



Authority, Modality and Obligation in Online Iraqi University Administrative Notices: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

This study investigates the discursive construction of authority, modality, and obligation in online administrative notices issued by Iraqi universities. Drawing on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and adopting Norman Fairclough's (1995) [7] three-dimensional model, the research analyzes a corpus of Arabic-language notices collected from official university websites and social media platforms. The analysis is conducted at three levels: textual (linguistic features), discursive practice (production and distribution), and social practice (ideological and institutional context).

The findings reveal a systematic reliance on strong modal expressions such as **يجب** (must) and **يمنع** (prohibited), along with imperative forms, to construct non-negotiable obligations and enforce institutional authority. Additionally, the frequent use of impersonal constructions and nominalizations serves to depersonalize directives, presenting them as objective rules rather than subjective commands. At the discursive level, intertextual references to ministerial regulations enhance the legitimacy of the notices, while digital dissemination maintains a predominantly one-way communicative structure. At the social level, the discourse reflects an underlying ideology of discipline, compliance, and hierarchical control within Iraqi higher education institutions.

The study concludes that Iraqi university administrative discourse is characterized by a "culture of directives," where language functions as a key mechanism for reproducing institutional power and regulating behavior. This research contributes to expanding CDA into underexplored Arabic institutional contexts and provides insights into the linguistic realization of authority in non-Western academic settings.

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1. Introduction

Universities function not only as educational institutions but also as formal sites of authority where power is exercised, negotiated, and normalized through language. As bureaucratic organizations, universities rely heavily on written discourse to regulate academic life, manage conduct, and ensure compliance with institutional rules. From a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective, such institutions are understood as key locations where discursive power operates through routine, often unquestioned texts that shape social relations and identities (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2008) [7, 16]. Administrative language, in this sense, is not neutral; rather, it reflects and reproduces institutional hierarchies and ideological assumptions about authority, obedience, and legitimacy.

Among the most visible and recurrent forms of institutional discourse within universities are administrative notices. These notices—published online through official university websites and social media platforms—play a central role in regulating behavior, directing actions, and enforcing norms related to attendance, dress codes, examinations, deadlines, and disciplinary matters. Linguistically, they often rely on markers of obligation, prohibition, and necessity, such as modal expressions, imperatives, and impersonal structures. Such features serve to legitimize institutional control while presenting directives as natural, necessary, or non-negotiable (Bhatia, 2014; Fairclough, 2001) ^[5, 8]. Because administrative notices are routinely encountered by students and staff, they contribute to the everyday internalization of institutional power relations.

Despite the growing body of CDA research on political, media, and educational discourse, administrative notices remain a relatively underexplored genre, particularly in non-Western and Arabic-speaking contexts. Existing studies in educational discourse often focus on policy documents, curricula, or classroom interaction (Hyland, 2004; Wodak & Meyer, 2016) ^[11, 18], while Iraqi academic contexts are mostly examined from historical, organizational, or pedagogical perspectives rather than discursive ones. To date, very limited research has applied CDA to Iraqi university administrative discourse, especially with a focus on how authority and obligation are linguistically constructed in Arabic online notices. This gap is significant, as Iraqi universities operate within specific socio-political, cultural, and institutional conditions that shape how power is communicated and maintained. The absence of systematic CDA studies on Iraqi university administrative notices means that the ideological functions of these texts remain largely invisible. Without critical examination, the ways in which language normalizes obedience, minimizes dialogue, and reinforces power distance may go unchallenged. Addressing this gap is necessary not only to extend CDA research into underrepresented contexts, but also to contribute to a deeper understanding of Arabic institutional discourse as a distinct and meaningful site of analysis (Al-Ali, 2006; Oudah, 2020) ^[12].

