

Collocations and Collocational Networks of Characters: A Corpus-based Feminist Stylistic Analysis

**Ohood Ali Mohammed Saif Al-Nakeeb
Basheer Ahmed Hamood Mufleh**

1. Abstract

The aim of this paper is to detect the linguistic construction of fe/male characters in a specialised literary corpus. The corpus (GHANEM) consists of Qais Ghanem's three novels *Final Flight from Yemen* (2011), *Two Boys from Aden College* (2012) and *Forbidden Love in the Land of Sheba* (2014), which are respectively referred to as FFFS, TBAC and FLLS henceforth. The collocations of major Yemeni characters as well as their shared collocates are analysed using collocational networks created by the GraphColl function in the corpus analytical tool LancesBox. The quantitative collocation analysis aids in extracting concordance lines for the in-depth qualitative analysis at the lexical level investigating adjectives and nouns collocates, and at the lexicogrammatical level through looking at transitivity processes (e.g. material, mental, relational) as set out in Burton (1982) and adapted later by Mills (1995). The analysis results in the following: not all characters belonging to the same gender are equally represented. All the male characters along with one female character (Hana) are evaluated as cheerful and playful. These are lively characters who are able to express feelings and thoughts and relate to others. On the other hand, the other female characters Salma and Muna are depicted as sufferers who are indifferent, unimportant and dependent.

Keywords: Corpus-based, feminist stylistics, collocation, GraphColl, transitivity, characters.

2. Introduction

Characters in prose fiction as well as in drama have been exploited by both literary critics and stylisticians. The simple reason for such an interest is that "characters are made of words, they are not simulacra of humans –they are simply words which the reader has learned how to construct into a set of ideological messages drawing on her knowledge of the way that texts have been written and continue to be written, and the views which are circulating within society about how women and men are" (Mills, 1995, 160). With that in mind, these ideological messages are clearly formed by the systematic and frequent co-occurrence of words in the text, known as collocations. Indeed, collocates can tell much about how characters represent themselves or being represented by narrators. Moreover, collocational networks or "the connectivity between individual collocates" (Brezina et al., 2015, p. 141) can demonstrate how characters belonging to the same gender are connected, thus exposing shared patterns of representation.

These linguistic structures are investigated by corpus linguists and corpus stylisticians via the help of software programs that generate certain statistics employing some criteria such as the distance, frequency and dispersion of the collocate and the node word (Brezina et al., 2015). There is a plethora of corpus tools that enable the generation of collocations such as WordSmith, AntConc, Wmatrix, etc. but there are only few tools that offer the analysis of collocation networks, of which the most recent, released in 2015, is *GraphColl* (Brezina et al., 2015).

The argument that *GraphColl* enables the uncoverage of semantic relations in texts and discourse that are not easily identified by humans has motivated scholars to use it in the analysis of discourse such as Brindle (2015) Brezina, et al. (2015) and Baker (2016). Brindle (2015) investigates the representation of Muslims in a 90,000-word corpus of Facebook postings made by supports of the far-right English Defence League (EDL) and finds that Muslims collocate with discourses of extremism such as extremists, extreme, terrorists and radical. Other collocations are related to violence e.g. rape, kill and hate. He also generates a graph of Muslims’ collocational network linked to White and finds out that White is associated with discourses of sexuality including collocates such as girls, pretty and cock.

Brezina, et al. (2015) use the tool to replicate McEnery (2006), who had used WordSmith tool of collocation in the study of discourses of swearing in English in a specialised corpus of religious societies in the 17th and 18th centuries. They confirm McEnery’s results including that swearing is depicted as a negative term “an act that undermines the social and religious order” (p. 154). They also “extend the scope of the analysis beyond what was possible in the earlier study” i.e. religious dimensions of the debate, “the personalization of the discourse and explicit labelling of offenders against morality” (p. 164).

Baker (2016) studies collocational networks of the word troops in a corpus of newspaper articles in The Sun. Baker argues that this kind of analysis “helps us to find a related and important linguistic construction which tells us more about The Sun’s preferred construction of British soldiers” (p. 147), moreover, it gives “added value” to corpus analysis by indicating relationships between multiple words which can help to suggest equivalencies, synonyms, rewordings or related terms and concepts, which (in the case of a discourse-based analysis) may have ideological significance”(p. 148).

This study, however, makes use of *GraphColl* in the investigation of literary discourse, GHANEM corpus; second, it integrates the corpus linguistic technique of collocation with transitivity analytical tool discussed in the Mills (1995) feminist stylistic approach; and third, it is placed within critical linguistics rather than critical discourse analysis, and finally, it concerns gender representation.

3. GHANEM Corpus

GHANEM Corpus is a corpus of three novels about Yemen written originally in English by a Yemeni author named Qais Ghanem. The author was born in Aden, Yemen and immigrated to Canada forty years ago. He studied medicine in Edinburg University and became a neurophysiologist. After retirement, he officially took up writing poetry and novels. Besides, he presents a weekly radio show in Canada (*Dialogue with Diversity*), where he talks about peace and gender equality, and for which he won four national prizes. So far, Ghanem has written three novels: *Final Flight from Sana'a*, *Two Boys from Aden College*, and *Forbidden Love in the Land of Sheba*. By consent of the author, the corpus was created in an electronically-readable format including the main texts only. The table below shows the attributes of GHANEM Corpus, followed by plot summaries of the novels.

