CHAPTER THREE
DATA COLLECTION
III DATA COLLECTION

3.1 Variables

Attempting an analysis of errors made by students requires an investigation of the variables affecting the learning /teaching process. Some of these variables are discussed here as being the most important and closely interacting principles within the process. These variables are: (i) Learner autonomy, (ii) Teacher`s role and (iii) Teaching materials.

3.1.1 Learner Autonomy

3.1.1.1 What is autonomy?

Learner autonomy is a key concept in modern teaching theory. Holec (Gardner and Miller, 2003) first introduced it in 1981, who was then, regarded as the father of this concept. It has many definitions which focus on learners and learning, for instance, autonomy “is the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (Holec 1981:3, cited in Gardner and Miller 2003:6) ,and “Autonomy is a situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all the decisions concerned with his [or her] learning and

However, Gardner and Miller (2003) claim that ‘autonomy’, as a term, is difficult to be defined for three reasons. “First, different terms have defined the concept in different ways. Second, they are areas of ongoing debate and therefore, definitions are continuing to mature as more discussions take place. Third, these concepts have developed independently in different geographical areas and therefore they have been defined using different (but similar) terminology” (Gardner and Miller 2003:5).

As a concept, learner autonomy involves ideas such as:

- the teacher becoming less of an interest and more of facilitator;
- discouraging students from relying on the teacher as the main source of knowledge;
- encouraging student’s capacity to learn for themselves;
- encouraging students to make decisions about their learning;
- encouraging students’ awareness of their own learning styles;
- encouraging student to develop their own learning strategies. (McMillan dictionary)

3.1.1.2 Interpretation

There are different basis for examining different interpretations of autonomy provided by Benson (1996 cited in Sinclair 1997): individual, political, social and psychological. Barbara Sinclair (1997) clarifies this interpretation saying; “individual autonomy stresses individual learning style and preference, social autonomy recognizes that learning takes place through interaction and collaboration, as well as through individual reflection and experimentation. A psychological view of autonomy focuses on the importance of the psychological or ‘internal’ capacities of the learner, such as cognitive and learning styles, motivation, attitude, aptitude and so on. There is a focus on the learners’ responsibility for their own success or failure in learning.” (Sinclair, 1997:1).

Political autonomy was seen by the council of Europe as one of those educational innovations which insist on: “…the need to develop the individual’s freedom by developing those abilities which will enable him to act more responsibily in running

Sinclair (1997) points out that, raising cultural, social and political awareness in learners by strangers from different cultural background is not desired. Introduction of autonomy without first becoming aware of the social, cultural and political context of learning may lead, as asserted by Pennycook (1997, cited in Sinclair 1997), to inappropriate pedagogies and at its worst to cultural imposition. Hence, to avoid such crises it is preferable to train local teachers for such new pedagogical missions aiding them with modified universal concepts, for instance autonomy, in order to suit their learners.

3.1.1.3 Importance and need

Learners should be empowered by autonomy to gain life long influencing education. They have to be trained for self- access learning (Gardner and Miller, 2003). Learners in the process of becoming autonomous need a teacher (Aoki, 2002). Learners need strategies, which ensure that the learner gets the maximum benefit from all the language they meet in and, more importantly, outside the formal
teaching situation (Lewis, 2001). If learners have self-autonomy, they would make the best of what is given in an academic situation (Shaughnessy, 1977).

Little and Dam (1998) related autonomy and learning with freedom from self that is the capacity to transcend the limitations of personal heritage. They claim that development of autonomy empowers the individual learner both educationally and linguistically (ibid). They have an optimistic view of autonomous learning; “human beings have a tendency to strive after autonomy within the limits imposed by their inescapable interdependence.” (ibid). For them, a human being in spite of being faced with his own limitations, is not to stop attempting being autonomous.


Trim (1988, cited in McCarthy, 1999) justifies the rabid focus on continuous search for learner autonomy saying, “No school or even university can provide its pupils
with all the knowledge and the skills they will need in their active adult lives. It is more important for a young person to have an understanding of himself or herself, an awareness of the environment and its workings, and to have learned how to think and how to learn.” (Trim 1988:3, cited in McCarthy, 1999).

Learners’ language autonomous learning is partially connected with training. For McCarthy (1999), training in certain explicit areas can broaden the horizon of the learners and empower them to become autonomous in language.

3.1.1.4 The shift to learner-centered education

The emergence of Self-Access highlights the crucial shift in pedagogical theory, research and practice from teaching language to learning language. The whole educational system is built around learners. However, some approaches emphasize the central position a learner occupies in the educational system, other approaches suggest different variables, such as materials, methods and techniques. In fact, variables in the educational system, could be replaced with various alternatives in every pedagogical development attempted, so far, but never could heighten the learner’s central position.
Autonomy as a concept is not to be obtained by telling learners to become autonomous. Actually, for this process to become possibly successful there must be a catalyst helping the shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered education to happen. Thanasaulas (2000) has a reasonable belief that, a concatenation of changes to the currently used curriculum towards a more learner-centered kind of learning is a must to bring the desired shift into existence.

