

## THE REALITY OF TEACHING FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR AT THE ALGERIAN UNIVERSITY -THE HIGHER SCHOOL OF TEACHERS OF SETIF AS A MODEL-

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### **Abstract :**

This study aims to diagnose the actual and practical reality of teaching functional grammar at the Algerian University, exactly at the Higher School of Teachers Sétif, and to achieve this goal it relied on a field study in which a set of techniques were employed, including: direct inspection and distribution of the questionnaire to a sample of fourth-year middle and secondary students concerned with the study of this scale.

**Keywords:** grammar, career, teaching, student, linguistics, education.

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### **Introduction:**

The modern era has witnessed an amazing scientific and technological development that contributed to the emergence of new sciences within which many disciplines arose, which made the specialist confused due to the huge flow of serious research that appears daily, which made books and curricula rich and diverse. Functional grammar was one of the most prominent of those disciplines that researchers and scholars paid attention to, and it became an imperative necessity for teaching and teaching it at the Arab University in general and the Algerian University in particular, as well as searching for the difficulties and obstacles that the student encounters during Receiving this material, and finding appropriate solutions to it in order to simplify and understand it correctly without trouble.

**The problem of the study:** The problem of the study is based on a set of problems, which are as follows:

What is the concept of functional grammar?

What is the purpose of teaching it?

What is a good and appropriate way to teach this scale?

What difficulties do students face in receiving functional grammar?

What are the appropriate solutions to reduce these difficulties?

**Study hypotheses:** The hypotheses of the study are represented in the following points:

Recognize the importance of functional grammar and its relationship to education, linguistics, education, psychology, and sociology.

Demonstrate the importance of functional grammar for the student.

Know the role of functional grammar in developing the student's language ability and verbal performance.

Linking functional grammar to the teaching and learning process.

Standing at the total difficulties that the student faces while receiving this course.

Provide solutions, and propose new technologies to simplify it.

**The importance of the study:** The importance of this research lies in determining the reality of teaching functional grammar at the Algerian university, and exactly the Higher School of Teachers Sétif, and due to its scientific usefulness and value in the field of education, I decided to put it to the test of field study, by adopting educational mechanisms and techniques, including identification and direct inspection.

**Objectives of the study:** This study seeks to achieve a set of objectives, including:

- Define the concept of functional grammar, its function and the purpose of teaching it.
- Enable the student to understand how the language works well.
- The student acquires linguistic analysis skills to interpret texts.
- Identify the difficulties facing the student in acquiring the functional grammar scale.
- The ability to analyze the relationships that exist between vocabulary within structures to understand meanings.
- Identify the means of aids in teaching it.
- Identify the content provided practically in the classroom, and determine the appropriateness of the method of communicating it to students.

**Study Methodology:** The approach adopted in this study is the descriptive, analytical and explanatory approach that is concerned with providing functional grammatical concepts and information, and the functional approach that searches for the function of verbal circulation between the speaker and the listener, and knowing the relationship of linguistic structures with external contexts, through collecting data and information, analyzing them and determining their function to reach effective solutions that make this material accessible to the student without trouble and difficulties.

**1- The concept of functional grammar:** Ahmed Al-Mutawakel did not refer to the definition of functional grammar in his writings, but I found a definition of it in the book (Theory of Functional Grammar Foundations, Models and Concepts) that "towards the characteristics of the natural tongue formal compositional, morphological and phonetic components are not independent of semantics and circulation, and are not described and interpreted except by resorting to semantic and deliberative factors".<sup>1</sup>

This means that functional grammar did not only study the levels of linguistic research (phonetic, morphological and grammatical), but went beyond that to the external context or place in which it is accomplished, which is represented in semantics and circulation.

Therefore, a mathematical formulation of functional grammar can be presented as follows: **Functional grammar = structure + denominator.**

**2- The subject of functional grammar:** The subject of the theory of functional grammar is determined in the communicative ability, and this sentence is a composite of (ability and communication).

Ability means "the speaker's knowledge of the rules that enable him to achieve certain communicative purposes by language, and ability in functional grammar is a communicative ability that includes syntactic rules, semantic rules, phonetic rules and deliberative rules".<sup>2</sup>

Communication is "the natural language user's goal of using language, or at least his greatest goal"<sup>3</sup>

Communicative ability means "a set of faculties or energies that activate and interact in the processes of producing and understanding discourse according to the conversational situation and the pattern of discourse, thus allowing communication between users of natural language".<sup>4</sup>

This means that communicative ability is a process that occurs between the user of natural languages during the speech process, and this ability is achieved only if there is a set of faculties, the latter consisting of the linguistic faculty (\*), the logical faculty (†); the cognitive faculty (††); Perceptual faculty (§). Social faculty (\*\*)<sup>5</sup> these faculties meet and interact with each other to achieve communicative ability.