Table 1. *Attributes of texts in GHANEM Corpus*

Title	Year of Publication	Selected Major Yemeni Characters		Number of Words
		Male	Female	
<i>Final Flight from Sana'a (FFFS)</i>	2011	Tariq	Muna	56 527
<i>Two Boys from Aden College (TBAC)</i>	2012	Ahmad	Salma	92 592
<i>Forbidden Love in the Land of Sheba (FLLS)</i>	2014	Farook	Hana	39 273
Total		3	3	188 392

FFFS is about Tariq, a Yemeni doctor living in Canada, and his journey of return to Yemen. Tariq's relationship with his bar friend Colin, a lawyer, leads to a business trip to Yemen in order to introduce medical machines to the country. In Yemen, he gets involved with the rape case of Muna, the daughter of an old friend (Farook), and eventually he is arrested by high officials and is sent to prison. Gita, a western married woman who had had an affair with Tariq, travels to Yemen to rescue him. She succeeds and they both leave Yemen. In the airport, and on his way back to Ottawa, Tariq falls down and loses consciousness, thus marking the end of the novel.

TBAC is a story about two Yemeni friends from Aden city Ahmed and Hasan whose intelligence secure them good education in Britain. Ahmed studies medicine while Hasan goes for law. The 'good' forensic doctor Ahmed goes back to Yemen to practice medicine but faces problems when he diagnoses murder so he has to escape. A young prostitute helps him. Hasan mistreats his western wife and when he comes back to Yemen he becomes rich and high-ranked (the minister of justice), gets married to Ahmed's sister Salma and mingles in the corrupted regime.

Ghanem's FLLS is about Farook, a young Yemeni doctor who studies in Scotland. When he comes back to Yemen and opens a clinic, he indulges in a relationship with his cousin Hana who is forced to marry a criminal who is twice her age. They manage to escape the country by much difficulty.

4. Objectives of the Study

This paper aims to

1. Investigate the representation of fe/male characters in GHANEM corpus via collocation analysis.
2. Examine similarities or differences in the linguistic construction of collective gendered characters using collocational network analysis
3. Find out who does what to whom in the corpus by looking at transitivity processes collocated with characters

5. Methodology

Two methods of analysis are employed in this paper: the first is the quantitative analysis realized in statistical generation of graphs of collocations and collocational networks using the corpus analytical tool *GraphColl*. The second is qualitative in nature realized in studying agency and actions, feelings and thoughts of the characters via the tool of transitivity.

5.1. *GraphColl*

GraphColl is accessed through LancsBox, a new generation software package developed by Brezina, McEnery and Timperely at Lancaster University. It "implements a range of different collocation measures (including the directional Delta P), and also allows the user to define their own statistics via a simple interface" (Brezina, et al., 2015, p. 141). The first version was released in 2015, the second in 2017. In this study, we have used the first version 2.0.0 because it has the freeze feature which allows moving the collocates so that a better visualization is enhanced, and overpopulation is eliminated.

Using the tool, we generated graphs of collocations of the six characters as well as collocational networks of female and male characters. The following settings were used: cut-off and statistical measure (word span: three words to each side of the node/ name (in order to identify the strongest and closest collocates), a minimum frequency value: three for male characters and two for female characters (since we are working on a comparatively small corpus and we minimized the frequency

collocation cut to 2 because their frequency of occurrence in the corpus is small in comparison their male counterparts) and a minimum MI score: four in order to eliminate function words. Indeed, using MI (Mutual Information) as the statistical measure is beneficial for this study in the sense that it does not show collocations on the basis of their frequency of occurrence in the corpus only but also displays statistically significant collocates according to dispersion and distance, thus eliminating grammatical words and highlighting content adjectives, nouns, verbs and adverbs.

Concordances of noun and adjective collocates were, then, generated in order to find out lexical patterns of positive or negative representation. Collocations of verbs and their concordances, however, were generated for the qualitative in-depth lexico-grammatical analysis in order to figure out who does what to whom and what is being done, felt, thought or said. This kind of analysis is done via the second analytical tool employed for the study, named transitivity.

5.2. Transitivity

Transitivity is "the set of options whereby the speaker encodes his [sic] experience of the process of the external world, and of the internal world of his consciousness, together with the participants in these processes and their attendant circumstances" (Halliday, 1971, cited in Mills, 1994, p. 142). Mills (1994) states that "by analysing patterns in transitivity choice it is possible to make more general statements about the way that characters view their position in the world and their relation to others" (p. 143).