It is essential for all the workers in the educational field to recognize and be aware of this shift. Gardner and Miller (2003) emphasize the importance of sharing such awareness with learners too. In the new pedagogical view, the learner is given an active role generating ideas and availing himself of learning opportunities, rather than reacting to various stimuli of the teacher (Boud, 1988; Kohonen, 1992; Knowles, 1975, cited in Thanasaulas, 2000).

3.1.1.5 Goal

Learner autonomy is universally accepted as an important and general educational goal. The main objectives, intended for by introducing learner autonomy are to have students who are encouraged to take responsibility of their own work, by being given some control over what, how and when the learners are more likely to be able
to set realistic goals, plans, programmes of work, develop strategies for coping with new and unforeseen situations, educate and assess their own work generally, to learn how to learn from their own success and failure in ways which will help them to be more efficient learners in the future.” (McGarry 1995:1 cited in McCarthy, 1: 1999).

The aim of teaching languages is to make the learners achieve the native speaker’s communicative competence. This level is achieved by advanced learners who have the ability to deploy a wide range of lexical chunks accurately and appropriately according to Thornbury (2002) (cited in Williams, 2003). Advanced learners, mostly, show interest in learning more collocation because they can observe the improvement in their ability to speak and write more completed ideas (Lewis 2001). They can easily acquire the required satisfaction and motivation to become autonomous.

A learner can be considered autonomous if he has the “capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making, and independent action” (Little, 1991:4, cited in Thanasaulas, 2000). There are additional conditions to consider some one as an autonomous learner such as independently choosing aims and purposes and setting goals; choosing materials, methods and tasks; exercising choice and purpose in organizing and carrying out the chosen tasks; and choosing criteria for evaluation.
The learner should use the freedom granted by this concept in an active and effective way.

Pushing learners to evaluate every thing involved in the process motivates them to detect the failures to seek change. Therefore, it is useful to provide learners with convincing information about a situation because they tend to re-examine their evaluation about it and revise or change it completely (Wenden, 1998, cites in Thanasaualas, 2000).

Autonomy is considered successful when certain points are satisfied such as becoming aware of and able to identify one’s strategies, needs, and goals as a learner and having the opportunity to reconsider and refashion the approaches and procedures for optimal learning (Thanasaulas, 2000).

“Knowledge lies everywhere at hand for those who observe and think.” (Holyoake1892, vol.1.p4, cited in Thanasaulas, 2000). To come out with such a person is the ultimate goal of all the efforts and searches done in the field of learner autonomy. In fact, if these goals are achieved then the process can be judged successful.
3.1.1.6 Traditional vs modern classroom

Dam et al (1990, cited in Gardner and Miller, 2003) refer to the classroom as a social environment that can estimate the level of autonomous learning in addition to previous knowledge and experience. For them an autonomous learner is “an active participant in the social process of classroom learning…. an active interpreter of new information in terms of what he/she already and uniquely know….someone who knows how to learn and can use this knowledge in any learning situation she/he encounter at any stage in her/his life.” (Dam et al, 1990:120, cited in Gardner and Miller, 2003:6).

Many scholars have questioned the limited types of activities that used to take place in the traditional classrooms. Ellis criticizes such classrooms for “offering only limited opportunities for the kind of production that facilitates acquisition” (Ellis, 1999).

McCarthy (1995, cited in McCarthy, 1999) blames the present school education for promoting dependency among the majority of the students leaving them ill-equipped to apply their school-learnt knowledge and skills to the world beyond the classroom.
Out-class experience can be an input and an output of autonomous learning. Little and Dam (1998) consider autonomy in a general behavioral sense as one of the obligatory outcomes of the developmental and experiential learning. Therefore, to help developing learner autonomy, teacher should seek the support from the world outside the classroom. Institutes are being judged as providers not imposers of learning opportunities (Gardner and Miller, 2003).

Several recent technological developments have helped encourage greater learner autonomy. CD-ROM’s are available for complete language course or as supplementary material for textbooks. Through the internet, students can take self-access or distance learning language courses. Many schools and universities have their own internet to complement traditional courses. These developments will, probably, never completely replace classroom and the teacher, but are, already, dramatically changing the role of teachers.

3.1.1.7 Awareness

Little and Dam (1998) raise an important point that, learners cannot accept responsibility for their own learning unless they have some idea of what, why, and
how they are trying to learn. Learning must include the monitoring and evaluating the achievements of their learning.

Learners need to know and become more aware of their central role in the decision making process. They have to be trained to be incorporated into self-access materials, activities, counseling and classroom work rather than becoming a stand alone of instructional activities (Gardner and Miller 2003).

To achieve the best result of autonomy, learners should be aware of self-access which leads to becoming autonomous learner. They should know how it is different from other concepts and why it is useful to be involved in it (Gardner and Miller 2003). In fact, they have to be trained to find out how to learn because this improves the effectiveness of learning which is part and parcel of autonomy (McCarthy, 1999).

