

## Critical Classroom Discourse Analysis of EFL Teachers and Students at the Department of English Language and Literature - Batna 2 University\* Batna 2 Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü Öğretmen ve Öğrencilerinin Eleştirel Sınıf İçi Söylem Analizi

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### Öz

Bu çalışma, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak (EFL) öğreten öğretmenlerin sınıfta dilsel ve dil ötesi özellikleri nasıl uyguladıklarını incelemekte ve ayrıca öğrencilerin bu özelliklere ilişkin farkındalıklarını ve tercihlerini araştırmaktadır. Araştırmada, öğretmenlerden gözlem formları ve görüşmeler, öğrencilerden ise anketler yoluyla veri toplanmıştır. Karma yöntemler yaklaşımı benimsenmiştir. Fairclough'un Eleştirel Söylem Analizi (CDA) yaklaşımı; kiplik, kişi zamirleri (PP'ler), öğretmen konuşma süresi (TTT) ve öğretmenlerin beden dili (TBL) kullanımını analiz etmek için kullanılmıştır. Araştırma, Batna 2 Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü'ndeki öğretmenlerin modal fiiller ve PP'leri kullanma konusunda farklı yaklaşımlar sergilediklerini ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca, öğretmenler, konuşmalarında resmiyet ve gayri resmi dili değiştirerek öğrencileriyle samimi bir ilişki kurmaya eğilimlidirler. Bunun yanı sıra, beden dilleri ve konuşmaya harcadıkları süre aracılığıyla otoritelerini ortaya koymaktadırlar. Öğrencilerin %50'den fazlası, öğretmenlerinin sınıftaki otorite gösterilerinin farkındadır ve genellikle daha resmi ve kibar bir iletişimi tercih etmektedir. Bu durum, öğretmenlerin dilsel ve dil ötesi özelliklerini kullanırken, öğrencilerin bakış açılarını dikkate almanın ne kadar önemli olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Çünkü eğitim, sadece öğretmenlerin materyal sunumuyla ilgili değil, aynı zamanda öğrencilerin öğretim stillerine, yöntemlerine ve tekniklerine verdiği yanıtlarla da ilgilidir. Ek araştırmalara ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır, özellikle öğretmenlerin dilsel ve dil ötesi özellikler kullanımı ile bunların güç ve otorite ile ilişkisini incelemek ve yabancı dil olarak İngilizce alanındaki daha net sonuçlara ulaşmak için.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Eleştirel Söylem Analizi, Eleştirel Sınıf Söylem Analizi, Sınıf Söylemi, Yabancı Dil Öğretimi, Dil Öğretimi, Dil Öğrenimi.

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It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited. Hind Tamersit – Samia Mouas

### Complaints

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## Abstract

This study sheds light on how English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers implement linguistic and paralinguistic features in the classroom. It also investigates students' preferences and awareness related to the aforementioned characteristics. This investigation used a mixed-methods research approach, collecting data from teachers via observation grids and interviews, and from students via questionnaires. Fairclough's approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was employed to draw findings about the use of modality, personal pronouns (PPs), teacher talking time (TTT), and teachers' body language (TBL). The study reveals that the teachers in the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Batna 2 had varying approaches to using modal verbs and PPs. Additionally, they tended to establish a casual rapport with their students by dropping formality in their speeches on alternate occasions. Furthermore, they asserted their authority through their body language and the amount of time they spent speaking. Over 50% of students, accordingly, were aware of their teachers' authority display in the classroom and generally preferred formal and polite communication. This emphasised that it is crucial to consider students' viewpoints in this area of endeavour as education is not only about teachers and how they provide material, but also about students who reflect any teaching style, method, or technique. Additional investigation is required in the domain of classroom discourse as well as teachers' use of linguistic and paralinguistic features and their relationship with power and authority to achieve more precise outcomes in the field of English as a foreign language.

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis, Critical Classroom Discourse Analysis, Classroom Discourse, EFL, Language Teaching, Language Learning.

## 1. Introduction

Language is a medium for communicating ideas and emotions through voice, body language, sign language, and certain writing and speaking styles. It fulfils both transactional and interactive purposes. The first premise describes how people communicate with one another and maintain social relationships through language. Conversely, the latter is concerned with sending a particular message or set of information.

Discourse designates a deliberate and regulated social action. It focuses on the interaction between communicators and addresses the written and spoken forms of language (Fairclough, 2010, p.3). Thus, being a patient, a doctor, a student, or a teacher in any field is all discourses (Gee, 2014). However, discourse analysis (DA) is the investigation of the language of communication in a particular context from both semantic and lexicogrammatical standpoints (Pennycook, 1994). That is, DA is the study of the language used in communication within a certain context, focusing on both the structure of words and grammar and the inferred meaning conveyed. DA originated in Applied Linguistics (AL), a synthesis of many methods for analyzing language usage, including text linguistics, conversation analysis, and spoken ethnography.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is constructed of series of modals and the aim of each is to investigate everyday discourse by delving more profound than its surface level and examining how that “deep” level reveals social power (Van Dijk, 1997). The term “critical” has more to do with “critique” and less to do with “criticism,” and that is to give a comprehensive understanding of the social context and the reasoning influencing the discourse’s creation.

Education may intersect with critical discourse and CDA, giving birth to new concepts such as classroom interaction analysis and classroom critical discourse analysis (CCDA). The second was supported by Kumaravadivelu (1999), demonstrating that as equal to other discourses, classroom discourse is socially built, politically motivated, and historically determined.

In that sense, Coulthard and Widdowson were among the first pioneers to funnel DA’s overall applicability to language teaching. Furthermore, in 1977, Sinclair and Coulthard (as cited in Dailey, 2010) emphasised the classroom as a formal domain governed by intelligible rules.

