



## RESEARCH PAPER

### Decoding Meaning through Language Choices: A Systemic Functional Analysis of Faiz Ahmad Faiz's Poem "Captivity"

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## ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the poetic meaning in a literary text by scrutinizing it through the three metafunctions of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). The data selected for this study from Faiz Ahmad Faiz's poem 'Captivity' (متاع لوح و قلم چهن گنی تو کیا غم بے) translated into English by Daud Kamal (1984). The main objective of this study is to identify the functional elements within the "Captivity" poem. A lexico-grammatical method known as "transitivity" was used to explore the applicability of the Systemic Functional Grammar promoted by famous linguist M.A. K. Halliday. The theory establishes the view of the functionality of linguistic phenomena in the pieces of literature. The poem's analysis involved three primary functional methods within the theory: Ideational, Interpersonal, and Textual analysis. In the first category, Transitivity includes the material process, which illustrates the happening and doing process. The second interpersonal element, maintaining social relations, indicates the roles of the participants in communication. Finally, the Textual meaning makes a text into a text, such as thematic structure, information structure, and cohesion. This study indicated that elements of the material process have been found eight times in this poem compared to other metafunctions of language. The result showed that the verbs "does matter, been snatched, have dipped, does matter, have been selected, have put" belong to the material process, goals and actors are central participants of the material process and circumstance of the material process are categorized into place and location elements. This study revealed that employing SFL to analyze literary texts has introduced new perspectives to researchers and suggested potential avenues for future studies in literary works.

**KEYWORDS**      Captivity Poem, Ideational Metafunction, Interpersonal Metafunctions, Systemic Functional Grammar, Textual Metafunctions

## Introduction

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) offers a practical approach to analyzing language from a semiotic perspective. The primary aim of this theory is to ascertain the grammatical and semantic functions of language within specific contexts. M. A. K. Halliday is the leading proponent of this approach (Costetchi, 2013). SFL is based on non-transformation generative grammar; it classifies words and their functions inside the structure (Moji, 2011). It focuses on linguistic functions in various contexts.

The current study sought to support three main points: (I) analyzing the literary text in social contextual meaning; (II) identifying the ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning of Fiaz Ahmed Fiaz's poem Captivity; and (III) exploring the three meanings of clauses contribute significantly to revealing the writer's ideology in the text.

## Systemic Functional Grammar

The Halliday model of systemic functional grammar plays a significant role in exploring the complex clauses within a social-cultural and register framework. According to Halliday's (1989) model, language relies on intercommunication, events, and detailed connotations. Schaffner (2002) studied the role of discourse analysis in translation studies. For this purpose, the researchers applied Halliday's model. The result of this study shows that discourse analysis serves multiple functions in a specific context. It also constructs the relationship between functional and social meaning.

Functional Grammar is significantly related to creating the logical connection in register variations. Functional Grammar explores the purposeful meaning in-depth and carries out in lexicogrammatical combination to realize the practical sense of the poem. The following graph illuminates the model of SFL as offered by Halliday and Matthiessen (2013).

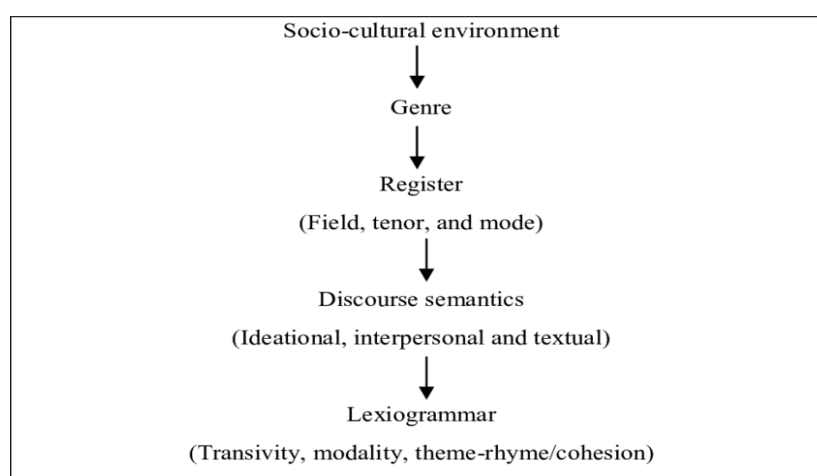


Figure.1 The Halliday Model in Systemic Functional Grammar

The style of genre involves (text type) social-cultural environment. The register consists of the context of the situation and is distributed into three categories:

1. Field-based on different activities, e.g., see pain.
2. Tenor-based on social interaction, e.g., father, son.
3. Mode-based on the mode of the speaker in communication, e.g., spoken, written

The above three variables have a significant role in the context of the situation and culture of the genre:

1. The ideational clause is associated with the text field in the transitivity system and pays attention to idiosyncratic categories of activity in participant, process, and circumstantial elements.
2. Interpersonal meaning is associated with the tenor of text modality and emphasis in mood and residue constituents.
3. Textual structure is associated with the text mode in theme and rheme factors.

## Background of the Poem

The poem "Captivity" has been translated into several languages, including English, French, Russian, and Baloch, by Daud Kamal (1984) and Victor Kiernan (1971). The verses of this poem portray the truth, love, country, people, and reality of life, as well

as preparedness to die for a belief. The writer of the poem is against the bias and identifies the socio-political meaning in the circumstantial situation. Poverty, injustice, exploitation, and sweetness are features of Fiaz's poetry. Kamal (1984) says that the poet used a forceful appeal, did not bow his head, and accepted the defeat. Further, the poet also continues the struggle for the needs of human rights. The poem's structure is divided into two grammatical characteristics: verb and noun phrases, which explore the speaker's mode in the poem.

Fiaz Ahmed Fiaz, who lived from 1911 to 1984, was a well-known poet, playwright, independence warrior, and writer of several books in the Indo-Subcontinent. His writing style distinguishes him from others, and his poetry is innovative. Fiaz uses figurative language to explore intense love and symbolic images in his written works. Therefore, the researchers selected this poem based on their interest and interpretations of all metafunctions based on the text's transitivity, interpersonal, and textual processes.

### **Literature Review**

In studying past literature inquiries, researchers investigate a variety of authentic resources, including journals, websites, and books, relevant to their fields. Language plays a vital role in various aspects of life, such as chatting, reading, writing, and serving different purposes. Halliday (1973) identified the seven functions of language: instrumental, interactional, representational, regulatory, personal, imaginative, and heuristic. Additionally, the first four language functions have a substantial role in developing language in early teenagers. Its fulfillment of the basic needs in social and physical activity. Furthermore, it also implies that children use language with specific intentions and are shaped by behavioral patterns.

### **Theoretical Background**

Almurashi (2016) has described the basic introduction of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) in linguistics and applied linguistics. Halliday formulates this concept to illustrate how SFL provides traditional and generative grammar structures of clauses. SFL theory is used to analyze the meaning of text with deep perspectives.

The ideology of the text was explained by Haratyan (2011) to emphasize the social meanings and systemic functional grammar. The conclusion demonstrated how text functions in many contexts. Three metafunctions of language—ideational (Field), interpersonal (tenor), and textual (mood)—are interdependent throughout the entire language system.

Forey and Sampson (2017) established the model of Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) in Systemic Functional Linguistics. It is a social context for classifying the three general meanings in the clauses as (1) the field of text as a representative clause in the system of experiential meaning, (2) the tenor of text as an interactional /exchange clause in the system of interpersonal meaning, (3) and the mode of text as message clause in the system of textual metafunctions of language.

The following table is essential for illustrating the literary analysis of the poem in the term functional meaning.

**Table 1**  
**Three metafunctions of language**

<b>Ideational</b>	
<b>Participants</b>	Actor, goal, scope, beneficiary, range, etc
<b>Processes</b>	material, mental, verbal, behavioral, existential, relational
<b>Circumstances</b>	Place, time, manner, location, cause, extent, contingency
<b>Interpersonal</b>	
<b>Mood</b>	Subject, finite
<b>Residue</b>	Predicator, compliment, adjunct
<b>Textual</b>	
<b>Theme (given information)</b>	ideational, (marked, unmarked) interpersonal, textual
<b>Rheme (new information)</b>	

The three metafunctions of language – ideational, interpersonal, and textual – are shown in the above table in the context of social semiotics and the contextual framework that Halliday provides in Systemic Functional Linguistics. There are a large number of studies have been conducted to identify the functional and social meaning across the various disciplines employing SFL theory Halliday, (1973); Butler, (2003); Eggins, (2004) Bilal, (2012) Mahdi, (2017) Qasim et al. (2018)

#### **Previous studies in the field of literary texts**

Many studies have been done in the advanced and applied fields of linguistics by employing systemic functional grammar in genre-based study. The following is a summary of research papers that used systemic available approach analysis to examine the language of literary texts.