To accelerate this process, all the components should be in tune with the goal and the final destination, the specific expected contraption, and the type of relation that bounds them in a particular period.
When the learners are not aware of their learning strategies, goals and outcomes, they “will be trapped in their old patterns of beliefs and behaviors and never be fully autonomous” (Wenden, 1998: 90, cited in Thanasaulas, 2000).

3.1.1.8 Training

McCarthy (1999) shed light on the practical aim of relating learner training with learner autonomy. For him the importance of training lies in improving the effectiveness of the students’ learning while studying a course and more importantly their continued learning after the course (McCarthy, 1999).

McCarthy (1999) drags the attention to the word ‘capacity’ in some definition and discussion of learner autonomy like the one given by Little (1991), learner autonomy is “a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making, and independent action” (Little 1991:4, cited in McCarthy, 1999). He regards capacity as a general term, which has a general feature that grows with practice, or gets lost by inactivity.

What becomes clear here is that Yemeni teachers are in need of specific training to fulfill the need of the shift to learner-centered curriculum. In addition, Yemeni
learners’ autonomy requires a focused study to identify the characteristics of their learning and their level of autonomy.

A logical scale to evaluate the success of the process of developing learner autonomy is to compare the learners’ performance before and after. Ellis (1999) puts it clearly that the successful treatment is the one that makes learners able to produce the correct forms of language autonomously when they were not able to do so before.

3.1.1.9 Individualization

Achieving learner autonomy differs in the degree and power; some learners are more successful than their peers are. Little (1990) related autonomy to other principles like personal psychology stating that autonomy is “essentially a matter of learner’s psychological relation to the process and content of learning” (Little 1990, cited in Gardner and Miller 2003). The development of autonomy becomes a direct or indirect outcome of this relationship. Holmen (1985, cited in Ellis, 1999) recognizes the effect of personality on learners’ relationship with their teachers, performance and activities.
It is essential to “help the learner to become aware of and identify the strategies that they already use or could potentially use” (Holmes and Ramos, 1991:198, cited in Thanasaulas, 2000).

Treating autonomy as a process implies accepting the assumption presented by Tumposky (1982, cited in Thanasaulas, 2000) that individual learners being different in aspects like their language habits, interests, needs, and motivation, may rate differently in developing various degrees of independence through their lives. As a result, according to individual circumstances, the process of becoming autonomous may turn out to be different in different conditions: either slows down and takes longer time, sticks at a certain stage and gets fossilized, or may continue progressing successfully.

Learner’s selection of certain learning strategies “may partly reflect personal preference rather than innate endowment.” (Skehan, 1999:237, cited in Thanasaulas, 2000). The diversity of learning strategies selected by learners can be understood as an expected product of individualization.
Nunan (1997 cited in Gardner and Miller 2003) proposes that there is no fully autonomous learner but there are degrees of autonomy due to differences in personality, goal, institutional philosophy and cultural context.

3.1.1.10 Autonomy as a process

When taking autonomy as a process it becomes a means not a goal by itself as pointed by Thanasaulas (2000); “it is of consequence to note that autonomy is a process not a product. One does not become autonomous; one only works towards autonomy”. For him autonomy is a process which is not a static product or a state that is reached once and for all, it is an active and dynamic process. He presents learning as the result of the learners’ self-initiated interaction with the world, hence, the learner is regarded as the generator of the process. Moreover, autonomy is a long-term process, which must stretch over the different levels and stages in the educational systems.

3.1.1.11 Aspects of Autonomy

Sinclair (1997) observes an agreement among researchers and practitioners on certain aspects of autonomy. She sums up these aspects as:
1. “Autonomy involves a learner’s capacity and willingness to take responsibility for making decisions about their own learning;

2. The capacity and willingness to take such responsibility are not necessarily innate;

3. There are degrees of autonomy;

4. These degrees of autonomy are unstable and variable;

5. Developing autonomy requires conscious awareness of the learning process, i.e., conscious reflection and decision making;

6. There is a role for the teacher in supporting the requisite capacity building and development of positive attitudes for learner autonomy;

7. Autonomy can take places both inside and outside the classroom;

8. Autonomy has both individual and social dimension;

9. The promotion of learner autonomy has both psychological and political dimension;

10. Different cultures interpret autonomy in different ways; different teaching and learning contexts require different approaches to the promotion of learner autonomy.” (Sinclair, 1997)
3.1.1.12 Factors Influencing Autonomy

Some researchers (Benson and Voller, 1997, Candy, 1991, cited in Thanasaulas) introduce learning as a two-side activity in which cognitive acts interrelate to other aspects such as affect and desire to learn. Learners’ relation to the process has a psychological dimension that it is “essentially a matter of learner’s psychological relation to the process and content of learning” (Little, 1991:4, cited in Thanasaulas, 2000).