Stylisticians doing transitivity analyses formulate their tools from Halliday's (1971) framework. Mills (1994) uses Burton's (1982) framework which is considered the first of its kind in feminist stylistics. Burton's (1982) processes include three types; material, mental and relational. Material processes are "elements which are actions which can be observed in the real world and which have consequences". These can be either Material action intention (MAI henceforth), in which "there is a clear will to do something", or Material Action Supervention (MAS), in which "there is an attempt to capture for analysis those verbal processes where things are not done intentionally". Mental internalised (MI) and mental externalised (ME) processes, on the other hand, are those containing elements "which take place largely in the mind", while relational processes include elements "which simply relate two elements together" (Mills, 1995, p. 142).

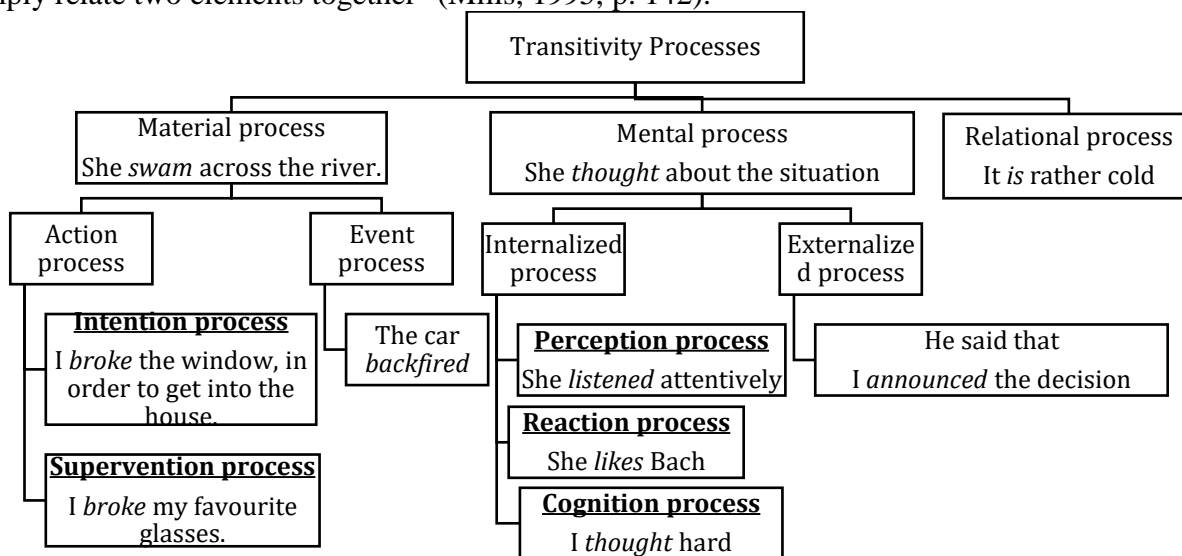


Chart1: Transitivity processes (adapted from Mills (1995) p. 144, and Burton (1982), p. 199.

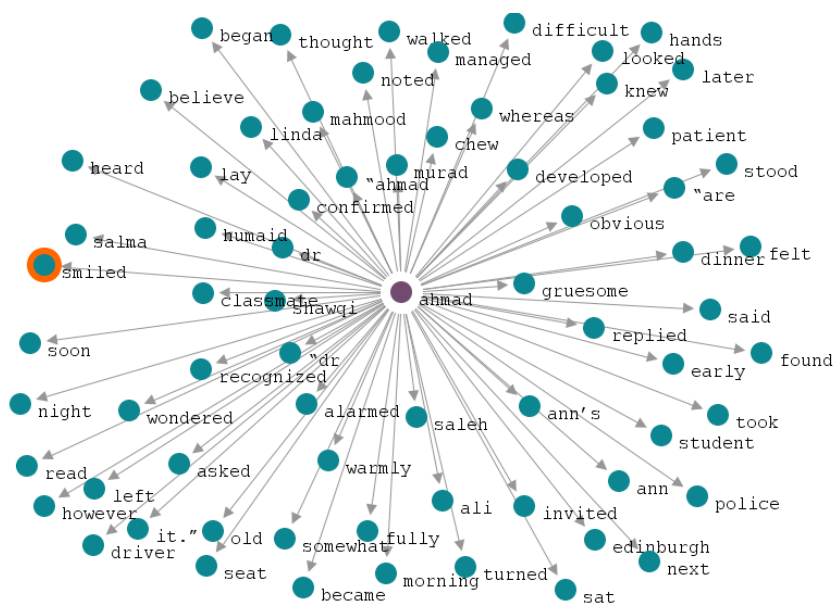
name, heard some commotion from behind the curtains, heard a conversation outside his cell. Found, as well, functions as MAI in eventually found his [suitcase], as MA supervention in found himself with several hours to spend, and found himself extending his hand of friendship, while as an MI cognition process in found Colin surprisingly excited about the whole.

There are other processes that are considered an intermediate between material action and mental processes which are referred to by Halliday (1994) as verbal processes. There are 54 occurrences of these processes demonstrated by *nodded* (2), *replied* (3), *continued* (4), *asked* (14), *smiled* (2), *said* (25), *began* (2), *started* (2). One possible interpretation of the dominance of these processes is that the corpus under scrutiny is composed of novels narrated from a third-person point of view.