Bilal (2012) has analyzed the three metafunctions of Hallidayan theory in Thank You Ma'am's story. The result of this study shows the analysis of the story provides deep meaning and grammatical features in specific discourse. It shows the attitude of the writer in literary texts.

Linguistic Choices in Hamid's Moth Smoke were analyzed by Qasim et al. (2018). The purpose of this research was to evaluate the system of transitivity in Pakistani literary texts. Moth Smoke by Mohsin Ahmed was taken to analyze the ideational language meaning in context. This research shows a writer's or narrative's attitude for conveying the message to the reader. They argue that transitivity theory is valuable for analyzing a literary text and how linguistic choices carry the contextual meaning (pp.303-31).

Nur (2015) examined the speech within the framework of politics. Data from Nelson Mandela's political speeches was collected to analyze the text's interpersonal metafunction of mood and modality. The consequence of this study shows that speech not only conveys the message in lexicogrammatical categories but also has functional meanings.

Banks (2002) claims systemic functional linguistics is a model for semantically analyzing the text. This study gathered information from two texts to create a mini corpus from physics and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The distribution of process categories found in physics was as follows: four times for material processes, one time for mental processes, one time for verbal processes, and two times for relational processes. Conversely, there are four distinct processes in the social texts: one for the mental process,

two for the material, three for the verbal, and four for the relational. The findings show similarities and differences between the scientific and social texts.

Systemic Functional Linguistics Mood Analysis of the Last Address of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) investigated by Noor et al. (2015). The information was gathered from the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad's (S.A.W.) final speech. The researchers determined the modality and mood of the speaker in a specific situation. The results show the co-occurrence of declarative clause 32\56 and a comparison from others. Secondly, the imperative mood is 22 out of 56 in the whole text, and the last interrogative clause is 48 out of 56, which describes the Wh and polarity questions. In the religious text, mood analysis is the most significant category for understanding the interpersonal relationship of the participant.

Many studies have been done regarding literary analysis of poems, which are done by employing SFL. The mystic poem 'Main jana jogy day Naal' was written by Baba Bulhay Shah and analyzed by Danish (2014) using systemic functional linguistics. Bughio (2014) studied A Walk by Rainer Maria Rilke with the theory of systemic functional grammar. Moreover, Lashari and Bughio (2014) explored literary meaning in the collection of Poems by William Butler Yeats through the functional theory of language. No research has yet been published on Fiaz Ahmed Fiaz's poetry within a Systemic Functional context.

The current study is based on the system's fictional theory of Halliday (2014) for analyzing the "Captivity" poem. The selected text is analyzed according to ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions. Subsequently, the statistical method is used to count the frequency of individual clauses concerning the grammatical functions of participant, process, circumstance, mood, residue, theme, and rheme, which occur in the whole poem text.

## Material and Methods

This study employs a mixed-methodological approach. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses offer comprehensive evidence regarding the interpretation of data collection and statistical findings throughout the poem. For analysis, eight clauses were identified in the poem, and they have been numbered accordingly to make reference to them easy. The inherent meaning in each part of the clause focuses on how language is used to express the functions of language, namely experiential, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions. These metafunctions help us understand Faiz Ahmad Faiz's "Captivity" in terms of its functions and purpose.

## Data Collection

The materials of this study were the literary texts written by Faiz Ahmad Faiz. The data of the poem's Captivity (متاع لوح و قلم چہن گنی تو کیا غم ہے) was collected from selected poems by Daud Kamal (1984) through available resources. The data on the literary text was obtained from an online source (<https://sociolegalsaint.medium.com/faiz-ahmed-faiz-6e289a392b12>). This material is selected based on the limited public research concerning English literature. Another rationale for its selection is the significance of utilizing literary text analysis in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms.

