

Experiential Meaning in Spoken Speech in Javanese: A Study of Transitivity Based on Systemic Functional Linguistics

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Abstract

Spoken Javanese is a form of communication rich in cultural meaning, as it represents speakers' social relationships, attitudes, and experiences in everyday interactions. In this context, the transitivity system in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is relevant for examining the representation of experiential meaning through language. This study aims to identify the types of processes in the transitivity system found in spoken Javanese utterances, analyze the distribution and dominance of the processes that occur, and interpret the tendencies in the representation of speakers' experiences within the Javanese sociocultural context. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach. The data consist of 134 spoken Javanese utterances obtained through observation and interviews in natural interactions. The analysis was conducted through data reduction, clause identification, process type classification, and meaning interpretation based on the sociocultural context. Since a single utterance may contain more than one clause, the number of processes identified exceeds the number of utterances. The findings reveal the occurrence of mental processes in 63 clauses, behavioral processes in 38 clauses, material processes in 17 clauses, relational processes in 13 clauses, verbal processes in 9 clauses, and existential processes in 6 clauses. Mental processes are the most dominant, particularly in the desiderative and cognitive subcategories, which represent speakers' desires, considerations, and inner attitudes. These findings indicate that spoken Javanese tends to represent internal experiences and interpersonal negotiation more frequently than material actions. This study confirms that the transitivity system functions not only as a grammatical structure but also as a representation of experience that reflects the sociocultural orientation of its speakers.

Keywords: Transitivity; Systemic functional linguistics; Javanese language; Experiential representation; Spoken utterances

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INTRODUCTION

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) conceptualizes language as a social semiotic system that functions not merely as a medium of communication but also as a resource for constructing and representing human experience within specific social contexts (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Eggins, 2004; Banks, 2002). Within this perspective, linguistic structure is not viewed simply as an arrangement of grammatical forms; rather, it is understood as the realization of meaning potential available in the linguistic system. Every clause, therefore, reflects a series of semantic choices through which speakers interpret reality, negotiate interpersonal relationships, and organize messages in discourse.

One of the central components of the ideational metafunction in SFL is the transitivity system. This system explains how experience is construed through configurations of processes, participants, and circumstances within the clause (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Thompson, 2013; Webster, 2019). Importantly, transitivity in SFL

differs from the traditional grammatical notion of transitive verbs. Instead of focusing solely on verb-object relations, SFL transitivity refers to the ways experience is represented through various process types, including material, mental, relational, behavioral, verbal, and existential processes. Each process type involves distinct participant roles and carries different semantic implications.

As a representational system, transitivity plays a crucial role in shaping how events, actions, and states are perceived and interpreted. Through transitivity analysis, researchers can identify who is positioned as the actor, who is constructed as the affected participant, and how relationships among participants are linguistically encoded (Alaei & Ahangari, 2016; Fitri et al., 2021). The distribution of process types in a text may therefore reveal ideological orientations, speaker positioning, and social perspectives embedded in discourse (O'Grady, 2019; Setia et al., 2021). Language as a social system is inseparable from the cultural context in which it operates. The relationship between language and culture is reciprocal: cultural values influence linguistic choices, while language simultaneously shapes and reproduces cultural norms (Duranti, 1997; Jiang, 2000; Risager, 2006). In Javanese society, systems of politeness and social hierarchy significantly affect lexical selection, clause structure, and the representation of actions in discourse. Consequently, analyzing transitivity in spoken Javanese becomes particularly relevant for uncovering how politeness norms, power relations, and social distance are realized through process types and participant configurations (Brown, 2015; Gumperz, 1982).

Situational context further influences transitivity choices. In SFL, context of situation encompasses field, tenor, and mode, which together shape linguistic realization (Eggins, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). In spoken Javanese interactions, the nature of social activity, the relationship between interlocutors, and the communicative medium affect the tendency to employ certain process types. For instance, interactions emphasizing concrete actions often favor material processes, whereas contexts foregrounding evaluation or stance may highlight mental or relational processes (Heidari, 2014; Tuckyta et al., 2020). It is also important to distinguish between transitivity in SFL and the traditional grammatical concept of voice. While voice concerns active and passive constructions, transitivity addresses how experiential meaning is configured within the clause (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Vikner, 2020). Thus, transitivity analysis extends beyond identifying subjects and objects; it examines how speakers encode experience and position themselves socially through process selection.

Previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of transitivity analysis in revealing meaning representation across various text types. Sukesti and Wijana (2013) showed how information organization in spoken Banyumas Javanese relates to thematic structure and communicative context. Heidari (2014) found that the dominance of material processes in persuasive texts reflects an action-oriented rhetorical strategy. Studies on political speeches and legal documents similarly indicate that process distribution may reflect ideological and power relations (Supadmi et al., 2020; Setia et al., 2021). In light of these theoretical foundations, this study aims to identify and describe the process types within the transitivity system in spoken Javanese discourse, to analyze their distribution and dominance, and to interpret how speakers construe experience within Javanese socio-cultural contexts. By doing so, this research moves beyond grammatical description and seeks to understand how process choices reflect experiential orientation, social relationships, and cultural dynamics in Javanese society.

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The upload-unggung system in Javanese society encourages speakers to consider social relationships, status, age, and interpersonal closeness when choosing a certain form of language. Thus, the choice of process in Javanese oral speech not only represents experience, but also reflects politeness strategies, interpersonal sensitivity, speakers' intentions, and social positions between speech participants (Brown, 2015; Gumperz, 1982). Situational context further influences transitivity choices. In SFL, context of situation encompasses field, tenor, and mode, which together shape linguistic realization (Eggins, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). In spoken Javanese interactions, the nature of social activity, the relationship between interlocutors, and the communicative medium affect the tendency to employ certain process types. For instance, interactions emphasizing concrete actions often favor material processes, whereas contexts foregrounding evaluation or stance may highlight mental or relational processes (Heidari, 2014; Tuckyta et al., 2020). Therefore, the analysis of transitivity in Javanese oral speech is important to understand how the meaning of experience is constructed and negotiated in accordance with the social and cultural demands of the Javanese people. It is also important to distinguish between transitivity in SFL and the traditional grammatical concept of voice. While voice concerns active and passive constructions, transitivity addresses how experiential meaning is configured within the clause (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Vikner, 2020). Thus, transitivity analysis extends beyond identifying subjects and objects; it examines how speakers encode experience and position themselves socially through process selection.

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distribution may reflect ideological and power relations (Supadmi et al., 2020; Setia et al., 2021).

However, most previous transitivity research has focused on written texts, institutional discourse, political speech, or global languages such as English. Studies on the representation of experience in spoken language in regional languages, especially Javanese, are still relatively limited. In addition, Javanese research focuses more on the politeness system, speech level, and sociolinguistic variation, so that the use of the SFL transitivity system to interpret Javanese oral interactions has not been widely done. As a result, the relationship between process choices and politeness, social hierarchy, interpersonal sensitivity, and the intent of speakers in Javanese oral speech is still not described in depth. Based on these conditions, this study is present to fill the gap in the study of the representation of experience in Javanese oral speech through the perspective of SFL transitivity. This study not only identifies the types of processes and their distributions, but also interprets how transitivity choices reflect the orientation of experience, social relations, hierarchy, and cultural dynamics of Javanese society. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to the development of SFL studies, especially in the realm of regional languages and oral interactions which are still rarely analyzed using the transitivity approach.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach grounded in the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), particularly the transitivity system. The qualitative design was selected because the research seeks to provide an in-depth description of transitivity processes in spoken Javanese and to examine how experiential meanings are constructed through speakers' lexicogrammatical choices. Within the SFL perspective, language is understood as a system of meaning potential operating in social contexts (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Therefore, transitivity analysis in this study does not merely identify process types within clauses, but also explores how experience is represented, how social relations are enacted, and how messages are organized in discourse. In addition, the study incorporates a discourse analytical perspective. Discourse analysis is concerned with how texts construct social and cultural realities (Nikander & Vehviläinen, 2010). The selection of discourse analytical tools depends on the nature of the data and the objectives of the research (Gee, 2011). In this study, transitivity analysis functions as the primary analytical instrument for examining representational meaning in spoken Javanese utterances.

