



## Examining Classroom Discourse in Iraqi Secondary School Classes Using the Systemic Functional Linguistics Approach

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### Abstract

This study aimed to describe practically materials for teaching discourse analysis in Iraqi secondary schools and validate materials for teaching discourse analysis by using systemic functional linguistic approach. Aiming towards a material design of Discourse Analysis grounded on systemic functional linguistics, this study was research (in theory) and development (in practice). This study applied 4D Model with the process define, design, develops and spreads. Sixty students from the Al-Maymona secondary school for boys were chosen. Observation and questionnaire constituted the method of data collecting. The study of material design development turned out to be valid based on validators and students' questionnaire. The elements that had been decided had matched the material of the textbook, which had been suitable with the competencies on the curriculum. Teaching discourse analysis had involved pragmatic materials. The learning process, the material, time allocation, and student needs all clearly show this. The resources from the discourse analysis grounded in systemic functional linguistic worked well.

**Keywords:** Teaching Material; Discourse Analysis; and SFL Approach.

دراسة الخطاب الصفي في المدارس الثانوية العراقية باستخدام منهج اللغويات الوظيفية النظامية  
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### الملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى وصف مواد تدريس تحليل الخطاب في المدارس الثانوية العراقية عملياً، والتحقق من صحتها باستخدام المنهج اللغوي الوظيفي النظامي. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تصميم مواد لتحليل الخطاب استناداً إلى اللغويات الوظيفية النظامية، وقد خضعت للبحث (نظرياً) والتطوير (تطبيقياً). وطبقت نموذجاً رباعي الأبعاد يتضمن عملية التعريف والتصميم والتطوير والنشر. تم اختيار ستين طالباً من مدرسة الميمونة الثانوية للبنين. وشكل الاستبيان والملاحظة أسلوب جمع البيانات. وقد أثبتت دراسة تطوير تصميم المواد فعاليتها استناداً إلى أدوات التحقق واستبيان الطلاب. تطابقت العناصر التي تم تحديدها مع محتوى الكتاب المدرسي، والتي كانت مناسبة لكفاءات المنهج. تضمن تدريس تحليل الخطاب مواد عملية. ويظهر ذلك جلياً من خلال عملية التعلم، والمواد، وتخصيص الوقت، واحتياجات الطلاب. وقد نجحت الموارد المستمدة من تحليل الخطاب القائم على اللغويات الوظيفية النظامية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مواد تعليمية؛ تحليل الخطاب؛ ومنهج اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.



## 1. Introduction

Currently in the academic community, the study has very different forms of discourse include talking on information in social media, humor, insults, critiques, description, explanation, procedure, argumentation, narration, history, report, visual picture and education etc. Researching many forms of communication helps one to demonstrate their own experience. Therefore, in language education particularly in the evolution of human experience is highly dynamic; this implies that life and the advancement are full of exchange of experience and requires discourse analysis.

Two words in discourse analysis—discourse and analysis—rule guide. Whereas discourse is oral and written language uses, analysis is the method of closely scrutinizing the detail of anything in order to comprehend and to explain it. Joining the two concepts, discourse and analysis, indicates that analysis is the method of analyzing the specifics of speech to grasp and justify the meaning of it.

For academics, working in several fields, the phrase "discourse analysis" has evolved to have several meanings. It implies that it finds use in quite several spheres. Discourse analysis helps to explain the actual human experience by means of the text and the background of how the human experience is expressed, connected, shared, and arranged (Johnstone & Andrus, 2024). To represent, to relate, to exchange and to organize means that some criteria must be numbered and then examined on speech (Witt & Fiser, 2022). At last, the criteria are called "teaching tools" in the field of education.

This study will mostly address the extent of discourse analysis in language and the application in social context as the key issues. To detail them all, one will also have means of comprehension, understanding, and mastery of the scopes of discourse analysis. Therefore, in discourse analysis, one needs a strategy to grasp and clarify the meaning and the scopes of conversation. Accordingly, a systematic functional language approach is used.

The British linguist Halliday developed the systemic functional language in the 1970s. This fundamental method of grammar analysis is highly important since it precisely serves as the link between social and linguistic structure. An approach of language that addresses the language as a social semantic system (Cristofaro, 2023) is systemic functional linguistics (SFL). Apart from that, SFL is also characterized as a method in which a language developed by a sequence of systems in which the speaker or the writer has unrestricted options of approaches in generating meaning (Thompson, 2013). SFL is therefore a method of language



study that links the context of the language to every single unit of language structure.