## Lexical Text Density Analysis

The fraction of content words in the entire text is known as lexical density. The software was utilized for the statistical analysis of literary text. It also includes the count's

length, the word, sentence complexity in the text, Average Variance (AV) in word and sentence length, lexical density, lexeme per sentence, and lexeme % of the text. A detailed description of text features in statistical analysis is given below:

**Table 2**  
**Text Information**

File	Text Information
Length	
Word in text	56
Sentence in text	6
Text complexity	
AV-Word Length	3.89
AV- Sentence Length	9.33
Lexical Density	
Lexeme per sentence	4.0
Lexeme % of text	42.84

The overhead table describes the general overview of a literary text concerning the specific linguistic and statistical features in the whole text.

### Theoretical Framework

Systemic Functional Linguistics is a theoretical framework for analyzing poetic meaning within socio-cultural and cognitive contexts. This model involves ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions, and these three lines of meaning play a significant role in semantically describing the text. The approach adopted here is primarily based on the work of Michael Halliday (2002).

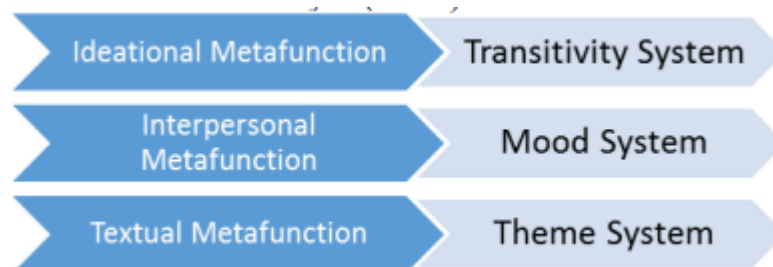


Figure 2: Adapted from Halliday's (2002) work

### Results and Discussion

#### Data Analysis

This poem, written by Fiaz Ahmed Fiaz and translated into English by Daud Kamal (1984), has been selected as a sample for complete data analysis. Below is the description of the text:

#### Captivity

What does it matter?

If pen and paper

Have been snatched

From my hands?  
 I have  
 Dipped  
 My fingers in the blood  
 Of my heart.  
 What does it matter?  
 If  
 My lips  
 Has it been sealed?  
 I have put  
 A tongue  
 In every ring  
 Of my chain.

The Systemic Functional Linguistics model (1978) developed by Michael Halliday sees language as a socio-semiotic system that creates contextual meaning in text, and this approach has been used to sort data. These are the tabular results of the analysis of various clauses:

<b>Clause 1</b>				
<b>What does it matter?</b>				
<b>Clause Meaning</b>	What	Does	it	matter?
<b>1. Ideational Function:</b>	Goal	Material: Proc	Actor	Material Proc
<b>2. Interpersonal Function:</b>	Subject/wh	Finite	Subject	Predicator
	Mood			
	Residue			
<b>3. Textual Function:</b>	Theme {Interrogative}	Rheme	Theme	Rheme
	Theme		Rheme	
<b>Clause 2</b>				
<b>If pen and paper have been snatched from my hands?</b>				
<b>Clause Meaning</b>	If	pen and paper	have	been snatched from my hands?
<b>1. Ideational Function:</b>	Circ {Condition}	Actor	Material: Proc	Circ

<b>2. Interpersonal Function:</b>		Subject	Finite	Predicator	Adverbial
			Mood		Residue
<b>3. Textual Function:</b>	Textual Theme {(conjunctive)}		Theme		Rheme

### Clause 3

#### I have dipped my fingers in the blood of my heart.

<b>Clause Meaning</b>	I	have	dipped	my fingers	in the blood of my heart.
<b>1. Ideational Function:</b>	Actor		material process	Goal	Circ of place
<b>2. Interpersonal Function:</b>	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Compliment	Adverbial
		Mood-declarative		Residue	
<b>3. Textual Function:</b>	Topical Theme			Rheme	

### Clause 4

#### What does it matter if my lips have been sealed?

<b>Clause Meaning</b>	What	does	it	matter	if	my lips	have been sealed?
<b>1. Ideational Function:</b>	Goal	Material::proc	Actor	Material: Proc	Circ: {Condi}	Actor	Material: Proc
<b>2. Interpersonal Function:</b>	Subject /wh	Finite	Subj	Predicator	Subj	Finite	Predicator
		Mood		Residue	Mood		Residue
<b>3. Textual Function:</b>	Theme {Interrogative}		Rheme {Conjunctive}		Textual Theme	Theme	Rheme

