



## A comparative study of naturalistic tendencies in works by Sadegh Chubak and Jack London: A functional linguistics approach

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### 1. Introduction

Stylistics is a branch of applied linguistics that connects linguistics and literature, functioning like as a bridge between the two. This shows that studying literary text is not limited to literature. Generally, the analysis of literary texts is based on two methods. The First method, used by literary experts, is mainly based on traditional and modern literary criticism, as well as determining the type of literary text. The second method, which is based on objectivism and the use of demonstrability methods using the foundations of other disciplines, is employed in linguistics. Different linguistic approaches such as formalism, structuralism, and cognitive linguistics can provide the framework for literary analysis. Among these, functional linguistics is one of the most efficient approaches in stylistics due to its emphasis on context.

Functional theories of language consider language fundamentally as a tool. In this case, it is reasonable to assume that language structure could be analyzed with reference to the functions they carry out better. There are various approaches in functional linguistic schools; one of the most famous one is Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). SFL views language as a social semiotic system. The present study aims to apply Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) to investigate the thematic features of two short stories '*Mardi dar qafas*' (A Man in the Cage)" by Sadegh Chubak and "To Build a Fire" by Jack London through a comparative approach. In this research, their devotion to naturalism has been considered as the most important common point of Sadegh Chubak and Jack London. As far as we know, Chubak's literary works have not been investigated separately or comparatively in Halliday's SFG. Therefore, no research directly related to the

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topic exists. Furthermore, based on the review of previous studies, it seems that Jack London's literary works have not served as a basis for comparative studies with Iranian writers.

## 2. Materials and Method

The research employed a descriptive-analytic methodology. SFG, the main theoretical framework of this study, consists of three simultaneously generated metafunctions: the ideational, which construes our experience of outer and inner reality and logical relations between phenomena; the interpersonal relations, which enacts social relations; and the textual, which weaves together these two functions to create text. The present study was based on elements of ideational and interpersonal metafunctions.

In the first stage, the frequency of different variables in each component of the ideational and interpersonal metafunctions were determined based on the clauses of '*Mardi dar qafas*' (A man in the cage). Then, based on clause structure and principles of systemic functional grammar, the frequency of the intended components was statistically analyzed. The analysis included the use of processes within each clause, the tense of the clauses, and their mood. In the final part of this stage, statistical results were reviewed and descriptively analyzed. The second stage involved applying the same process to 'To build a fire' story. In the third stage, results of the previous stages were compared. Finally, statistical results were presented in the form of frequency percentage charts followed by a discussion and analysis of these results.

## 3. Results and Discussion

Results of the study regarding the processes in the ideational metafunction indicated that three processes -material, relational, and behavioral- have the highest frequency in both short stories. This can reflect the emergence of the characteristics of naturalism school in these works. Additionally, the very low frequency of verbal and existential processes in both works suggests a realistic and naturalistic perspective on the part of the authors.

Furthermore, comparing data regarding the mood of clauses in both stories demonstrates that the declarative mood occurs more frequently, showing a significant difference from other moods. This can be generalized to most of the narrative works. It is worth mentioning that the frequency of other moods is insignificant, and conclusions based on them lack strong support. However, the low frequency of other moods such as the conditional and aspirational in both works can be considered as result of the authors' perspective of leaving hopelessness aside.

The results related to the category of time revealed that in both stories, the past tense has the highest occurrence. This shows that the authors are narrating natural events from the past due to the nature of the short stories being narratives. Moreover, the low frequency of future tense usage in both stories can be considered as a sign of hopelessness, a distinguishing feature of the naturalism school.

## 4. Conclusion

The main goal of the present study was to determine the tendencies of Sadegh Chubak, an Iranian author, and Jack London, the American Author, toward naturalism school. These two writers are regarded as naturalist authors in Iranian and American contemporary literature. This study adopted an objective approach

based on SFG to test this claim. Ultimately, the statistical results confirmed the tendency of both Chubak and London toward naturalism.

**Keywords:** comparative literature, systemic functional grammar, naturalism school, short story.