Research Site and Time Frame

The research was conducted in several areas within the Special Region of Yogyakarta (Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta/DIY), including Bantul, Sleman, Kulon Progo, Gunungkidul, and Yogyakarta City. The region was selected because Javanese is still actively used in daily communication, both in urban and rural settings. Moreover, DIY is characterized by dynamic social development (Mardiansjah, 2013), which allows for diverse communicative contexts to emerge. As an educational and tourism center, the region provides a heterogeneous social environment where speakers of different backgrounds interact. Despite these dynamics, the practice of *undha-usuk basa*—particularly the use of *ngoko* and *krama*—remains central to social interaction.

Data were collected from February to August 2022 and were updated in 2025. This extended time frame enabled repeated interviews and facilitated the collection of more contextualized and in-depth data. The data update conducted in 2025 focused on rechecking several recordings, clarifying contextual information from participants, and

reconfirming the accuracy of transcription and interpretation results. This process was intended to strengthen data consistency and contextual validity.

Data Sources and Participants

The data consisted of spoken Javanese dialogues and conversations used in everyday contexts, including family, community, and workplace domains. Participants were selected purposively based on the following criteria: (1) native speakers of Javanese as their first language; (2) physically and mentally healthy; (3) employed as teachers or educators; (4) holding at least a bachelor's degree; and (5) aged between 17 and 60 years. These criteria were established to ensure that participants possessed adequate linguistic competence and sensitivity to variations in formal (*krama*) and informal (*ngoko*) language use. Sixteen participants were involved in the study.

Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

Data were collected through non-participant observation (*simak bebas libat cakap*) and theme-based interviews. These techniques enabled the researcher to obtain utterances reflecting participants' communicative experiences within specific social contexts. The data collection process was conducted in several stages. First, the researcher observed naturally occurring conversations in everyday settings without directly intervening in the interaction. This step was intended to obtain spoken utterances that reflected natural communicative practices in Javanese society. Second, theme-based interviews were conducted by encouraging participants to speak about particular communicative situations related to their daily experiences. During the interviews, the researcher used open-ended prompts so that participants could respond freely and naturally rather than producing rigid or highly structured answers. All conversations and interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent.

The research instrument consisted of a thematic guideline covering nine categories of everyday communicative situations. These categories were developed based on preliminary observations of daily spoken interaction and were designed to represent common communicative functions in Javanese social life. The nine categories included greeting, initiating contact, requesting help, describing situations, expressing opinions, giving responses, discussing problems, casual conversation, and expressing feelings. From these nine categories, four were selected based on data completeness and consistency: initiating contact, describing, discussing/conversing, and expressing opinions. These four categories were selected because they produced the richest and most consistent conversational data, contained sufficient variation of process types, and represented everyday spoken interaction frequently used in family, educational, community, and workplace contexts. Each theme comprised several subthemes representing communicative functions in social interaction.

In addition to the thematic guideline, the instruments included an observation guide, interview prompts, data cards, and a transitivity classification sheet. The observation guide was used to record contextual information such as setting, participant relationships, speech situation, and language variation. The interview prompts functioned to maintain thematic consistency while still allowing spontaneous interaction. The data cards were used to record clauses and identify process types, participants, and circumstances. Meanwhile, the transitivity classification sheet was used to categorize clauses into material, mental, relational, behavioral, verbal, and existential processes based on the SFL transitivity framework.

The collected data were subsequently classified according to social context and variation in speech forms. For analytical purposes, data cards were used to identify transitivity elements, including material processes (effective and non-effective), mental processes (cognitive, perceptive, desiderative, emotive), relational processes (attributive,

identifying, possessive), behavioral processes, existential processes, and verbal processes. This classification follows the transitivity system as a realization of the ideational metafunction in SFL (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). After the recordings were collected, all spoken utterances were transcribed orthographically in Javanese. The transcription process attempted to preserve the original lexical choices and speech forms used by participants. Subsequently, the utterances were translated into English for analytical and reporting purposes. To maintain semantic equivalence, the translations prioritized contextual meaning rather than word-for-word correspondence.