### Clause 5

#### I have put a tongue in every link of my chain.

<b>Clause Meaning</b>	I	have	put	a tongue in every ring of	my chain.
<b>1. Ideational Function:</b>	Actor		Material: Proc	Goal	Cir: of place
<b>2. Interpersonal Function:</b>	Subject	Finite	predicator	Compliment	Adverbial
		Mood		Residue	
<b>3. Textual Function:</b>			Theme	Rheme	

## Discussion

As observed, three metafunctions of language are employed for text analysis, along with the frequency of each metafunction. This highlights their crucial role in identifying the semantic status in the following manner:

### Ideational Function

The ideational function further involves the transitivity system, as Halliday (2014) outlined. The system of clauses is known as transitivity. It involves three elements: Participants {Nominal group}, Processes {Verbal group}, and circumstances {Prepositional, Adverbial group}. The transitivity system is based on how different people create



meanings through feelings, seeing, emotion, perception, and cognition within society – a clause is representational for creating the experiential meaning in the poem.

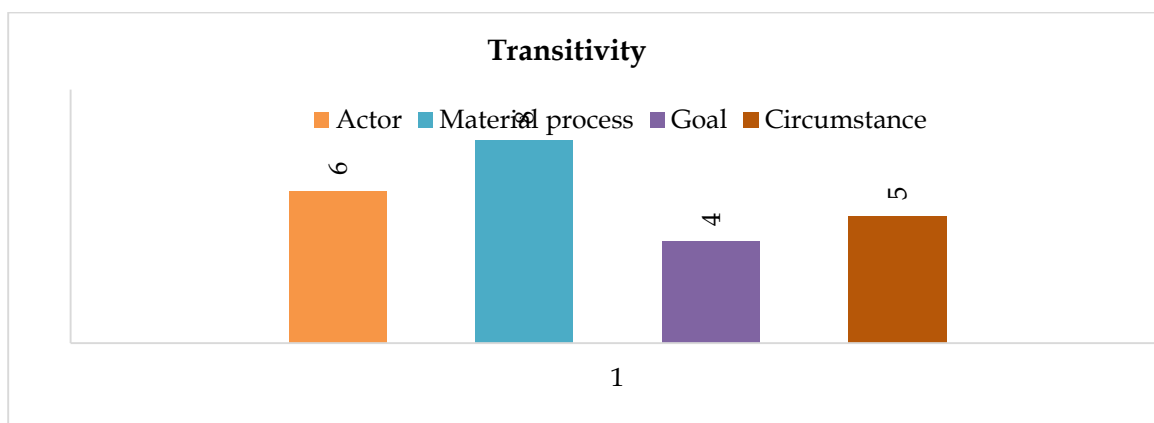


Figure 3: The transitivity pattern in the Poem

Note: Frequency of Occurrence of the Process in the Experiential Function

This figure shows that throughout the text, actors appear six times, material processes eight times, goals four times, and circumstantial elements five times. The poet utilized material progression more frequently compared to other components, employing words such as "matter," "snatched," "dipped," "selected," and so forth. Essentially, the material process deals with both the abstract and concrete worlds in physical terms. However, the writer chose particular lexemes to construct the material world in the poem (Mahdi. (2017). pp.238-243).

### Interpersonal Function

Halliday (2014) states that interpersonal metafunction explains how the reader and writer interact inside the text and how individuals contribute to creating different discourses through interaction. The interpersonal function reflects the personal and social relationships and roles in particular contexts, such as exchanging information, goods, and services.

This linguistic function is structured into two components: Mood and Residue. Mood is divided into Subject + Finite, while Residue encompasses Predicator, Complement, and Adverbial (Adjunct).

