CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION
V CONCLUSION

5.1 The Major Findings

Learners have showed a tendency to commit certain types of errors in collocation. These errors affected the syntax and the coherence of the texts. At each level of the test, there were some common errors which were grouped in subcategories as follows:

a. First Test

The common errors committed by the learners in collocation fall in four categories:

1. Mis-collocations due to replacement of different collocates depending upon their dictionary meanings or translations (eg. together/each other, communicate/connect, study/teach, that/what, even/until/to, because/because of, and/but, find/look, sever/very, so/that, still/stay, stay/wait, look for/look to/look after/look about/look, said/told)

2. Using odd collocations due to mother tongue transfer (eg. enjoy with, and so, and also, and because, so that to, could not to + v + to the)

3. Over-generalizing the use of lexis in all positions (eg. thing, cause, and)
4. Breaking strings by full stops (e.g. ‘but’ clause and the contrastive clause, ‘so’ clause and the cause clause, ‘because’ clause and the effect clause)

Some syntactic errors appeared in the texts as a result of the collocational errors observed above. These errors are categorized as follows:

1. When losing connection between some collocates the students broke the strings with full stops creating the fragmental structures in the texts.
2. Over generalizing the use of ‘and’ as a coordinator and combining it with multiple strings resulted in lengthy sentences.
3. Allowing many complementizers to form dependent strings loosened the structure of sentences.
4. Some complicated phrases could be replaced by single words if the students knew them as a possible collocates.
5. Some sentences seemed to be meaningless collection of words and clauses with no connection of ideas.
6. Excessive use of some complementizers resulted in lengthy and complicated sentences.

Moreover, the inadequacy of the students’ ability in using words with their proper collocates had its impact on the coherence of the texts. The following was observed:
1. Excessive use of some transaction devices in the same text and some times in one sentence created complications.

2. Odd collocates become meaningless elements in the text disturbing the coherence of the text.

3. The Arabic equivalents of some transaction devices have different uses and when translated literally in the texts they caused confusion and strange expressions.

4. Fragmental sentences presented incomplete ideas.

5. Irrelevant words and phrases distracted the unity of the texts.

6. Mis-collocations disturbed the focus of the topics.

b. Second Test

The errors in collocation in the second test were of the following categories:

1. using mis-collocations due to replacement of collocates (eg. neither ... nor/ neither ... didn’t, that- clause/ that ‘demonstrative’, that-clause/ that ‘relative pronoun’, as +adjective +as/ as well as, as ‘comparative’/as ‘cause marker’, proverb / example, interested / interesting, learn / study / educate, let / make / leave, make / do / work)

2. Using odd collocations due to mother tongue transfer (eg. the more of/more)
3. Using odd collocations due to different sources of errors (eg. although…but, although…so, hardly ‘adverb’)

4. Breaking strings by full stops (eg. ‘so’ clause and the cause clause, ‘because’ clause and the effect clause).

5. Over-generalizing the use of lexis in all positions (eg. and)

The syntax of the texts written by the students was affected in the following way:

1. Fragmental clusters appeared due to the mis-collocations used.

2. Changing the complementizer or mistaking it for another word in a collocation changed the syntactic structure of some clauses.

3. Using odd collocations in sentences led to constructing complicated and ill structured sentences.

4. Fragmental structures were found because of using incomplete sentences or breaking clauses into two sentences

5. Some sentences seemed to be meaningless collection of words and clauses with no connection of ideas

6. Lengthy sentences came as a result of using ‘and’ instead of the full stop.

Moreover, errors in collocation had serious impact on the coherence of the texts.

They appeared incoherent due to the following:
1. Mis-collocations distracted the flow of the texts.

2. The use of some transaction devices as sentence breakers affected the flow of the ideas.

3. Ignoring the function of some devices led to the use of illogical constructions in sentences.

4. Fragmental sentences presented incomplete ideas.

5. Irrelevant words and phrases confused the unity of the texts.

6. Confusion of ideas in lengthy sentences made the texts vague.

c. Third Test

The students’ texts in the first task of the third test showed the following errors in collocation:

1. Mis-collocations due to replacement of different collocates depending upon their dictionary meanings or translations (e.g. still / stay, until/even, meet/get, fact/reality, fact/meaning, internet/machine, identify/recognize, teach/learn, for/to, the more/more, most/many, the most / most, lose / waist, remind / memorize, internet / computer / instrument, private / special, provide / save, location / site, learn / teach / study)
2. Using odd collocations due to mother tongue transfer (eg. should to, very away, to of, hardly ‘adverb’, provide time, provide efforts, although of, before all, together with ‘in non serial sequence’).

3. Breaking strings by full stops (eg. ‘so’ clause and the cause clause, ‘because’ clause and the effect clause).

4. Over-generalizing the use of lexis in all positions (eg. thing, and)

The syntax of the texts was affected duly in the following way:

1. Incomplete sentences with fragmental structure were used because of the absence of complementizers.

2. Some structures were modulated in Arabic (mother tongue).

3. Lengthy sentences came as a result of using complementizers (eg. and) as sentence breakers.

Errors in collocation affected the coherence of the texts as follows:

1. Odd collocates became meaningless elements in the texts.

2. Excessive use of some transaction devices in the same text and some times in one sentence created complications.
3. The Arabic equivalents of some transaction devices have different uses, therefore, when translated literally in the texts they caused confusion and strange expressions in English.

