, the grammatical rule whose function is to extend beyond description of the forms use is purely semantic terms testing uses performed in pragmatic conditions (Givon, 1984; Moore and Carling, 1982). As mentioned before, grammar is the mechanism within which human messages are organized in any oral speech acts. Halliday (1985 pp. 68-7) says that messages are divided into two main kinds, requesting and giving. Requesting is when services or information is demanded as presented in the examples below:

Can I have a cup of tea, please? Where are you from?  
Who is the best in the class?

Giving is the answer to any of these or typical demands. In brief, a message has much more than essential information. Accordingly, Bolinger (1977 p.4) states that "Linguistics meaning covers a great deal more than reports of events in the real world. It expresses, sometimes in very obvious ways, other times in ways that are hard to ferret out, such things as what is the central part of the message as against the peripheral part, what our attitudes are to the person we are speaking to, how we feel about the reliability of our message, how we situate ourselves in the events we report, and many other things that make our messages not merely recital of facts, but a complex of facts and comments about facts and situations."

## BACKGROUND

In the 1970s and 1980s or so of the 20th century, the L2 acquisition has developed greatly with a lot of published research increased annually. Consequently the accumulated data is increasing the complexity and range of L2 learner task and thus providing a better basis for theory construction. Studies conducted e.g. on universal grammar or acquisitional sequences or grammatical errors are good instances. Such studies have created a greater effect on the L2 acquisition research.

Several contemporary models e.g. Krashen's (1982, cited in AL-Fotih, 2007) model and Naiman et al's (1989, cited in AL-Fotih, 2007) model used in the L2 learning in the recent years to manipulate the students' learning situations and the aforesaid problems.

In the 1970s of the 20th century, the empirical studies have disclosed that the L1 is only the main source of errors in second language acquisition. Other sources e.g. are intralingual confusion and faulty pedagogical processes (Sunderman, 1978 cited in AL-Fotih, 2007). Recent studies in the second language acquisition and development have indicated some advantages in proceedings raising students' consciousness of particular grammatical forms. Although there are numerous pedagogic advantages, the communicative teaching method has not created in learners' habits of observation, noticing or conscious description or

grammatical forms and functions (Carter, 2004). The findings of Carter's (2004) study are similar to the findings and observations of the linguist whose objective is to expand explanations of the spoken English language. The applied linguists' concerns are based on the most effectively grammatically teaching forms in the communicative classrooms (Sheen, 2002). Like other linguists, Dekeyser (1998) recommends special attention to grammar and subsequent combination of the knowledge supplied in increasingly communicative tasks. Long (1988, 1991) agrees with Dekeyser (1998) and states that grammar instruction has to concentrate on the 'form' referring to the learners' attention to linguistic elements as they emerge in lessons which mainly concentrate on meaning and communication and the 'forms' which refer to the traditional teaching of discrete points of grammar in separate lessons.

The Savignon's (1972) study of effects of classroom training on the development of two traits, language competence and communicative competence. The results disclose that there is no significant difference across the groups on either the language competence tests or the final grade. However, the instructors' ratings show a significant difference ( $P < 0.05$ ) whereas the communicative competence shows a significant difference ( $P < 0.001$ ). The differentiation on language competence is zero percent whereas it is one percent on communicative competence test. This could be considered evidence for the distinctiveness of language competence from communicative competence. Communicative tasks requirements one of which can be included in writing component conducted in Swain's (2001) leading to repeated examples of metalanguage namely talk about parts of language form. In their study of effects of planning on task performance Skehan and Foster (1997) find that with an inherent structure of information, communicative activities and/or tasks create greater accuracy in learners' language whereas more complicated communicative tasks affect the language structure. Conversely, Bygate (1999a, 2001) never finds clear evidence saying that there is an effect of specific communicative tasks on achievement, but simple communicative task repetition does positively affect learners' fluency and accuracy.

