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## *English Language Learning in Elementary Schools: Difficulties & Solutions*

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### **Abstract:**

This study examined whether there are difficulties facing the students in elementary schools in learning English as a foreign language. Data was collected from three elementary schools in Hajjah city; also it was collected from academic teachers in Hajjah college. The findings show that there are four main factors that cause such difficulties, which are:-

- 1- Curriculum
- 2- Teacher effect
- 3- Environment and facilities
- 4- Psychology of the students.

The research runs in five chapters. Chapter one gives an introductory remarks about the research theoretical background, research significance; it also outlines the research hypothesis and objectives. Chapter two was mainly allocated for the previous related researches and studies. Chapter three shows methodology and design. Chapter four discusses the data analysis and results. Finally, in chapter five, the researchers talked about the research recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

### ***Term Definitions***

**Curriculum** is the totality of learning experiences provided to students so that they can attain general skills and knowledge at a variety of learning sites.

**Educational psychology** concentrates on those aspects of the psychic activity that have to do with learning.

**Environment** is the sum total of all surroundings of a living organism, including natural forces and other living things, which provide conditions for development and growth as well as of danger and damage.

**Facilities** something that permits the easier performance of an action, course of conduct, etc.: to provide someone with every facility for accomplishing a task.

**SPSS:** A statistical examination of two population me Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) A proprietary set of integrated computer programs oriented toward general and survey analysis. SPSS provides over 50 statistical processes, including regression analysis, correlation and analysis of variance, and is used extensively in the marketing research fielders.

**T-TEST:** A two-sample t-test examines whether two samples are different and is commonly used when the variances of two normal distributions are unknown and when an experiment uses a small sample size.

**One-Way Analysis of Variance:** is a way to test the equality of three or more means at one time by using variances.

**Pedagogy** has been defined as ‘the study of methods and styles of teaching and the principles, practice or profession of teaching’ (Hedge & Whitney, 1996, p. 121).

### ***Abbreviations***

**EFL** / (English as a foreign language).

**ELT** / (English Language Teaching).

**CALT**/ (Communicative Approach to Language Teaching).

**CLT** / Communicative Language Teaching.

**TE** / Teaching English.

**FL** / Foreign language.

**SPSS** / Statistical Package in the Social Sciences

**ANOVA** / One-Way Analysis of Variance

**L2**/ Second Language

**EL**/English Language

### ***Introduction***

Yemen is a monolingual country with Arabic as the mother tongue of nationals. English is a foreign language in Yemen, which is taught for three years in the preparatory schools (classes 7-9) and for three years more at the secondary stage (classes 10-12) in government schools.

Like learners in many other countries where English is taught as a foreign language, Yemeni learners of English are exposed to English in the classroom, but communicate in their own language outside. Therefore, they cannot communicate well in English either inside or outside the classroom sometimes even after completing the tertiary stage of education.

One common problem to both the situations is that teachers of English teach in a traditional way, i.e., they just focus on teaching grammatical items in a graded manner. The learners receive knowledge alone of English usage, thus they fail to communicate/ speak fluently in English outside the classroom. This research focuses on the difficulties and problems that face students of elementary schools while studying English Language and will suggest some solutions and recommendations to overcome these difficulties.

### ***The Significance of the Research:-***

English is the 'Lingua Franca' of the world. With the technological revolution and learning system, English Language has emerged as one of the world's most important tools of formal communication in the present cyber and digital age. The Yemeni students face many difficulties while studying and learning English. This research is significant because it deals with an important area of study which is the difficulties that elementary schools' students face while studying English and it will suggest some solutions and recommendations to overcome those problems. If those who are concerned with the process of teaching English take the outcomes and recommendations into consideration, no doubt that the level of the students will improve. Thus, this research and its findings will be an important contribution to the field of knowledge and education.

### ***The Objectives of the Research***

This research paper attempts to achieve the following objectives :

- 1- To find out the main difficulties facing students in learning English language.
- 2- To investigate the reasons behind such difficulties.
- 3- To discover whether there are statistically significant differences between male and female students in one hand and schools on the other hand.
- 4- To examine if there is a correlation between the axes of the research.
- 5- To suggest some solutions to overcome such difficulties.

### ***Research Hypothesis:-***

The hypothesis of this research is based on three assumptions:

Firstly, the curriculum represents the biggest difficulty facing the student in elementary schools; secondly, there is a difference between male and female students in learning English language; thirdly, each axe in this research has an effect to some extent on the other axes. Based on these assumptions, this research hypothesizes the following: There are four main difficulties students face during their learning process, which are-

- 1- The Difficulty of the Curriculum
- 2- Teacher's effect
- 3- Environment and the lack of facilities
- 4- Psychology of the students

### ***Limitation of the Research:-***

The research is limited to focus on the difficulties facing the seventh class students while studying English language in the elementary schools. The sample of this research will be limited to 60 students, both males and females from the following schools in Hajjah city:-

- a) Al khadem Al wajeeh.
- b) Annahdha.
- c) Annasr.

### ***Review of Related Literature***

*A PhD thesis entitled ' Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Oman:*

"An Exploration of English Language Teaching Pedagogy in Tertiary Education by Husna Suleiman Al-Jadidi in July 2009 deals with a similar issue and focuses on the need for a systematic program of professional development for teachers who teach English as a foreign language.

This thesis reports on research conducted between 2004 and 2007 into the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in tertiary education institutions in Oman. The research was an exploration of English language teaching pedagogy with a particular focus on bilingual (English and Arabic) versus monolingual (English only) teaching and the role of first language (Arabic)

usage in the classroom. According to this thesis, there is a need for a systematic program of professional development for both groups of teachers in theories of language acquisition, communicative competence and more recent theories of constructivist pedagogy in language education. In addition, an opportunity exists for professional development programs that aim to involve local and expatriate teachers in cross-cultural awareness and in teaching and learning from each other.