The narrator’s evaluation can be detected in the surrounding structures of these verbs. Tariq’s playfulness and intelligence are seen in *saying..with a mischievous smile*, and in *asking..to test the man’s knowledge*. It is also seen in mental processes as in *playing along/the game*. His openness is seen in saying with *raising eyebrows*; his capability in *managing to..get/sleep/speak*. Other examples of narrator’s evaluation are *said with a fake frown*, *said with a (mischievous) smile*, (3) *said. trying to pretend*, *said with bitterness*, *said quietly*. The repetition of *mischievous* demonstrates Tariq’s playfulness. However, there is only 1 instance in which *said* is employed to directly answer a question *Here in my luggage’, said Tariq*. These are demonstrated in the selected concordances below.

Table 2. Selected concordances of verb collocates of Tariq in GHANEM Corpus

his glass, then stepping back to wait for the verdict.	Tariq	also played the game to its full , looking at the
turned inward toward her left thigh and blocked his view.	Tariq	played along, and said “Yes indeed, just like I told
remember well how it was when we were young, Doctor?”	Tariq	played along and smiled back , and said “Yes, as Maurice
this mission is done.” With raised eyebrows	Tariq	asked , “Why do you say that?” “This
“Maybe your luck has just changed?” said	Tariq,	raising his eyebrows . “I wouldn’t count on
as soon as we get back,” said	Tariq	with a mischievous smile . Over the next
of curiosity, of course, not voyeurism,” said	Tariq	with a mischievous smile . He continued. “I
moved in with Brian.” “Lucky Brian!” said	Tariq	with a smile . “You mean you don’t
have something to do with nerves,” said	Tariq	with a big dose of intended sarcasm .
honor?” “How would you do that?” asked	Tariq,	to test the man’s knowledge . “I would



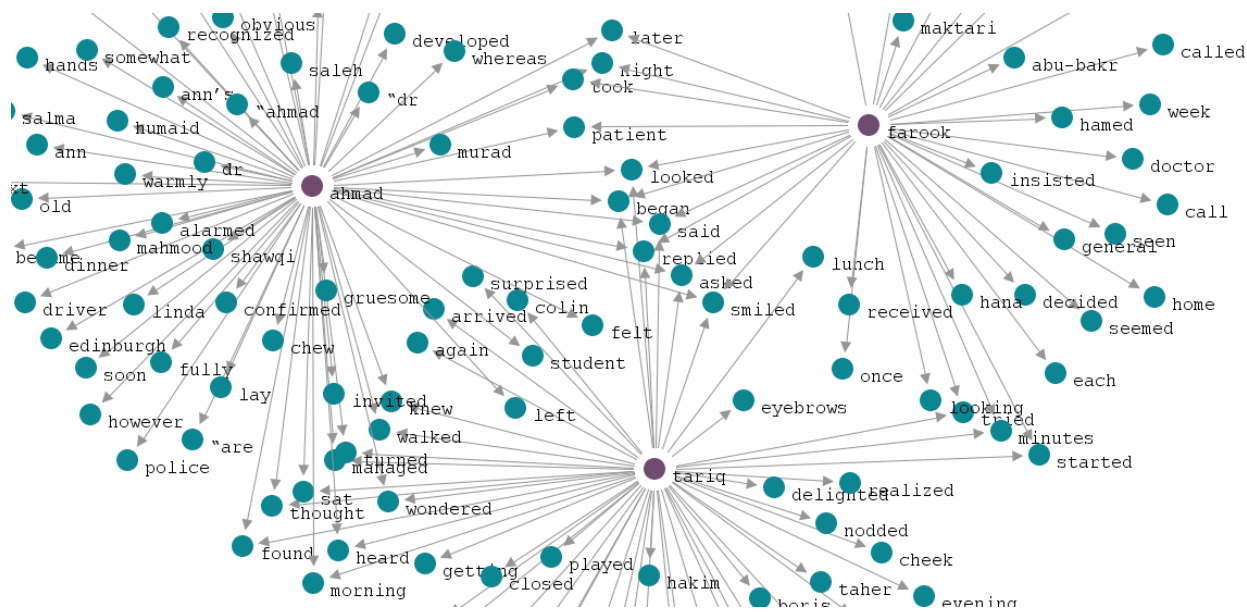
Graph2. Collocates of Ahmad in GHANEM corpus, produced by GraphColl in LancsBox 2.0.0

Similar to Tariq, Ahmad is mostly identified with words related to his career and social identity. 'Dr' tops the list of collocates with an MI score of 8.6, followed by *Shawqi* (MI 7.33), his father's name. Almost 50% of its occurrences (6 out of 13), 'dr' appears in the narrator's speech as shown in the following concordances. Ahmad is also addressed by 'dr' by other characters in 5 out of 13 of its occurrences. This statistical preference highlights the narrator's formal attitude towards Ahmad emphasizing his identity and social rank.