Politzer and McGroarty's (1983) correlational study of the communicative competence of Spanish-speaking students in bilingual education programmes, in addition to the TOEFL and the comprehensive English language test, two communicative tests were administered: the active communicative tests and receptive communicative tests. The findings of the two tests indicate that (i) low levels of language competence seem incompatible with high levels of communicative competence; (ii) high language competence never guarantees a high degree of communicative competence; and (iii) different levels of communicative competence are likely at the typical language competence level. As a result there is evidence indicating that there is distinctiveness between language and communicative competence described as separate constructs. In other words, through their study, Politzer and McGroarty (1983), attempt to support the notion of interdependence due to the general

tendency for high language competence to correlate with high communicative competence. In fact the findings of their study recommend the following: (i) the relationship between high language and communicative competence is ascribed to the lower levels of the former which are presented to be largely incompatible with high levels of the latter; (ii) the existence of a minimum low level of language competence is considered as prerequisite for adequate communicative competence; and (iii) the assertion of language competence emerging distinctively from communicative competence due to the latter presupposes the former while the opposite never holds. Depending on their study of the eighty seven students enrolled in ESL class in American universities (eighteen Spanish, sixteen Chinese, eighteen Parisian, ten Japanese and twenty five Arabic) Joup and Kruse (1977, cited in AL-Fotih, 2007) state that there is no significant relationship between the learners' mother tongue and the right English sentence which they produced. Therefore, they argue that the English sentence type is the most reliable predictor of errors.

Other studies related to the distinctiveness between grammatical and communicative competence have been performed by Schulz (1977), Palmer (1979) and Backman and Palmer (1982), the findings indicate that the communicative competence acquisition has occasionally hindered the need to evolve grammatical competence which is described as a main component. However, in the light of empirical studies supporting the grammatical competence considered as an essential construct in a constructural pattern of communicative competence, there appears to be a case for reintroducing grammar at least as organizing foundations in curricula development and practice. Based on his study of observation on talks between a bilingual and a monolingual and between two bilinguals, Weinreich (1953: 81, cited in AL-Fotih, 2007) states that "if both speakers are bilingual interference in their speech is uninhabited." Additionally Smith (1994) argues that about 95% of the L2 learners do not reach the high level of native speakers.

The process of permanent exposure and practice is called fossilization. In brief, 95% of students remain at some interlanguage level which Nemser (1974, cited in AL-Fotih, 2007) calls a suitable intermediate system. Kleinmann's study (1977 cited in Al-Fotih, 2007) of Arabic, Spanish, Portuguese and American learners strengthens Schachter's (1974, cited in AL-Fotih, 2007) opinion and recommends that personality factors, e.g. anxiety, confidence and willingness to take risks indicate when there is a probability for the student to obviate different constructions.

To sum up, pragmalinguistics is used in the study of the more linguistic and pragmatical end of pragmatics whereas socio-pragmatics is used more in the socio-cultural end. These two elements of pragmatic knowledge are necessary to decide appropriateness of second language speech act production (Leech, 1983). The speech act fluency results rapidly from social concepts' transformation and the concepts' articulation. In the speech acts, nonlinguistic social knowledge e.g. the speakers' relationship and interaction goals helps to

do planning. As a result, two production dimensions, planning speed and speaking speed are able to jointly promote the speech act fluency (Taguchi, N. 2007).

### **THE NULL HYPOTHESIS**

The null hypothesis which can be rejected at or below .05 or .01 says that the 4th level students of the English Departments, Education College and Arts College, Thamar University (Yemen) have no significant differences in their grammar acquisition and oral language proficiency.

### **THE STUDY OBJECTIVE**

To help the students know their weak grammatical points and how to overcome them; to help English teachers, curricula designers, and writers know where the learners' weakness is if there is.

### **THE STUDY SIGNIFICANCE**

The study findings may indicate that the difficulties in grammar acquisition with which students sometimes get confused. The findings may also guide the curricula designers, writers and English teachers to invent learning grammatical tasks and/or learning grammatical activities which may make learners able to learn the English grammar easily and quickly and use it fluently in different social situations.