Accordingly, the aim of this study is to examine how authority, modality, and obligation are discursively constructed in online administrative notices issued by Iraqi universities. Using Fairclough's (1995) ^[7] three-dimensional model of CDA, the study analyzes selected Arabic-language notices at the textual, discursive, and social levels. Specifically, it focuses on modal expressions of obligation and prohibition, the use of impersonal and passive constructions, and the broader ideological implications of these linguistic choices within the Iraqi higher education context. This paper is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews relevant literature on CDA, institutional discourse, and modality in administrative contexts. Section 3 outlines the theoretical framework underpinning the study. Section 4 describes the methodology, including data selection and analytical procedures. Section 5 presents and discusses the findings of the analysis. Finally, Section 6 concludes the paper by summarizing the main findings, highlighting the study's contributions, and suggesting directions for future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Critical Discourse Analysis and Institutional Power

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a robust interdisciplinary approach to studying language that emphasizes the constitutive role of discourse in reproducing and challenging power relations within society (Fairclough, 2010; van Dijk, 2008) ^[9, 16]. CDA is fundamentally concerned with how social power, dominance, and inequality are enacted, legitimized, and resisted through linguistic and semiotic practices. Fairclough (2010) ^[9] posits that discourse is not merely a reflection of social structures but actively shapes and is shaped by social practices, making it a crucial site for understanding societal dynamics. Similarly, van Dijk (2008) ^[16] highlights the necessity for CDA to analyze how discourse constructs social cognition and ideology, particularly within institutional settings where power is formalized and often subtly exercised.

In institutional contexts, language serves as a primary instrument for exercising authority and maintaining social order. Organizations such as universities are inherently structured around hierarchical roles, established rules, and formalized procedures, and their communicative practices frequently reinforce these existing structures. CDA provides the conceptual and analytical tools necessary to investigate how texts produced by such institutions—ranging from official policies to public announcements—reflect, reproduce, and sometimes challenge ideological positions, authority structures, and power dynamics (Fairclough, 2010).

2.2. Administrative and Bureaucratic Discourse

Administrative discourse refers to the specialized language employed in formal institutional communications, encompassing a wide array of texts such as memos, announcements, directives, and notices. These texts are typically characterized by features such as impersonality, explicit expressions of obligation, and various forms of control, all intended to regulate behavior and ensure compliance within the institutional framework (Bhatia, 1993; Ventola, 1994) ^[4, 17]. Impersonality is often achieved through formalized syntactic structures, the deliberate avoidance of personal pronouns, and a consistent focus on procedures and rules rather than individual actors. Expressions of obligation are frequently conveyed through modal verbs like “must,” “shall,” or “required to,” which unequivocally signal institutional authority and enforce adherence to directives.

Previous CDA studies have extensively examined administrative and bureaucratic discourse across diverse institutional contexts. For instance, Bhatia (1993) ^[4] provided seminal analyses of professional and institutional genres, illustrating how legal and administrative texts strategically communicate authority and exert control. Similarly, research focusing on university policies and announcements has revealed the intricate ways in which institutional language shapes behavior, enforces compliance, and establishes the legitimacy of university authority (Bednarek, 2006; Tottie, 2011) ^[3, 15]. However, a notable limitation in much of this research is its predominant focus on Western contexts. There remains a significant paucity of studies examining administrative discourse within Iraqi universities or other Middle Eastern higher education institutions. This gap underscores the

critical need for CDA research that investigates Iraqi university administrative discourse, as it is likely to reflect unique cultural, linguistic, and institutional characteristics that differ from Western counterparts.

2.3. Modality, Obligation, and Authority

Modality constitutes a central linguistic mechanism through which speakers or writers express their attitudes, judgments, and varying degrees of certainty, necessity, or obligation (Palmer, 2001; Hoyer, 2010) ^[10, 13]. Within institutional discourse, modality assumes particular importance because it directly signals the extent of authority, responsibility, or control that the issuing institution seeks to exercise over its audience. Modality can articulate various functions, including obligation, necessity, permission, or prohibition, thereby serving as a powerful tool for regulating behavior in formal settings (Biber *et al.*, 1999) ^[6].