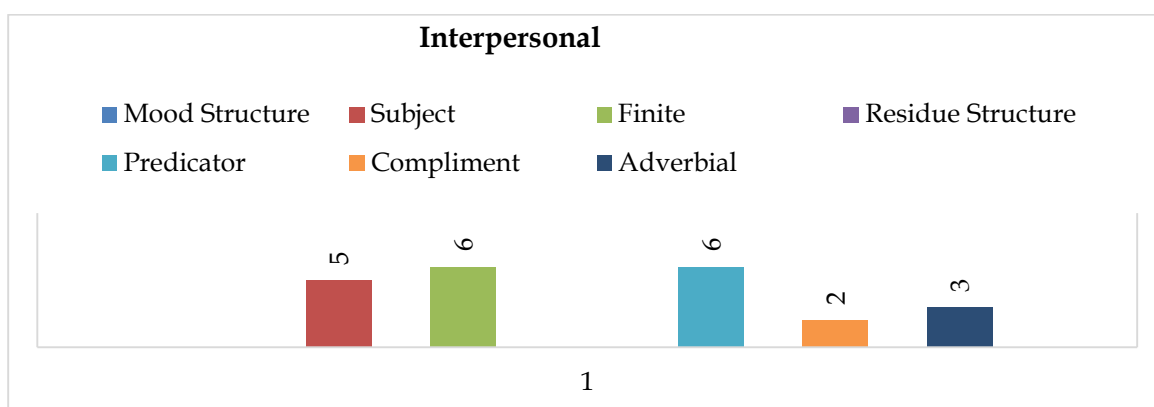


Figure 4: Modality pattern in the Poem

Note: Frequency of Occurrence for Modality in the Interpersonal Function

The above figure identifies that the frequency of the declarative mood in finite clauses is used more. The poem uses both declarative and interrogative styles to convey its emotion. The subject/wh appears twice in declarative expressions and three times in interrogative sentences in the Mood structure, whereas the finite appears six times. Limited language features are used frequently in the poem, and the author used a predicator to convey the primary information in the text. On the other hand, the predicator occurs six times, complement twice, and adverbial three times throughout the entire text. Additionally, the writer delivers the message of the poem through declaration {Pen and paper}, personal and possessive pronoun {I, My}, and interrogative statements {what} for constructing the social realities.

### Textual Metafunction

The textual metafunction concerns itself with the structural organization of information within the text, illustrating how ideational and interpersonal meanings are expressed through structural arrangement and cohesion. The theme relates to the material already known or given information, while the rheme denotes new information. Furthermore, Theme is usually the first word in a phrase, followed by a rheme, which elaborates on the Theme (Halliday, 1967; 2004).

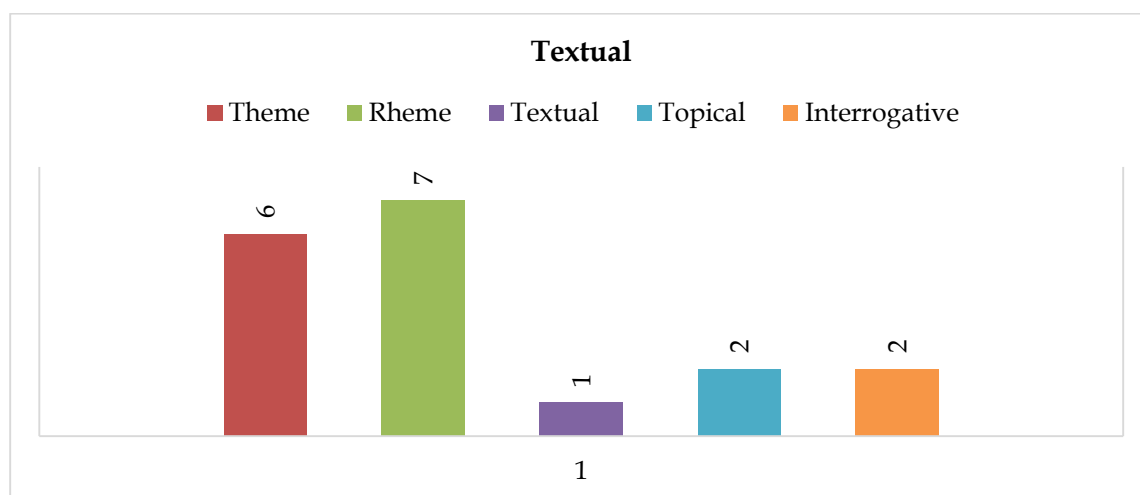


Figure 5: Textual pattern in the poem

Note: Frequency of Occurrence of Theme and Rheme in Textual Function

The above figure shows that the tendency of rheme is more than that of other categories of textual metafunction. The occurrence of the theme is observed 6 times, while the rheme appears seven times. The theme is further revealed through textual occurrences once, topical occurrences twice, and interrogative occurrences twice throughout the text.