## **DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY**

### **Subjects**

The subjects of this study were 91 Education College students and 14 Arts College students of the two English Departments, Thamar University (Yemen). They were in total 105 students. They were mostly between 24-27 years old. The language they speak is Arabic.

### **Instrument**

A multiple-choice test was prepared from the grammatical tasks and/or grammatical activities which the subjects learnt at the first and second levels of the two English Departments in education faculty and arts college, Thamar University. The multiple-choice test is composed of the 27 grammatical items which were divided and categorized into 9 items, Wh-Word, Verb to Be, Verb to Do, Perfect Tense, Modals, Clauses (That-Clause,

Complement Clauses), Conditional Sentence. Besides, in their English Departments they had practiced grammar and spoken language for four years through these four different skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Accordingly, it was mainly assumed that the subjects could have learnt the English grammar successfully and in the meantime it was expected that the subjects could have answered most, if not all, the 27 grammatical items of the multiple-choice test which they performed in the 1st semester of the academic year, 2005/2006. After conducting the test, they were required to describe each grammatical rule of each item of the test in detail in order to see whether or not there was a correlation between their grammar acquisition and their oral language competences.

### Test Reliability

The multiple-choice test was piloted to 5 fourth level students, English Department, Education college and Arts College, Tamar University (Yemen) in the first term, 2005/2006. The KR-20 formula was used to calculate the reliability. It was found 1.04.

### Procedures

The multiple-choice test was administered to 91 education college students and 14 arts college students in the first term, 2005/2006. After finishing the test, the subjects were asked to describe the grammatical rules used in all items structures. The statistics which was used in this study is the t-test and ANOVA (analysis of variance). They were used either to accept null hypothesis of the research if it were greater than .05, .01 or to reject it if it were less than .05, .01.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In response to the multiple-choice test centering on the grammatical items, the results display that the correct answers which the students of education and arts colleges made in the description of the grammatical rules of the 27 items of the multiple-choice test are 350 (89.3%) right out of 392 whilst the errors they made are 42 (10.7%) errors out of 392. This indicates that all the students of the two colleges (English Departments) are good at English grammar rules description peculiarly the rules of the grammatical items of the multiple-choice test and in contrast the findings of the multiple-choice test as well reveal that the errors of the arts college students (English Dep.) are more than those of the education college students (English Dep.). The errors which the arts college students committed are actually 351 (53.67%) errors out of 654 whereas the errors of the education college students are 303 (46.33%) errors out of 654. The arts college students and the education college students committed errors mostly in all the 27 items of the multiple-choice test but relatively different in numbers and percentages which are displayed in Table (2) below

:

Table (2): Description of frequent errors of education faculty and arts college students

Test Items	Frequent Errors of Education College Students	Percentage	Frequent Errors of Arts College Students	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Wh-Word	2	0.66	-	0.0	2	0.31
Verb to be	34	11.23	37	10.54	71	10.86
Verb to do	123	40.59	149	42.54	272	41.59
Perfect Tense	29	9.57	27	7.29	56	8.56
Modals	26	8.57	30	8.55	56	8.56
Future Tense	22	7.26	27	7.69	49	7.49
Clauses: .Complement Wh-Clauses .That-clause	57	18.81	66	18.81	123	18.81
Conditional Sentence	10	3.31	15	4.27	25	3.82
Total	303	100%	351	100%	654	100%