In Arabic, modality is realized through a complex interplay of verbal forms, dedicated modal verbs, particles, and specific syntactic constructions. Obligatory actions are frequently conveyed using verbs such as *يجب* (yajibu, “must/should”), *لا بد من* (la budda min, “it is necessary to”), or through the direct use of imperative forms (*افعل*, “do”) (Al-Khatib, 2006) ^[2]. Conversely, prohibitions are typically expressed via negative imperatives (*لا تفعل*, “do not do”) or particles indicating negation combined with obligation (*لا يجوز*, “it is not permissible”) (Rouchdy, 2003) ^[14]. Furthermore, necessity and strong recommendations can be encoded using semi-modal expressions, such as *من الضروري* (min al-daruri, “it is essential/necessary”) or *ينبغي* (yanbaghi, “ought to”). These diverse linguistic tools enable administrative texts to effectively enforce compliance and clearly signal the authoritative stance of the issuing institution.

Within Iraqi university administrative discourse, authority is often reinforced not only through the strategic deployment of modality but also through specific lexical choices, nominalizations, and impersonal constructions. These linguistic strategies serve to depersonalize the message, shifting the focus from individual actors to institutional rules and procedures (Al-Khatib, 2006) ^[2]. For example, an administrative notice stating *يجب على جميع الطلبة الحضور* (“All students must comply with attending on time”) exemplifies how the modal verb *يجب* is combined with a formalized syntactic structure to simultaneously convey a strong sense of obligation and underscore institutional authority. Such constructions are emblematic of how linguistic features in Arabic institutional texts encode hierarchical relationships, enforce norms, and ultimately shape the behavior of students and staff.

Despite the undeniable centrality of modality in enforcing institutional authority, there is a discernible lack of research specifically examining its use in Iraqi university administrative texts. The majority of studies on Arabic institutional discourse have historically concentrated on legal, political, or media texts, leaving a significant gap in our

understanding of higher education administrative communication in this specific context (Rouchdy, 2003; Al-Khatib, 2006) ^[2, 14]. This study aims to address this critical gap by systematically examining how modality and authority are linguistically realized and discursively constructed in the online administrative notices issued by Iraqi universities.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Norman Fairclough’s (1995) ^[7] three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its primary theoretical framework. Fairclough’s model provides a comprehensive approach to analyzing the intricate relationship between language, power, and ideology by examining discourse at three interconnected levels: text, discursive practice, and social practice. This framework is particularly suitable for investigating how authority, modality, and obligation are discursively constructed in online Iraqi university administrative notices, as it allows for a nuanced understanding of both the linguistic features of the texts and their broader socio-political implications.

3.1. Textual Analysis (Description)

The first dimension, **Textual Analysis**, focuses on the linguistic and semiotic features of the discourse itself. At this level, the study will meticulously examine the specific linguistic choices made within the online administrative notices. This includes:

- **Vocabulary:** Analysis of specific word choices, evaluative adjectives, and metaphors that contribute to the construction of authority and the framing of obligations. For instance, the use of formal or bureaucratic lexicon, or terms that implicitly or explicitly convey power relations.
- **Grammar:** Investigation of grammatical structures, particularly the use of active versus passive voice, nominalizations, and impersonal constructions. These grammatical choices can serve to assign or obscure agency, depersonalize directives, and reinforce institutional authority by presenting actions as natural or self-evident rather than as originating from specific actors.
- **Modality:** A central focus will be on modal expressions, which indicate degrees of certainty, necessity, obligation, or prohibition. This includes modal verbs (e.g., “must,” “should,” “will,” “may”), semi-modal expressions, and other linguistic devices in Arabic that convey different strengths of obligation or permission. The analysis will explore how these modal choices are employed to regulate behavior and signal the institution’s authoritative stance.
- **Ideological Square (van Dijk):** While not explicitly a part of Fairclough’s original model, van Dijk’s (2008) ^[16] concept of the ideological square—which involves positive self-representation and negative other-representation—can be implicitly considered when analyzing how the notices position the institution versus the students/staff, particularly in terms of responsibilities and expectations.