Since so many English education departments, particularly in Iraq, do not develop this technique, systemic functional linguistics is rather promising and vital to provide resources for teaching discourse analysis (Matthiessen and Teruya, 2023). Many of Iraq schools' syllabuses and courses reflect this fact. Based on Chomskian theory, they simply concentrate on the degree of semantic and pragmatic parts. Consequently, many terminology used in discourse analysis still have great relevance for the method.

According to conventional wisdom on language, traditional grammar (Halliday, 1985) is what counts. It is the theory of language elements and how the eight parts of speech in tenses shape the arrangement of the language elements. Conventional grammar mostly addresses English standard grammar. Usually, it is set in relation to Latin. English students are supposed to learn names of parts of speech, creating phrases in textbook and recognizing or fixing grammar or generally, it is termed passive language strategy.

## **2.The Problem of the Study**

What occurs in the class occupies a central part of the educational system. So, a great effort needs to be activated and played to cover this area of study. Interactive activities and classroom management involve many successful procedures and strategies that promote the students' performance in language skills. Henceforth, people in concern, i.e., those people who are specialized in curricula design and teachers, should have a sufficient data on how to interact successfully in classroom discourse due to the active role of the classroom discourse in making better results to students' competence in achieving the syllabus aims and goals. Halliday's systemic functional linguistics has been adopted to make students have knowledge in English grammar through successful discourse in the classroom.

## **3. The Questions and Hypotheses of the Study**

- 1.Does classroom discourse contribute to make students gain SFL better?
2. Does SFL have a better understanding of the English grammar than that the conventional grammar in the textbook?

The following hypotheses have been adopted:

1. Classroom discourse does not contribute to make students gain SFL better.



2. SFL does not have a better understanding of the English grammar than that of the conventional grammar.

#### **4.The Aim of the Study**

The study aims at examining the classroom discourse through using Halliday's systemic functional linguistics in Iraqi EFL secondary schools.

#### **5. The Significance of the Study**

The present study focuses mainly on classroom discourse and SFL. Classroom discourse has a vital role in language development. No better results are made in case the classroom discourse is ignored. Because all activities and communal participations between students happen in classroom discourse. SFL also has a great reputation in the community campus that was made by Halliday. It has a big foundation as a theory. So, SFL and classroom discourse are very important terms in language teaching and linguistic studies.

#### **6.Classroom Discourse**

Classroom discourse talks about classroom events. It is a kind of conversation fit for language classrooms—more especially, for verbal activities in classroom (Rex and Shiller, 2010). Features of classroom discourse include types of interactions, instructor speaking, and uneven power relations. According to Zuengler and Cole (2017), classroom discourse is a complex sociocultural process including strategies of meaning formation in the evolution of students' social identities. Therefore, one should give great attention to the function and communication of instructors in the classroom. Attached to classroom discourse are instructors' speech and duties as they change and adapt forms of language to improve interactions and communications (Wajdi, 2018).

#### **7.Teaching Material**

It is the process of attending to people's needs, involved knowledge, skill and attitude to attain the competency that has been decided (Liston and Rahimi, 2023). Usually, linguistic characteristics are defined by significant linguistic studies or materials (Brebner and Han, 2023.). Beginning from phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics, they are investigated in language education. Two materials concerning meaning are semantics and pragmatics.



Whereas pragmatics is the study of meaning in social context, semantics is the study of meaning in text (Nemeth and Bebok, 2022). Combining together, the two of them cannot be split in terms of analyzing meaning. Actually, for many circumstances joining the two meanings together is not simple and requires simpler, more basic materials or qualities. In this scenario, discourse analysis serves rather well. It implies that by means of constructing the resources for teaching discourse analysis, it covers such elements of semantics and pragmatics in analyzing meaning of text and the meaning of the social situation.

### **8. Discourse Analysis**

Discourse analysis is a technique used in study of a speech (Saragih, 2006). While discourse is oral and written language usage (Strauss and Feiz, 2013), analysis defined as the process of analyzing the detail of something in order to comprehend and to explain it. Joining the two words, discourse and analysis, suggests that they are the means of closely analyzing the elements of speech to grasp and justify the meaning of it.

Language is the medium of communication. Language is named text; it means such morphing, words; groupings, phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs or more. (Halliday, 2003). The language use implies such the interpretation, interaction, organization or genre, kinds of speech, literature works, sciences, education, essays, communication, textbook, translation, registers, discussions, drama, TV programs, semiotic codes such pictures, film, symbols, comic strips, colors, and other visual aspects (Connor-Linton and Fasold, 2006). In discourse analysis, one has to have a strategy to grasp and clarify the meaning of speech. Accordingly, a systematic functional language approach is used.