Another research was entitled 'Learning Difficulties in English: Diagnosis and pedagogy in Saudi Arabia' by Intakhab Alam Khan, July, 2011 states :-

'Teaching of English as a Foreign Language is always a challenging task. English in Saudi Arabia serves a very limited purpose. Yet, it is very important for social as well as technological development. Therefore, English language teaching in this country in particular catches attention of many researchers. Teaching of English in Saudi starts at the school level. Despite good overall planning, purposive curriculum, integrated textbooks, qualified teachers, achievement is below the expectations'. Moreover, Khan adds:-

'Teaching of English as a foreign language is always difficult. When it comes to the places where English serves a very limited purpose, it becomes more crucial and painstaking to teach and learn. English teaching is taught at the school levels, but it does not enjoy as much important part in the curriculum as in many other developing countries. Another related study is *Teaching English in primary classroom* by Susan Halliwell published in 1992 confirms that:-

Teaching English in the primary classrooms where children sometimes misbehave and where teachers are sometimes too overworked to spend hours preparing lessons or are anxious about their own knowledge of English. The book gives a valuable insight into how children learn language and how to achieve a positive and uninhibited attitude to language learning in your classroom.

One of the shared views between these studies is that learning English as a foreign language is not an easy task and the teacher is an important element in this process.

### **Research Methodology**

This research is a field research that mainly depends on questionnaires as a means of data collection. The sample of this research is elementary schools students, both males and females as shown in the following table:-

*The number and gender of students selected for the questionnaire*

School	Number of females	Number of males
1\Alkadem	10	10
2\Annahdha	20	-
3\Annasr	-	20

### **Research Instruments and Procedures**

1-A close-ended questionnaire was developed (CF-Appendix 1) and distributed to the students of elementary schools and their teachers.

2- An open-ended questionnaire was developed (CF-Appendix 2) and distributed to the staff of English department and instructors from the office of Education.

The first questionnaire is for the student of the elementary schools, male and female and it is a close-ended one. Another close –ended questionnaire is for the teachers of those schools.

The close-ended questionnaire is designed for gaining more opinions and suggestions and for result analysis. It is also designed to find out the difficulties faced by the students .The questionnaire of the teachers aimed at evaluating the curriculum and their roles as teachers of foreign language.

Another type of questionnaire is the open-ended one that is distributed on the staff of the department of English and instructors.

The closed-ended questionnaire is testing four sections (Curriculum, Teacher, Psychological state of the students and Environment and Facilities). Each of these sections has certain items according to its criteria sections. The open-ended questionnaire given to the academic teachers consists of ten questions and the one which is given to the instructors consists of eleven different questions, each group of questions were given according to the specialization of each sample.

### **Data Analysis and Findings**

Results were analyzed using the statistical packages in the social sciences and humanities (SPSS)) with the use of means, standard deviations and percentages to know all the difficulties in general and for each axis separately as well as the coefficient T-test was used. T-test to test the differences according to the gender, as well as the use of one way ANOVA)) analysis of variance test for coefficient differences between the two variables and more and they are:

Variable of the following schools /

1 / Alkhadem Alwajeeh

2 / Anahdhah

3 / Anser

It was also used Pearson correlation coefficient (Pearson correlation) to test the relationship between the axes of the questionnaire and the questionnaire as a whole table ( 1 ).

**Table (1)** shows the relationship between the axes of the questionnaire and the questionnaire as a whole.

	Sub.	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	percent
Total	Item1	1.93	60	1.10	48.33
	Item2	3.48	60	0.85	87.08
	Item3	1.85	60	0.82	46.25
	Item4	3.20	60	1.13	80.00
	Item5	1.38	60	0.78	34.58
	Item6	1.35	60	0.73	33.75
	Item7	3.43	60	0.96	85.83
	Item8	1.62	60	0.99	40.42
	Item9	1.82	60	1.17	45.42
	Item10	2.40	60	1.38	60.00
	Item11	1.52	60	0.93	37.92
	Item12	1.28	60	0.69	32.08
	Item13	2.27	60	1.38	56.67
	Item14	3.47	60	0.87	86.67

Item15	2.18	60	1.30	54.58
psychology	33.18	60	8.68	55.31
Item1	1.12	60	0.32	55.83
Item2	1.43	60	0.50	71.67
Item3	1.23	60	0.43	61.67
Item4	1.25	60	0.44	62.50
Item5	1.17	60	0.38	58.33
Item6	1.23	60	0.43	61.67
Item7	1.65	60	0.48	82.50
Item8	1.08	60	0.28	54.17
Item9	1.05	60	0.22	52.50
Item10	1.82	60	0.39	90.83
Item11	1.25	60	0.44	62.50
Item12	1.33	60	0.48	66.67
Item13	1.45	60	0.50	72.50
Item14	1.55	60	0.50	77.50
Item15	1.68	60	0.47	84.17
Item16	1.52	60	0.50	75.83
Item17	1.37	60	0.49	68.33
Item18	1.08	60	0.28	54.17
curriculum	24.27	60	2.09	67.41
Item1	1.10	60	0.30	55.00
Item2	1.20	60	0.40	60.00
Item3	1.42	60	0.50	70.83
Item4	1.78	60	0.42	89.17
Item5	1.10	60	0.30	55.00
Item6	1.37	60	0.49	68.33
Item7	1.17	60	0.38	58.33
Item8	1.25	60	0.44	62.50