4. Using too general references made the texts vague with no specific topic.

5. There was no consistency in using referents of the words in the same contexts which shattered the texture of the texts.

6. Students were not confident; they used two or three alternatives in a collocation and left the decision to the reader.

7. Lengthy sentences made the texts boring.

8. Fragmental sentences presented incomplete ideas.

9. Irrelevant words and phrases confused the unity of the texts.

10. Replacement of collocations distracted the flow of the texts.

The second task of the third test required identification of free and semi fixed collocations. The collocations were identified by the students of the Faculty of Education, Hodeidah and the Faculty of Education, Zabid in different ways. The selections of the students of the Faculty of Education, Hodeidah are subcategorized as follows:

1. Collocates successfully identified by 70% and above of the students;
   - 'trying' and 'to concentrate/ understand/remember'
- ‘feeling’ and ‘pleased/colour/ confident’
- ‘leading’ and ‘life/ you/ group’

2. Collocates identified by 50-69% of the students;
   - ‘giving’ and ‘promise/message/service’
   - ‘dressing’ and ‘wound/cake/suit’
   - ‘celebrating’ and ‘birthday/ success/anniversary’

3. Collocates failed to be identified (less than 50% correct answers);
   - ‘wondering’ and ‘if/what’
   - ‘doing’ and ‘nothing/ what I can do/ the best I can’
   - ‘making’ and ‘mistake/money/calculation’
   - ‘providing’ and ‘copies/details/food’

4. Mis-collocates given by more than 10% of the students;
   - ‘wondering’ and ‘pleased/colour/ confident’
   - ‘wondering’ and ‘nothing/ what I can do/ the best I can’
   - ‘doing’ and ‘mistake/money/calculation’
   - ‘doing’ and ‘birthday/ success/anniversary’
   - ‘making’ and ‘birthday/ success/anniversary’
   - ‘making’ and ‘copies/details/food’
   - ‘providing’ and ‘promise/message/service’
   - ‘providing’ and ‘if/what’
In this task, second task, the selections of the students of the Faculty of Education, Zabid differed as shown by the following subcategorized:

1. Collocates successfully identified by 70% and above of the students;
   - ‘trying’ and ‘to concentrate/ understand/remember’
   - ‘feeling’ and ‘pleased/colour/confident’
   - ‘leading’ and ‘life/ you/ group’

2. Collocates identified by 50-69% of the students;
   - ‘giving’ and ‘promise/message/service’
   - ‘paying’ and ‘bills/debts/expenses’
   - ‘celebrating’ and ‘birthday/ success/anniversary’

3. Collocates failed to be identified (less than 50% correct answers);
   - ‘wondering’ and ‘if/what’
   - ‘doing’ and ‘nothing/ what I can do/ the best I can’
   - ‘making’ and ‘mistake/money/calculation’
   - ‘providing’ and ‘copies/details/food’
   - ‘dressing’ and ‘wound/cake/suit’
4. Mis-collocations given by more than 10% of the students;

- ‘wondering’ and ‘nothing/ what I can do/ the best I can’
- ‘wondering’ and ‘birthday/ success/anniversary’
- ‘wondering’ and ‘wound/cake/suit’
- ‘doing’ and ‘promise/message/service’
- ‘doing’ and ‘mistake/money/calculation’
- ‘giving’ and ‘nothing/ what I can do/ the best I can’
- ‘giving’ and ‘mistake/money/calculation’
- ‘giving’ and ‘birthday/ success/anniversary’
- ‘giving’ and ‘copies/details/food’
- ‘paying’ and ‘wound/cake/suit’
- ‘paying’ and ‘copies/details/food’
- ‘making’ and ‘nothing/ what I can do/ the best I can’
- ‘making’ and ‘promise/message/service’
- ‘making’ and ‘copies/details/food’
- ‘dressing’ and ‘if/what’
- ‘dressing’ and ‘copies/details/food’
- ‘leading’ and ‘if/what’
- ‘providing’ and ‘if/what’
- ‘providing’ and ‘copies/details/food’
The third task required identification of the best collocates of the verbs ‘say, tell, speak and talk’. The collocation errors were of the following types:

1. Mis-collocation due to treating verbs as alternative collocates (eg. say/tell, speak/talk)
2. Overgeneralization of using collocates (eg. speak)

The fourth task consisted of two parts; part one was to identify acceptable and unacceptable collocations and part two was to suggest the best replacement collocates in case of unacceptable ones.

In part one, some students accepted the collocation and some did not. The collocations are grouped accordingly. The following are the subcategories of the collocations’ selection made by the students of the Faculty of Education, Hodeidah.

1. Collocates successfully identified by 70% and above of the students;
   - It’s up with you.
   - Look at it from my line of view
   - I go fishing as often if I can.
- Sorry, I didn’t take that. Could you repeat it please?
- I have known her even since she was a child.
- You can get to the town with taking the next bus.