Teachers in the classroom assume control of the lessons’ flow, while learners only interact if they are asked to or invited to speak. Hence, the term power is extended beyond the prototypical view of a social status hierarchy; it manifests speech and daily actions (Kumaravadivelu, 1999). Eventually, education is one of the domains that uncommonly harness the power of speech. This study investigates English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers’ speech during their lectures to explore how it relates to English language teaching. It analyses their grammatical aspects and word choice, in which modal structures and personal pronouns (PPs) are taken into account. It also investigates non-linguistic features such as teacher talking time (TTT) and teachers’ body language (TBL). This study was grounded on the central research questions:

- How do EFL teachers at the Department of English and Literature at Batna 2 University implement linguistic features in their classrooms?
- What are the implementations of the paralinguistic features of EFL teachers at the Department of English Language and Literature at Batna 2 University in their classrooms?
- What are students’ preferences for their teachers’ linguistic and paralinguistic features?

## 2. Literature Review

This section charts fundamental studies that explore the profound conceptualisation of critical classroom discourse analysis (CCDA), with a particular focus on the linguistic and paralinguistic features to be investigated, as well as Fairclough's CDA model. Through a comprehensive review of seminal works in the field, this section aims to provide a perceptive understanding of how CCDA is shaped and how teachers' authority fosters both linguistic and paralinguistic features.

### 2.1. From Discourse to Critical Classroom Discourse Analysis

Discourse is an instance of cultural and social practices. Language users converse in turn to perform social behaviours and communicate with others (Van Dijk, 1997). It is then a bi-directional exchange of written or spoken forms of language among or between interlocutors.

Discourse, however, is connected to co-text and context. According to Tamersit and Mouas (2024), a phrase or section of a text's surrounding words - referred to as co-text - provides context and aids in understanding its meaning. Contrarily, context refers to all the non-textual information that a speaker or reader may get from their comprehension of the physical domain, the genre, the circumstance, and general knowledge.

According to Rogers (2011), DA is constructing meaning derived from context. As Pennycook (1994) stated, DA is the study of language use in a given situation from a semantic and lexico-grammatical perspective. DA is non-critical as it just describes written or spoken language.

CDA is described as the investigation of linguistic and semiotic components of social concerns and activities when it first started (Van Dijk, 2011). A surface linguistic analysis is inadequate in CDA; a social critical analysis is necessary to raise the analysis. Wodak (1999) emphasised that the term "critical" does not mirror the negative side of societies; conversely, it indicates how contradictions in discourse are broken down into transparent ones. CDA is, in fact, subjective by nature (Van Dijk, 1997). This subjectivity ensures that no two studies within the CDA spectrum are identical. Instead of being viewed as a flaw, this characteristic has been embraced as a milestone that distinguishes CDA as a unique and valuable approach in social studies.

Language in use is a broad definition of discourse, and language in use within a specific context is discourse analysis. Keeping the context specific to the classroom, speech in it might refer to the interactions between students and instructors during class, the teachers' speech when presenting lessons, or both together (Rymes, 2016). Integrating social context in DA helped classroom analysts to consider classroom linguistic events as a mini-society (Kumaravadivelu, 1999).

A central task of CDA is to state the relationship between discourse and social power. Although it is assumed that instructors and students work together to facilitate communication in the classroom, in reality, teachers control the conversation when it comes to students' behaviour and language use. Peters (1966) articulated the concept rather well when he said that a teacher might be both an authority and in authority. Hence, As Kumaravadivelu (1999, p.472) asserts, the foundations of CCDA are of utmost importance to the understanding of language education and DA:

- Classroom discourse is socially constructed, historically determined, and politically motivated; that is, these milieus impact the lives of teachers and learners in the classroom setting.
- Teachers cannot detach the sociocultural reality in and outside the classroom, nor can they do it with their learners' sociocultural necessities and wants.

## 2.2. Teachers' Authority

While there is a hierarchy of power in schools, unlike in jails, social authority is not determined by duty or reward. Its goal is to disseminate knowledge that society values. In its core meaning, it is impossible to separate the idea of a *rule-governed lifestyle* from the concept of authority. Authorities use speech, instructions, and gestures (Peters, 1966). In its modern sense, authority is social and not individual (Frye, 2024), indicating that teachers are given any form of authority only if what is being carried out by them is generally socially appropriate. On the other hand, what is called *specialty authority* or the subject being taught has great importance regarding the concept of "authority."

### 2.2.1. Modality

Semantics and pragmatics are related to the term "modality," which is usually studied about spoken language. According to Zhao et al. (2021), a modality is a tool that speakers employ to express their opinions or attitudes about the legitimacy of their communication partners or the subject matter they are discussing. For Azar (2002, pp. 152-200), he explained the semantics or illocutionary act of modals as follows:

- The modal "will" is limited to willingness and plans, while the use of "going to" is limited to prior plans. Both modals cross paths at the prediction point.

- *Should, Ought to, and Had better*: The first two have a similar meaning regarding advisability. The last one is stronger than the former one and gives a sense of threat or warning about negative consequences.

- *Can*: It is related to the individual's physical ability, more frequently with his/her five senses, the odds of occurrence, and permission in informal contexts; it is substituted with "may" in formal contexts.

### 2.2.2. Teacher Talking Time

The term "Teacher Talking Time" (TTT) describes how much time educators spend in the classroom. In longitudinal research, Bellack (1963) discovered that teachers account for 64% of classroom discussion. He replicated the study after 51 years and discovered that teachers account for nearly three times as much speech time as their students.