Item9	1.13	60	0.34	56.67
Item10	1.75	60	0.44	87.50
Item11	1.65	60	0.48	82.50
Item12	1.07	60	0.25	53.33
Item13	1.27	60	0.45	63.33
Teacher	17.25	60	2.48	66.35
Item1	1.05	60	0.22	52.50
Item2	1.50	60	0.50	75.00
Item3	1.57	60	0.50	78.33
Item4	1.20	60	0.40	60.00
Item5	1.17	60	0.38	58.33
Item6	1.55	60	0.50	77.50
Item7	1.48	60	0.50	74.17
Item8	1.13	60	0.34	56.67
Item9	1.05	60	0.22	52.50
Item10	1.07	60	0.25	53.33
Item11	1.23	60	0.43	61.67
Item12	1.80	60	0.40	90.00
Environment	15.80	60	3.26	65.83
all questionnaires	90.50	60	6.93	61.99

In table No. ( 1 ) it has been Shown that there are difficulties facing the students in studying English, where the ratio of the difficulties in general is( 61.99 ) and the arithmetic mean is ( 90.95 ) and standard deviation is ( 6.93 ) . for the difficulties at the level of each axis separately the proportion of the difficulties is in the following order (the psychological state - curriculum – teacher - Environment) as ( 55.31-67.41-66.35-65.83 ). It is clear from the results that Curriculum is a difficulty of the highest impact, followed by the teacher, which is confirmed by Khan when he points out:-

*There are varieties of factors that affect the learning of English. The issues which are directly related to pedagogy are of more importance than any other factors Among others, teacher factor is always considered as very important as he is the one who is considered as the instrument of change(learning difficulties in English: Diagnosis and pedagogy in Saudi Arabia,khan,2011),*

The impact of the environment and the psychological state has the lowest rate.

**Reasons Behind Such Results:-**

This result can be attributed to several reasons:

- 1/ the curriculum does not serve the recent needs of the students and the community.
- 2/ The curriculum is designed to study the positions in an ideal environment, not in the environment of Yemen. There are some lessons that do not suit the nature and environment of the Yemeni students.

*The students were invited to give their views on whether the cultural content of their English lessons was appropriate to the Muslim context (TE in Oman as a FL, ALjadidi Husna,2009p128 )*

- 3- The curriculum taught by teachers who lack basic skills and they are not adequately trained.
- 4- There are some items that should be facilitated to suit the students' intellectual and developmental level.
- 5- There are some lessons that are not built to achieve the goal of student' learning and therefore they should be deleted or updated.

**The reasons behind the impact of the teacher are-**

- 1 / Teachers are still using traditional methods and old teaching in spite of the wild use of modern methods at the rest of the world.

*CLT not only encourages the above activities but also emphasizes the use of visual aids, cue cards and power-point displays. Language teachers in the old-fashioned teaching ways used to use chalk, talk, black board, and pictures. Influenced by the principles of CLT, teachers have adopted more sophisticated Hi- Tech techniques in their classrooms (TE in Oman as a FL, ALjadidi Husna,2009p56 ).*

*It is usually believed that the poor result in English is mainly due to the traditional approach to teaching of English right from the school level. (learning difficulties in English: Diagnosis and pedagogy in Saudi Arabia,khan,2011).*

- 2 / After graduating from the university, a large proportion of English language teachers are not able to teach this material an appropriate and required way.

- 3 / English Language teachers are not included in specialized training programs to catch up the scientific revolution taking place recently.

*Senior English teachers and supervisors in Basic Education meet periodically throughout the year with the trainer to discuss issues pertaining to their role in supporting teaching and learning in their schools' curriculum support seminars (TE in Oman as a FL, ALjadidi Husna,2009 ).*

*The Teacher Training Institute offered courses in different majors of specialty, such as Arabic, Islamic, Social Science Studies, and English Language. to develop competence in a second language is by language learning. Learning refers to conscious knowledge of a second language and being aware of language rules (Krashen, 1982, p. 10)*

- 4 / Some teachers neglect material development and modernization of their ways and methods of teaching and this is may be because of the lack of motivation from the authorities.

- 5/ Teachers do not vary the activities and games used in the class.

*Input is given by means of meaningful and communicative activities supplied by the teacher; and plenty of opportunities for linguistic interaction in the target language. This is the most direct way that teachers can promote language acquisition in the classroom. (Krashen, 1982). That is why games are so useful and so important. It is not just because they are fun. It is partly because the fun element create a desire to communicate and partly because game can create unpredictability. (TE in the Primary Classroom, Halliwell Susan,1992,p5)*

**The reasons behind the impact of the environment:-**



1 / Prevailing economic situation does not represent a helping factor for learning English, especially as the level of the income of most Yemeni families does not encourage the students to improve their language by joining some specialized institutes and qualifying courses.

2 / Most of the illiterate parents have zero English language and this is a hindrance in student learning and highly affects the motivation of learning.

***The reasons behind the impact of the facilities:-***

1 / Yemen in general and Hajjah in particular, totally lack the modern facilities currently used to help learning and using the language and its application, as computer-.Viewer-.labs-. , useful libraries with modern references.

*School buildings, class rooms, labs, etc. may not be quite adequate. (learning difficulties in English: Diagnosis and pedagogy in Saudi Arabia,khan,2011)*

***The reasons behind the impact of the psychological state:-***

1 / Family problems affect the psychology of the student in school.

*The income of majority of the families may not be adequate. Hence, the parents are not interested in giving good education background or educational promotion to their children (learning difficulties in English: Diagnosis and pedagogy in Saudi Arabia, Khan,2011).*

2/ Some illiterate parents neglect following-up students (their children) in the school regularly and continuously.