2. Collocates identified by 50-69% of the students:

- Have your time—there’s no hurry.
- Her notion is silly that children will eat only what they need
- I was looking for a yellow belt but I found one.
- Media wondered whether the doctor was there
- She worked hard, even though they were paying her very little.
- He didn’t smile until he saw the results.
- When this man makes any proposal, read between the words; don’t say ‘yes’ immediately.

3. Collocates failed to be identified (less than 50% correct answers):

- He was anxious for nobody to leave.
- That Habiba had earned that scholarship pleased every one.
- The theory which the world is flat has been disproved.
- John asked if the lunch was ready.
- No matter what hard I study, I can’t master statistics.
- As a matter of reality, my father is under transfer now.
- This kind of dress is not of date surely.
- The host received us with open hands.

The selections of the students of the Faculty of Education, Zabid are subcategorized as follows:

1. Collocates successfully identified by 70% and above of the students:
   - Look at it from my line of view.
   - I go fishing as often if I can.
   - He was anxious for nobody to leave.

2. Collocates identified by 50-69% of the students;
   - It’s up with you.
   - Sorry, I didn’t take that. Could you repeat it please?
   - Her notion is silly that children will eat only what they need.
   - I was looking for a yellow belt but I found one.
   - The theory which the world is flat has been disproved
   - When this man makes any proposal, read between the words: don’t say ‘yes’ immediately.

3. Collocates failed to be identified (less than 50% correct answers);
   - Have your time—there’s no hurry.
   - He was anxious for nobody to leave.
   - That Habiba had earned that scholarship pleased every one.
- Media wondered whether the doctor was there.
- I have known her even since she was a child.
- She worked hard, even though they were paying her very little.
- He didn’t smile until he saw the results.
- No matter what hard I study, I can’t master statistics.
- As a matter of reality, my father is under transfer now.
- This kind of dress is not of date surely.
- The host received us with open hands.

The students who did not accept the collocations and suggested replacements varied in their scores. Thus, collocations are grouped according to the percentage. The subcategories of the replacements done by the students of the Faculty of Education, Hodeidah are:

1. Acceptable collocates suggested by 70% and above;
   - It’s up to you.
   - You can get to the town by taking the next bus.
   - Take your time—there’s no hurry
   - I go fishing as often as I can

2. Acceptable collocates suggested by 50-69%;
   - Look at it from my point of view.
- I was looking for a yellow belt and I found one
- The theory that the world is flat has been disproved
- As a matter of fact, my father is under transfer now
- When this man makes any proposal, read between the lines; don’t say ‘yes’ immediately.

3. Acceptable collocates suggested by less than 50%:
- Sorry, I didn’t get that. Could you repeat it please?
- I have known her ever since she was a child
- John asked whether the lunch was ready.
- No matter how hard I study, I can’t master statistics
- This kind of dress is out of date surely.
- The host received us with open arms.
- Media wondered if the doctor was there

4. Mis-collocations suggested as replacements by the students.
- It’s up for/from/on/point you.
- Look at it from my room/own/as/whatever/sight/look/eyes/angle
  window/that/opinion/sentence/way/direct/side of view
- I go fishing as often when/take/don’t/if I can.
- When/is/did/has/say/enjoy your time-there’s no hurry.

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- Sorry, I didn’t hear/understand/listen/care/do/heard/about/talk/have/say that. Could you repeat it please?

- He was anxious about/that/because/so/with/of/get/since/whom/at/to nobody to leave

- Her notion is silly because/that/so/which/her/those/who/through/about children will eat only what they need.

- I was looking for a yellow belt so/where/until/that/so that I found one.

- When/this/the/it since/what/who/because/which Habiba had earned that scholarship pleased every one.

- The theory in which/where/ of in what/ the world is flat has been disproved.

- Media wondered further/that/even the doctor was there.

- I have known her when/time/from/while/along/so since she was a child.

- John asked did/is/that/where the lunch was ready.

- She worked hard, where /so/because/but/since/in spite that/ although/ while though they were paying her very little.

- He didn’t smile from/otherwise/ever/but/after/since/if he saw the results.

- You can get to the town and/is taking the next bus

- No matter at/that/about/even/to hard I study, I can’t master statistics.

- As a matter of frank/that/unreality/real, my father is under transfer now.

- This kind of dress is doesn’t/it/fact/never/new/one/when of date surely.
- The host received us with open heart/smile/book/books/door/doors/face/abdomen.

- When this man makes any proposal, read between the blanks / ideas/ thoughts / opinion / papers / questions / sentence; don’t say ‘yes’ immediately.

The subcategories of the replacements done by the students of the Faculty of Education, Zabid are as follows:

1. Acceptable collocates suggested by 70% and above;

   Non

1. Acceptable collocates suggested by 50- 69%;

   - John asked if the lunch was ready.

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

3. Acceptable collocates suggested by less than 50%;

   - It’s up with you.

   - Look at it from my line of view.

   - I go fishing as often if I can.

   - Have your time—there’s no hurry.

   - Sorry, I didn’t take that. Could you repeat it please?

   - He was anxious for nobody to leave.

   - Her notion is silly that children will eat only what they need.
-I was looking for a yellow belt but I found one.