**3- Principles of functional grammar:** Functional grammar is based on a set of principles, which are as follows:<sup>6</sup>

**3-1- The function of language is communication:** functional linguists have argued that language is used mainly for communication within human societies, in linguistic terms, vocabulary or sentences, and by means used to perform communicative purposes.

**3-2- communicative function determines the linguistic structure:** The functional interpretation of linguistic phenomena is based on a set of mechanisms that cause interaction between structure and function;

- Audiovisual aids.
- Conditions of language use (physical, social and cultural).

**3-3- The problem of language acquisition:** Al-Mutawakkil went to the fact that the individual's acquisition of the language has pronunciation and practical habits that are in line with the stages of his life, represented in childhood, school and practical life.

**3- 4 -Function and linguistic colleges:** Functional linguists unanimously agreed that linguistic colleges, or as they called the total grammar, is a way that marries between formal and functional<sup>7</sup>; that is, between structures and functions and cannot be separated.

**3-5- Function and subject of description:** This means the description of the speaker's knowledge of his linguistic ability, and this is only done through the interaction between the structural characteristics of the language and the communicative functions.

**3- 6- The goal of linguistic research:** aims to achieve four competencies: typical sufficiency, psychological sufficiency, deliberative sufficiency, and computer sufficiency.

#### 4- Applied study:

**4-1- Selection of the study sample:** The importance and strength of the study and the accurate scientific results lie in the characteristics of the sample that we have chosen, represented in the students of Arabic language and literature, Department of Arabic Language and Sociology, at the Higher School of Professors Massoud Zaghar Setif, concerned with studying the functional grammar scale, and they are the total students of the fourth year intermediate and secondary stage, so the sample that we chose, who numbered thirty Student, note that the application of the idea of the work that we will propose is addressed to students of higher schools of teachers in general.

**4-2- Study Scale:** The process of collecting data is a very important step in scientific research to achieve the desired goals, and to reach accurate field facts that help the researcher to present his research with objective realism, away from prejudices, and I had the experience of teaching the functional grammar scale during the past years, and after contacting students and listening to their opinions about this scale, I found that most students face some difficulties in understanding and absorbing its vocabulary, and this is what prompted me to search for scientific and pedagogical solutions to reduce Some of the difficulties faced by students in their studies and professors in teaching them.

Out of great keenness to reach accurate scientific results, I collected data by building a set of questions in a topical scientific questionnaire, which are as follows:

- What is the functional grammar scale useful for you?
- Do you think that the lecture class alone is enough to achieve understanding? Or should a guided business class be programmed?
- In your opinion, what is the appropriate and effective way to teach functional grammar?
- What difficulties did you receive in studying this scale?
- Scale terminology is complex.
- Frequent symbols.
- The material is dry and dull.
- The student's inability to study the modern language.
- Does the student of the École Normale Supérieure really benefit from this measure as it is education-oriented?
- The functional grammar scale combines the terms of traditional grammar and modern linguistics.
- Does this increase the difficulty and mixing of terminology, or enrich and clarify the material?
- Why has a negative image been formed around the scale in the eyes of some students?
- What are the reasons for your aversion to studying this scale?
- Lack of good mastery of the modern linguistic lesson.
- Name other reasons.

- Have you read books on functional grammar. (Yes/No)

If the answer is yes, state some of them, and if no, specify the reason.

- Have you thought about having the subject of your graduation note in functional grammar. (Yes/No)

- If your answer is "yes", state the reasons.

- If your answer is no, state the reasons for your reluctance.

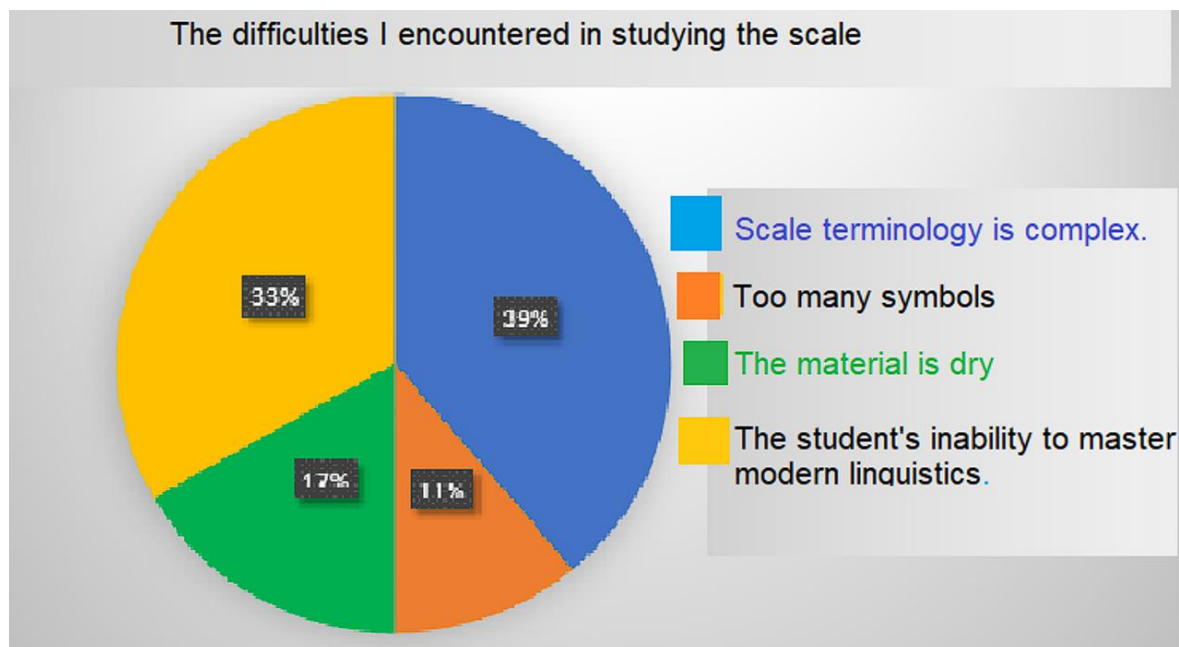
#### 4-3- Discussion of the results of the questionnaire:

##### 4- 3- 1 Students' impression of the scale:

**Fourth question:** The difficulties that the student receives in studying this scale lie in:

- Scale terminology is complex.
- Frequent symbols.
- The material is dry and dull.
- The student's inability to study the modern language.

This question aims to identify some of the obstacles that trouble the student and make him not understand this material, and I tried through it to put forward a set of suggestions to reveal some difficulties, and the result was as shown in the first figure:



**Figure I**

**Discussion and analysis of the results:** The results of the graphic circuit showed that the difficulties received by the student in studying this subject lie in its complex terminology that made the student confused about it, by (39%), and (33%) of the sample owners went to it is due to the student's inability to study the modern language being a researcher and a student, he must adhere to

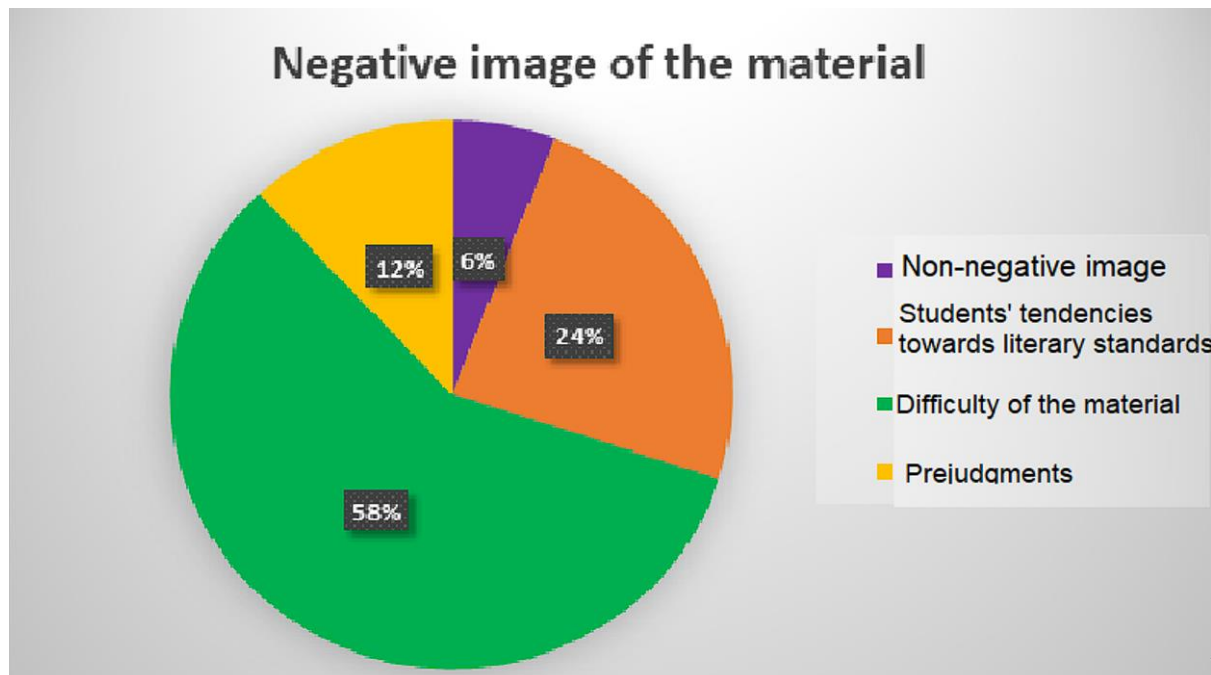
his duties in research to achieve understanding, while another group (17%) went to the difficulty due to the dryness of the material, which does not exceed the limits of the theory between the books and only, while other members of the sample see their percentage (11%) that this is due to the large number and density of symbols.