3.2. Discursive Practice (Interpretation)

The second dimension, **Discursive Practice**, concerns the processes of text production and consumption. This level moves beyond the text itself to consider how the administrative notices are created, disseminated, and interpreted within the university context. Key aspects to be explored include:

- **Intertextuality:** Examination of how the administrative notices relate to other texts or discourses. This might involve analyzing references to university regulations, national educational policies, or even implicit dialogues with previous announcements or common student queries. Intertextuality helps to understand how the notices draw upon existing authority and contribute to a broader institutional discourse.
- **Distribution and Reception:** Consideration of how these notices are published (e.g., official university websites, specific departmental portals, social media platforms) and how their online presence might influence their reception and perceived authority. The online nature of these notices is crucial, as it shapes accessibility, permanence, and potential for interaction.
- **Contextual Interpretation:** How the notices are likely to be interpreted by their target audience (students, faculty, staff) given their prior knowledge, institutional roles, and cultural background. This involves considering the communicative purpose of the notices and the expected perlocutionary effects.

3.3. Social Practice (Explanation)

The third dimension, **Social Practice**, situates the discourse within its broader socio-political and cultural context. This level aims to explain how the administrative notices contribute to, are shaped by, and potentially challenge existing social structures and power relations within Iraqi higher education and society at large. This involves:

- **Power Dynamics:** Analyzing how the discourse in the notices reinforces or challenges existing power hierarchies within Iraqi universities. This includes examining how institutional power is legitimized, maintained, or potentially contested through linguistic means.
- **Ideological Function:** Identifying the underlying ideologies that are promoted or reproduced through the administrative notices. This could involve exploring how the notices reflect institutional values, educational philosophies, or broader societal norms regarding authority, discipline, and compliance in the Iraqi context.
- **Social Impact:** Considering the potential social consequences of the discourse, such as its impact on student autonomy, staff morale, or the overall institutional culture. This dimension seeks to understand the role of these notices in shaping social relations and contributing to social reproduction or change within the university environment.

By applying Fairclough's three-dimensional model, this study aims to provide a comprehensive and critical analysis of how authority, modality, and obligation are linguistically constructed in online Iraqi university administrative notices, thereby revealing their ideological underpinnings and their

role in institutional power dynamics.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative and interpretive research design, grounded in the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA is particularly suited for this investigation as it allows for an in-depth examination of the intricate relationship between language, power, and ideology within specific social contexts (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2008) [16]. The interpretive nature of the design facilitates a nuanced understanding of how linguistic choices in online administrative notices contribute to the construction of authority, modality, and obligation within Iraqi universities. This approach moves beyond mere description to uncover the underlying social and ideological implications of discursive practices.

4.2. Corpus Selection

The research corpus will consist of online administrative notices issued by a selection of Iraqi public universities. To ensure a representative sample, notices will be collected from at least three distinct Iraqi universities, encompassing a mix of older, more established institutions and newer ones, if feasible. The selection criteria for the notices will include:

- **Source:** Notices published on official university websites and/or official university social media pages (e.g., Facebook, Telegram channels) that are publicly accessible.
- **Timeframe:** Notices published within a specific period, for instance, from January 2023 to December 2025, to capture contemporary communication practices. This timeframe will allow for an analysis of recent trends in administrative discourse.
- **Type of Notice:** The corpus will primarily include notices related to student conduct, academic regulations (e.g., attendance, examinations, deadlines), disciplinary actions, and general administrative directives that convey obligations or prohibitions. Notices that are purely informational (e.g., event announcements without directives) will be excluded.

The final corpus size will be determined based on saturation, aiming for a sufficient number of texts (e.g., 30-50 notices) to allow for comprehensive analysis of recurring linguistic patterns and discursive strategies related to authority, modality, and obligation.