Verb collocates of the list constitute 29 out of the total number of collocates (69) appearing in 189 concordances. Out of these, 133 occurrences have Ahmad as the agent. The rest are either actions done by other characters, for example, *looked/ smiled at Ahmad, invited Ahmad*, etc. or repetitions of the same concordances. Out of the 133 occurrences, there are 40 MA either having Ahmad as the agent in control of himself and his environment in MAI as *chew* (2), *lay* (3), *invited* (3) (Ahmad here is the agent but not the doer of the action hence the clauses are passivized), *managed* (4), *walked* (3), *turned* (2), *began* (2), *sat* (3), *took* (4), *stood* (2), *read* (2), *left* (5), *found* (1), or having no control over how he feels or acts as in MA supervision processes realized in *developed* (1), and *found* (3). Ahmad is also the senser of 45 MI processes (cognition: *recognized* (3), *knew* (8), *wondered* (3), *believe* (2), *thought* (9), *felt* (4), *heard* (2), *found* (3); reaction: *smiled* (3); perception: *noted* (4), *looked* (1), *felt* (1), *heard* (2)). Relational processes make only 8 of the total concordances realized in *developed* (3), *began* (1), *became* (3), *took* (1).

Although verbal processes in collocation with Ahmad (39 occurrences) such as *said, asked* and *replied*, do not dominate as they did with Tariq, they are evaluated by the narrator as in '*said with a chuckle*', '*said with a (mischievous/big) smile*'(4), '*said with obvious sarcasm*' and '*said quietly to himself*'. These examples signify a character that is playful and sarcastic, however, there are also other instances where he is associated with clausal structures that entail negative prosody such as *asked angrily with a tremulous voice, raising his voice involuntarily*. In fact, the first collocate in the Ahmad's collocation list is the adjective *gruesome* which carries negative prosody as shown in the following concordances. One more thing to note here is that unlike Tariq, Ahmad's mental processes are demonstrated negatively showing the character's physical and mental struggle as in *felt terrified/ nauseated, found himself summoned, and found it difficult to*.

As demonstrated by the graph and the table below there are 24 shared collocates between each two of the three male characters Tariq, Ahmad and Farook. 19 out of these 24 are verb collocates. The following analysis will be focused on how the verb collocates function in relation to the characters, the type of processes each verb carries and its implications.



Graph4. Collocational network of major male eastern protagonists in GHANEM corpus, produced by GraphColl in LancsBox 2.0.0

Table 3. Shared collocates between male protagonists in GHANM Corpus

Tariq and Ahmad	<i>Morning, heard, found, thought, sat, wondered, managed, turned, walked, knew</i>
Tariq and Farook	<i>Looking, tried, minutes, started,</i>
Ahmad and Farook	<i>Later, night, took, patient,</i>
All	<i>Looked, began, said, replied, asked, smiled</i>

As an MI perception process, *looked* is used 19 times of which 10 are processes where the male characters are the sensors while in the rest they are the phenomenon or *looked at*. Tariq plays the role of the sensor 3 times while phenomenon 5 times. Out of the total 11 concordances in which Ahmad collocates with *looked*, Ahmad is a sensor in 5, phenomenon in 2. The rest 4 examples are not mental processes, rather, *looked* here functions as a relation process as *looked somewhat odd, looked quite stunned, looked devastated, and was looked upon*. Farook is a sensor of 1 mental process but a phenomenon in 2 and plays both roles with the female protagonist Hana as *Farook and Hana looked at each other*.

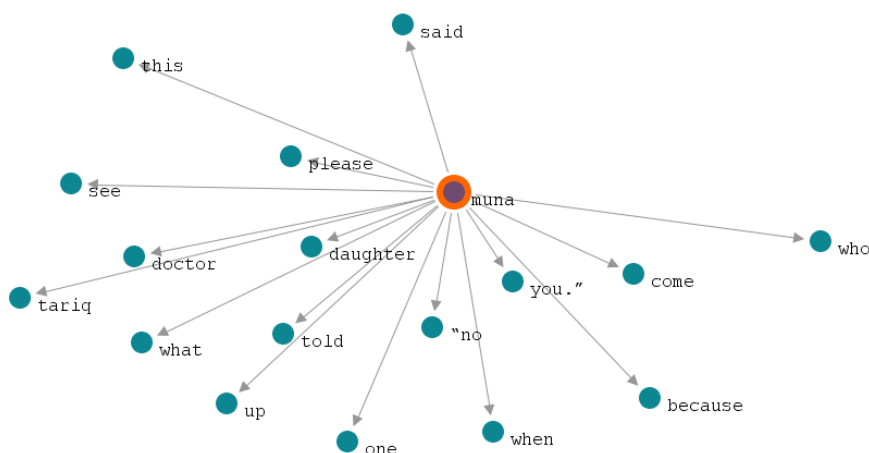
Smiled is an MI reaction process collocating with each character as the sensor 2 times. Tariq and Farook, as the phenomenon, collocate twice each with *smiled*. However, Ahmad plays the roles of the sensor and phenomenon when he and Hana are together. They *turned towards each other and*

smiled. The last argument lends support to the previous argument that Farook is tender only with Hana.