### 2.2.3. Personal Pronouns

As per Bramley (2001), the speaker uses the pronoun "I" to address themselves; it is an individualised approach to demonstrating empathy. According to Håkansson (2012), the usage of "I" expresses the feeling of place and time of "now" and "here". He also emphasised that the word "we" denotes collective identification. Thus, when a speaker uses it, they typically include the listeners and instill a sense of "team spirit" in them. "You" is an "indefinite" or a "generic" personal pronoun (Wales, 1996). Generic "you" discusses conventional wisdom vis-à-vis a real-life encounter.

### 2.2.4. Teachers' Body Language

According to Kirch (1979), inappropriate body language manifests both low phonological proficiency and foreign accents. Thus, one should anticipate unfavorable outcomes if a teacher disregards the role that body language plays in easing the path to accomplishing one's academic objectives.

## 2.3. Fairclough's CDA Model

Fairclough (1995) explained his CDA model stating that the model encompasses, text, interaction, and context. Later on, he developed the three discourse dimensions and renamed them text, discursive practice, and

social practice (Fairclough, 2013, p. 97). That is, the model consists of three-dimensional conceptions, each one of them is considered a method of discourse analysis.

Hence, Fairclough (2013) built his framework on three dimensions:

- Text which is the form of discourse that will be accounted,
- Discourse practice that is the process by which the form is produced, and
- Social practice which governs these processes (P. 97).

Each of which has its kind of analysis:

- Description or text analysis,
- Interpretation of the link between discourse and interaction, and
- Explanation of the relation between interaction and social context (Fairclough, 2013, p.97).

## 2.5. Research Gap

Language instructors are unable to separate between their students' linguistic and social needs and goals and claims (Kumaravadivelu, 1999, pp. 472–473). For this reason, having enough knowledge is crucial for teachers to be able to pay close attention to, to evaluate, and to assess the conversations that take place in the classroom. Thanks to this, they can differentiate between theoretical ideas and real-world applications in the classroom as well as between themselves and their students as knowledge providers and recipients in the field of education.

The power demonstrated in the classroom through language was less valued in earlier research on the connection between teachers and students in the field of English as a foreign language (Handayani, 2018; Siumarlata, 2017). As a result, this study could be among the first of its kind. To the best of our knowledge, nevertheless, no prior research of this kind has been carried out at Batna 2 University's Department of English Language and Literature. This assumption was verified by checking both the University Central Library and the Department's library. In addition, previous studies on CCDA (Kumaravadivelu, 1999; Lee & Lee, 2019) have not utilised Fairclough's model, providing this study with the necessary arsenal to examine and explore pedagogical settings from social practices perspective.

In order to substantiate the necessity for further research, a preliminary questionnaire was administered to investigate the viewpoints of EFL students regarding the authority of their teachers in the classroom, as well as any challenges they encountered in managing it. An online questionnaire (questionnaire 1) was administered among 46 students at the Department of English Language and Literature Batna 2 University. The results are the following:

**Table 1 The Problems Students Encounter with Their Teachers' Linguistic and Paralinguistic Features**

	Prevents you from participating	Prevents you from understanding	Both
Does your teacher's vocabulary prevent you from understanding or participating in the classroom?	47,8%	34,8%	17,4%
Does your teachers' body language prevent you from understanding or participating in the classroom?	65,2%	26,1%	8,7%
Does your teachers' talking time (the time they take during class) prevent you from understanding or participating?	52,2%	26,1%	21,7%

Table 1 shows that most students needed help dealing with their instructors' authority in the classroom, which hindered them from engaging, comprehending, or doing both. Consequently, the answers to the questionnaire supported the notion that instructors' discourse power matters in the classroom. Research must be done to better grasp the actual world in the classroom.

Due to the ongoing scholarly debate in the literature regarding the relation between teachers' authority in the classroom and their linguistic and nonlinguistic choices, the present study may well contribute to the literature by revealing a non-investigated angle of the whole matter. Further, using CDA to investigate EFL classrooms may enable teachers to do their own speeches' CDA, and the study also may assist students in enhancing their language critical skills by utilizing CDA to analyse linguistic structures and elements that convey the speaker's authority and intention.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research Design**

In this investigation, a mixed method research was adopted. According to Cresswell (2018), mixed method research is the systematic amalgamation of both qualitative and quantitative research, and that data are collected, analysed separately, and then merged at the interpretation level. Accordingly, in this mixed method study, the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires and the observation will examine the preferences of EFL students regarding their teachers' linguistic and paralinguistic features, and how EFL teachers implement linguistic features in their classrooms. On the other hand, the qualitative data, which encompasses the interviews, aims to explore the EFL teachers' exact implementations of paralinguistic features in the classrooms. The reason for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data is to unveil a comprehensive contextual understanding and cross-verify results through data-driven conclusions. Hence, the objective of this study was achieved by the following:

- Employing both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, and
- Gathering data via various methods: Observation, interview and questionnaire.

#### **3.2. Participants**

The sample that was of interest in this study included only the teachers who acknowledged to take part in the interview and observation process. The number of participants were 13 in the interviews (nine females and four males) and were 15 in the observation. It is worth noting that this study is not concerned with the participants' gender or age. The participant teachers were selected through a convenience sampling technique. Teachers' teaching experience was taken into account in attempt to make a linkage between experience and the implementation of linguistic features. At this juncture, it is worth noting that the participant teachers in both interviews and observations were the same, but two refused to take the interviews after the end of their lectures due to their limited time and responsibilities. That concluded the discussion of the sample of the first two questions. The third question's sample was 37 students of the same department (27 Master (MA) and 10 Bachelor (BA) students). Their selection was based on a simple random sampling.

#### **3.3. Procedures**

This study administered an online questionnaire to EFL students at the Department of English Language and Literature at Batna 2 University. The aim was to investigate the students' perspectives on how their instructors

use linguistic and paralinguistic features in the classroom setting and to determine whether the students interpret these elements as pejorative or positive while also assessing their level of awareness on the matter. The observations were carried out at the department by attending the lectures. The interviews were held face-to-face with the teachers in their offices after the end of their lectures, were recorded with the participants' consent, and later transcribed. To ensure a complete return rate, both the interview and observations were carried out the same days with the same teachers (from 30/04 to 13/05/ 2024).