Attitude and motivation are expected to contribute in shaping the learners’ performance. Wenden (1998) defines attitude as “learned motivation, valued beliefs, evaluations, what one believes is acceptable, or responses oriented towards approaching or avoiding” (Wenden, 1998:52, cited in Thanasaulas, 2000).

Motivation is comprised of three components: “desire to achieve a goal, effort extended in this direction, and satisfaction with the task” (Gardner and McIntryre, 1993:3, cited in Thanasaulas, 2000). According to this definition, willingness and desire are the igniters of the whole process. When there is a motive to start a learning activity, the related events follow without doubt.
Motivation and attitude are associated with the concept of self-esteem which is defined as "the evaluation the learner makes of her self with regard to the target language or learning in general" (Thanasaulas, 2000). Actually, Learners with self-esteem can survive negative assessments and comments by others while lack of self-esteem is likely to lead to negative attitudes and low self-assessment as incapable of learning.

Learning strategies are defined as "the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information" (O’Malley and Chamot, 1990:1, cited in Cook, 1993, cited in Thanasaulas, 2000). In addition, they are the "mental steps or operations that learners use to learn a new language and to regulate their efforts to do so (Wenden, 1998:18, cited in Thanasaulas, 2000). Even well motivated learners can make little progress if not equipped with the suitable strategies.

Motivation, self-esteem, attitude are usually regarded as the integrated factor that may enhance, or even militate against, the learner’s willingness to take charge of her own learning and her confidence in her ability as a learner” (Thanasaulas, 2000).
Thanasaulas (2000), among other researchers, believes that, changing some of the learners’ negative beliefs and attitudes is bound to facilitate learning. If teachers are interested in learner autonomy, their students are likely to be so (Gardner and Miller, 2003).

Gardner and Miller (2003) suggest four factors that influence the learners’ attitudes towards self-access, which are their teachers, their educational institution, their peers and society. These factors need to experience changes in role (Gardner and Miller, 2003). Introducing these factors per se is not to make the change researchers looking for; it is the vision behind the new space given for each factor and their active interaction techniques, which give hope for the desired change.

3.1.1.13 How to become autonomous?

If learners do not accept the idea of shifting the teacher and student responsibilities in order to change the traditional classroom situations, they may negatively affect and nullify the efforts paid to make the process of autonomy learning develop. Dornyei (1998, cited in Thanasaulas, 2000) supposes that, motivation is “one of the key factors that influence the rate and success of second [or foreign] language (L.2) learning. Motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the L2 and
later to sustain the long and often tedious learning process (Dornyei, 1998, cited in Thanasaulas, 2000).

Actually, learners self-repair may be more effective and more conducive for acquisition than other-repair (Van Lier, 1988, cited in Ellis, 1999). It is only when learners are ready to identify and face their shortcomings, and to take responsibility of self-repair that autonomy is moving in the right mode.

Lewis (2001) emphasizes that, part of teaching collocation is building the students’ ability to use available resources when producing language, and to have the tool to discover the collocations on their own. The students gain better results when they become involved in the process of becoming aware of and identifying lexical phrases, processing them orally or in writing, distinguishing between high frequency and low-frequency lexical items (Kavaliauskienė and Janulevièienë, 2001). Being able to notice and use collocation and to use language correctly is a considerable step towards learner autonomy.
3.1.2 Teacher’s role

Teacher’s role is one of the most important variables of the learning/teaching process. Too dominating a teacher at the one end and too liberal teacher at the other are equally undesirable. S/he is expected to adopt the teaching strategies to the changing needs of the learners. While conducting some activities in the classroom, the teacher has to be sensitive to the response of the students. While correcting the students, the teacher has to ensure that there is no negative impact on the students. S/he also has to bear in mind that different learners may react differently to the language structure or item which is being corrected.

Krashen (1982, cited in Ellis, 1999)) reveals some bad reactions affecting the acquisition of language like the learners may become defensive and prove to avoid difficult structures and to focus on form rather than on meaning. Holmen (1985, cited in Ellis, 1999) observed that, teacher-centered classrooms encourage learners that are more passive.

The rate and the portion of talks and activities when balanced and exchanged by teachers and learners lead to successful acquisition. Politzer, Ramirez and Lewis
(1981, cited in Ellis, 1999) find out that the least is the teachers’ talk in a classroom the more successful it is.

Teachers have to introduce language to learners and help them develop and produce language. However, this is not their only role; they give the feed back on the performance of their students and react properly to the errors.

The formal classroom and teacher assistance are justified by Little and Dam (1998) as a requirement of the process of developing autonomy. They believe that, as social creatures, we necessarily depend on others even as we exercise our independence in formal learning.

Thnasaulas (2000) opposes the convention that presents autonomy learning as a ‘teacherless learning’. For him, teachers are expected to provide learners with the opportunity to experiment, make hypothesis, and improvise in their attempt to master the target language and along with it to learn how to learn in their own way.