-That Habiba had earned that scholarship pleased every one.

-The theory which the world is flat has been disproved.

-Media wondered whether the doctor was there.

-I have known her even since she was a child.

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

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

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

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

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

-This kind of dress is not of date surely.

-The host received us with open hands.

4. Mis-collocations suggested as replacements by the students;

-It’s up idea/on/for/of/upon you.

-Look at it from my it/beautiful/as/direction/passage/widow/village/nice /side/opinion of view.

-I go fishing as often so/it/what/how/when I can.

-keep/did/it your time—there’s no hurry.

-Sorry, I didn’t it/repeat/bring/tell/talk that. Could you repeat it please?
- He was anxious if/but/about/that/of nobody to leave.

- Her notion is silly which/so/and/this/for that/when/whom/children will eat only what they need.

- I was looking for a yellow belt it/then/so I found one.

- When/the/this/if Habiba had earned that scholarship pleased every one.

- The theory of/it the world is flat has been disproved.

- Media wondered it/how/during the doctor was there.

- I have known her when/just/whether/for/until/birth since she was a child.

- John asked has/it/that the lunch was ready.

- She worked hard, when/therefore/it/but/as/if/also/just/and though they were paying her very little.

- He didn’t smile but/still/will he saw the results.

- You can get to the town and/in/of/until/to/ taking the next bus.

- No matter is/if/of/whether/when/ hard I study, I can’t master statistics.

- When this man makes any proposal, read between the book/it/student/lives/apostrophe; don’t say ‘yes’ immediately.

- As a matter of truth/it_REAL_LIFE/frankly, my father is under transfer now.

- This kind of dress is non/without of date surely.

- The host received us with open office/heart/eyes
In conclusion, there are some observations about the student’ performance in the tests;

1. The students avoided using idiomatic constructions in their compositions.

2. In spite of the progress in many linguistic areas and aspects like morphology, syntax and paragraph structure, lexical cohesion suffered a lot in the students’ performance.

3. In contexts where coherence relies on lexemes, collocations proved to be an obstacle hindering well constructed coherent texts.

4. Students’ self-esteem showed to be low in many texts. There were many occasions when two or more collocates, specially content words, were left to the reader to decide which one suited the sentence best.

5. A limited number of collocations tested proved to be fairly well treated in the teaching materials and classrooms that the results were encouraging. They scored either null errors or very few and occasional ones.

6. Lengthy sentences were common errors in the students writing in English and their mother tongue as well. The domination of the conjunction ‘and’ as a neutral collocate is quite noticeable in the students writing systems.
7. Errors came from different sources and covered, almost, all the collocation types in content and function words. The students showed similar knowledge of most of those types.

8. However, some words were very frequently used in the texts, the ranges of their collocation sets used did not match with their popularity (eg. Do). On the contrary, some words had no limits for use and collocations (eg. Make).

9. On some occasions the students showed a remarkable agreement on the impossibility of a collocation. The appearance of ‘0 %’ as a selection for a set of collocation could be a vivid indicator.

10. Sometimes selections of collocations were done though they violated simple and basic syntactic rules. This revealed that there is no integration of meaning and structure in using language.

11. Some students could identify the words used in the test being unacceptable but failed to suggest appropriate replacements. This shortcoming may be due to one of the following possible reasons:

   a. The students had never met those expressions before and depended upon their own intuition in finding whether the expressions sound or not.
b. The collocations did not match with the students’ mother tongue equivalents so they did not accept them. Consequently, they used what seemed to be more suitable according to their mother tongue.

c. The students applied their logical thinking and judged the statements as being illogically collocated, according to them. Thus, they started replacing the words with what they thought more logical ones. This replacement type was more noticeable in the idiomatic constructions.

d. The expected replacements were of certain function words which happened to be not mastered by the students though presented at earlier levels.

e. The students were not exposed to lexis of very limited lists of possible collocations and those of restricted uses.

f. Some replacements reveal overlapping of functions within the same type of function words.

g. Some other replacements exceeded the confusion within one type to overlap with other types of function words or content words.

12. Some students failed to recognize the acceptable collocations. This could be due to one of the following possible reasons;
a. Lack of exposure to the tested collocations made them look unfamiliar and odd.

b. Overcorrection of some structures and word uses made the students hesitant and unsure of the correct structure and use.

c. Some collocations were expected to be less problematic as being dealt with at the previous levels, still they caused lots of confusion.

13. Some students gave no answers in some tasks which could be due to the following reasons:

a. They were not confident enough to write answers for something they were not sure of.

b. They were not able to give any answer because they have none. Actually, they have never come across such collocations before.

5.2 Sources of Errors: General Remarks

There are common sources of errors noticed by researchers and scalars who investigated second and foreign language learners’ performance. Many errors cannot be referred to as being a manifestation of one factor and a specific source. In fact, usually more than one factor may collaborate to create difficulties identified as errors. What makes a certain factor named as a source of errors is the high
possibility of it to affect the learners’ performance systematically. Richards and Sampson (1984) discussed the following sources of errors.

1. Language transfer: The learner’s mother tongue (MT) interferes and influences the sentences and the texts in the target language (TL). It could be positive or negative transfer.