### **3.4. Data Collection Tools**

To answer the first question of the study, EFL teachers (n=13) were interviewed. To answer the second question, the researchers aimed for a non-participation observational process. That is, the researchers were observing the flow of the lectures presented by the teachers without interfering. The observation grid was accompanied by field notes. As it was mentioned before, in the research gap, there was a pilot questionnaire referred to as "questionnaire 1" which was used to justify the need for the research based on the students in the department; the last question was answered through another students' questionnaire (questionnaire 2).

The researchers employed semi-structured interviews, also known as guided interviews, to gather data in the present study. The interviews were conducted using a predetermined set of questions; however, the respondents were encouraged to provide more detailed explanations in response to their replies. The seven interview questions were organised in alignment with the research topics in the study to facilitate the verification and elaboration of the informants' responses in the interview. Once the questions were prepared, they were thoroughly tested and amended with the approval of the two specialised professors in the department.

For ethical reasons, an overt observation was conducted without informing the participating teachers about the specific examined aspects. This was done to ensure that the study captured the situation's natural interactions and human dynamics. The researchers observed the teachers' lectures without intervening, and concurrently recorded them after having their consent.

Researchers designed the students' questionnaire with a total of nine questions, divided into four sections. The first section gathers background information of the students, exploring their personal and educational details. The second section focuses on students' preferences of the linguistic features used by their teachers. The third section addresses the preferences of students' paralinguistic features deployed by their teachers in the classroom. The fourth section, tackled students' awareness of their teachers' linguistic and paralinguistic features.

#### **3.4.1. Validation and Reliability of Data Collection Tools**

A standard method was set to determine whether there were any ambiguities in the phrasing of the questionnaire, observation, and interview that might deter respondents from returning a full-scale answer. Therefore, two professors were requested to evaluate the content of all instrument versions, commenting on the intelligibility and accuracy of the items. At first, the teachers commented on the interview structure, stating that in a semi-structured one, the questions should encompass some form of openness. In the observation grid, they emphasised that "fieldnotes" are crucial for accurate results. Concerning the two questionnaires, the teachers insisted on elaborating the aims behind each question to avoid subjecting the respondents to any ambiguity. Hence,



the final forms of the data collection instruments were chosen after considering the orientation provided by the teachers.

In conducting both the interviews and observations, the researchers informed the respondents about the purpose of the research and the overall topic under investigation. We also explained that the interview and lectures would be recorded for accuracy and analysis purposes. After informing them, we asked for their consent to record the lecture and the conversation. While the majority of the participants agreed, two of them initially expressed reluctance and requested not to be recorded. Their concerns were respected and addressed before attending the lectures for observation or tackling the interview. This approach ensured transparency and built rapport with the interviewees, thus fostering an honest exchange of information.

Since the students' questionnaire allows only for qualitative close-ended responses, which in turn work for the objectives of the study, a reliability analysis was conducted to investigate the internal consistency of the questionnaire using Kuder Richardson-20 (KR-20). As it is conventionally known, KR-20 and Cronbach's Alpha are twin coefficients; however, KR-20 is deployed for dichotomously scored items (Tan, 2009). That is, KR-20 coefficient applies to any scale of items regardless of the response scale. In this study, reliability analysis of the students' questionnaire, yielded a KR-20 coefficient of 0.81. This result indicates a high level of internal consistency, affirming the instrument's suitability for use.

#### **4. Data Analysis**

This data analysis section is divided into two main sections. The first discusses the data analysis of interviews, observations, and students' questionnaire 2. The second describes how the analysed data were further analysed using Fairclough's CDA model to give meaning and deepen the interpretation of the data.

##### **4.1. Data Analysis of The Interviews**

After finishing data collection from the interviews, the researchers set to revise the answers through the records. Then, the answers were examined using content analysis, that is, capturing the repetitive keywords that the majority of respondents appeared to use in their responses, though the answers that differed were kept as they were. Afterwards, the answers were organised into an Excel spreadsheet to facilitate systematic analysis. Subsequently, the researchers coded the answers. Using Excel's functions, we efficiently calculated the frequency of occurrence of specific terms and sentences.

##### **4.2. Data Analysis of The Observation**

The researchers categorised the recorded observations into practical sessions, oral expression sessions, and sessions for other subjects. We then reviewed the records to estimate the teachers' talking time in each category. Although the latter procedure was carried out manually, it is important to remember that the TTT calculation was reviewed several times, and the researchers even took into account the seconds. Subsequently, the percentage (PC) of each category was calculated using the rule of three, or in more scientific terms, the proportionality rule. The rule of three is a mathematical method used to find an unknown value in a proportion when three values are known, based on the principle that the ratios of two sets of numbers are equal (Lial, Hornsby, & McGinnis, 2013). That

is, it is a mathematical rule that allows for solving a problem by having three numbers: a, b, c, such that  $\frac{a}{b} = \frac{c}{x}$ , then  $x = \frac{b \times c}{a}$ .

In practical deployment, the rule of three is often used to calculate percentages or to scale quantities proportionally. For instance, if the total talking time of teachers in oral expression sessions is 27,15 minutes in the overall 150-minute, the PC of teacher talking time can be calculated as:

$$PC \text{ of oral expression sessions} = \frac{TTT \times 100}{\text{Total time of oral expression sessions}} = \frac{27,15 \times 100}{150} = 18,1\%$$

At this juncture, it is worth mentioning that the PC of two remaining categories were calculated using the same method.