Examples, some of the education college students performed 2 errors (.66%) out of 303 on the grammatical item wh-word. They chose the wrong wh- word, Who, in order to produce a wrong interrogative statement, Who's her name? They should have selected the right wh-word, What, in order to produce the correct interrogative statement, What's her name? while the arts college students did very well in this item, wh-word. In the verb to be item, the education college students made 34 (11.23%) errors whereas the arts college students yielded 35 (10.54%) errors out of 351. Totally the arts and education college students performed 71 (10.86%) errors out of 654. They selected the incorrect choices to produce these following wrong interrogative statements, How do are they?, What she was doing?, How the weather is like today? They should have selected the right alternatives in order to achieve these correct interrogative statements, What are they?, What was she doing?, What is the weather like today? In the item of the verb to do, the arts college students performed 149 (42.45%) errors out of 351 whilst the education college students committed 123 (40.59%) errors out of 303. They totally made 272 (41.59%) errors out of 654. Accordingly, the incorrect interrogative statements which they produced in item, verb to do, are, What does happen outside?, How many people do they live in this house?, What best method he does follow in learning English? However, they should have chosen the correct alternatives in order to yield the following right interrogative statements, What is happening

outside?, How many people live in this house?, What best method does he follow in learning English?

Moreover, the education college students (English Dep.) the arts college students (English Dep.) made many errors in the modals item. The arts college students performed 30 (8.55) errors out of 351 while the education college students performed 26 (8.57%) errors out of 303. In total, they produced 56 (8.56%) errors out of 654. Consequently they chose the wrong alternatives of the verbs which follow modals and in the meantime they could not nearly recognize between the subject-operator inversion and verb-subject agreement in all the items of the test and thus they yielded the following incorrect interrogative statements, Could you spelt it?, How well she can speaks English?, Can speaks he any other language? They should have chosen the right choices so that they could produce the following correct interrogative statements, Could you spell it? How well can she speak English?, Can he speak any other language? With the wh-clauses item, the complement wh-clauses and that-clause, the arts college students and the education college students committed a very large number of errors. The arts college students produced 66 (18.81%) errors out of 351 whilst the errors which the education college students produced are 57 (18.80) errors out of 303. The totality of the education and arts college students' errors is 123 (18.81%) errors out of 654. Again they repeated the same mistakes and errors as they did in the modals item. In other words, they got confused with the subject-verb concord in the complement wh-clauses and that-clause and they considered it as if it were subject-operator inversion and they therefore yielded the following an incorrect interrogative that-clause and incorrect complement wh-clauses, Do you think are you able to be a good learner?, They know where does she usually go, He does not know how does he get there, Tell me where do you live, Tell us how many friends have you got in this college. In order to produce the following right clauses either the interrogative that-clause or the complement wh-clauses, they should have chosen the right alternatives, Do you think you are a good learner?, They know where she usually goes, He does not know how to get there, Tell me where you live, Tell us how many friends you have in this college.

All the errors made by the 4th level students of the two English Departments in the following grammatical items, wh-word, verb to be, verb to do, perfect continuous tense, future tense, interrogative that –clause, complement wh- clauses, a conditional sentence are not attributed to the students' mother tongue but factually to the intralingual interference, developmental strategies and /or overgeneralization. Generally speaking, according to the findings of this empirical study, it is inferred that there is no a significant correlation between the students' grammatical acquisition and their oral language proficiency.

Table (3): Description of means and standard deviations of arts college boys and education faculty girls

	Means	SD
Arts College male Students	11.6	1.67
Education College Female Students	12	4.69

Table (4): Description of the t-test value of the test of arts college boys and education faculty girls

SD		d. f.	t-value	*P
0.54	0.17	9	2.35	0.01

\*P<0.01

Table (5): Description of the F value of the test of arts college boys and education faculty girls

Source	SS	d. f.	MS	F
Between Groups	0.4	1	0.4	31.13
Within Groups	99.2	8	12.45	-
Total	99.6			

\*P<0.05

The results of the multiple-choice test are entirely different from the research's null hypothesis indicating that the 4th level students of the two English Departments in education faculty and arts college, Tamar University (Yemen) have no significant relationship between their knowledge of grammar and their oral language proficiency. The statistical measures, means, standard deviations displayed in Table (3), the t-test value in Table (4) which is 2.35 ( $p < .05$ ) for 9 d. f. and the F value in Table (5) which is 5.32 ( $p < .05$ ) for 1 / 8 d. f. are able to confirm that the arts college male students and the education college female students' findings are not the same but completely different. Thus, the education college female students' results are statistically much better than those of the arts college male students in the multiple-choice test which they performed in the academic year, 2005/2006, 1st semester. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected and in the meantime the t- test value and the F value do not support the research's null hypothesis saying that the 4th level students of the two English Departments in the two faculties, education and arts have no significant differences in these two language factors, grammatical awareness and oral language competence.