2. Intralingual interference: When learners are exposed partially to the TL, they try to derive the rules behind the data to which they have been exposed. They tend to develop hypotheses that correspond to neither MT nor TL. These interferences are within the target language concepts.

3. Sociolinguistic situation: Factors like the socio-cultural setting of the learner and the relationship holding between the learner and the target language community affect the motivation of the learner to learn TL.

4. Modality: Whether the learner is exposed to spoken or written form of the TL affects the acquisition of that language. Learners develop different systems for each style. When a learner produces spoken form he encounters different problems and errors other than those of his written form.
5. Age: The learner’s approximative system may be affected by his age. Being a child, teen or an adult affects memory, motivation, and ability to understand complex rules, explanation and other language aspects.

6. Succession of approximative systems: The learner’s language goes through different stages in progress to form his productive competence. Within this progressive process rules of language may be operated partially till they become fully operated at an advanced stage. These rules may be distinct from the learner’s MT and the TL systems but not completely independent.

7. Universal hierarchy of difficulty: The linguistic items vary at their level of difficulty inherently. It may be interlingual or universal hierarchy of difficulty. The learner’s background has no role in determining the difficulty of learning such items.

Richards (1984) added some other sources of errors which are based on a non-contrastive view of the issue. They are as follows:
1. **Overgeneralization**: ‘A learner may create a deviant structure on the basis of his experience of other structures in the target language’ (Richards, 1984:174). This structure may be in place of two regular structures. It may be the result of reducing the learner’s linguistic burden and using some inappropriate teaching techniques.

2. **Ignorance of rule restrictions**: some learners fail to observe the restrictions of existing structures, that is the application of rules to contexts where they do not apply. This may be because of using previously acquired rule in a new situation, using analogy or rote learning rules.

3. **Incomplete application of rules**: Some deviant sentences reflect the degree of development of the rules required to produce acceptable utterances.

4. **False concepts hypothesized**: Some errors are due to faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language. This problem may appear because of poor gradation of teaching items.

Learning as a process may be affected by some factors which hinder its progress. These difficulties may turn into sources of errors. Some of these sources are:
1. Fossilization: It is a ‘mechanism which, also, exists in the latent psychological structure, underlies surface linguistic material which learners will tend to keep in their IL [interlingual] productive performance, no matter what the age of the learner or the amount of instruction he receives in the TL [target language]’ (Selinker, 1984:48).

2. Lack of objectives and experience in higher education: Lack of objectives in the learners mind for studying in higher education reduces motivation to learn. Cottrell (2001) blames overloaded curriculum for pushing students into adopting superficial or surface approaches to learning. The students take information and try to manage through out the course without trying to develop anything for use beyond the course. Coverage of the materials in the curriculum and stiffing information do not insure learning (ibid). Moreover, she claims that students fail not because they are not bright enough but because they have not yet been exposed to sufficient concrete experience of higher education in order to develop abstract schema of what it is to be a student at this level’ (Cottrell, 2001: 20). Education at this level differs from school education and learners may not get enough training to cop with it. Such learners are not ready to perceive or produce well formed and meaningful language successfully.
3. Vague ‘autonomy’ identification: Building autonomy attracts lots of educators to use when describing the new curriculum. Unfortunately, they do not present a clear definition of ‘autonomy’ and ‘autonomous learning’ which make it difficult to be applied by teachers. In addition, ‘it can also be difficult for students to know the role they are supposed to play in the learning process where their own ideas are supposed to come in, what is meant to be ‘autonomous’ or ‘independent’.‘ (Cottrell, 2001:29). Consequently, learners fail to gain proper and practical experience to fulfill the objectives of the educational system.

4. Time limit in classroom: Teaching and learning take place at specific timing. When it comes to productive skills, each student should get an adequate chance to express himself and get the required feedback from his teachers and peers. Time in crowded classes seems to be dedicated only for receiving information and little feedback. The students’ performance gets evaluated in the exams when it is too late to reform any unpleasant results.

Other sources of error are directly related to learning vocabulary, especially collocations. These sources are:
1. Lack of awareness of the nature of language: Lewis (2001) discussed awareness of the lexical nature of language. Language has many aspects which are repeatedly presented in teaching materials explicitly and implicitly according to the nature of the aspect. If language aspects are ignored in the teaching/learning process, errors are likely to appear in the performance of learners.

2. Absence of specific rules: In teaching vocabulary, the teachers are not able to provide rules in many cases. It is often difficult to aid learners with specific rules to work with collocations and form clear cut identification of the possible collocations in the language. Teachers can only guide their learners through the kind of chunks they meet in the natural language received.

3. Partial synonymy: According to Taiwo (2001), partial synonymy is sometimes responsible for inappropriate choice of lexical items. Relying on dictionary meaning without careful association of actual use and the additional information may promote collocational errors. McCarthy (2001) believes that depending upon dictionaries only can lead to a circularity of abstract definitions. Words in actual use carry additional information beyond their simple meaning (Islam and Timmis, 2007), which usually accompanies
them when being stored in the mental lexicon and being recalled afterwards. Hence, being of similar meanings differs from being interchangeable.