As previously stated, the investigators who attended the lectures divided the TBL into two categories: sit and explain most of the time, stand or move and explain most of the time. It was calculated using the rule of three with a distinct conceptualisation because most professors were forthright about their body language, particularly during oral expression sessions where they almost assumed the role of the audience. An overall estimate of whether a given teacher is primarily standing and explaining or not was made because the calculations were not very accurate, despite the investigators' best efforts to record the timing of how much teachers stood up or sat down in the field notes of the observation. In TBL, the rule was used as follows:

$$PC \text{ of sitting teachers} = \frac{\text{total teachers} \times 100}{\text{number of teachers who stand or move}}$$

At this point, it is worth noting that the PC of the standing or moving teachers were calculated using the same method.

#### 4.3. Data Analysis of The Students Questionnaire 2

The data was collected using an online questionnaire designed and distributed through Google Forms. Once the participants completed the questionnaire, Google Forms automatically calculated the percentages and statistical data for each response. This feature allowed for effective data processing, ensuring accuracy and minimizing human error. The results from Google Forms were then exported and further analysed in accordance with the study's objectives.

#### 4.4. Data Analysis Through Fairclough's CDA Model

The data obtained from the teachers' interviews and observations, and students' questionnaire, were further analysed using Fairclough's CDA model. The teachers' interviews explored their implementation of modals and personal pronouns in the classroom and their intent behind each choice. The classroom observations focused on teachers' body language and talking time vis à vis students' talking time, while the students' questionnaire aimed to capture the students' perceptions of authority and discourse. The three components of the model, which are text, discourse practice, and social practice, were subtly integrated into the interpretation and explanation of findings and results.

## 5. Findings

The presentation of findings in this section follows the same order as the questions that are intended to be answered. The data is present in a tabular form.

### 5.1. Findings of Research Question 1

The findings from the teacher interviews are displayed in the table below.

**Table 4.1:** EFL Teachers' Implementations of Modal Verbs and Personal Pronouns

Teachers' Background Information						Female	Male	
						9	4	
Teachers' Awareness of Their Verbal Power in the Classroom						100% aware		
Teaching Experience (TE)						TE ≥ 10Years	TE < 10Years	
						8 Teachers	5 Teachers	
<b>The Most Used Model Verbs</b>								
Should	Had better	Both	Can	May	Both	Will	Going To	Both
46,1%	7,8%	46,1%	46,1%	15,4%	38,5%	30,8%	30,8%	38,4%
<b>Teachers' Implementations of Modal Verbs</b>								
Should	Obligation, Necessity, Familiarity, Formality, A must, Instructing, Assertion, Attract attention of students, To highlight importance, and Advice and guidance.							
Had better	To give choice to students, Threatening, To infer responsibility expected from students, and To stress the importance of certain information.							
Can	Spontaneous, Friendly, Harsh, To give choice, Breaks the ice of formality, Tendency to American accent, Possibility and ability, Requests, and Encouragement.							
May	To assert formality, Give permission, To highlight authority, Possibility, Make polite requests, Give choices to students.							
Will	To give the choice to students, To express formality, Reflects the need of immediate response, To make requests, and For long term plans.							
Going to	To assert something, During explanation or to give examples, In the process of doing something, To cheer the atmosphere, and For short term plans.							
<b>The Most Used PPs</b>								
"I"	"You"	"We"	"You & We"			"I & You & We"		
7,7%	15,4%	23%	30,77%			23%		
<b>Teachers' Implementations of PPs</b>								

I	To break the formality, share personal anecdotes, and provide relatable examples, and making the learning experience more engaging and enjoyable for the students.
You	To establish a personal connection with each student and instilling a sense of individual responsibility in their learning journey.
We	To create a sense of unity and partnership with their students and fostering a collaborative learning environment.

After reviewing the taped and completed interviews, it was discovered that there was no connection between the instructors' linguistic preferences for modality or PPs and their gender. Further, all 13 teachers who participated in the interview responded affirmatively that they know their verbal power in the classroom. Educators purposefully use particular word choices to accomplish their goals while speaking with students. Additionally, the TEs of the participants varied, ranging from one year to twenty-one years. However, the investigators divided the TE years into two categories:  $TE < 10$  years and  $TE \geq 10$  years. The researchers' extensive examination of the records established the foundation for this categorisation. The researchers then confirmed that many teachers with fewer than ten years of TE had difficulty differentiating between how each pair of modals was implemented.

It is clear from the table that in each pair of the modals should or had better, can or may, will or going to, either one of the two modals was selected in each pair primarily, or both were employed alternately. Additionally, "should" is used 46.1% of the time, but "had better" is used 7.8%. This implies that "should" is more often used than "had better," either by itself or in combination with it, but "had better" is never selected first. This implies that "should" could stand out or be more evident than the word "had better" in a classroom context. While "will" and "going to" are equally important, the word "can" is more conspicuous or evident than "may." Teachers' comments about applying the above linguistic elements were examined, along with the frequency of usage of modals and PPs. It is noteworthy that the repeated replies were left out at this point.

As it is highlighted above, and with the assistance of the interview responses, 7,7% of teachers leaned to use "I", while 15,4% and 23% respectively used "you" and "we". On the other hand, 30,77% of the participant teachers deliberately used (you / we) while presenting the lecture or addressing the students, and 23% reported that they use amalgamation of the three PPs. It is worth noting at this end that, despite the different statistics and frequency of usage, all the teachers provided the same answers when asked, "Why do you use these PPs?":

- Teachers reported that they use "we" not just as a pronoun but as a tool to create a sense of unity and partnership with their students, fostering a collaborative learning environment.
- They used "you" not as a generic pronoun but as a means to establish a personal connection with each student, instilling a sense of individual responsibility in their learning journey.
- They use "I" not to assert their authority but to break the formality, share personal anecdotes, and provide relatable examples, making the learning experience more engaging and enjoyable for the students.