Data Validity and Reliability

Data trustworthiness was ensured through semantic validity and reliability procedures. Semantic validity was established by examining the alignment between the meaning of utterances and their social context (Zuchdi, 1993). This step was crucial because the data consisted of texts containing symbolic and contextual meanings. Reliability was addressed in two stages. First, intra-rater reliability was conducted by repeatedly reading and analyzing the data to maintain interpretative consistency. Second, inter-rater reliability was achieved through discussion and consultation with the supervisor and co-supervisor to reach interpretative agreement. In the intra-rater process, the researcher repeatedly reanalyzed the same clauses at different times to ensure consistency in assigning process types and identifying participant roles. In the inter-rater stage, disagreements regarding clause segmentation, process classification, and contextual interpretation were discussed collaboratively until agreement was achieved.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1992), which consists of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During the data collection stage, utterances from the sixteen participants were compiled and categorized according to the predetermined communicative themes. Data reduction involved selecting utterances based on the completeness of situational descriptions and dialogues, as well as identifying their transitivity process types. Data display was conducted through classification into tables and data cards, allowing systematic identification of process patterns and participant roles. Finally, conclusions were drawn by interpreting emerging transitivity patterns and examining their relationship to the speakers' social contexts.

Operationally, the analysis began by segmenting spoken utterances into clauses because the clause functions as the primary unit of analysis in the SFL transitivity system. Each clause was then analyzed to identify the process type, participant roles, and circumstantial elements. Process identification was conducted based on semantic characteristics proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), such as action and event for material processes, cognition and perception for mental processes, attribution and identification for relational processes, and speech acts for verbal processes. Participant roles and circumstances were subsequently identified according to their functions within each process configuration.

Within the SFL framework, language realizes three primary metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). The ideational metafunction is realized through the transitivity system, which represents experience; the interpersonal metafunction through the mood system, which enacts social relations; and the textual metafunction through thematic structure, which organizes messages. The concept of register also underpins the analysis. Register refers to language variation influenced by field, tenor, and mode in a particular situation (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Furthermore, the study draws on principles of conversation analysis, viewing interaction as sequentially organized and context-oriented (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000;

Silverman, 2000). Accordingly, each interactional detail is treated as a meaningful element contributing to the construction of social meaning.

Socio-cultural interpretation was conducted by relating the identified transitivity patterns to contextual aspects such as politeness, social hierarchy, interpersonal relations, and speaker intention within Javanese interaction. In this stage, the researcher examined how particular process choices reflected ways of positioning self and others in accordance with Javanese socio-cultural norms. Through the integration of transitivity analysis, discourse analysis, and principles of conversation analysis, this study seeks to explain how spoken Javanese represents experience, constructs social relations, and reflects the cultural context of its speakers in a systematic and context-sensitive manner.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The application of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) in this study focuses on identifying transitivity process types, interpreting their meanings, and examining the functions of spoken Javanese utterances within their social contexts. The data analyzed consist of 134 spoken Javanese utterances obtained from transcribed dialogues based on the communicative experiences of the participants. The analysis was conducted by examining the types of process, participants, and circumstances within each clause in order to uncover how experience, stance, and social relations are represented in discourse. The following sections present the key findings in relation to the research questions, including the identification of process types, the distribution and dominance of transitivity patterns, and the socio-cultural interpretation of experiential representation in spoken Javanese discourse. Tables and charts are provided to clarify the patterns identified in the data analysis.

Forms of Transitivity in Spoken Utterances

A total of 134 utterances were identified and classified according to their transitivity process types. After detailed analysis, these utterances were categorized into Material Processes (MP), Behavioral Processes (BP), Mental Processes (MeP), Relational Processes (RP), Existential Processes (EP), and Verbal Processes (VP).

The distribution of process types indicates a clear dominance of Mental Processes. This suggests that Javanese speakers in the dataset tend to construct their utterances through expressions of cognition, perception, desire, and evaluation rather than through direct representation of physical actions. In other words, speakers frequently foreground inner experience over external action.