We conclude through this that functional grammar is a modern functional linguistic approach that came in order to serve the Arabic language and develop the linguistic capabilities of students and researchers, but what is noticeable is the reluctance of many of them to delve into this worthwhile science. The results of this study revealed to us that the most important reasons that made this obsession are due to the following:

- Prejudge the difficulty of the scale.
- Lack of good mastery of the modern linguistic lesson.
- Students are averse to linguistics, and this is due to the lack of effort to understand and delve into it.

**Seventh question:** Why was the negative image about the scale formed in the eyes of some students?

The students presented a set of justifications and resulted in varying and different percentages, as shown in the following figure:



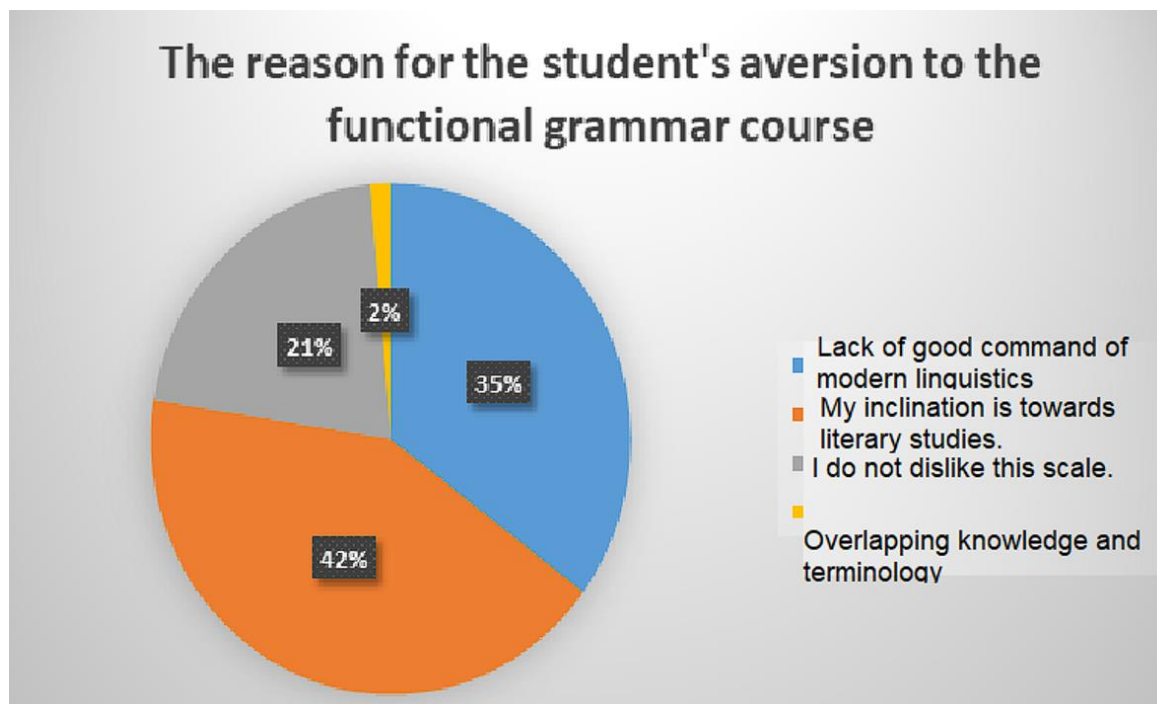
**Figure II**

**Discussion and analysis of the results:** Through the results of the second figure, we find that (58%) of the respondents believe that the negative image about the functional grammar scale is due to the difficulty of its complex and ambiguous terminology and the density of its symbols, while the percentage (24%) of the sample members went to the fact that the main reason for the formation of the negative image is due to the tendencies of students to literary standards and their aversion to linguistic standards, while another category of this sample, which estimated (12%) that the reason is

the formation of a negative image about the scale, which is due to their prejudices that they issued before knowing and studying it, based on the statements of their predecessors of students on the pretext that they did not get good marks, and resulted in a ratio of (6%) However, the material is good and simple and only needs concentration and mental presence.

**Question eight:** What are the reasons for your aversion to studying this scale?

This question aims to find out the extent to which good training affects the level of the modern linguistic lesson, as well as other reasons, so we get the results shown in the following relative circle:

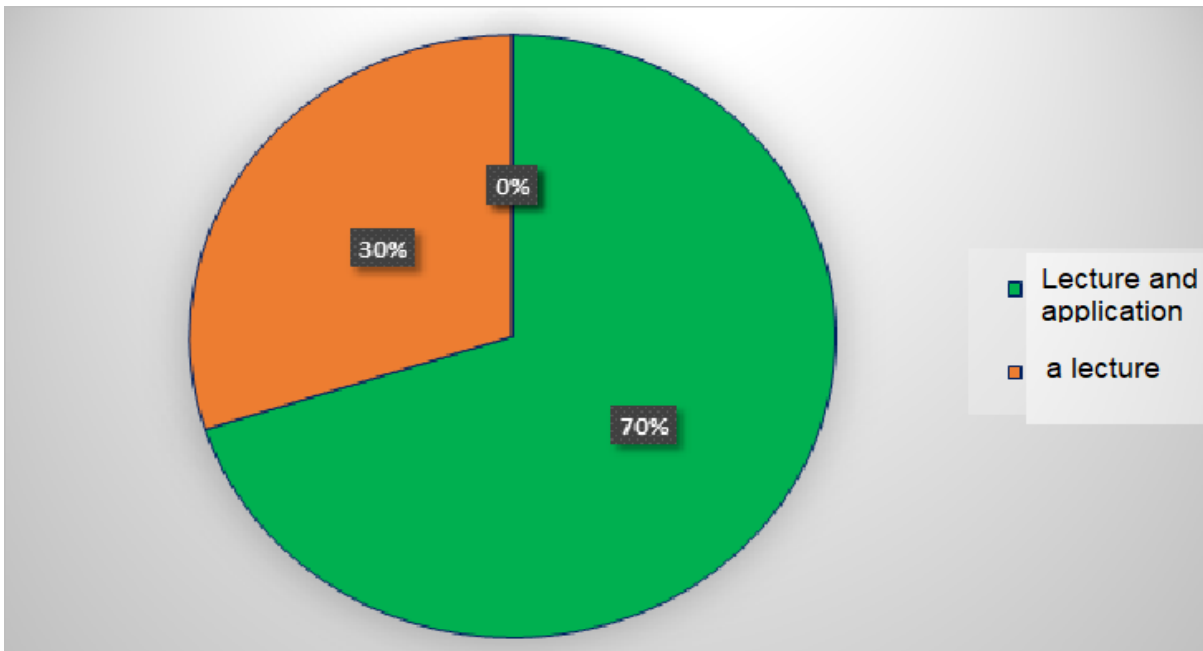


**Figure III**

**Discussion and analysis of the results:** The results shown in the third figure showed that (42%) of the sample members agreed that the main reason for students' aversion to studying the functional grammar scale in the higher schools of teachers is their tendencies to literary standards that depend on memorization, unlike linguistic standards, especially functional grammar, which depends on analysis, interpretation and understanding, and in the maqabThis means that the problem is not related to this scale, but lies in the mentality of the student who did not accept modern sciences, especially Western ones, while another category went by (21%) to their love for the scale and not to be averse to it, and another category by (2%) believes that the reason is due to the overlap of knowledge and terminology among them and their mixing, which made the student averse to this material.

#### **4- 3- 2 - Method of teaching functional grammar:**

**Second question:** Do you think that the lecture session alone is sufficient to achieve understanding? Or should a guided business class be programmed?

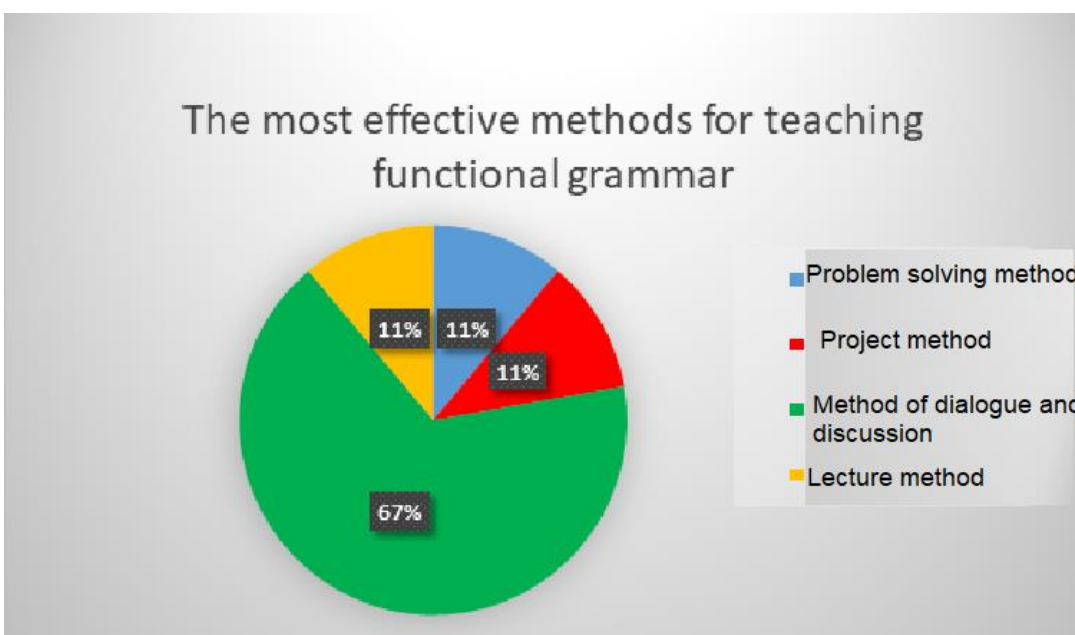


**Figure IV**

**Discussion and analysis of the results:** The results of the relative circle shown in the fourth figure showed that most of the students estimated (70%) condemn supporting the lecture with the share of directed work so that the student can understand and understand the scale more, while another sample estimated at (30%) went that the lecture share alone is sufficient to communicate the concepts of functional grammar and its application.