*Environment and family background play vital role in success of learning process. (learning difficulties in English: Diagnosis and pedagogy in Saudi Arabia, Khan,2011).*

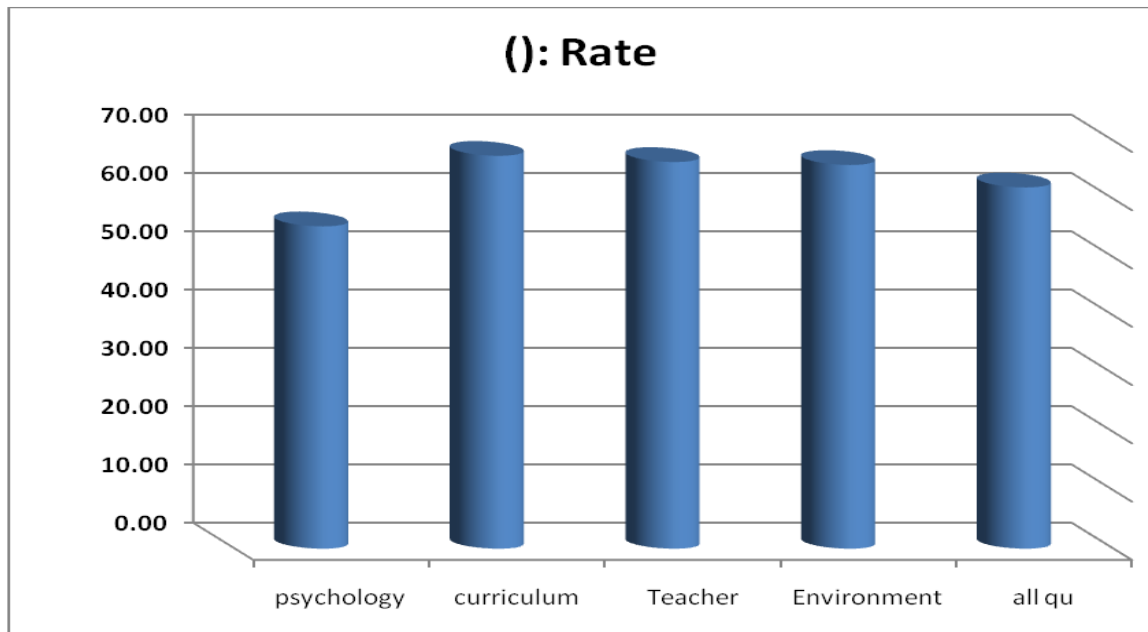
3/ The increase in the number of students per class makes students ignore the lesson so that they will not pay attention to the teacher.

4/ Some teachers do not encourage their students, especially those of low level.

*Most children arrive at school with their confidence. They do not expect to be able to do everything immediately, but they assume they can do anything eventually. In other word, for children mistakes and failures are frustrating rather than humiliating. They are a normal part of learning to do something. After all, nearly everything they do takes a long time and even then is frequently still not quite right. (TE in the Primary Classroom, Halliwell Susan,1992,p13).*

5 / Perception difficulty of this language represents a psychological barrier that prevents the student from acquiring this language.

sub.	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	percentage
psychology	33.18	60	8.68	55.31
curriculum	24.27	60	2.09	67.41
Teacher	17.25	60	2.48	66.35
Environment	15.80	60	3.26	65.83
all questionnaires	90.50	60	6.93	61.99



*The second question / Are there any differences attributed to sex?*

*Table (2) shows differences attributed to sex.*

Axes	sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
psychology	male	30	34.50	8.54	1.18	58.00	0.24
	female	30	31.87	8.76			
curriculum	male	30	24.77	1.76	1.89	58.00	0.06
	female	30		2.30			
Teacher	male	30	17.17	2.10	0.26	58.00	0.80
	female	30	17.33	2.84			
Environment	male	30	15.67	3.30	0.31	58.00	0.75
	female	30	15.93	3.26			
all questionnaires	male	30	92.10	5.87	1.82	58.00	0.07
	female	30	90	7.62			

Table No. (2) Shows that there is a difference in the difficulties attributed to sex in a very little rate. (T-test) has been used that shows that these differences and resulted in that there are no sex differences in this language as the value (t) is (1.82) and the level of significance is (0.07) in general and for the axes there are no differences at the level of significance (0.05) as the value of(t) of axes (psychological - the curriculum - teacher- Environment)in the following pattern (1.18-1.89-.26-.31)