Table (6): Description of means and standard deviations of arts college girls and education faculty boys

	Means	SD
Arts college Female Students	13	3.06
Education College Male students	11.14	6.48

Table (7): Description of the t-test value of the test of arts college girls and education faculty boys

SD		d. f.	t-value	*P
1.39	0.37	13	5.03	0.05

\*P&lt;0.01

Table (8): Description of the F value of the test of arts college girls and education faculty boys

Source	SS	d. f.	MS	F
Between Groups	12.94	1	12.94	1.47
Within Groups	92.8	12	8.81	
Total	105.74			

\*P&lt;0.05

The means and standard deviations as well in Table (6) and the t-test value, 5.03 (p.<.05) for 13 d .f. in Table (7) which rejects the null hypothesis of the research saying that there are no meaningful differences in the students' grammar acquisition and oral language skills indicate that the arts college female students have done significantly well whereas the education college male students have not. However, in Table (8) the F value, 4.75 (p. > .05) for 1/12 d. f. accepts and supports the null hypothesis of the research.

Table (9): Explanation of means and standard deviations of all education and arts college students:

	Means	SD
Education Students	11	1.07
Arts College Students	12	2.67

Table (10): Description of the t-test value of the test of all education and arts college students

SD		d .f.	t-value	*P
1.68	0.32	26	3.31	0.01

\*P&lt;0.01

Table (11): Explanation of the F value of the test of all education and arts college students

Source	SS	d .f.	MS	F
Between Groups	5.92	1	5.92	0.63
Within Groups	243	26	9.35	-
Total	248.92			

The F value, 4.22 (p. > .05) for 1/ 26 d. f. in Table (11) also accepts the null hypothesis of the research whilst the t-test value, 3.13 (p. < .05) for 26 d. f. in Table

(10) and the means and standard deviations in Table (9) reveal that the art college female and male students' performance on the multiple-choice test is much better than that of the education college female and male students. Strictly speaking, according to the findings of this current empirical study, the arts college students proved that they are much more acquainted with the English grammatical items of the multiple-choice test and more able to use them fluently in oral language than the education faculty male and female students.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the grammatical rules description test show that all the students of the two English Departments in education faculty and arts college are good while in the multiple-choice test are poor. The errors which they committed in the grammatical rules explanation are 42 (10.7%) errors out of 392 whilst the errors that they performed on the multiple-choice test are 654 (100%) errors out of 654. This indicates that the students of the two English Departments in the two faculties know the grammatical rules but they cannot use them well in either spoken or written form.

In relation to the findings analysis of the multiple-choice test, the statistical measures, the means, standard deviations, t-test values and F value in Tables (3), (4), (5), (6), (7) refuse the null hypothesis of the research and reveal that the female students of the two colleges (English Departments) have done much better than the male students. Although the frequent errors and their percentages in Table (2) point out that the education faculty students have done much better in the multiple-choice test than the arts college students. The statistical factors, the means, standard deviations and t-test value in Tables (9), (10) reject the

research's null hypothesis and disclose that the arts college students have much more awareness of grammar and its practical use in different tasks and/or different social situations.

All the errors committed by the English Departments 4th level students are not attributed to the students' mother tongue interference but actually to the intralingual interference, developmental strategies and overgeneralization. In White's (1974, cited in AL-Fotih, 2007) and Dulay and Burt's (1974, cited in AL-Fotih, 2007) study on children's L2 acquisition show that the first language interference accounts for only 4.7% of the children's errors whereas the developmental strategies account for 87.10%. At first and second levels of the English Departments, the students may have not been exposed to enough exercises on the grammatical items presented in Table (2) which might help the students master them. Duskuva (1969, cited in AL-Fotih, 2007) and Bhatia (1974, cited in AL-Fotih, 2007) believe that in many cases, the errors of the target language learners are due to the lack of learning rather than the interference from the mother tongue.