4.3. Data Collection

Data collection will involve systematically accessing the official websites and designated social media platforms of the selected Iraqi universities. A manual collection approach will be utilized, where relevant administrative notices will be identified, extracted, and saved. For notices on websites, the full text will be copied, along with relevant metadata such as publication date and source URL. For social media posts, screenshots will be taken to preserve the visual context, and the accompanying text will be transcribed. All collected data will be anonymized where necessary to protect the privacy of individuals mentioned in the notices, if any, and stored securely.

4.4. Data Analysis Procedures

The collected corpus will be subjected to a detailed Critical Discourse Analysis using Fairclough's (1995) ^[7] three-dimensional model, which integrates textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice. The analytical procedure will involve the following steps:

1. Textual Analysis (Description): Each administrative notice will be analyzed for its linguistic features. This will involve:

- **Lexical Analysis:** Identifying specific vocabulary, evaluative adjectives, and metaphors used to construct authority and frame obligations. Attention will be paid to formal, bureaucratic, or legalistic language.
- **Grammatical Analysis:** Examining grammatical structures, including the prevalence of active versus passive voice, nominalizations, and impersonal constructions. The aim is to understand how agency is assigned or obscured and how directives are depersonalized.
- **Modal Analysis:** A focused examination of modal expressions (e.g., modal verbs, semi-modals, particles) that convey degrees of obligation, necessity, permission, or prohibition in Arabic. The strength and type of modality will be categorized and analyzed.

2. Discursive Practice (Interpretation): This stage will interpret the processes of text production and consumption. It will involve:

- **Intertextuality:** Investigating how the notices refer to or incorporate other texts (e.g., university regulations, national laws) to establish credibility and authority.
- **Contextual Interpretation:** Analyzing how the online distribution platforms (websites, social media) influence the reception and interpretation of the notices by the target audience (students, staff), considering their prior knowledge and institutional roles.

3. Social Practice (Explanation): The final stage will situate the discourse within its broader socio-political and cultural context, aiming to explain its ideological functions and social impact. This will involve:

- **Power Dynamics:** Discussing how the linguistic and discursive choices in the notices reinforce or challenge existing power hierarchies within Iraqi universities and the broader society.
- **Ideological Function:** Identifying the underlying ideologies, values, and norms promoted or reproduced through the administrative discourse, particularly concerning authority, discipline, and compliance in the

Iraqi educational system.

- **Social Impact:** Reflecting on the potential consequences of these discursive practices on student autonomy, institutional culture, and social relations within the university community.

4.5. Ethical Considerations

All collected data will be treated with utmost ethical consideration. Since the notices are publicly available online, direct consent from individuals is not required. However, care will be taken to anonymize any potentially identifiable information if individual cases are discussed. The research will maintain objectivity and avoid any biased interpretations, ensuring that the analysis is solely based on the linguistic and discursive evidence within the corpus. The study will adhere to academic integrity standards, including proper citation and avoidance of plagiarism.

4.6. Limitations of the Study

This study acknowledges several potential limitations. Firstly, the reliance on publicly available online notices may not capture all forms of administrative communication within Iraqi universities, particularly informal or internal communications. Secondly, the interpretive nature of CDA means that findings are subject to researcher interpretation, although efforts will be made to ensure transparency and rigor in the analytical process. Thirdly, while the study focuses on a selection of Iraqi universities, the findings may not be generalizable to all Iraqi higher education institutions or to other Arabic-speaking contexts without further research. Finally, the dynamic nature of online content means that some notices might be updated or removed, which could affect the stability of the corpus over an extended period.

5. Data Analysis and Discussion

The data analysis section systematically examines the collected corpus of online administrative notices from Iraqi universities, applying Fairclough's (1995) ^[7] three-dimensional model. The analysis focuses on how authority, modality, and obligation are discursively constructed across the textual, discursive, and social levels.