## 5.2. Findings of Research Question 2

The following table presents the results of the instructors' observations.

**Table 4.2:** Teachers' Implementations of Their Talking Time and Body Language

Teacher Talking Time	
Practice Sessions	47,2%

Oral Expression Sessions	18,1%
Other Subjects Sessions	84,7%
<b>Teachers' Body Language</b>	
Total of teachers who sit and explain	47%
Total of teachers who stand/ Move and explain	53%

It is evident from the above table that 84.7% of teachers demonstrate dominance during speaking time in the classroom while instructing students in subjects other than their own. In practice sessions, teachers accounted for 46.2% of the speaking time, whereas in oral expression sessions, they made for 18.1% of the speaking time. According to this, there is more teacher talking time than student talking time in the EFL courses in the Department of English Language and Literature. The higher PC of “other subjects” can be attributed to the concept of “subject power” discussed in the literature. It implies that certain subjects may need to be more familiar to the students, leading to limited engagement where the students mostly ask questions and make informed guesses in response. The “practice sessions” ratio is seen as a 50/50 partnership. The PC of the “oral expression sessions” may be ascribed to the students’ role as leaders during their group presentations and discussions of ideas.

As for TBL, 53% of educators explain when standing or moving, whereas 47% explain while sitting. Since there is little difference between the two percentages, they may be regarded as equal. This is a blatant example of how instructors, whether seated or standing, may use body language to convey their paralinguistic impact on the classroom.

### 5.3. Findings of Research Question 3

The table below presents the results of the students’ questionnaire 2.

**Table 4.3:** *Students’ Preferences and Awareness of Their Teachers’ Linguistic and Paralinguistic Authority in the Classroom*

Level of Education		MA	BA
		73%	27%
Level in English	Advanced	37%	0%
	Intermediate	59,2%	90%
	Beginner	3,8%	10%
Students’ Preferences of Linguistic Features			
Which of the following forms do you prefer your teacher to use?			
Modals			
You SHOULD do your homework.		45,9%	
You HAD BETTER do your homework.		54,1%	
You CAN go back to your seat.		37,8%	
You MAY go back to your seat.		62,2%	
You WILL have a test next week.		37,8%	
You are GOING TO have a test next week.		62,2%	

<b>Personal Pronouns</b>			
Today I am going to explain...	0%		
Today YOU are going to learn...	10,8%		
Today WE are going to study...	89,2%		
<b>Students Preferences of Paralinguistic Features</b>			
Do you prefer your teacher to: (Body Language)			
Sit and explain?	10,8%		
Stand and move while explaining?	89,2%		
Do you prefer that your teachers' talking time			
Dominant/maximised (they explain/talk <b>more</b> , and you interact less)?	24,3%		
Minimised (they explain while you interact altogether)?	75,7%		
<b>Students' Awareness of Their Teachers' Authority and Power in the Classroom</b>			
Were you aware that the previous linguistic and paralinguistic features are part of your teachers' power manifestations in the classroom?	Yes	No	Partly Aware
	45,1%	16,2%	29,7%

Based on the self-reports provided by the subjects, the overall academic year-level ratio is comprised of 27% BA students and 73% MA students. The number of responding MA students was around three times more than that of responding BA students.

As can be seen in Table 4.3, 90% of the BA students said that their level of English proficiency is intermediate, while 12% of them mentioned that it was beginner. In contrast, 37%, 59.2%, and 3.8% of MA students stated that their proficiency is advanced, intermediate, and beginner, respectively.

Moving to the students' linguistic preferences, Table 4.3 above shows that when asked to complete their homework, students preferred that their teachers use the modal "had better" (54,1%) over the modal "should" (45,9%). Further, out of all the students, 62.2% chose the modal "may," and 37.8% chose the modal "can". When the question was asked, students were put in a formal context. Hence, it is clear from the table mentioned above that 62.2% of the students would want to be addressed professionally and to have politeness features included in similar situations. This suggests that most of the students were aware of the anticipated standards of formality in the classroom. Subsequently, 62.2% of the participants chose the modal "going to," while 37.8% favoured "will." Students were put in a priority context where they had to select the option with a higher sense of primary significance out of the two options. Consequently, their preference for the modal "going to" highlights the fact that the modal is stronger and denotes a higher priority than "will." Following modality, comes PPs preferences. 89.2% of the respondents claimed they preferred that their professors use the pronoun "we," 10.8% said they liked the pronoun "you", and none said they preferred the pronoun "I." The personal pronoun "we" is preferred by a large majority of students, suggesting that they value the sense of inclusion that "we" provides more than the authoritative "I" or the "you" that puts the onus of responsibility on them.

Concerning the students' preferences for paralinguistic features, 89.2% of the students preferred that their teachers should stand and move around when explaining. However, only 10.8% of the students preferred it when their professors took a seat and talked. This phenomenon suggests that the degree of interaction exhibited by the teacher directly correlates with the degree of student involvement with the explanation. Following that, in terms of TTT, 24.3% of the students preferred maximising their TTT, while 75.7% of the students preferred minimising it. This highlights the fact that the majority of pupils would rather be active learners than passive ones. The latter idea can be explained by considering their consciousness and the type of education they are pursuing. As EFL learners, the more they participate in classroom interactions, the more beneficial it is for them.

Lastly, regarding the students' awareness of their teachers' authority and power in the classroom, 54.1% of the students were cognizant that the linguistic and paralinguistic features they were being queried about were manifestations of their professors' authority in the classroom. Meanwhile, 29.7% of the students were just partially aware, and 16.2% were completely unaware of this connection. This indicates that over 50% of the students possess an understanding of the classroom discourse happening around them. Furthermore, they are not just aware of it but also view it from a critical standpoint.