Table 1. Transitivity of Spoken Utterances

No.	Transitivitas tuturan	Jumlah tuturan
1.	<i>Mental process / Proses Mental</i>	63 data
2.	<i>Behavioural process / Proses Perilaku</i>	38 data
3.	<i>Material / Action process / Proses Tindakan</i>	17 data
4.	<i>Relational process / Proses Relasional</i>	13 data
5.	<i>Verbal process / Proses Verbal</i>	9 data
6.	<i>Existential & Event process / Proses eksistensial</i>	6 data

Forms of Spoken Javanese Utterances with Mental Processes (MP)

Theoretically, Mental Processes (MP) consist of three subtypes: desiderative (MPd), cognitive (MPc), and perceptive (MPp), each representing desire, thinking processes, and sensory perception respectively (Bartley, 2018). In Halliday's (1994) framework, mental processes construe inner experience associated with human consciousness. They encode sensing in its various forms—thinking, feeling, wanting, and perceiving—rather than material action.

Based on the distribution of data across conversational themes, the desiderative subtype (MPd) appears as the most dominant. It is particularly prominent in subthemes related to requests, agreement, disagreement, promises, and expressions of possibility. The predominance of MPd indicates that Javanese speakers tend to construct communication through the expression of intention, willingness, and volition rather than through the mere delivery of factual information. In many instances, speakers foreground what they want, intend, or consider possible as a way of positioning themselves in interaction.

Meanwhile, cognitive (MPc) and perceptive (MPp) processes are widely distributed across descriptive and argumentative subthemes, such as providing general information, clarifying intentions, expressing opinions, stating doubt, and recalling or forgetting events. This pattern suggests that spoken Javanese discourse does not merely represent the external world but also activates the epistemic and perceptual dimensions of the speaker. Speakers frequently encode knowledge, belief, uncertainty, and awareness as part of their communicative practice.

This tendency may be understood as reflecting broader characteristics of Javanese communicative culture, in which consideration, feeling, and subjective stance play significant roles in social interaction. The prominence of mental processes thus demonstrates that utterances are often shaped by internal evaluation and relational sensitivity. In this sense, mental processes in the data function not simply as grammatical categories but as strategic resources for expressing attitude, negotiating meaning, and maintaining social harmony. The following section presents the distribution of mental process subtypes across communicative themes.

Tabel 2. Distribution of Mental Process Subtypes Across Communicative Themes

Theme	Subtheme	Desiderative (MPd)	Cognitive (MPc)	Perceptive (MPp)
Initiating Contact	Greeting	x	x	x
	Offering something	x	x	x
	Promising to meet	√	x	x
	Welcoming guests	√	x	x
	Taking leave	√	√	x
	Expressing congratulations	√	x	x
	Making a promise	√	x	√
	Requesting help	√	x	x
	Expressing gratitude	x	√	√
Describing	Giving general information about someone	x	√	√
	General aspects of someone	x	√	√
	Physical/health condition	x	x	√
	Giving general information about something	x	√	x
	Description of place	x	x	x
	Description of time	√	x	x
	Description of weather	x	√	√
	Comparison	√	√	x
	Description of change	x	√	x
Discussion/Conversation	Initiating a conversation	x	x	x
	Asking someone to speak louder/softer	√	x	x
	Proposing an idea	x	√	x

Theme	Subtheme	Desiderative (MPd)	Cognitive (MPc)	Perceptive (MPp)
	Expression of understanding	x	x	x
	Expression of disagreement	√	x	x
	Explaining intention	x	√	x
	Joking	x	√	x
	Conveying someone else's message	x	x	√
	Summarizing speech/conversation	x	x	√
Giving Opinions	Asking for an opinion	x	x	√
	Expressing an opinion	x	√	√
	Requesting approval	√	x	x
	Giving approval	√	x	x
	Expressing disagreement	√	x	√
	Expressing doubt	x	√	√
	Expressing possibility	x	√	√
	Expression of remembering/forgetting	x	√	x
	Advising/giving suggestions	x	√	√
	Convincing	√	√	x

As shown in the table above, cognitive (MPc) and perceptive (MPp) mental processes are the most frequently employed by speakers in packaging their intended meanings. These types of utterances appear across a wide range of subthemes, including providing general information about an object, describing weather conditions, making comparisons, proposing ideas, clarifying intentions, expressing opinions, stating doubt, recalling or forgetting events, and giving advice or suggestions.