5.1 Textual Analysis: Linguistic Construction of Authority

At the textual level, the analysis reveals a consistent use of specific linguistic markers that reinforce institutional authority and clearly delineate student obligations. A primary feature is the strategic deployment of modality in Arabic, particularly through modal verbs and imperative forms.

Table 1: Frequent Modal Expressions and Their Discursive Functions in the Corpus

Modal Expression (Arabic)	Transliteration	English Equivalent	Discursive Function	Frequency of Use
يجب	Yajibu	Must / Should	Strong obligation; signals non-negotiable institutional requirements.	Very High
لا بد من	La budda min	It is necessary to	Emphasizes inevitability and administrative necessity.	High
ينبغي	Yanbaghi	Ought to / Should	Recommendation or standard expectation; often used for behavioral norms.	Medium
لا يجوز / يمنع	La yajuzu / Yumna'u	Not permissible / Prohibited	Explicit prohibition; sets boundaries for acceptable behavior.	High
افعل (Imperative)	If'al	Do (Command)	Direct instruction; asserts immediate institutional authority.	Very High

The use of Yajibu (يجب) is particularly prevalent in notices regarding examination attendance and fee payments, where compliance is mandatory. Conversely, prohibitions related to the "Uniform Dress Code" (الزّي الموحد) frequently utilize Yumna'u (يمنع), often accompanied by specific descriptions of restricted attire, such as "tight or short clothing" (الملابس الضيقة والقصيرة). This categorical language leaves little room for interpretation, positioning the university as the ultimate arbiter of student conduct.

Furthermore, the analysis identifies a high frequency of nominalizations and impersonal constructions. Instead of saying "The Dean requires you to...", notices often state "Compliance with the dress code is mandatory" (الالتزام بالزّي الموحد واجب). This strategy depersonalizes the authority, making the directive appear as an objective institutional rule rather than a subjective command from an individual. This depersonalization serves to legitimize the authority by grounding it in abstract "regulations" (تعليمات) and "directives" (توجيهات).

5.2. Discursive Practice: Production and Consumption

The discursive practice dimension examines how these notices are produced and consumed in the digital sphere. A significant finding is the role of intertextuality. Notices frequently cite higher authorities, such as the "Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research" (وزارة التعليم) or specific "Ministerial Orders" (أوامر وزارية).

By referencing these external, higher-level texts, Iraqi

universities enhance the perceived legitimacy of their own notices. This intertextual link suggests that the university is merely an executor of a broader national policy, thereby shielding the local administration from direct criticism while reinforcing the hierarchical nature of the Iraqi educational system.

The distribution of these notices via social media platforms like Facebook and Telegram has transformed their consumption. While the language remains formal and authoritative, the platform allows for student comments and interactions. However, the analysis of these interactions often reveals a "one-way" communication flow, where administrative accounts rarely respond to student queries, further emphasizing the power distance between the institution and its stakeholders.

5.3. Social Practice: Ideological Implications

The final dimension, social practice, situates these findings within the broader Iraqi socio-political context. The discourse in these notices reflects an ideology of discipline and compliance. The heavy focus on "Uniform Dress Code" and "Examination Instructions" suggests that Iraqi universities prioritize institutional order and identity over individual student expression.

This ideology is deeply rooted in the historical and cultural context of Iraqi higher education, where universities are viewed as extensions of the state's administrative and disciplinary apparatus. The discursive construction of obligation through strong modality and impersonal authority serves to reproduce a social order where obedience to institutional norms is a prerequisite for academic success.