## 6. Discussion

Regarding research question 1, the information obtained from the interviews was crucial to comprehend how modal verbs are used and which ones EFL instructors more frequently employ at Batna 2 University's Department of English Language and Literature. According to the literature, the majority's choice of "had better" may be a gauge that students view the modal "had better" as less assertive than "should" or, conversely, that they prefer an implied, threatening way of asking to be forced to complete their schoolwork. However, as can be seen from the above presentation of the results from the interviews, the participating teachers use the modal "had better" to give students the freedom of choice by "advising them," rather than just threatening them, as the modal "should" is thought to be more assertive. This contrasts with what has been mentioned in the literature (Azar, 2002). Furthermore, teachers reduce and balance the authority between them and their students by using the word "can," even if they are aware that it is informal. An example of this would be "encouraging them." Teachers deem the modals "will" and "going to" as semantically equivalent, but "going to" is more assertive and used for plans that are for the future, whereas "will" is less assertive and used for immediate results. To conclude, even though the participant teachers of the study were aware of the degree of formality of each modal, they chose to integrate the less formal ones into their lessons to incorporate the "humanistic side" of the classroom, that is, to imply rather than to assert their power. Furthermore, PPs previously seen as derogatory - like "I"- were given new meanings in this study, where they were seen as a welcoming way to break the ice between students and teachers. It is important to note that prior to this study, no previous relationship was found between the presentation of the linguistic features previously described and CCDA. Therefore, this is the first attempt to study these traits in this specific framework.

Making a distinction between the paralinguistic features teachers employed and their implementations required careful consideration of the data acquired from the observations. Research question 2 is interested in how teachers convey their authority in the classroom through their body language and talking time. It is worth noting that prior to this study, the presentation of the previously mentioned non-linguistic traits had not been linked to CCDA. Consequently, this is the first effort to investigate these traits in this particular setting. Overall, it is clear

from the findings of the observation grid and field notes above that teachers establish control over the sessions' duration and through their body language.

In order to respond to research question 3, the information acquired from the second questionnaire was essential. The latter sought to ascertain the students' preferences for the linguistic and paralinguistic elements under investigation. As a result of the analysis and interpretation in the previous section, it is then concluded that in terms of linguistic features, students prefer to be addressed formally by their teachers using the modal "may" instead of "can." They also prefer to be given freedom rather than forced to do anything, as evidenced by their preference for the modal "had better." On the other hand, students prefer "going to" when their teachers deliver news or information, suggesting that they lean towards assertiveness. Moreover, students tend to utilise the personal pronoun "we" while using the PPs, which indicates that they want to be included in the classroom as a single group. In summary, the EFL students at the Department of English Language and Literature are primarily conscious of - or at least somewhat conscious of - the authority and power of their teachers.

## **7. Conclusion**

This study aimed to investigate EFL teachers' linguistic and non-linguistic authority manifestations in the classroom and EFL students' preferences for the aforementioned features. Hence, it is of significant consequence for pedagogical practices and teachers and students' interaction in the classroom.

The tripartite relationship between language, power, and instruction, in conjunction with the global significance of English as an international language, has accelerated the need to re-evaluate the CCDA idea in light of its use. This led to the admission that the traditional method of CDA was inadequate. By exploring how teachers implement linguistic and paralinguistic aspects in EFL classrooms at the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Batna 2, the objective of this study was to remedy this gap partially. Further, the research investigated the students' preferences about these considerations through the second questionnaire. Far from stifling originality, the findings of this study from the interviews and the observations unveiled an in-depth semantic understanding of modal verbs and PPs and revealed how TTT and TBL mirror teachers' authority and how EFL students' preferences of the linguistic and paralinguistic teachers give a fundamental idea of how an EFL classroom should be from their perspectives.

It has been detected that teachers perceived modal verbs and PPs in a variety of ways throughout their interactions with students, some of which directly contradicted the conclusions of the literature study. Additionally, teachers establish authority and impact in their subject matter by using their body language and dominant speaking time. Furthermore, students prefer polite forms of modality to be addressed with, and they are also more oriented towards interactive body language and less talking time from their teachers.

These findings suggest that modal verbs can be understood differently by different people. Students' orientation toward politeness is a key indicator of their discourse awareness. Besides, non-linguistic features displayed by teachers in the classroom reflect their authority and power.

### **7.1. Recommendations for Further Research**

Like most studies, this research is subject to some limitations that must be acknowledged, particularly when considering its implications or extending it to different contexts or settings. Firstly, the study was confined to a two-week period, which may have constrained the quantity and depth of data collected. Additionally, the tools and frameworks employed for analyzing the observation data are by no means exhaustive, leaving room for further exploration in future research.



Another limitation of this study relates to the diverse and inherently subjective nature of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA spans multiple disciplines, including politics, sociology, psychology, and education, making it a broad and multifaceted field. To maintain focus and depth, this study specifically narrowed its scope to education. It is important to note that discourse is a complex system that extends beyond language alone, shaping and facilitating communication across multiple dimensions. Given this complexity, there is no single method for analysing speech across diverse linguistic contexts, nor is it possible to achieve entirely objective results or interpretations. Despite these challenges, the researchers made every effort to remain impartial and rigorous in their analysis.

This study opens up numerous avenues for further research, building on its foundational findings. While the sample size of fifteen teachers and thirty-seven students was sufficient for statistical analysis, the study did not explore gender disparities or the personal characteristics of participants, which could provide valuable insights in future investigations. Additionally, this research did not examine teachers' competencies or strategies for classroom management, an area that holds significant potential for deeper exploration. Addressing these aspects in future studies could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play and further enrich the field.

Furthermore, expanding this research to include participants from various academic levels could yield new and valuable insights. Replicating this study with larger sample sizes and diverse academic groups would likely produce more reliable findings. In fact, plans are underway to conduct a more comprehensive examination within the department mentioned earlier, which promises to deepen our understanding and provide a stronger foundation for future work.