**The third question is: Are there any differences attributable to schools?**

It has been used One way ANOVA to calculate the difference according to school

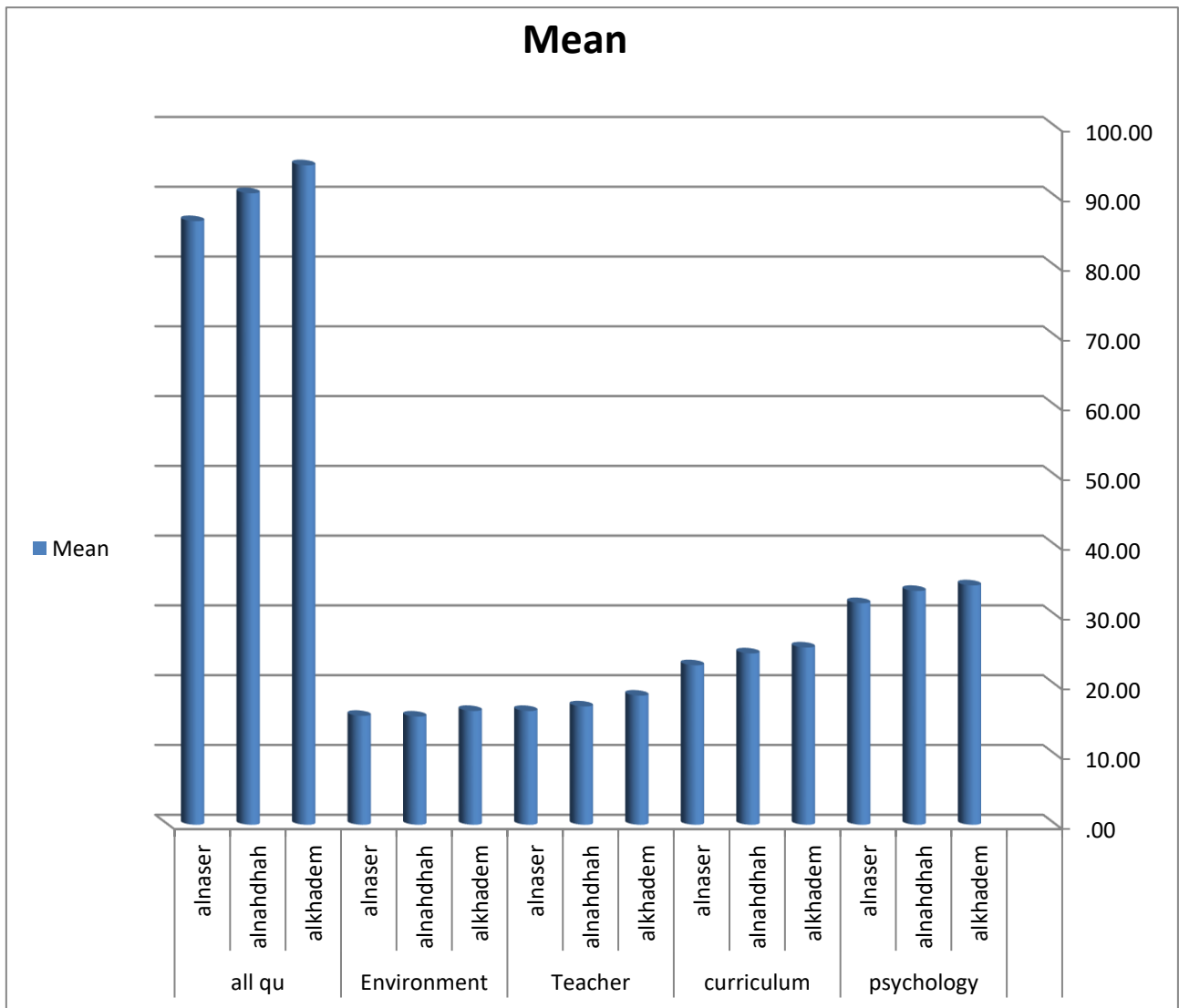
**Table (3) shows differences attributable to schools.**

ANOVA						
Axes		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
psychology	Between Groups	68.033	2	34.017	0.443	0.644
	Within Groups	4376.950	57	76.789		
	Total	4444.983	59			
curriculum	Between Groups	67.433	2	33.717	10.099	0.000
	Within Groups	190.300	57	3.339		
	Total	257.733	59			
Teacher	Between Groups	51.100	2	25.550	4.666	0.013
	Within Groups	312.150	57	5.476		
	Total	363.250	59			
Environment	Between Groups	7.600	2	3.800	0.350	0.706
	Within Groups	618.000	57	10.842		
	Total	625.600	59			
all questionnaires	Between Groups	640.000	2	320.000	8.302	0.001
	Within Groups	2197.000	57	38.544		
	Total	2837.000	59			

Table No. (3) shows that there are significant differences at the level of significance (0,05) in the difficulties as a whole as the value of (f) is (8,302) and the level of significance (0,001) and statistically significant differences at the level of significance (0,05) in the axial curriculum and teacher as the value of (f) in the curriculum is (10,099) and the level of significance (0,000) and teacher (4,666) and the level of significance (0,013). as seen from the table that there was no difference for the psychology and the environment and the facilities and the value of (f), respectively (0,443-0,350). The level of significance (,644 -,706)

**The fourth question :- Is there a correlation between the difficulties faced by students in studying English language in general and for the axes in particular?**

**Table (4) show the correlation between the difficulties faced by students**



		Correlations						
		sex	school	psychology	curriculum	Teacher	Environment	all qu
sex	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.408**	0.153	0.241	0.034	0.041	0.233
	Sig. (2tailed)		0.001	0.243	0.063	0.797	0.754	0.074
	N	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000
school	Pearson Correlation	.408**	1.000	0.121	.502**	.365**	0.089	.475**
	Sig. (2tailed)	0.001		0.357	0.000	0.004	0.501	0.000
	N	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000
psychology	Pearson Correlation	0.153	0.121	1.000	0.016	.611**	.819**	.653**
	Sig. (2tailed)	0.243	0.357		0.904	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000
curriculum	Pearson Correlation	0.241	.502**	0.016	1.000	.601**	.332**	.692**
	Sig. (2tailed)	0.063	0.000	0.904		0.000	0.010	0.000
	N	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000
Teacher	Pearson Correlation	0.034	.365**	.611**	.601**	1.000	.799**	0.149
	Sig. (2tailed)	0.797	0.004	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.255
	N	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000
Environment	Pearson Correlation	0.041	0.089	.819**	.332**	.799**	1.000	0.170
	Sig. (2tailed)	0.754	0.501	0.000	0.010	0.000		0.195
	N	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000
all questionnaires	Pearson Correlation	0.233	.475**	.653**	.692**	0.149	0.170	1.000
	Sig. (2tailed)	0.074	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.255	0.195	
	N	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000	60.000
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2tailed).								

Table No. (4) Shows that there is correlation at the level of significance (0.01) in all questionnaires and the value of the correlation coefficient between psychology and curriculum is (.692-.653) while

there is no correlation between teacher and the environment as the value of the correlation coefficient is (0.170-.149)

*There is correlation between the environment and :* -

1/ psychology as the value of correlation coefficient is .819

2/curriculum as the value of correlation coefficient is ( 0.332 ).

*Krashen's theories imply that lessons should be conducted primarily in English, should be communication rich environments and provide comprehensible input in order to enhance acquisition(Krashen, 1982)*

3 /teacher as the value of correlation coefficient is(0.799)

*Also there is correlation between the teacher and both of :* -

1 / psychology as the value of correlation coefficient is (0.611)

2 / curriculum as the value of correlation coefficient is (0.601)

**Table (5)** reveals the items upon which the academic teachers agreed all regarding the question they have been asked by the researchers.

