

A Reflective Recount of SFL-informed grammar Pedagogy in an Indian Masters' Classroom

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Abstract

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) conceptualises grammar as a resource for meaning-making in social context rather than a set of decontextualized rules. Despite SFL-informed pedagogies transforming classroom practices in Australia, Hongkong, the US and Canada, their influence remains limited in India, even within English studies, let alone disciplinary contexts.

This paper presents a retrospective reflective account of a masters'-level elective, *EG504: Working with English Grammar*, taught in Autumn 2024 to literature-focused students with minimal exposure to language study. Though the course designed and implemented was not initially intended as a systematic research study, this paper draws its motivation from the present conference theme to examine (1) how SFL-informed grammar tasks functioned in my classroom and (2) the kinds of language awareness they generated among my students.

The tasks in the course were designed around three constructs: register (field, tenor and mode), metafunctional organisation of meaning (ideational, interpersonal and textual) and lexicogrammatical realisation of discourse semantics. Using authentic materials drawn from the local newspapers, textbook excerpts and digital media, the course engaged students with scaffolded tasks requiring them to analyse register variables configuring the situational context, explore metafunctional meanings and examine lexicogrammatical choices enacting social purposes.

In this paper, I argue that SFL-informed grammar tasks, when sequenced carefully, support students to move from viewing language as a set of rules to construing it as a meaning-making resource in social context. This paper suggests that such tasks provide learners with a metalanguage for unpacking and repacking ideologies underlying different kinds of discourses encountered in everyday life. Finally, the paper outlines pedagogical implications for integrating SFL-informed grammar tasks into both English and disciplinary classrooms in the Indian higher education context.