The verb *began* is used as a MAI process in 2 instances and as a verbal process in 3 concordances and 3 as an MI cognition process as in '*Tariq began to feel*' (2), and '*Áhmad began to worry*'. Although other clausal choices could have been selected such as *was feeling* or *felt nauseated/worried*, the narrator has selected *began*, as an indication that the characters (here only Tariq and Áhmad) are introspective by nature, being aware of their emotions, moreover, it indicates how it is possible for their negative feelings to develop. Also, the narrator is assuming a complete knowledge of feelings experienced by the characters allowing the reader an access to their cognition.

Said, replied and *asked* appear in the shared collocates between the three characters. On their own, they are not significant in the sense that they are used as verbal processes functioning to report the characters' speeches in a corpus of novels narrated from a third-person point of view. However, evaluative structures surrounding them are significant in showing the narrators' depictions of the characters generally as powerful, playful and sarcastic. For example, Farook, who collocates with '*said*' 14 times, '*said with a (naughty) smile*' (2), '*said with a chuckle*', '*pretending he didn't understand*', '*said with a grin*', '*said knowing*', '*said giving a suspicious look*'. And, Tariq '*asked to test the man's knowledge*', Ahmad '*asked angrily*', and Farook '*asked aggressively*', and '*asked looking into Gihad's eyes*'.

6.3. Collocations of the female protagonists in GHANEM Corpus

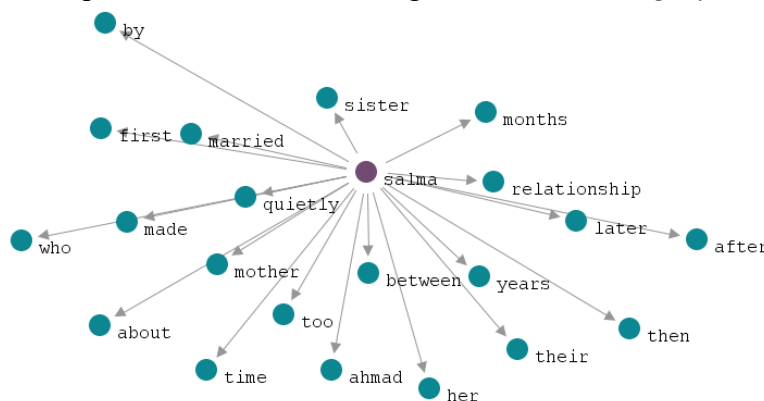


Graph5. Collocates of Muna in FFFS corpus, produced by GraphColl in LancsBox 2.0.0

The graph above shows collocates of Muna in FFFS corpus not in GHANEM corpus because when we first generated the list in GHANEM corpus, the word *secretary* appeared at the top of the list. This was surprising because Muna, the female protagonist in FFFS, is not an employee, and a quick look at the concordance showed that *secretary* is a strong collocate of another minor character named Muna, mentioned in the second novel TBAC. What is interesting here is that *GraphColl* lists the collocates showing the most important aspects of the characters such as their jobs!

There are 18 collocates of Muna, of which 11 are content words while the rest are function words such as *you*, *because*, *what*, *up* etc. The top collocate in the list is *daughter* with an MI score of 8.95. Other nouns in the list include *Tariq* and *doctor*. These word choices demonstrate Muna's subordination in the sense that she is a daughter of a male, and a patient of a male doctor!

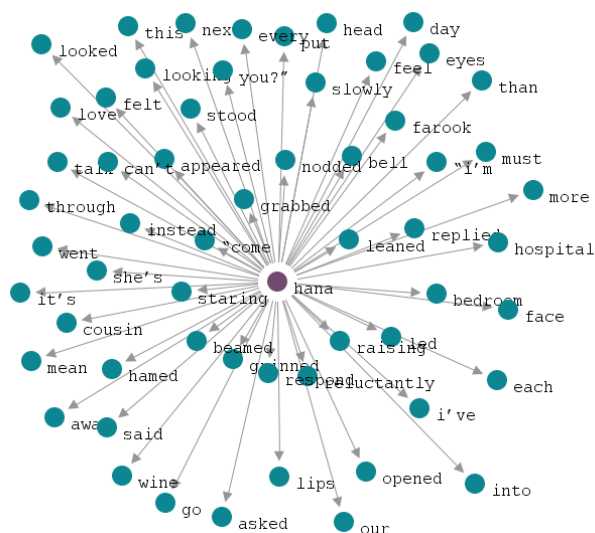
Verbs and adverbs collocates of Muna include *please, come, told, see, said*. These make 10 concordances of which the adverb *please* appears twice, however not used by Muna, rather by Tariq who gently asking her to stop talking about her rape experience. Another instance is when Tariq asks Muna’s husband to discuss the issue with her. There are 2 MAI processes realized in the action verb *come*. However, Muna is not the agent, rather she is being acted upon; ordered by her father to ‘*come and greet the doctor*’, and ‘*come here immediately!*’. Moreover, in the verbal and mental processes, *told, said* and *see* respectively, Muna is being seen and told about. There is only one instance, out of ten, in which there is an exposition of Muna’s feelings in *said Muna angrily*.