Eventually, he sums up the need for a teacher in the process of autonomy learning saying, “There has to be a teacher who will adopt resources, materials and methods to the learner’s needs and even abandon all of this if needed”.

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Learners need a helping hand to manage going through the process and teachers are the best helping hand. Satisfying such a condition, the teacher himself should be autonomous, to be able to observe and act freely.

Teachers should not take their previous personal knowledge and experience for granted. They need to learn and get suitable training on the new skills and techniques to take on their new role (Gardner and Miller, 2003).

The emphasis in current foreign/second language acquisition studies is on teachers as active participants or initiators (de Andres, 2002). How teachers view and practice teaching definitely affects learners performance.

Prompting autonomy is the central role of teachers (McCarthy, 1999). By shifting to a more learner-centered education, teacher’s role is expected to undergo some changes but not making teachers become redundant. Many researchers emphasized the vital role of teachers though they agree with giving them a different position and role in the new vision of learning.

In the Lexical Approach, teachers are expected to make the first step in the teaching/learning process by training their students to redirect their priorities. In addition, the
teacher has the responsibility to direct the learners’ attention to the most useful collocations they meet in texts and to convince them that they do not know a word until they know how it operates with other words and contexts (Conzett, 2001). They should make their students aware of the fact that each field has its frequently used collocations (Henry, 2001). With the help of teachers, learners should be aware of the lexical nature of language to develop an understanding of the kind of chunks found in the texts they met and the kind of the prefabricated groups of words, which are the prerequisite of fluency (Lewis, 2001).

3.1.3 Teaching Materials:

Teaching materials have a strong effect on the teaching/learning process. They are essential participants in classroom whatever the form they are presented in. Michael Hoey (2001) discussed some types of materials used for teaching English. He suggests using materials, which enhance the learners’ vocabulary so that they learn not just the meaning of words but the environments they occur in.

The function assigned to textbooks is to work as the “script of learning process that teacher seek to enact with their learner” (Little and Dam, 1998). It is not easy to prepare or adapt materials for teaching. Course designers should take into account
the nature of learners, context of learning, and purpose of learning beside the language items. In fact, learners should find it easy to use the material with little help of the instructor. In addition, materials should resample and act as a guide to other sources.

If learners can move from one step to the other smoothly, the text can be regarded of a good quality. In the contexts where materials, usually, form the main source of the foreign language, they have to be well prepared to provide the maximum help for the learners.

Usually, texts are simplified and graded to meet the need and suit the level of the students. Doing this requires special skills and enough knowledge of the learners’ abilities and background.

Little and Dam (1998) treat textbooks as a physical projection of the objectives and the different stages of learning. Learners have to take and deal with the textbooks even if they do not meet their individual interests and needs, affective factors and motivation. This is regarded as a drawback in most prescribed materials.
A valid replacement of teaching materials has not been offered yet. All the alternatives available, up to now, have their own limitations and drawbacks and unable to satisfy the broad objectives of learning.

Materials may function as a source of errors when they are poorly graded (Richard, 1984). They may include incomplete language principles, invalid inputs, and vague explanations. Moreover, they may help in developing inappropriate learning strategies. Many defects in the gradation may not be noticeable to the textbook designers and teachers when the work is in process. After that, they start using the textbooks with the intention to extend the maximum help to the students. Unfortunately, the results may be frustrating and the errors may be irreparable after being absorbed in the learners’ interlanguage.

McCarthy (1999) regards authentic texts and experience as the richest source of language. To examine the contribution an authentic text can make there are two areas of major concern “a) the matching of language learning opportunities to the needs and interests of individual students, and b) the creation of the conditions under which students can most successfully exploit the opportunities” (McGarry, 1995:3, cited in McCarthy, 1999).
3.2 The Test

3.2.1 The Objectives of the Test

The tests given to the students have the general objective to evaluate the students' language at certain levels in their education. There have been three tests, the first and the second were achievement tests (given by the course teachers, not the researcher). The first test was at the end of ‘Writing Skills 4’, a course administrated in second semester, second year. The second test was for ‘Advanced Writing Skills’ – administrated in second semester, third year. These tests were selected for their position in the teaching process and their relevance to writing skills. The specific objectives stated for these tests are:

1. observing errors in using collocations in written texts,
2. studying the effect of these errors on the syntax of those texts,
3. studying the effect of these errors on the coherence of those texts, and
4. observing if there is an improvement in the performance of the students in the second test compared to the first.

The third is a proficiency test, administrated by the researcher in the second semester, fourth year. It consists of four tasks. The objectives of these tasks are;
1. task 1, to observe the same (first three) points tested in the first and second tests,
2. tasks 2, to observe the students ability to identify and use free and semi-fixed collocations,
3. task 3, to observe the students ability to identify and use words with similar dictionary meanings but different collocations,
4. task 4, to observe the students ability to identify and use semi-fixed and fixed collocations, and
5. generally, to observe if there is an improvement in the performance of the students in the last test compared to the first and second

Tasks 2, 3, and 4 are given as attempts to check the use of the types of collocations, which are expected to be avoided by students in their compositions in, task one.