4. Semantic boundaries: Taiwo (2001) tackled another serious problem, which is when learners can not identify the semantic boundaries that separate lexical items. Learners fail to observe the rule of restrictions on the co-occurrences of lexical items; they produce incoherent and meaningless texts.

5. Lack of collocation competence: When students know the bare word but have no sense of the kind of relationships that word is permitted with other words in the sentence, they are not competent in using collocation. Taiwo (2004) highlights the serious influence of lack of collocational competence on syntax especially when learners do not know the collocation which expresses precisely their thoughts. In fact, lack of exposure to the natural use of words associations in authentic texts strongly affects the learners’ competence in this area.

6. Defected materials use: Teaching materials play an important role in facilitating teaching and learning as well. Unfortunately, some materials fail to provide help and may create problems. Some textbooks do not present
natural data especially regarding vocabulary; they are underrepresented 
(McCarthy, 2001). Other materials while being simplified, the lexical patterns 
of the naturally occurring structures in the texts are disturbed. This may lead 
to the unnaturalness and unauthenticity at the discourse level (ibid). Thus, 
some collocations may be unnaturally distributed or for worse become absent 
and never met by the learners.

Additionally, some materials develop word-out-of-context approach in 
teaching vocabulary; words are divorced from actual use or at best only 
concerned with repetitive skills (McCarthy, 2001). Cottrell (2001) points out 
that, tasks given in materials should be meaningful in terms of previous 
experience so that learners can perform them. Abstract presentations of tasks 
make it difficult, if not impossible, for learners to make use of language items 
in the tasks.

7. Blur borderlines: This problem becomes clear when certain lexical items, 
which can play the same role as some function words do in signaling clause 
relations, are used (McCarthy, 2001). These borderlines of the roles played 
by function words and their equivalent lexical items are blurred and not 
efficiently identified in teaching vocabulary and grammar.
8. Traditional translation techniques: Students tend to use word-to-word translation techniques. When they compose in English, they first compose sentences in their mother tongue (in their minds if not in writing) then translate them into English. In this process the selection of the correct words depends on their mother tongue which had negative transfer (Al-Magalih, 1998).

9. Ignorance of using vague language: Carter (2004) presents the term ‘purposely vague language’. Vague words and phrases like ‘thing, stuff, or so, something, any thing, whatever, and sort of’ are used to soften expressions to make them appear less direct or unduly authoritative and assertive (ibid). Using these words in contexts where specification is required affects the level of discourse clarity especially written texts. The idea of using such vague language should be presented to the students unambiguously that they know when to use and when to avoid these words.

10. Lexical adjustment: Lexical relation undergoes some adjustments from text to text. They do not have fixed forms because they do not have correspondingly fixed meanings as they are affected by stylistic features in texts in the sense of creative lexical usage, as devices of evaluation or irony.
and for particular focus (McCarthy, 2001). When not aware of these adjustments learners may be confused when using some word associations.

5.3 Sources of Errors in the Students’ Performance

Errors which occur in the performance of the students are results of one or a combination of some of the factors discussed above. The eminent factors are listed below as being the sources of the errors found in the students’ texts.

1. The students are not aware of the collocational nature of language.
2. They do not get the required training to notice and use collocations in different natural contexts, thus, they are not competent in collocation. They tend to take words out of context and look them up in the dictionaries (Arabic/English and English/Arabic) which promotes miscollocations errors.
3. Mother tongue transfer (classical and colloquial Arabic) very much affects the students’ performance - in collocation, syntax and coherence.
4. The translation techniques used by the students when composing new sentences in English are not modified. Students tend to use word to word translation not chunk to chunk.
5. Whenever the students fail to find the proper collocates in a string, they refer to their mother tongue and come up with defected chunks.

6. There is lack of exposure to collocations in their natural contexts.

7. Some function words usage in certain contexts is over-generalized.

8. Students are ignorant of some collocational restrictions; they do not know some blocked collocations.

9. Fossilization occurs specially in using some of the grammatical collocations which are presented frequently in the teaching materials in school and college education. It is also clear in the errors in using de-lexicalized verbs.

10. Some language specific aspects are incompletely presented to the students during their learning especially how to write coherent texts in English.

11. The students’ avoidance of using collocation while producing language keeps their problems unnoticed; therefore not corrected.

12. Teaching/learning strategies are not adjusted to tune with the collocational nature of language.

13. Some rules restrictions need clarification like the use of ‘purposely vague language’.

14. The students are not exposed, enough, to the target language, hence, they implement a limited amount of words which is not sufficient for applying chunks of different kinds.
15. Teaching materials give limited range of possible collocations of the new words presented in vocabulary tasks.

5.4 Observations About the Students’ General Progress

The results of the tests denoted slow progress in the students’ performance in the third year compared to that in the second year. The students continued committing the same types of errors. They did not show ability to use a larger amount of words whether as key words in simple phrases or as collocations.