Graph 6. Collocates of Salma in GHANEM corpus, produced by GraphColl in LancsBox 2.0.0

Similar to Muna, Salma also collocates with words denoting her familial status as *relationship, sister, married, mother, Ahmad*. What is noteworthy here is that in one of the concordances, Salma is associated with the Arabic term *Alkareemah*, meaning honorable and used in the Yemeni culture to refer to sisters instead of mentioning their names. Even collocates related to time such as *months, years, and time* are situated in a context of familial issues such as announcing pregnancy (*Three months later, Salma announced to her husband that*), giving birth, comparing age with an elder brother (*Salma was five years his junior*), etc.

Verbs and adverbs collocates of Salma are *quietly, first* and *made*. *Quietly* tops the list of collocates with an MI score of 8.7. It premodifies the MAS *sell* in the sense that she does not have the choice to ‘sell’ because she is given ‘*time to quietly sell*’. *Made* is a MAI realized in *Salma made sure he had enough blankets to*, where, although Salma is the actor, the action benefits someone else and it emphasizes Salma’s care and empathy within a familial context. The adverb *first* appears in a clause that contains a relational process ‘*had her first baby boy*’, again her role as a mother is emphasized here.



Graph7. Collocates of Hana in GHANEM corpus, produced by GraphColl in LancsBox 2.0.0

The most statistically significant noun collocating with Hana is *bedroom* (6.7 MI), followed by *lips*, *Hamed*, *Farook*, *cousin*, *hospital*, *face* (also used as a verb), *wine*, *head*, *eyes*. Unlike Muna and Salma, Hana only collocates with one kinship term ‘*cousin*’. Hana’s collocates are mainly parts of the body or places as *bedroom* and *hospital*; objects as *bell*; drink as *wine*. Hana’s relationship with Farook and Hamed are highlighted via the conjunction *and* (as in *Hana and Hamed were ushered, the hospital informed Hana and Hamed, Hana and Farook asked each other, Hana and Farook practically ran*, etc.) which indicates equivalence and togetherness in portrayal. Another word denoting Hana’s relationship with the men is *cousin*. What is interesting here is that she is described in one of the instances as *cousin Hana is a rebellious woman*. Beside to that representation, Hana is depicted as actively engaged in drinking wine and making love with Farook as seen in the following concordances.

Table 4. Selected concordances of noun collocates of Hana in GHANEM Corpus

moment he rang the bell, as if	Hana	were already standing behind it. “Ahlan wa
only to ring the bell once for	Hana	to open the door. As he stepped
arm toward the spare bedroom, but	Hana	knelt down seductively on the living room
instead,		
what can—” Before he finished his	Hana	put her lips on his. He made
sentence,		
looked with utter lust at each other.	Hana	clamped her lips on his left nipple,
expressed no emotion, but he nodded.	Hana	grabbed Farook’s wine glass and took a
Suddenly,		
raising her eyebrows. Both had great	Hana	poured white wine for both, and enjoyed
appetites.		
the two fumbled with the seat belts.	Hana	leaned her head against Farook’s shoulder
		and
her. It took a full hour before	Hana	opened her eyes a crack, looked briefly
As she seductively lay on the bed,	Hana	whispered with eyes half closed, “Take me,
it when we make love next time,”	Hana	chuckled. “You mean I wasn’t good enough

Verbs collocating with Hana are 27 in number including *grinned* (topping the list with 10.6 MI score). In 20 of the 75 generated concordances, Hana is being affected by the actions of other characters mostly Farook. However, in the rest 55 occurrences, Hana is the agent/actor of 15 MAI processes realized in verbs as *grabbed* (2), *leaned* (2), *raising* (2), *led* (1), *appeared* (1), *stood* (3), *put* (1), *go* (3). She is also the senser in the following 12 MI processes, perception: *grinned* (1), *beamed* (2), *staring* (2), *looking* (1), *looked* (1); reaction: *love* (1); cognition: *feel* (2), *felt* (2). Hana, moreover, plays the role of the sayer in the following 19 verbal processes *respond* (1), *nodded* (2), *replied* (3), *said* (11), *asked* (1), *talk* (1), and she also collocates with relational processes carried by *appeared* (1) and *mean* (1). One verb collocate worth discussing here is *come* (2). It functions as an imperative given by Hana to Farook.