3.2.2 The Elements Tested

Function and content words are included in the study according to the classification of collocation into lexical collocation and grammatical collocation. Content words are taken to be nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs.
As function word can be classified into further sub-word classes in many ways, this study, adapts Trask’s classification. He gives a definition which differs from the traditional labeling of parts of speech. He notes that traditional grammarians used to include two groups of words under conjunctions - ‘subordinators’ as being the ‘subordinating conjunctions’ and ‘complementizers’. These two groups of words behave very differently from conjunctions; therefore, modern grammarians place them in different classes by themselves (Trask, 2004). However, some researchers such as Rasenbaum (1967, cited in the Wikipedia) and Berk (1999) treat subordinators and complementizers as being alternative terms identifying the same group of words in the classifications they provide.

The study adapts the following classification of function words:

1. conjunctions,
2. complementizers,
3. subordinators;
   a. adverbial clauses
   b. concessive and contrastive
   c. that-clauses
   d. wh-nominal clauses
   e. adjuncts and conjuncts
These terms are used in this study in a close sense to the following definitions;

Conjunctions:
“...The part of speech which includes words like and and or. Today the label conjunction is normally applied to a very small group of words, chiefly and and or, which were traditionally called the coordinating conjunctions. Most usually, a conjunction conjoins two or more instances of the same category.” (Trask, 2004:50).

Subordination:
is “any type of sentence structure in which one clause forms part of a larger clause. The recognition of subordination is ancient in our grammatical tradition, and any clause, which is part of a larger one, is a subordinate clause.” (Trask, 2004:299).

Adverbial clause:
“...Behaves like an adverb within its sentence and must be introduced by a suitable marker of subordination”. (Trask, 2004:299).
Complementizers:

"The items that and whether which introduce complement clauses, are assigned to a part of speech called complementizers. (Traditional grammarians called them conjunctions, but we no longer do so.)" (Trask, 2004:47).

Here is a list of the function words included in the study;

and, or, but, that, for, because, so, to, as, though, despite, before, after, while, hence, least, more, much, less, soon, then, yet, there, here, up, down, any, well, quickly, often, never, sometimes, twice, occasionally, always, very, too, rather, quite, hardly, but, since, like, with, only, if, unless, still, until, till when, where, who, how, why, which, ever, even, what, how, by, at, in, from, of, on, out, though, without, about, under, across, along, around, behind, between, beyond, inside, outside, during, against, from, whatever, whenever, wherever, however, whoever, whether, whomsoever, whosesoever, wheresoever, howsoever, whereas, ever since, now and then, even though, provided that, as if, as though, so that, so far, in spite of, either or, neither...nor, though...yet, whether...or, not only...but also, so...that, both...and, no sooner...than, as...as, as well as, for the sake of, because of, on behalf of, in case of, in place of, instead of, on account of, owing to, due to, with a view to, with regard to, with reference to, by dint of, in consequence...
of, consequent to, consequent upon, in the event of, by reason of, by way of, in favour of, by means of, in addition to, in order to and as a result of.

For function words, the point is not what class a word belongs to; it is how that word is being used in a collocation. The aim of naming some classes under function words is to facilitate making lists for deeper investigation not for categorization per se. Hence, any word identified as a conjunction, subordinator, or complementizer is automatically included.

3.2.3 Test items

The test items are presented according to the level and the department of English in each faculty of education selected for the study.

3.2.3.1 First Test:

The students have to appear for the achievement tests at the end of each semester. ‘Writing Skills 4’ paper, second semester, second year has been selected for the first test in this study. The selected items of this paper are:

a- Hodeidah
1. using the techniques of cause and effect, write a paragraph on either of the following:
   a) Why you want to visit India.
   b) What is the importance of Hodeidah as a port?

2. Using the techniques of comparison and contrast, write a paragraph on your father and uncle.

b- Zabid

Build a brief newspaper report and a story from the following telegram received by newspaper office.

Child stolen - maternity hospital - impersonating nurse disappears - mother phoned police - police investigating.

3.2.3.2 Second Test:

For this test, ‘Advanced Writing Skills’ paper, second semester, second year has been selected. The test items are:
a- Hodeidah

Complete each of the following words/phrases. Your completion must be meaningful and logical.

1. Because of ..............................
2. Actually, today's life .........................
3. The tea is too hot ...........................
4. She looks as pure as ..........................
5. He is neither single .........................
6. Arrangement of ideas ..........................
7. Although it was raining, ......................
8. You can either write .......................  
9. The weather was so attractive that ............
10. I am a hardworking boy but ................

b- Zabid

1. Write a paragraph of about 150 words each in length on either of the following:
   
   a. Honesty is the best policy.
   
   b. Rome was not built in a day.