Discourse analysis helps to explain the actual human experience by means of the text and the background of how the human experience is shown, transmitted, shared, and arranged as discourse. To represent, to relate, to exchange and to organize means that some criteria must be numbered and then examined on speech. At last, the criteria are called teaching tools in the field of education.

### **9. Systemic Functional Linguistics**

Developed by M. A. K. Halliday, systemic functional linguistics is a recent method in language studies. Originally from British, English is the language of study. Systemic functional linguistics has now been used in numerous languages. Systemic functional linguistics generates language perspective as the generativism (Halliday, 1985). It implies that it carries on the past views since they are conventional and transforming ones. It provides such detailed explanations of



language components based on meaning. Every language element is thus produced by meaning, and then language elements help to understand meaning.

Systemic functional linguistics holds that human experience is language (Halliday, 1994). Language is thus humans' production of their experiences arranged in words, groups, phrases, clauses, sentences or text, and at last they are expressed in general in sounds and symbols. Linguistically speaking, human experience is creator; language is creation.

Situation consists in three elements: field or ideational (what is going on) or experiential function, tenor or interpersonal function (The social positions and interactions among the participants) and mode (Aspects of the communication channel include whether it is monologic or dialogic, spoken or written, and if there is visual contact or not) or the textual function (Lennon, 2020). They have been the grammar of the representation, relatedness, sharing, and organization of an experience. Systemic Functional linguistics refers to that as metafunctions. Metafunction is the study of text and context functions. Metafunction is the systemic functional linguistics developed by Halliday. The newspaper runs alongside several of his associates (1994).

One can investigate language in written and oral forms as well as not from the functional point of view (Malovrh and Moreno, 2023). Metafunctions claim that they simultaneously encode three strand meanings, Experiential, textual, and Interpersonal (Catalano and Waugh , 2020), so they function in the clause, sentence, phrase, etc. One of them has to be able to translate a given text in terms of its metafunctions in order to be able to read, listen well, and grasp a certain text (Halliday, 1985). Within grammatical construction of a clause, metafunctions have three different connotations (Halliday, 1994). Three of four distinct types—Logical or Experiential (clause as representation), Interpersonal function (clause as an exchange), and Textual—clause as a message—are integrated in a clause.

Moreover, functional grammar is a method of language based on the roles or functions performed by language or human beings to language in their daily life as social beings (Saragih, 2006). Based on the perspective, Saragih first explains functional research based on the premise of the language that language is organized in responding to the demands of person as a social being. Halliday shares the same point of view: language has been involved in fulfilling human wants. Second, functional approach relates to the idea that human being use language in other to complete three tasks known as Metafunctions, namely to depict ( Ideational), to exchange (Interpersonal) and to organize (Textual) experience. Thirdly, functional approach suggests that reference to its role in the whole linguistic system explains every part or unit of language in any level.

## **10. Research Methodology**



Learning technology revolves mostly on design, production, and assessment of products and programmes (Romero-Hall, 2020). This study and development applied generalizable or contextually particular is the two main forms of developmental research. Research and development is the process utilized in product creation and product efficacy testing (Anderson et al., 2024). The goods that have been developed in this study is discourse analysis learning tool. The processes are: a) determining the demands of textbook materials; b) providing the validated materials; c) specifying the cleanliness elements of materials; d) evaluating material practicality.

### 11. Research Findings of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was divided into four main parts. The examination outcome demonstrates that the textbook grounded on Systemic Functional Linguistics has been valid based on validator points shown in the below tables. With the competences on the syllabus, the material of the textbook has been suitable; likewise, the component has been suitable depending on the determined elements.

**Table 1: The outcome of aspects related to textbook materials**

Indicator	Average	Category
Suit the concept of SFL	3.11	valid
fits idea, definition, methods, symbols, traits to support the concept.	2.91	valid
Provide appropriate exercises, examples, and explanations to help concepts to be understood.	3.2	Very valid
The idea supported by images and table.	3,4	Very valid
Material can raise the level of instruction.	2.9	valid
Allow the image that would enable the students to grasp the content.	3.00	valid
One might inspire the students' creative thinking using examples.	2.8	valid
The scenario in question is fitting given the issue.	2.9	valid

**Table 2: The outcome of material validation presentations**

Indicator	Average	Category
Indicate adaptive learning and the learning material's order.	2.87	valid
Change the instruction to suit the students	2.3	valid