In the fourth year, their performance was comparatively better, yet, not to the expected level. Though the number of errors increases, they managed to decrease the accumulated errors in one sentence. Furthermore, they started using new strings and chunks which, previously, were avoided completely. The errors in certain areas decreased, like the illogical fragmental clauses and the excessive use of function words in one sentence. They became able to show more control over the coverage and organization of topics. Generally, there has been a progress though relatively slow.
Though the tests started from second year onwards, it is possible that the students were not well trained to cope with learning in higher education. They were not ready to take responsibility of their own learning. Furthermore, they did not show better achievement because they did not have specific objectives at college to motivate them.

The slow progress asserts the incapability of the students to depend upon themselves in learning in college. They tended to reproduce the limited inputs given in classes. They did not prove being autonomous learners who can go on exploring language beyond the materials and teachers' instructions.

5.5 Validation of Hypothesis

The arguments of the researcher have been found valid and justified. The study hypothesized that (i) Lexical cohesion is a major area of Yemeni students' errors at the college level. (ii)Lack of mastery over lexical cohesion seriously affects syntax and coherence. (iii)Learner autonomy is not well developed in colleges of education in general and regarding vocabulary acquisition and use in particular which has a negative impact on the performance of the students.
The students’ errors have revealed the areas which require serious attention and special treatment. Lexical cohesion (collocation) is the major area of errors to affect the intelligibility of the Yemeni learners’ written texts. Errors like mis-collocations due to replacement of different collocates depending upon their dictionary meanings or Arabic equivalents, using odd collocations due to mother tongue transfer, over-generalizing the use of lexis in all positions and breaking strings by full stops gave rise to errors in syntax and coherence. The results were the typical examples of the English texts by Yemeni writers. The texts, often, contain fragmental sentences presenting incomplete ideas, irrelevant words and phrases which disturb the unity of the texts, lengthy sentences, too general and vague referents with no specific topics.

The slow progress observed in the students’ performance is an indicator of their unprogressive, dependent attitude. Though they could show more control over the coverage and organization of topics, they did not prove to be autonomous learners who could go beyond the teaching materials and teachers’ direct instructions.

5.6 Pedagogical implications

In order to narrow the wide gap between the present status of the Yemeni learners and the expected advanced level of the output of the departments of English, there
must be serious attitudinal changes towards learning and teaching. At the college level learners are supposed to notice, identify and use collocations in a better way than what they have shown in the tests. The learners do not get the support they need in the classrooms. They need natural materials, direct training, and teachers who can help them meet the challenges they face in learning English as a foreign language with new perspectives.

Actually the whole educational system should collaborate to build motivated autonomous learner’s character that can make the best of what is available inside and outside the classroom. They have to work hard to narrow the wide gap between the present status of the Yemeni learners and the expected advanced levels in order to fulfill the objectives of college education.

Teachers should play their role with open minds to accept the useful ideas and try to modify and apply them in class. Regarding the field of collocation, they should focus on the co-occurrences of words which the students will not expect to find together and those which they do not expect their students to produce (Woolard 2001).
Including collocation in the syllabus helps students learn vocabulary with less efforts as asserted by Morgan Lewis (2001) who feels that 'actively introducing collocation recycles half-known words and while this does not directly cause learning, it accelerates it'. Students become fluent and accurate in using the target language, hence, motivated and confident. They will find it easy to pursue learning on their own and become autonomous learners.

5.7 Remedial Recommendations

The major recommendations can be grouped under two headings: teaching materials and teacher’s role.

5.4.1 Teaching materials

Teaching materials should include various text types giving learners more opportunities to come across different vocabulary aspects and different chunks. They should present specific aspects of vocabulary. For instance, lexical cohesion helps in giving learners meaningful, controlled practice, improving their text-creating and decoding ability, and providing them with more varied contexts for using and practicing vocabulary (McCarthy, 1999).
For materials to represent the natural occurrence of word relationship, authentic texts must be there. Hyland (2003) states the advantages and disadvantages of using authentic texts. He suggests that teachers can compromise in selecting authentic texts; taking good written models which are not far beyond the students’ level. Actually, the adjustment may vary according to the purpose of using a specific authentic text. As the core conception of teaching collocation is raising awareness of the natural use of word association, it is favorable to keep the representation of word association as authentic as possible.

Planning to use materials for teaching in higher education one should take into consideration Cottrell’s (2001) perception of the role of materials, teaching and assessment. She believes “it is more useful, long term, to train students to be self-managers of the learning process, able to direct themselves around the subject, recognizing gaps, and with the capacity of updating their knowledge once they leave university rather than overloading courses with materials. Using a variety of teaching and assessment methods can increase student skills without necessarily detracting from subject coverage” (Cottrell, 2001: 4).

To reduce errors in collocation, learners should be encouraged ‘to read a lot of literature written in English, since collocations are better acquired through reading,
and chances that ESL / [EFL] learners cannot combine words correctly without having previously read them are very high’ (Taiwo, 2001). Higuchi (2004) suggested short stories as being a suitable authentic text giving appropriate collocations in comprehensive phase.

Learners in higher education, especially teacher trainees, need to be introduced to the theoretical framework of corpus studies and to be given a chance to explore the relation between corpus findings, pedagogy and material selection and design (Gerson, 2006). Tasks should encourage learners to make use of textually-based-lexicon (McCarthy, 2001) and chunks preferably prepared by the learners themselves.