**Third question:** In your opinion, what is the appropriate and effective way to teach functional grammar?

This question aims to determine an appropriate and effective way to teach the functional grammar scale. The results were as shown in the following figure:



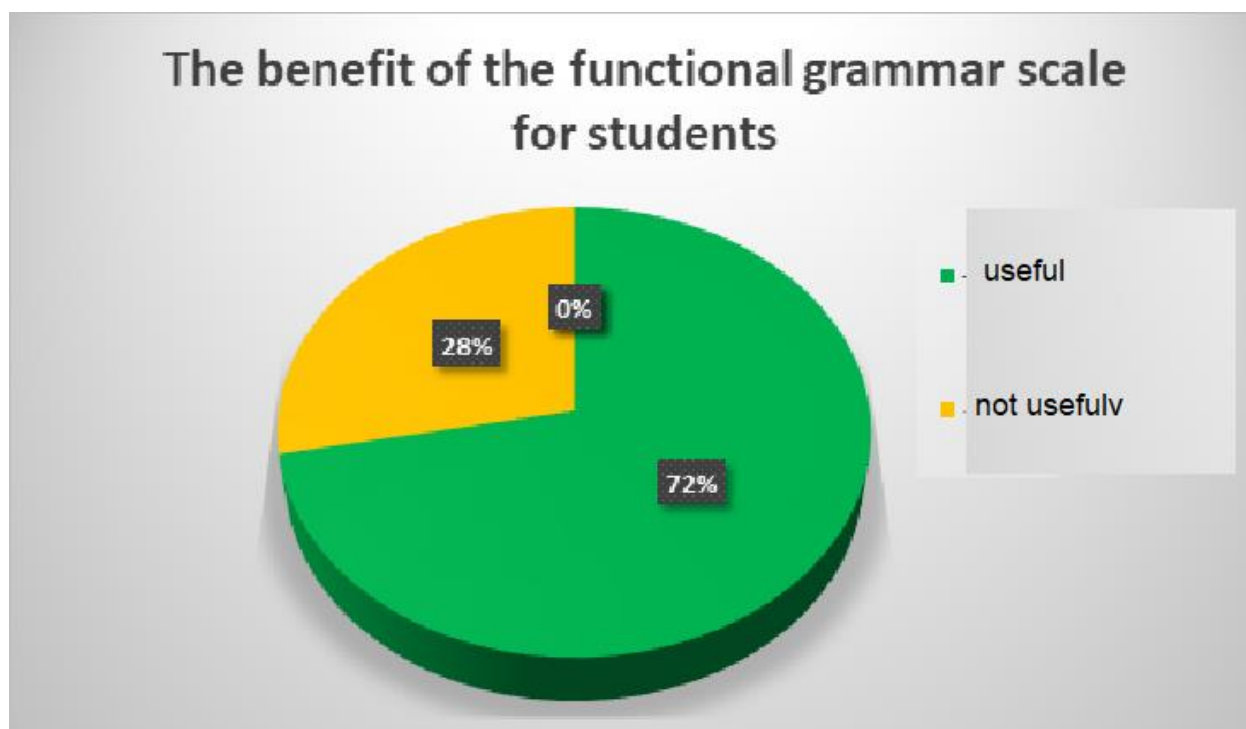
**Figure V**

**Discussion and analysis of results:** It is clear from the fifth figure that (67%) of students believe that the effective way to teach this scale is the method of dialogue and discussion that depends on vitality and activity between the professor and the student within the class to achieve understanding and consolidate complex concepts, while other groups see the estimated percentage (11%) that the lecture method is the most appropriate in order to provide the largest possible number of lessons to benefit everyone, and there are those who believe that the project method is effective because it develops the spirit of research in the student and pushes him towards solving problems and understanding complex rules, and invites another category to the method of solving problems in light of the multiplicity, diversity, complexity and abundance of functional grammatical terms.

#### 4 -3- 3 - How students benefit from the scale:

**First question:** What is useful for you the functional grammar scale? The first question is merged with the fifth question.