2. Write an essay of about 250 words on the following subject:

   Women in Yemen –past and present.
3.2.3.3 Third Test:

This is a diagnostic test. It is not part of any subject. It consists of four different questions (some items are collected from Nodell (2000), Jayakaran (2004), Radford (2004) and Lewis (2001)). The same paper has been given to both the tested groups. The tasks are:

1) Write an essay on ONE of the following topics (write about 200 words).
   a - Today’s College students and their attitude towards serious issues in life.
   b- Using the internet as a new lifestyle marker.
   c- Some days off classes can be helpful for better thinking and performance.

2) The first part of each sentence in LIST 1 can be completed with all the examples in one of the groups of endings given in LIST 2. Write the matching number and letter to form the best possible sentence, use each one of them only once.

   Number one is done for you as an example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIST 1</th>
<th>LIST 2</th>
<th>ANSWERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’m waiting</td>
<td>a) -to concentrate.</td>
<td>1 + d</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
-to understand it but I can't.
-to remember where I put them.

2. I'm trying

b) quite pleased with myself.
-a bit off colour.
-more confident than I did.

3. I'm wondering

c) you a promise.
-long clear messages.
-completely free service.

4. I'm feeling

d) for things to get better.
-but don't be late.
-for my friends.

5. I'm doing

e) what I can do about it.
-nothing yet.
-the best I can

6. I'm giving

f) a big mistake.
- a lot of money.
- the final calculation.

7. I'm making
   g)- my son's birth day.
   - the success of your project.
   - the anniversary of my office.

8. I'm paying
   h)- what we can do about it.
   - if it will make any difference.
   - if any one else knows yet.

9. I'm dressing
   i)- five copies of this issue.
   - enough details.
   - healthy food.

10. I'm leading
    j)- the small child's wound.
    - the cake I made.
    - her hair in a new style.

11. I'm providing
    k)- a quiet life.

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- you to success.
- a cooperative group.

12. I’m celebrating

1) the whole bill.
2) some of the debts.
3) all the expenses.

3) Complete the following with the appropriate form of speak, talk, say, tell. The first one is done for you.

1. Did you enjoy your trip? You must tell us all about it.
2. If I may .........., so , that doesn’t sound a very good idea to me.
3. She gets very lonely since her husband died. She has nobody to .... to, you see.
4. I can’t .........., for any one else, but I think it’s a good idea.
5. If you think it would help, you know you can .......... to me about it at any time.
6. It’s still a secret, you know. I hope you didn’t ........... any thing to any body.
7. Could you .......... the time please.
8. He .......... about football all the time. It gets very boring.
9. Shshsh! Don’t .......... . We don’t want to wake the baby.
4) State whether the underlined words in the sentences are acceptable or not (write acceptable for acceptable sentences and not acceptable for unacceptable sentences) then replace the unacceptable underlined words with acceptable ones. The first one is done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentences</th>
<th>Replacement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I hate them that young people smoke. (not acceptable) it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It’s up with you. ( ) ..................................................................</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Look at it from my line of view. ( ) ........................................</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I go fishing as often if I can. ( ) ............................................</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Have your time-there’s no hurry. ( ) ............................................</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Sorry, I didn’t take that. Could you repeat it please? ( ) ............</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. He was anxious for nobody to leave. ( ) .................................</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Her notion is silly that children will eat only what they need. ( ) ....</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I was looking for a yellow belt but I found one. ( ) ...................</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. That Habiba had earned that scholarship pleased every one.( ) .......</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The theory which the world is flat has been disproved. ( ) ............</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Media wondered whether the doctor was there. ( ) .................</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I have known her even since she was a child. ( ) ...................</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. John asked if the lunch was ready. ( ) .................................</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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15. She worked hard, even though they were paying her very little. 

16. He didn’t smile until he saw the results. 

17. You can get to the town with taking the next bus. 

18. No matter what hard I study, I can’t master statistics. 

19. As a matter of reality, my father is under transfer now. 

20. This kind of dress is not of date. 

21. The host received us with open hands. 

22. When this man makes any proposal, read between 
   the words; don’t say ‘yes’ immediately. 

3.2.4 The questionnaire:

The questionnaire consists of 12 inquiries regarding the students’ background. The 
main points are about personal information, domain of education in school 
education, tuitions and self-assessment. The items are:

1. Full name: 

2. Age: 

3. Sex:  □ Male □ Female 

4. Place where you were brought up:  □ village □ city
5. You started studying English  

☐ before elementary school (before stage 1)  
☐ at elementary school (at stage 1)  
☐ at preparatory school (at stage 7).