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**APPENDIX**

(a) Read the following sentences carefully and then choose the letter (a), (b), or (c) to fill in the blanks.

(b) Describe the grammatical rule of each item of the test.

(c) If you cannot, write I don't know.

1- her name?

a) Who's b) How's c) What's

Grammar rule explanation..... :  
 .....  
 .....

2- Could you it?

a) Spell b) spells c) spelt

Grammar rule explanation..... :  
 .....  
 .....

3- they?

a) What do are b) How did were c) What are

Grammar rule explanation..... :  
 .....  
 .....

4- do?

a) What does she b) What she did c) What she does

Grammar rule explanation..... :  
 .....  
 .....

5- like today?

a) Where the weather is b) What is the weather c) How the weather is Grammar rule explanation..... :

.....  
 .....

6- How well... English?

a) She can speaks b) she could spoke c) can she speak

Grammar rule explanation..... :  
 .....  
 .....

7- What three things... do yesterday?

- a) you did b) did you c) you does

Grammar rule explanation..... :

.....

8- .....doing?

- a) What was she b) What she is c) What she was

Grammar rule explanation..... :

.....

9- work?

- a) Where they do b) Where they did c) Where do they

Grammar rule explanation..... :

.....

10- When ?

- a) they did work b) do they work c) they do work

Grammar rule explanation..... :

.....

11- like the building which is in Taiz Street?

- a) Do Ali and Sami b) Ali and Sami does c) they do work

Grammar rule explanation..... :

.....

.....

12- How long... been living in Yemen?

- a) Jill does have b) Jill has had c) has Jill

Grammar rule explanation..... :

.....

13- What do when you leave here today?

- a) Will he b) he did c) he does

Grammar rule explanation..... :

.....

14- going to do for their next holiday?

a) Where they are      b) What are they      c) How they are Grammar rule explanation :

.....  
.....  
.....

15- What foreign countries      visited?

a) Have your friend      b) has your friend      c) your friend has Grammar rule explanation :

.....  
.....  
.....

16- Who...      to?

a) does she speak      b) she does speaks      c) she speaks

Grammar rule explanation..... :

.....  
.....

17- What outside?

a) does happen      b) happen      c) is happening

Grammar rule explanation..... :

.....  
.....

18- How many people...      in this house?

a) do they live      b) did they live      c) live

Grammar rule explanation..... :

.....  
.....

19- How long... ?

a) they stayed      b) did they stay      c) they did stay

Grammar rule explanation..... :

.....  
.....

20- any other language?

a) Could speak he      b) Can speaks he      c) Can he speak

Grammar rule explanation..... :

.....  
.....

21- What best methods in learning English?

- a) does he follow      b) he does follow      c) do he follow

Grammar rule explanation..... :  
 .....  
 .....

22- Do you think a good learner?

- a) are you      b) you are      c) are you able to be

Grammar rule explanation..... :  
 .....  
 .....

23- They know.....

- a) where does she usually go      b) where did she usually go

- c) where she usually goes

Grammar rule explanation..... :  
 .....  
 .....

24- His friend's house is against the national Bank. But he does not know .....there

- a) how to get      b) how does he get      c) how did he get

Grammar rule explanation..... :  
 .....  
 .....

25- Tell me live.

- a) where do you      b) where you      c) where did you

Grammar rule explanation..... :  
 .....  
 .....

26- If you were very rich,      for your village?

- a) What you would do      b) what you could do      c) what would you do

Grammar rule explanation..... :  
 .....  
 .....

27- Tell us how many friends in  
this college.

a) you have      b) have you      c) do you have

Grammar rule explanation..... :

.....

.....