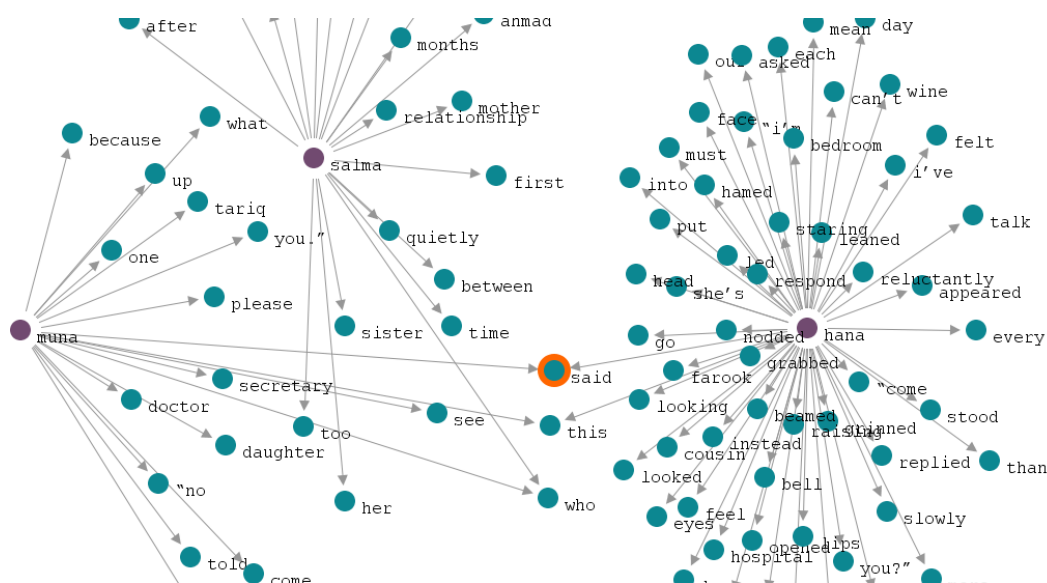
Observing the concordances of the processes mentioned above, one can make the following interpretations. First, Hana is actively engaged in the narration and assertively in control of her environment including other characters as Farook as demonstrated above. Second, Hana is portrayed as a playful and assertive character (*raising her eyebrows* (2), *said this with a chuckle/ with a quizzical smile*, *asked..equally concerned for her own welfare*) when she says something. Moreover, she is associated with positive prosody, thus depicting her as cheerful. Finally, she collocates with progressive verbs as *staring*, *looking*, and *raising*, which all denote her dynamic and zestful nature. Her boldness and tenderness are, furthermore, seen in *replied..scolding him/giving him a big kiss*.

6.4. Collocational networks of the female protagonists in GHANEM Corpus

There are no shared collocates between the three characters Muna, Salma and Hana. The shared collocates shown in *GraphColl* are ‘*said*’, ‘*this*’, and ‘*who*’. The first of these is considered a content word and also a shared collocate with the male characters.

Table 5. Shared collocates between female protagonists in GHANEM Corpus

Muna and Salma	Who
Muna and Hana	Said, this
Hana and Salma	---
All	---



Graph8: collocational network of major female protagonists in GHANEM Corpus, produced by *GraphColl* in LancsBox 2.0.0

'Said' collocates with Muna (2) and Hana (11) but not with Salma. There is an evaluative adverb postmodifying it in '*Muna said angrily*'. Hana's speech, however, signifies her playful and cheerful character. This is evident in evaluative structures as '*with a chuckle*', '*raising her eyebrows*' (2), '*with a quizzical smile*'. There is only one instance in which she is shown helpless as '*said in desperation*'.

With Hana, '*this*' functions both as a demonstrative pronoun (4) and as a demonstrative adjective (4). Two of these postmodify '*said*' as in '*said this with a chuckle*', and '*said this with a quizzical smile*'. Comparing its position here with the '*said*' concordances of the male characters, there is only one instance out of 72 concordances in which it is being used, while with the female characters it makes 25% of the concordances. This deictic expression indicates an emphasis and recall of what has been '*said*'.

Both Salma and Muna collocate with the relative pronoun '*who*'. Structures postmodifying '*who*' demonstrate the use of multiple processes; Muna who '*was drying her tears*' (MAI), '*was experiencing the longest and worst convulsions*' (MAS), Salma, however, '*was not consulted*' (passivized ME), '*was married and secure with her husband*' and '*was oblivious of the other men*' (relational). All of these patterns indicate suffering, unimportance, dependence and indifference.

7. Conclusion

Portraying the male characters in accordance to their social rank and identity while depicting their female counterparts with relevance to the roles they play in relation to other men or their families is not at all surprising, given the patriarchal nature of the Yemeni society. What is astonishing, though, is the construction of the female character Hana. Her assertiveness and active engagement in the narration sets her as an equivalent to the other men, not as subordinate or dependent as the other female protagonists. It is perhaps the author's imaginative aspiration, affected by his stay in the West, for the existence of this kind of powerful woman in the Yemeni society; someone who does what she feels and feels what she does!

Thus, the analysis of collocations and collocational networks of characters and integrating it in the investigation of multi-layered transitivity processes has proved to be beneficial for the examination of gender representation. It has shown the distinctive characteristics of each individual character as well as shared traits with other characters belonging to the same gender. This lends support to Mills (1995) argument that not all female characters are represented in a certain/similar manner, usually as subordinate lacking control of themselves and their environment, moreover, that there are not right or wrong representations of women in texts.

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Ohood Ali Mohammed Saif Al-Nakeeb

Research Scholar

Department of Linguistics

University of Kerala

India

ohoodnakeeb@gmail.com



Basheer Ahmed Hamood Mufleh

Research Scholar

Department of Linguistics

University of Kerala

India

bmufleh@gmail.com