The author gives new information to introduce the world in the poem. The poet uses words such as "If pen and paper have been snatched from my hands," "My fingers in the blood of my heart," and "in every ring of my chain. These selected words give new information about the poem.

### Overall Comparison of the Three Metafunctions of Language

The following figure of systemic functional grammar displays all statistical scores associated with ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions. It shows how speakers create meaning, how that meaning changes the social constructivist approach, and how the text makes sense concerning other elements. Bakuuro. (2017). pp. 211-217.

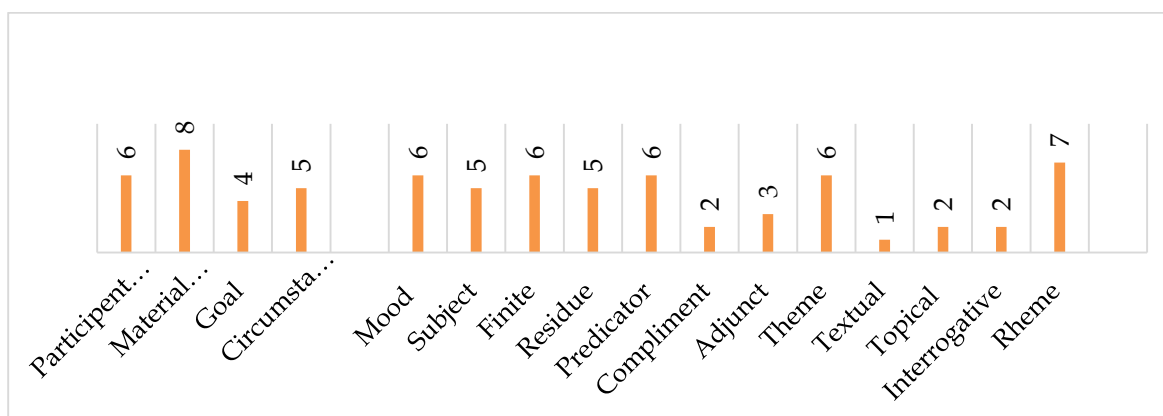


Figure 6: The overall frequency of Metafunctions

Note: Statistical Scores across Metafunctions

The results in the table highlight the significance of the three meanings of the clauses inside the text. As for the ideational function, the poet created only one kind of process, which is called the Material process. Eight percent of incidents were related to material processes. The poet's description of events and activities, which included physical actions, was a significant factor in this ratio.

On the other hand, the text's mood is declarative and interrogative; the imperative mood did not occur. Furthermore, the poet provides information goods and services, and the interrogative mood makes the text more interactive. Mood, Finite, and Predicator had a 6% ratio of occurrences, while Subject and Residue had a 5% ratio in the poem. Lastly, the poem has two different kinds of themes: textual (8%) and topical (2%), with no interpersonal themes.

The results of this investigation show that in ideational metafunctions, the material process was employed more frequently than other processes. Mahdi (2017) outlined in more detail how the material process is primarily one of "doing and happening," which symbolizes the actor's (participant's) purpose to perform something for something or someone else, known as (the goal). It means the material process usually consists of verbs showing the action, doing, and happening processes (p.25). From this point of view, the poet shows the experience of the world around us- including actions, activities, and social events are constructed through the material process of grammar (Halliday, 1994; Matthiessen, 1999; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013).

## Conclusion

Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) has proven to be a valuable tool for interpreting, shedding light on, and investigating how language represents our world experiences, facilitates interpersonal communication, and shapes the construction and arrangement of poetic content. This study was carried out to examine Faiz Ahmed Faiz's poem, Captivity, translated into English by Daud Kamal (1984), using a systemic functional grammar framework as the theoretical framework. The analysis of findings indicates that it can, therefore, be concluded that effectively conveying meaning in literary texts, especially poetry, depends mainly on how the writer or poet has consciously or unconsciously judiciously and effectively manipulated the lexicogrammatical elements that come together to create a powerful conduit for poetic expression.

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