QUES	ITEM	NO.	AGREE	PERCENTAGE
1	*We need well qualified T	4	3	75
	We need Using new methods	4	3	75
	7 grade is an important stage	4	3	75
	7grade the is first impression	4	2	50
	Ss show great enthusiasm	4	1	25
2	**Traditional methods used as lecturing, translation.	4	4	100
	Teacher-centered approach	4	2	50
	Translation was used	4	2	50
	There is a change now	4	2	50
	Also learner-centered approach is used	4	1	25
3	A change in teaching tools	4	4	100
	As colored boards	4	3	75
	Depends on the T style	4	2	50
	In the past T was classical	4	1	25
4	There is a change in curriculum	4	3	75
	Recent Curriculum does not serve the recent needs	4	2	50
	Curriculum must be related to Ss life	4	2	50
	Curriculum must be attached to different aspects of Ss	4	2	50

	It has to be designed by specialists	4	1	25
	Updating methods	4	1	25
	Task-based textbooks	4	1	25
	Picture, print are of high quality	4	1	25
	It is well-organized	4	1	25
5	Not all the gradutors are qualified enough	4	4	100
	They do not get benefits from college study	4	2	50
	Some are qualified	4	1	25
6	Social, economical, political factors reduce learning	4	4	100
	***Poverty is a main factor	4	3	75
	Unawareness of families, divorcing	4	2	50
	War, instability	4	2	50
7	There are psychological factors affect Ss	4	3	75
	Student/family/school relations	4	2	50
	School atmosphere	4	2	50
	Shiness, hesitation, lacking motivation	4	1	25
8	50% of school gradutors cannot use English	4	2	50
	They join ED mostly to get a job	4	1	25
9	Lacking labs, modern facilities is a major problem	4	3	75
	Also Classical curriculum	4	3	75
	Government should pay attention to English needs	4	2	50
	Updating facilities	4	1	25
	Qualifying T is a solution	4	1	25
10	There is a bright future of E in Yemen if/	4	4	100
	****E teachers are to be well-trained	4	2	50
	Computers are to be in use	4	2	50



	Ss families establish positive attitude ,sufficient motivation toward E	4	2	50
	Curriculum is to focus on unconscious methods	4	1	25

From table(1), the percentage of the items that are agreed upon by the academic teachers and which are significant, the percentage is 75% or higher.

- *Some teachers are required to work very closely to a given syllables. Some more or less have to create their own programmes within rough guidelines. Other have to create the whole programme for themselves. Whatever our circumstances, that is to say, however much external guidance or control there is of what we teach, we always have to make choices at some level about what happens in the classroom. Having identified our priorities and practical implications in Part I, we are now in a better position to make consistent and effective choices rather than haphazard decision. ( TE in the Primary Classroom, Halliwell Susan,1992,p112 ).*

-*Language teachers in the old-fashioned teaching ways used to use chalk, talk, black board, and pictures. Influenced by the principles of CLT, teachers have adopted more sophisticated Hi- Tech techniques in their classrooms. (TE in Oman as a FL, ALjadidi Husna,2009 ).*

-*Environment and family background play vital role in success of learning process. For example,. the income of majority of the families may not be adequate. Hence, the parents are not interested in giving good education background or educational promotion to their children. In some cases, they are willing to engage the children in some jobs in order to earn money. This is the very basic reason and the affecting factor in teaching. (learning difficulties in English: Diagnosis and pedagogy in Saudi Arabia, Khan,2011).*

-*Pre-service training that integrates academic subject studies with pedagogical studies and teaching practice is considered one of the most successful aspects of foreign language education in several countries (Pufahl, Rhodes & Christian, 2000).*

## 4.4 An open questionnaire for teachers in elementary schools about the curriculum

NO.	1	2	3	4	5	6	N	MEAN	PERCENT
1	4	4	2	4	4	4	6	3.67	91.67
2	3	4	1	2	3	3	6	2.67	66.67
3	1	3	4	2	4	2	6	2.67	66.67
4	3	2	1	1	2	2	6	1.83	45.83
5	1	4	1	4	3	1	6	2.33	58.33
6	4	3	3	3	4	4	6	3.50	87.50
7	4	4	4	3	3	4	6	3.67	91.67
8	1	4	3	3	1	2	6	2.33	58.33
9	1	2	3	2	2	2	6	2.00	50.00
10	1	2	3	2	2	1	6	1.83	45.83
ALL DEG.	23	32	25	26	28	25	6	26.50	53.00

From table (6), the percentage of the items which are agreed upon by most of the teachers is 50% higher. This indicates that all the items are agreed upon except the fourth and the tenth ones. The general percentage is ( 53.00).

## 4.5 An open questionnaire for the Instructors

N	sex		N	percent
	male	female		
1	1	1	2	100
	1	1	2	100
2	1	1	2	100
	1	1	2	100
3	1	1	2	100
	1	1	2	100
	1	1	2	100
4	1	1	2	100
	1	1	2	100
5	1	1	2	100

	1	1	2	100
6	1	1	2	100
7	1	1	2	100
	1	1	2	100
8	1	1	2	100
9	1	1	2	100
10	1	1	2	100
11	1	1	2	100

The instructors agreed upon the following points:-

- 1-Teachers are supervised one time a month.
  - 2-There is about 20%-qualified teachers in Hajjah city.
  - 3-Ability of explanation, well management of class, using of games, activities and puzzles in class are the main points of evaluating in a teacher.
  - 4-Some times, there are signs of improvement in the supervised teachers each time they are visited by the instructors.
  - 5-Students have talent if so if good teachers teach them, they will acquire EL properly.
  - 6-There are some factors affect EL learning such as traditional methods, lack of motivation and ambition.
  - 7-Curriculum needs to be updated to suit the current needs of the students and their society.
  - 8-It is believed that EL can be learnt away earlier than 7<sup>th</sup> class, may be at 4<sup>th</sup> grade
  - 9- The main reasons behind the general hatred of EL are:-
    - A-Teachers' misunderstanding of methodology and carelessness.
    - B- The Lack of encouragement and support from the family.
    - C-The false strategy followed to build the learners capacity of EL knowledge.
  - 10- The suggested solutions to overcome such problems:-
    - \*1-Moderating the style of teachers.
    - \*2-Updating Facilities by using labs, computers and useful libraries.
  - 11-Government does not abound with modern facilities because of the financial problems and the general carelessness of the responsible authorities.
- \*The future of EL cannot be predicted but can be planned well only if the income (the teacher, Facilities, enviroment) is accurate, the outcome "students' language" will satisfy the aimed objectives.