These two questions aim to know the extent of the student's interest in this subject and his keenness on it and its importance in the future in his practical life, so the results were as shown in the following figure:

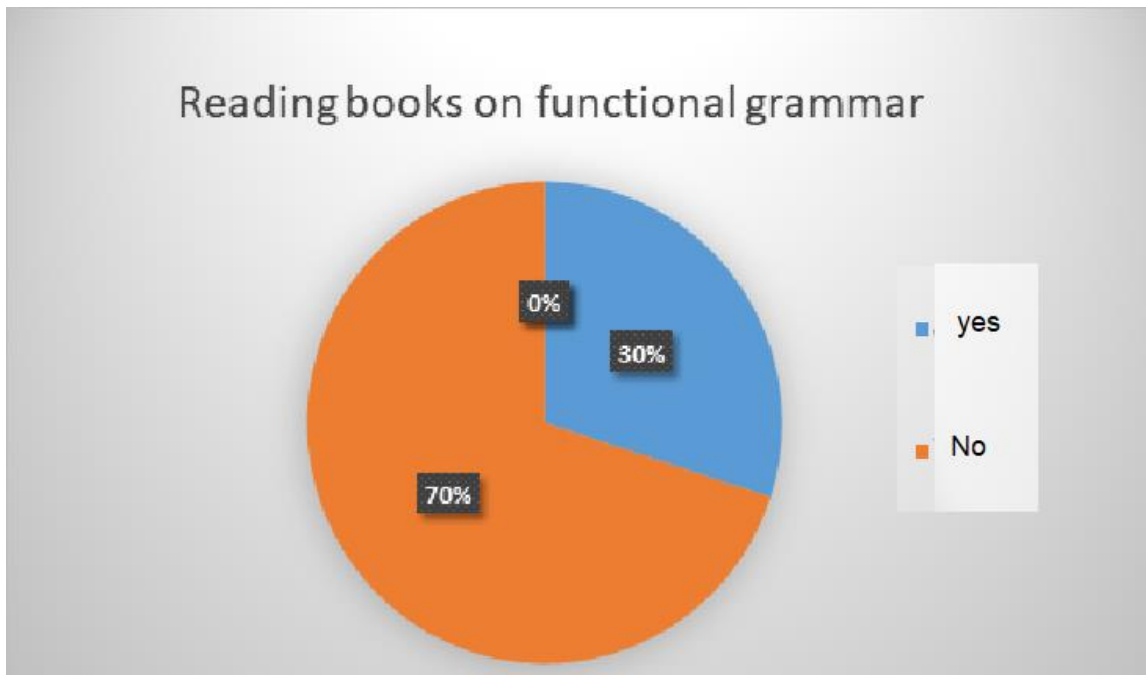


**Figure VI**

**Discussion and analysis of the results:** The results of the relative circle showed that (72%) of students believe that the functional grammar scale is useful in understanding and analyzing language, developing their skills, informing them of the status of the Western linguistic lesson, and enriching their knowledge and linguistic balance, while (28%) of them that this scale is not useful because they are simply not fans of the modern linguistic lesson, and its vocabulary has nothing to do with education, whether for middle or high school students. This indicates the value of this scale and its great role in the formation of the student.

**Question Nine:** Have you read books on functional grammar?

This question aims to find out the extent to which the student is familiar with this material, and the results are as shown in the following figure:

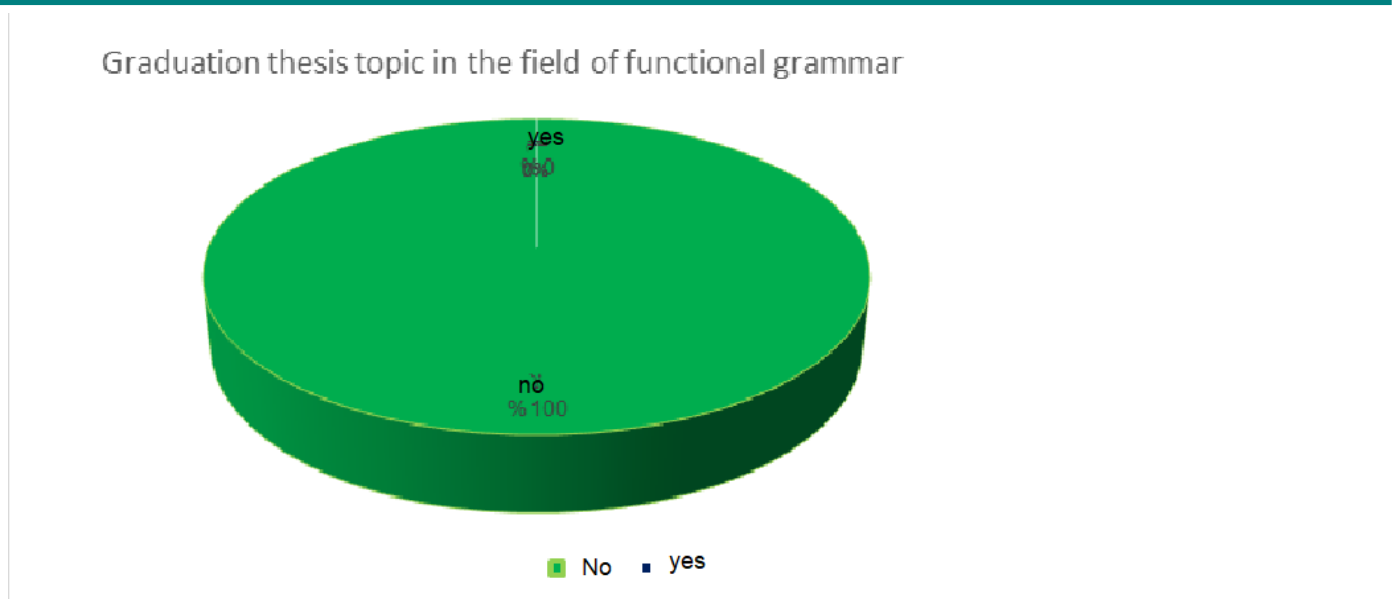


**Figure VII**

**Discussion and analysis of the results:** The sample members were divided into two categories, the first estimated (70%) as shown in the seventh figure, they went to the fact that they did not read books in functional grammar, and their argument in that they have no desire to study this scale because of the complexity of its terminology, and the difficulty of its concepts, while the second was (30%) of students who expressed their love and desire to read the books of this scale due to its importance in understanding language and accuracy in analysis.

**Tenth question:** Have you thought that the subject of your graduation note is in functional grammar (yes/no).

The goal of this question is to reveal the student's love and desire to work and work on this scale.



**Figure VIII**

**Discussion and analysis of the results:** The results of the relative circle in the eighth figure showed that all students by an estimated (100%) unanimously rejected and reluctant to have their graduation note in the field of functional grammar, and the reason for this is that they do not have a desire and love in this field and it has no importance in education, and does not serve their future goals.

**4-4-4- Proposed solutions to facilitate the teaching of the functional grammar scale:** These solutions are as follows:

- Relying on the method of dialogue and discussion in teaching functional grammar, and staying away from diction and indoctrination.
- Allocating the share of directed work and intensifying them, because the pleasure of the scale lies in the practical aspect.
- Simplifying the terms and concepts of the subject according to students' mental abilities to accept and absorb them.
- Gradual introduction of linguistics and its branches from the first year to the last year to achieve good understanding.
- Endearing the student to linguistics and pointing out how important it is, and to try to change their negative view of it.
- Linking the functional grammar scale to the educational learning process to realize its value.

**Conclusion, suggestions and recommendations:** By analyzing the results of the questionnaire, we conclude the following:

- Most students believe that their reluctance to linguistics in general and functional grammar in particular is caused by the difficulty and complexity of the material in terms of its concepts and

terminology, and this negative image was formed by former students in their minds, but this is a mistake. There is no difficult material, and the scale should not be prejudged.

- The prevailing method of teaching functional grammar is a method of indoctrination based on direct delivery, as the professor's view is limited to his knowledge of everything, and the student is seen as ignorant of everything.
- Functional grammarians must join forces to reform the teaching system at the Algerian university.
- Careful scientific and methodological planning.
- A suitable learning environment must be provided to present this material well.
- In order to be proficient, a professor must have a certain amount of educational knowledge that allows him to know the scientific methods of teaching the vocabulary of the subject.
- In order for the student to know the secrets of the functional grammar scale, he must have a certain amount of modern linguistic lesson.

### **Marginalization :**

(\*)**The linguistic faculty** is: a set of principles that enable the natural language user to produce and interpret an infinite number of linguistic phrases in different communicative maqams, as well as to acquire any natural language.

(†) **Logical faculty is:** the sum of the inferential rules by which the user of natural language can derive additional knowledge from existing knowledge by means of inference rules governed by the principles of deductive logic.

(††) **Cognitive faculty is :** the sum of the rules that enable the natural language user to build up a structured stock of linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge and use it to produce and interpret more linguistic phrases.

(§) **Perceptual faculty is:** the sum of the rules that enable the user of the language to use the knowledge he derives from his perception of his surroundings and from the communicative situation itself in the production and understanding of linguistic phrases.

(\*\*) **Social faculty is:** the sum of social rules and principles that enable the natural language user to use appropriate language phrases given the status of his social addressee and the purpose to be achieved during communication.

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<sup>1</sup> Muhammad Al-Hussein Melitan: Theory of Functional Grammar: Foundations, Models and Concepts, Difaf Publications and Publications of Difference, Dar Al-Aman, Rabat, 1st Edition, 2014, pp. 144-145.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>3</sup> Same reference, p. 76.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>5</sup> See: Ali Ait Ouchane: Linguistics and Didactics (Functional Grammar Model from Scientific Knowledge to School Knowledge), Pedagogical Series, Dar Al-Thaqafa, Casablanca, 1st Edition, 2005, p. 50.

<sup>6</sup> See: Ahmed Al-Mutakal: Functional Linguistics (Theoretical Introduction), Okaz Publications, Rabat, 1st Edition, 1989, pp. 49 to p. 93

See: Ahmed Al-Mutawakel: The Career Orientation in Arabic Linguistic Thought (Origins and Extension), Dar Al-Aman Library, 4 Mamounia Square, Rabat, 1st Edition, 2006, pp. 19 to p. 35.

<sup>7</sup> See: Ahmed Al-Mutawakel: Functional Linguistics: A Theoretical Introduction, p. 88.