Show current resources and students' owned prerequisites for ability.	2.8	Very valid
The students should actively seek for the discourse analysis idea in order to present the material.	3,00	Very valid
The manner the content is presented inspires the students to seek questions.	2.5	valid
On the outside, the idea, concept, vocabulary, rule, and conclusion shown obviously.	3.4	Very valid
The way things are presented does not suggest that discourse analysis is challenging.	2.64	valid
Presenting information in this fascinating and straightforward manner is challenging.	2.8	valid

**Table 3: The outcome of language and material clarity aspect**

Indicator	Average	Category
The application of language is suitable given grammar and structure.	2.87	valid
The application of sentence involves logical reasoning of the students.	3.3	Very valid
Given students' abilities, sentence form is suitable.	2.82	valid
the application of communicative language	3,3	Very valid
Students would be better suited with letters and sentences.	2.7	valid
Language assists the students to build knowledge.	3.2	Very valid

**Table 4: Student Practicality Questionnaire Result**

Indicator	Average	Category
Based on Systemic Functional Linguistics, the design's elements are easily understandable.	85.60%	Very practical
Using design elements grounded on Systemic Functional Linguistics helps me to learn on my own.	86.77%	Very practical
Using information grounded in Systemic	89.33%	Very



Functional Linguistic helps me to better understand discourse analysis.		practical
Using design elements grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics allows me to be artistically inspired.	83.23%	Very practical
Systemic functional linguistics' design allows me to continue my education at home.	84.35%	Very practical
Systemic functional linguistics' design helps me to understand the idea of discourse analysis.	89.66%	Very practical
The supplied period is suitable.	91.54%	Very practical
Design materials based on Systemic Functional Linguistics so that I may study anytime	86.57%	Very practical

## 12. Discussion of Observation

How is a design content for teaching discourse analysis using Systemic Functional Linguistics approach in secondary schools in Iraq? It has been responded depending on the way validator material design validation is described. The description revealed that the material design was legitimate; so, it indicates that the design of the materials has been able to test what ought to be tested.

The order of the learning materials matched the lesson, and the indicators of the materials suited for learning. It then offered information about students' owned prerequisite ability and material skills. The approach of presenting the content is for the students to actively discover the concept of discourse analysis. Presenting the content inspired the students to ask questions. Visually, the notion, concept, vocabulary, rule, and conclusion offered were rather apparent. The approach of presenting data does not convey the idea that discourse analysis is challenging. Furthermore, the presentation of the content was entertaining and unambiguous.

The learning resources for the material element classified as valid were rather clear. It can be said that the content of the learning materials suited concept, definition, methods, symbol, and qualities meant to support the idea. It included exercise, examples, and explanation to help grasp concepts. The idea confirmed by tables and images. The content might raise the degree of learning. It fit the picture. That would enable the students to grasp the content. One could inspire the students' creative thinking by example. Given the issue, the example was suitable.

The validity of language and the clarity of knowledge arranged into legitimate. It is clear that the usage of sentence engaged students' logical thinking; the use of language with structure and grammar was suitable. Given the students' aptitude, sentence construction made sense. Then, the use of communicative language, the



usage of letter and phrase was appropriate with students and the use of language allowed the students to build knowledge. The observation concentrated on whether the time designed is suitable or no and whether the learning method of discourse analysis utilizing material design could be grasped and applied simpler. One could argue from the fact that the application of discourse analysis material was pragmatic. There was no major issue as long as the lecture procedure was under progress. The students found the material design really easy. It was because just a small number of students asked questions on the topic and material design presentation during the lecture process. The low ability students are the ones that found some trouble understanding material design. Therefore, the material design practicality is based on Systemic Functional Linguistic categorized very practical depending on the requirements.

### **Conclusion**

Based on Systemic Functional Linguistics, this R&D project aims at a Discourse Analysis textbook. The validation result falls point indicating that the textbook grounded on Systemic Functional Linguistics has been valid. With the competencies on the syllabus, the material of the textbook has been suitable; the component has been suitable with the defined elements. Teaching Discourse Analysis has required useful resources. The learning process, the materials, the way time is allocated, and the demands of the students reveal this. Data analysis showed that class interaction or class discourse forms an important step for achieving communicative class in which communication and interactive language can be found; so students can communicate in case the class interaction is mastered and adjusted in accordance with the contemporary class methods criteria.

The study covered many aspects of classroom discourse as appeared in the questionnaire items and the students' responses. Educators and curriculum designers need to take such factors into consideration to avoid all the negatives in the classroom interaction. Analyzing classroom discourse opens new horizons in the field of teaching and learning English language. There has been a concord between systemic functional linguistics and material practicality in the class which, in turn, approves authenticity in the class activities and participation.

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