#### *The Conclusion*

This study examined the difficulties facing the students in elementary schools in learning English as a foreign language .Data was collected from three elementary schools in Hajjah city, also it was collected from academic teachers in Hajjah College. The findings show that there are four main factors that cause such difficulties, which are-

- 1-Curriculum
- 2-Teacher effect
- 3-Enviroment and facilities
- 4-Psychology of the students.

*The Recommendations and Suggested Solutions:-*

In the light of the findings and the analysis of the data of the research, the following recommendations and solutions are suggested, hoping that these points will be taken seriously into account by the concerned authorities:-

1- Curriculum represents the main difficulty facing students in elementary schools, so it is recommended that:-

a- Curriculum should be re-designed and updated and syllabuses should concern with attitude and response as well as the content.

b- Curriculum should be interesting .

c - Curriculum should be in harmony with students' ages.

d - Curriculum should go along with the Yemeni culture and traditions.

e - The technique of using the stories should be used more than it is used now.

f – The grammatical rules should not be given in a dry way; it can be conveyed through some games, puzzles and stories.

g – Generally, a course material which is used in Yemeni society must be designed by Yemeni specialists .

2- Teachers' effect represents the second high difficulty facing the students of elementary school and this effect can be changed from negativity to positivity through :-

a- Teacher should update his style and pedagogical methods and approaches .For example, he can give clear and comprehensible input and instruction.....etc.

b- Teacher should join some training programs to update his knowledge and to improve his style.

c- Using activities is very important, because the fun element creates a desire to communicate and partly because games can create unpredictability.

d- Motivation is an important factor in improving and developing the learners' communicative ability.

e- While dealing with the students in the class, teachers should equalize clever students and non-clever ones, because if they do not do that, they will badly affect the psychology of the low-level students.

f- Translation is a very helpful way especially in this stage .Beginners cannot understand if the teacher keeps speaking English all the time, they will feel frustrated.

g- Teacher has to attach himself directly or indirectly to the students' educational and personal issues, because only then the student will love and trust his teacher and then will receive all the information properly.

h- Teacher has to take care of his outlook, which will create a sort of respect inside the students.

3- Regarding Environment and facilities, they are considered to be the third difficulty facing the students; thus it is recommended that:-

a- Using modern facilities that go along with the current technology can motivate the learners as they enjoy learning EL. For example, using the language laboratory "suitably equipped with computer assisted language learning" "CALL" should be looked upon only as an aid to the mastery of certain specific language skills.

b- EL should be learned through different media instruments.

c- Specialized institutions should participate in improving EL by giving free courses for the needy students under the supervision of the school itself.

4- As for the psychology of the students, this can be regarded as the lowest difficulty that affects the students, so it is recommended that:-

a- the families should encourage their children to learn EL a long with the teacher and other available sources.

b- Verbal and non- verbal encouragement always push the student to improve and double his efforts to acquire the language.

c- The teacher should be flexible in correcting the students errors.

### 5.3- Suggestions:-

Further studies are suggested in the field that is touching a very sensitive area in the system of learning ELT in Yemen. It is suggested that:-

- a- The solutions suggested in this research have to be taken seriously into account.
- b- Designing a new modern curriculum that go along with this digital world.
- c- Supporting schools with the useful modern facilities will definitely contribute in improving the process of learning English.
- d- The Ministry of Education should conduct some training programs to improve the teachers' abilities.
- e- Building a modern and systematic policy that is based on the social, psychological and educational principles is a step that has to be made by qualified Yemeni educators to improve the process of education and learning English.

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**Republic of Yemen**  
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**Sciences**

**Appendix (1):-**

**Department of English**

**Part one:-**

**Closed-ended questionnaire:-**

**A) Questionnaire for the student:-**

**a) Questionnaire for the student about the curriculum**

Express your opinion by choosing one answer for each question

The Questions		Yes	NO
1	Do you think that the curriculum is in harmony with your age?		
2	Does the curriculum go along with traditions of your society ?		
3	( generally)Is the information in your books difficult?		
4	Are the vocabulary difficult for your age?		
5	Are the pictures that included in your books interesting?		
6	Are the enough for you to understand the lesson alone?		
7	Do they need some improvement?		
8	Do you like the stories in your book?		
9	Do you understand the lesson through its story better?		
10	Is it better to have more stories in the curriculum?		
11	Are the questions in workbook easy to be answered by yourself?		

12	Do you prefer that the course and work books join in one book?		
13	Are the grammatical rules difficult for your age?		
14	Do you think that the curriculum needs to be designed by Yemeni specialists?		
15	Do you think the curriculum should include Islamic lesson like prayers with pictures?		
16	Is the cover of your books good ?		
17	Does the cover express Yemen identity?		
18	Do you come out with benefits of learning English for your daily life?		



**b) Questionnaire about the Environment and Facilities***Express your opinion by choosing one answer for each question*

The Questions		Yes	NO
1	Does your society encourage you to learn English ?		
2	Can your parents speak English ?		
3	Do your parents help you in studying English?		
4	Do your elder brothers and sisters like English course?		
5	Do you watch English cartoons?		
6	Do you think that using cassettes in the class is important?		
7	Does your teacher use cassettes in the class?		
8	Do you think English charts should be available in the class?		
9	Do you think learning English is important for your society?		
10	Do you think English will help you to be a good member in the society?		
11	Do you have an English lab in your school?		
12	Do you agree that using computer is important in learning English ?		
13	Are these things ( TV / record / DVD )available in your school to use them in learning English ?		