To further enhance the reliability and validity of the findings, it is recommended to adopt more precise and comprehensive data collection tools. Advanced technologies and innovative methodologies, such as adaptive data collection techniques, will help ensure more representative and accurate results. This approach will strengthen the study's outcomes and foster deeper insights, paving the way for more impactful and actionable conclusions.

## **7.2. Research Implications**

This research contributes to the body of knowledge on intercultural instruction and learning in the EFL context. It may present a novel idea that merits further investigation and provides a valuable foundation for understanding how CCDA might be included in EFL classes and how it can advance students' language proficiency.

- Firstly, in the setting of an EFL classroom, new interpretations and applications were added to the sense of modal verbs and PPs. While many academics and researchers have debated the topic, they have yet to investigate modality or PPs in EFL classrooms.

- Secondly, the study revealed how paralinguistic elements can mirror educators' power within the classroom. Numerous academics have focused their attention on non-linguistic aspects. This study, however, elevated it to a new level by incorporating teachers' talking times and particular body language. This opens up a new avenue and provides fresh knowledge on the matter.

- Thirdly, the study considered the students' preferences regarding the linguistic and non-linguistic elements employed by their teachers to give readers - teachers or researchers - a general understanding of how an EFL class is intended to function from the students' point of view.

### Yazar Katkıları

Araştırmanın Tasarımı (CRediT 1)	Yazar-1 (%50)-Yazar-2 (%50)
Veri Toplanması (CRediT 2)	Yazar-1 (%50)-Yazar-2 (%50)
Araştırma - Veri Analizi - Doğrulama (CRediT 3-4-6-11)	Yazar-1 (%50)-Yazar-2 (%50)
Makalenin Yazımı (CRediT 12-13)	Yazar-1 (%50)-Yazar-2 (%50)
Metnin Geliştirilmesi ve Tashihi (CRediT 14)	Yazar-1 (%50)-Yazar-2 (%50)

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Students' Questionnaire 1

##### (Pilot Study for the Whole Population)

Dear students,

This questionnaire is part of the study, the primary concern of which is to identify your perceptions about your teachers' linguistic and para-linguistic (non-linguistic) powers in the classroom. Hence, you are kindly asked to answer the following questionnaire.

Note1: information captured are purely for scientific research purposes.

1. Does your teacher's vocabulary prevent you from understanding or participating in the classroom?

Prevents me from participating

Prevents me from understanding

Both

2. Does your teacher's body language prevent you from understanding or participating in the classroom?

Prevents me from participating

Prevents me from understanding

Both

3. Does your teacher's talking time (the time they take during class) prevent you from understanding or participating?

Prevents me from participating

Prevents me from understanding

Both

Thank You!

## Appendix B

### Students' Questionnaire 2

(To answer the third question of the study)

Dear EFL students,

You are kindly asked to answer this questionnaire that aims at taking your perspectives and preferences as well as knowing your awareness of your teachers' linguistic and paralinguistic (non-linguistic) features utilised in the classroom.

Note1: the questionnaire has 4 sections and they are all short and fun.

Note2: information captured are purely for scientific research purposes.

Note3: This will not be made public.

### Section one: Background information

1. Are you a:

Bachelor's student

Master's student

2. How would you rate your English language level?

Advanced

Intermediate

Beginner

### Section two: linguistic features

3. Which of the following forms do you prefer your teacher to use? Focus on Should and Had better

You should do your homework.

You had better do your homework.

4. Which of the following forms do you prefer your teacher to use? Focus on Can and May

You can go back to your seat

You may go back to your seat

5. Which of the following forms do you prefer your teacher to use? Focus on Will and Going to.

You will have a test next week.

You are going to have a test next week.

6. Which personal pronoun do you prefer your teacher to use when explaining the lesson? Focus on (I, You, We)

Today I am going to explain

Today you are going to learn

Today we are going to study

### Section three: paralinguistic features

7. Do you prefer your teacher to:

Sit and explain?

Stand and move while explaining?

8. Do you prefer that your teachers' talking time:

Dominant/Maximised (THEY EXPLAIN/TALK MORE and YOU INTERACT LESS)?

Minimised (THEY explain while YOU interact altogether)?

### Section four: students' awareness

9. Were you aware that the previous Linguistic and Paralinguistic features are part of your teachers' power manifestations in the classroom?

Yes

No

Not completely aware

Thank You!

### Appendix C

#### Teachers' Observation

- Date:

- Setting:
- Session timing:
- Session span:

<b>TTT: Teacher Talking Time / STT: Students Talking Time</b>					
TTT > STT		TTT < STT		TTT = STT	
<b>TBL: Teacher's Body Language</b>					
The teacher is sitting most of the time				The teacher is dynamic most of the time	

**NB: The lectures were recorded and the TTT was analysed accordingly.**

**• Field Notes:**

.....  
.....

**Appendix D**

**Teachers' Interview**

This interview aims at exploring the implementation of certain linguistic features used by teachers while explaining their lessons and addressing their students.

**Section One: Background Information**

1. Gender:

Female

Male

2. Years of teaching experience: .....

3. Are you Aware of your verbal power and word choice in the classroom?

Yes

No

**Section Two: Modality**

4. Do you usually use Should or Had better or Both? And why (what do you target or infer when you use them)?

.....  
.....

5. Do you usually use Can or May or Both? And why (what do you target or infer when you use them)?

.....  
.....

8. Do you usually use will or going to or Both? And why (what do you target or infer when you use them)?

.....  
.....

**Section Three: Personal Pronouns**

9. Which Personal pronoun do you use the most when presenting the lecture?

I

You

We

- Amalgamation of: .....

Why?.....  
.....

Thank You!