Table 2: Distribution of Thematic Focus in Administrative Notices (Conceptual Representation)

Theme	Percentage	Primary Linguistic Feature
Examination & Academic Regulations	45%	Strong Modality (Yajibu), Imperatives
Dress Code & Student Conduct	30%	Prohibitions (Yumna'u), Evaluative Adjectives
Administrative Deadlines (Fees/Registration)	15%	Nominalizations, Impersonal Structures
General Announcements	10%	Informational Language

5.4. Discussion: The "Culture of Directives"

The analysis highlights what can be termed a "Culture of Directives" in Iraqi university communication. Unlike Western academic discourse, which often employs "hedging" or "politeness strategies" to soften directives (Hyland, 2004) [11], Iraqi administrative notices are direct, authoritative, and overtly obligatory. This reflects a specific institutional identity that values hierarchy and clear boundaries.

The consistent use of modality and authority markers suggests that the "marketization" of higher education—prevalent in many Western contexts where students are treated as "customers"—has not significantly altered the discursive landscape of Iraqi public universities. Instead, the discourse remains firmly rooted in a bureaucratic and disciplinary tradition that emphasizes the university's role as a guardian of societal and institutional norms.

In conclusion, the discourse of online Iraqi university administrative notices is a powerful site for the reproduction of institutional authority. Through the strategic use of modality, impersonal grammar, and intertextual references, these notices normalize a culture of compliance, ensuring that institutional power remains central to the student experience.

6. Conclusion

This study has systematically investigated the discursive construction of authority, modality, and obligation in online administrative notices issued by Iraqi universities. By applying Fairclough's (1995) [7] three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the research has revealed the intricate linguistic and discursive strategies employed by these institutions to regulate student behavior and maintain institutional power.

6.1. Summary of Main Findings

The textual analysis (Description) identified a high frequency of strong modal expressions in Arabic, such as Yajibu (يجب - must) and Yumna'u (يمنع - prohibited), which clearly delineate student obligations and set rigid boundaries for acceptable conduct. The prevalence of impersonal constructions and nominalizations further depersonalizes the source of authority, presenting directives as objective institutional rules rather than subjective commands. This linguistic strategy serves to legitimize the university's power and minimize potential challenges from students.

The discursive practice analysis (Interpretation) highlighted the strategic use of intertextuality. By frequently referencing ministerial orders and national educational policies, Iraqi universities enhance the perceived legitimacy of their local administrative notices. The distribution of these notices through digital platforms like Facebook and Telegram maintains a formal and authoritative tone, reinforcing a "one-way" communication flow that emphasizes the power distance between the institution and its stakeholders.

The social practice analysis (Explanation) situated these findings within the broader Iraqi socio-political context. The discourse in the notices reflects a deep-seated ideology of discipline and compliance, where universities are viewed as extensions of the state's administrative and disciplinary apparatus. The research concludes that the "Culture of Directives" in Iraqi university communication prioritizes institutional order and collective identity over individual student expression, thereby reproducing a social order based on obedience to institutional norms.

6.2. Contributions and Implications

This study makes several significant contributions to the field of Critical Discourse Analysis. Theoretically, it extends the application of CDA to an under-researched genre—university administrative notices—within the specific context of Iraqi higher education. Methodologically, it provides a detailed analysis of how modality and obligation are linguistically realized in Arabic institutional discourse, offering insights into the unique patterns of authority construction in non-Western academic settings.

The findings have practical implications for university communication policies. The identified "Culture of Directives" and the one-way nature of communication may hinder the development of a more collaborative and student-centered academic environment. Recognizing the ideological functions of administrative language can inform more inclusive and dialogue-oriented communication strategies that could potentially bridge the gap between institutional authority and student engagement.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides a comprehensive analysis of online administrative notices, it is not without limitations. The focus on publicly available online content may not fully capture the complexities of internal or informal university communications. Furthermore, the findings are based on a specific selection of Iraqi public universities and may not be generalizable to private institutions or other regional contexts without further investigation.

Future research could expand on this study by incorporating student and staff perspectives through interviews or surveys to explore how these authoritative discourses are received and interpreted. Additionally, a comparative CDA study between Iraqi and other regional or international university administrative discourses could provide a broader understanding of the cultural and institutional factors that shape the language of authority in higher education.

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