Lewis (2001) suggests using collocation to explain the difference between two words with the same dictionary meaning. This will help to switch the problem of similar synonymy into a solution.

Reading aloud gained interest as a technique but with a different perception. Texts should be read aloud in class to give a good module of how words are correctly chunked which enables learners to store them properly in their mental lexicon for immediate recall (Hill, 2001).
The learners need exercises of new types awakening the unused power in their learning abilities. These exercises should focus on using what is available in the students’ mental lexicon and help them restore the single words as new chunks and strings. There are very useful examples of such exercises in Lewis’s books “Implementing the Lexical Approach” (2001) and “Teaching Collocation” (2001), Dowling (2004) for de-lexicalized verbs, Williams (2003) for collocation, Yule (2000) for verbs with close meanings in a topic to identify the collocational field of each, Leech and Svartvik (1994), (Kavaliauskienė and Janulevičienė, 2001) and Joyce (2007).

5.7.2 Teacher’s Role

Teachers are responsible for utilizing any situation arising in classrooms to the development of vocabulary learning beside other items. To be able to twist the prescribed flow of the lessons in class according to the need, teachers have to be free and not governed by fixed instructions. They need to be autonomous individuals, that they can start activities whenever a new teaching situation pops up in class. In case they have to raise the awareness of collocation, instant reactions will be more effective in helping learners to grasp the new occurrences of chunks.
Teachers should be aware of the impact of context on vocabulary usage, thereby can identify the permitted chunks and the possible synonymous replacements. They have to train their students to be aware of the lexical adjustment that is when ‘typical vocabulary relations are often readjusted in individual texts’ (McCarthy, 2001). These adjustments usually modify the collocational field of some words in texts.

Cottrell (2001) raised the issue of implementing the role of academic skills/ study skills and employability skills. If the outcomes of the teaching process in higher education are to be employable, they have to acquire useful skills besides knowledge. Skills like being able to deal with new situations autonomously should be embedded with the academic curriculum rather than through discrete modules (Cottrell, 2001). Therefore, she suggests training teachers and providing special courses for academic staff to enable them to use ‘embedding skills’, only then, progressive changes in the students’ performance are to be expected. Teaching and developing study skills ‘cannot be divorced from other aspects of a student’s learning experience, including the subject discipline’s knowledge base’ (Cottrell, 2001: 9). McCarthy (2001) argues that skills development should be subject specific, undertaken by subject specialists. Hurd (1999, cited in Cottrell, 2001) called for careful preparation for both learners and teachers before implementing any degree of autonomous learning.
Teachers can help learners to participate in active, meaningful tasks to become autonomous learners. Cottrell (2001) suggests that learners, while covering subject materials, can develop a culture of advance preparation for lectures. In fact, language teaching ‘implies the development of transferable language learning skills based on an understanding of what makes an effective language learner’ (Gray and Klapper, 2003: 352). Being involved in what they study may help them to develop ‘a wide portfolio of high level skills that are not only useful in the higher education context but are also transferable beyond the confines of academic world’ (Fallows, 2003: 122).

Teachers should try their best to make learners aware of how they learn and encourage them to practice strategies which depend on their ‘less dominant, natural or ‘instinctive’ cognitive styles’ (Gray and Klapper, 2003: 353). These cognitive styles can be deductive or inductive.

Conscious teachers can address collocational errors consistently to make their students aware of specific trouble spots so that they become careful and focus on those areas (Burt and Kipardky, 1972, cited in Freiermuth, 1998). It would be beneficial if learners are exposed to their own errors, for example miscollocations, to become aware of the possible and blocked collocations. However, teachers should
identify the errors which can be crucially noted and brought to light to suit the purpose of teaching at a specific learning stage.

Opportunities to write and practice using the language which the learners’ acquired, are better given by teachers. Teachers should give learners exercises to write and expose their writing to audience as early as possible (Shaughnessy, 1977).

How teachers can convert static knowledge into a process is best clarified by Cottrell (2001). She cited Bruner’s (1966) argument that ‘knowledge is a process not a product’ and concluded with a rational conceptualization of knowledge as not being an ‘end-product, a discrete set of information that passes from one head into another. Rather, it is intrinsically linked to processing of information, to making sense, developing understanding at increasingly sophisticated level bringing attention to certain kind of information dependent on the requirement of the context, panning out and homing in at appropriate level of detail.’ (Cottrell, 2001: 9).

Teaching does not mean torturing the learners throughout the course and finally in the exams. Teachers should be trained well to understand the real role of a teacher and to make their students struggle less in their search for knowledge and the quest for identity especially at the college level. In addition, they should help learners to
transfer experience, to be ‘more self-aware and confident about taking place in the professional world’ (McCarth, 2001: 4).

5.8 Suggestions for Further Work

1. The present work investigated errors in collocation made by the students of English Department, Faculties of Education, other departments and faculties can be included and investigated.

2. Investigating the use of some collocations in larger corpora can be done.

3. Colligation is an interesting area for deep investigation.

4. Learners’ affect is an area which requires special study.

5. Studying the teaching materials used for teaching English in college and how they represent word association will be interesting.