**c) Questionnaire about the Psychology of the student***Express your opinion by choosing one choice for each statement*

SA = strongly agree    A=agree    DS= disagree

SDS= strongly disagree

The statements		SA	A	DS	SDS
1	English Course is a difficult one				
2	Learning English is important in this time				
3	Most of your surrounded person you from learning English.				
4	The teacher's style affect your performance.				
5	You like your English teacher				
6	The big amount of paying attention in the class increase knowledge				
7	Your frequent absence from English classes affects your learning process.				
8	You count on others " brothers – friends " in doing your homework				
9	You think that you need only some marks to pass English course				
10	Your English class is boring more than other classes				
11	Your teacher says always English course is a difficult one				
12	You have an inner motive " interest " to learn English language				
13	Talking English all the time by the teacher in the class is a frustrating style				
14	You could have the capacity to learn English before 7th class				
15	The method of correcting errors in English affects the student's feeling				

**d) Questionnaire for students about the teacher***Express your opinion by choosing one answer for each question*

The Questions		Yes	NO
1	Do you like your English teacher?		
2	Is there justice in your teacher treatment with all the students?		
3	Does your teacher translate all the time ?		
4	Does he play some games with you?		
5	Does he help you to solve some educational problems?		
6	Does he help you to solve some personal problems?		
7	Do you prefer that your recent teacher will teach another year?		
8	Does he use some facilities other than the board?		
9	Does he chat with you in English kindly?		
10	Does he usually use the stick?		
11	Does he encourage you to do well?		
12	Is your teacher a good-looking person ?		

**Republic of Yemen**  
**Hajjah University**  
**Faculty of Education & Applied**

**Department of English**

**I**  
**I**  
**Sciences**

We would highly appreciate your cooperation in responding to these items for the purpose of conducting a research entitled

**"English Language Learning in Elementary Schools  
 Difficulties & Solutions"**

Your responses will be of a great value and will be kept secret for the research purposes.

**Questionnaire for the teacher about the curriculum**

Express your opinion by choosing one choice for each statement

SA = strongly agree    A=agree    DS= disagree

SDS= strongly disagree

	The statements	SA	A	DS	SDS
1	The curriculum needs to be re-designed.				
2	The lessons need to be re-order.				
3	The vocabulary must be changed into easier ones.				
4	There are some grammatical and spelling errors.				
5	There are some aspects need to be added into this curriculum.				
6	There are some need to be removed.				
7	The lesson's time is not sufficient to explain the lesson.				
8	The lessons' order in the school table is not suitable.				
9	The pictures serve the educational objectives they had been made for.				

10	The curriculum's nature suits to the age of the students.				
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**Republic of Yemen**  
**Hajjah University**  
**Faculty of Education & Applied**

**Appendix(2)**

**Department of English**

**Part two:-**

**open – ended questionnaire :-**

Dear,

We would highly appreciate your cooperation in responding to these questions for the purpose of conducting a research entitled

**"English Language Learning in Elementary Schools  
 Difficulties & Solutions"**

Your responses will be of a great value and will be kept secret for the research purposes.

**a) Interview with doctors and teachers in Hajjah college**

1	From your point of view as an academic teacher , how do you describe the importance of 7 <sup>th</sup> grade for learning English ?
2	As far as you can remember, what were the methods that your 7 <sup>th</sup> English teachers followed ? Compare them of those of today?
3	Regarding facilities, mostly board and chucks were the only tools for teaching English at that time, now what are the changes in these tools?
4	Are there any clear differences between the curriculum you have studied and the one which is taught now?
	a) If " Yes " what are these differences? Do they serve the recent needs of the society?
	b) If " No " is it impossible to have the same curriculum, what are the reasons behind this?
5	Every year, tens of gradulators go out of this college as official teachers, frankly are they qualified enough to teach Yemeni students?
6	Can the social, economical and political environment be the main factors of reducing the level of learning? How ?
7	What are the main psychological factors that may affect the students during their learning?
8	From 1-10 pick a number to evaluate the outcomes of school as level one here? Justify your answer?

9	What are the main problems facing 7 <sup>th</sup> class? Can you suggest some solutions to overcome such problems?
10	English language in Yemen, portray its future?

Dear Instructors/We would highly appreciate your cooperation in responding to these questions for conducting a research entitled

*"English Language Learning in Elementary Schools  
Difficulties & Solutions"*

Your responses will be of a great value and will be kept secret for the research purposes.

**b) Interview with an instructor:-**

1	Honestly, Are there enough qualified English teachers in Hajjah city? Give a rate ?
2	How many times do you supervised in a month?
3	While evaluating , what exactly do you evaluate in a teacher? Do you give the teacher your frank notes and points of criticism? When you visit him again , do you notice an improvement in his/ her performance based on your pre-evaluation ?
4	From your experience , How are students of Hajjah town doing regarding English language ?
5	Do you think that the recent curriculum is suitable for 7 <sup>th</sup> class students ?
6	Do you believe that English language can be taught earlier than 7 <sup>th</sup> class or later than this year?
7	From your point of view , what are the main reasons behind the general hatred toward this course , and what are the proper solution to overcome such problem ?
8	The government , starting with ministry up to the education office here , why they don't abound some modern facilities to join the recent revolution of technology ?
9	Do you give a special care and effort to improve the information based of the 7 <sup>th</sup> class as it's an important base in learning English ?
10	What do you suggest to make this subject attractive to the students ?
11	Finally , how do you evaluate the future of English language in Hajjah in specific and in Yemen in General ?