6. You finished your basic school in a .....  

☐ village ☐ city

7. You finished your secondary school in a .....  

☐ village ☐ city

8. Did you join any English courses in institutions other than the regular school classes?  

☐ yes ☐ no

9. If your answer to 8 is YES, was it  

☐ while studying at school  
☐ before joining college  
☐ while studying in college

10. Did you join any English tuition with tutors other than the regular school classes?  

☐ yes ☐ no

11. If your answer to 10 is YES, was it  

☐ every year ☐ sometimes ☐ for the Secondary National Examination
12. Do you think you --------

☐ are qualified and ready to teach
☐ need some extra training regarding your language
☐ need some extra training regarding teaching skills
☐ are not qualified and not ready to teach

3.2.5 Administration of the Tests and the Questionnaire:

The tests were given to five scholars for checking. One of these scholars is a Yemeni who works in the same university where the test has been administrated. The advantage of selecting this scholar is that he knows the background of the informants, setting, teachers, materials and environment of the study. His valuable comments have been taken into account.

Permission was been obtained from the administrative authorities, deans, head of departments and the concerned teachers.

The first and the second tests, being achievement tests, were administrated in the regular timing according to the rules of the colleges (the researcher played no role at this stage). The answer sheets were photocopied and handed to the researcher later.
The researcher, with the help of some colleagues, administrated the third test. The researcher used a lecture time (2 hours) and place without informing the students in advance. The questionnaire was attached to the question paper.

3.3 The population

The informant’s present educational details were collected using the questionnaire distributed along with the last test. The total number of the population was 117. They were 77 students from the Department of English, Faculty of Education, Hodeidah, Hodeidah University and 40 from the Department of English, Faculty of Education, Zabid, Hodeidah University.

The distribution of the students, as shown in table 1+2 at the following page, was as follows:

The subjects were the students from the fourth year of the degree course. 86.7 % of the subjects from Faculty of Education, Hodeidah and 87.5 % from Faculty of Education, Zabid belong to the age group of 20-25. 12 students (30 % of 40) from Zabid and 46 students (59.7% of 77) from Hodeidah were females. This also indicates that the number of female students is more in the urban areas compared to
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>ITEMS</th>
<th>OPTIONS</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
<th>NO RESPONSE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>20-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>61</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Place where you were brought up</td>
<td>Village</td>
<td>city</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>98.7%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>You started studying English</td>
<td>before stage 1</td>
<td>at stage 1</td>
<td>at stage 7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>83.1%</td>
<td>98.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>You finished your basic school in</td>
<td>village</td>
<td>city</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>You finished your secondary school in</td>
<td>village</td>
<td>city</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Did you join any English courses in institutions other than the regular school classes?</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>IF 8 is yes, was it</td>
<td>while studying at school</td>
<td>before joining college</td>
<td>while studying in college</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Did you join any English tuitions with tutors other than the regular school classes?</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>89.6%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>IF 10 is yes, was it</td>
<td>every year</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>for Sec. National Exam</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Do you think you are qualified</td>
<td>need language training</td>
<td>need extra teaching skills</td>
<td>are not qualified</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>79.9%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (1)
General Questionnaire- Faculty of Education, Hodeidah

81
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>ITEMS</th>
<th>OPTIONS</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
<th>NO RESPONSE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>female</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Place where you were brought up</td>
<td>village</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>city</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>You started studying English</td>
<td>before stage 1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>at stage 1</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>at stage 2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>You finished your basic school in</td>
<td>village</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>city</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>You finished your secondary school in</td>
<td>village</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>city</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Did you join any English courses in institutions other than the regular school classes?</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>IF 8 is yes, was it</td>
<td>while studying at school</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>before joining college</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>while studying in college</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Did you join any English tuitions with tutors other than the regular school classes?</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>IF 10 is yes, was it</td>
<td>for Sec. National Exam</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>every year</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Do you think you are qualified</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>need extra long training</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>need extra teaching skills</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>are not qualified</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (2)
General Questionnaire-Faculty of Education, Zabid
that in the rural areas. A large number of the students were brought up in villages; about 46.8% of the students in Hodeidah and 62.5 % of Zabid. It is also observed that at the successive stages of education an increasing number of students head to the city for education, 40 % of Zabid college students finished their basic school in the city and the number increases to 45 % in the secondary school. The entire students population can speak and write classical Arabic but they use their regional colloquial Arabic for daily informal communication. Coming from different villages with different varieties of Arabic suggests a larger variety of mother tongue interference to be expected in their performance.

Searching for complementary support in learning English from sources other than the formal institutions is clearly identified in the rural area. About 37.5% of Zabid students joined courses outside the regular institutes and 42.5 % joined private tuitions while 28.6 % joined courses outside the regular institutes and 22.1 % joined private tuitions in Hodeidah before joining college. This may reflect a common belief that their pre-college education is not up to the mark and that unless a student attends the courses or takes tuitions outside the regular institutes s/he would not get the desired results. Zabid students continued the additional classes even after joining
the English Department. This may imply that they are not satisfied with their achievements.

Being qualified graduates and ready to teach, 29.9% in Hodeidah and 47.5% in Zabid judged themselves as qualified to teach. About 65% of Hodeidah students and 52.5% of Zabid students admitted the need for more training regarding language and teaching skills. None of Zabid students found himself/herself as not qualified when only 2.6% of Hodeidah students did.