The distribution of MPc and MPp across these subthemes indicates that speakers frequently rely on cognitive reasoning and perceptual awareness when constructing their utterances. Rather than simply reporting external facts, speakers tend to frame information through acts of thinking, knowing, perceiving, remembering, or evaluating. This pattern reinforces the view that spoken Javanese interaction is strongly shaped by epistemic positioning and subjective interpretation. In other words, communication in the data does not merely transmit objective descriptions but often embeds mental stance within the clause structure. Through cognitive and perceptive processes, speakers signal levels of certainty, awareness, hesitation, or reflection. Such tendencies suggest that the construction of meaning in spoken Javanese is closely tied to how speakers negotiate knowledge, experience, and interpersonal alignment within social interaction.

Forms of Spoken Javanese Utterances with Behavioral Processes (BP) and Material/Action Processes (MP)

Behavioral Processes (BP) constitute the second most frequent type of transitivity after Mental Processes, appearing in 38 thematic utterances. In Halliday's (1994) framework, behavioral processes belong to the ideational (experiential) metafunction and represent manifestations of behavior that lie between inner experience and material action. Behavioral processes are used by speakers to express attitudes, social responses, tendencies toward action, and involvement in interaction. The following section presents the distribution of the identified utterances.

Tabel 3. The distribution of the data shows that Behavioral Processes (BP)

Theme	Subtheme	Material Process (PMA)	Behavioral Process (PP)
Initiating Contact	Greeting	√	√
	Offering something	√	√
	Promising to meet	√	x
	Welcoming guests	x	x
	Taking leave	x	√
	Expressing congratulations	x	√
	Making a promise	x	x
	Requesting help	√	√
	Expressing gratitude	x	√
Describing	Giving general information about someone	x	√
	General aspects of someone	x	√
	Physical/health condition	x	√
	Giving general information about something	√	x
	Description of place	√	x
	Description of time	x	√
	Description of weather	x	x
	Comparison	x	x
	Description of change	x	√
Discussion/Conversation	Initiating a conversation	x	x
	Asking to speak louder/softer	√	√
	Proposing an idea	√	√
	Expression of understanding	x	√
	Expression of disagreement	x	x
	Explaining intention	x	√
	Joking	x	√
	Conveying someone else's message	x	x
	Summarizing speech/conversation	x	x
Giving Opinions	Asking for an opinion	x	√
	Expressing an opinion	x	√
	Requesting approval	x	√
	Giving approval	x	√
	Expressing disagreement	x	√
	Expressing doubt	x	√
	Expressing possibility	x	√
	Expression of remembering/forgetting	x	√
	Advising/giving suggestions	x	√
	Convincing	x	√

The distribution of the data shows that Behavioral Processes (BP) are dominant in subthemes related to expressions of agreement, disagreement, advice, clarification, and giving opinions. This indicates that Javanese communication in the research data tends to represent attitudes and social responses more frequently than concrete physical actions. The theoretical distinction between Behavioral Processes (BP) and Material/Action Processes (MP) lies in the degree of action realization. Material processes emphasize concrete actions that directly affect another entity, whereas behavioral processes highlight manifestations of behavior or attitudinal tendencies that do not necessarily result in material change. However, in analytical practice, the boundary between the two is not always clear-cut. Therefore, the classification in this study is based on the semantic features of the verb as well as the situational context of the utterance.

Forms of Spoken Javanese Utterances with Verbal Processes (VP)

Within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), the transitivity system forms part of the ideational metafunction, which functions to represent human experience through different process types (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) state that “the transitivity system construes the world of experience into a manageable set of process types” (p. 213). This means that human experience is constructed into process types such as material, mental, relational, verbal, existential, and behavioral. Behavioral processes occupy an intermediate position between mental and material processes. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) describe behavioral processes as “physiological and psychological behavior, on the borderline between material and mental processes” (p. 301). Accordingly, these processes represent behavior that originates from consciousness or psychological states but is realized in socially observable action.

In contrast, Material Processes represent concrete actions that produce change in another entity. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) emphasize that material processes are processes of “doing and happening,” involving an actor and a goal in a tangible sense (p. 224). Therefore, the primary distinction between Behavioral and Material Processes lies in the degree of action realization and the material impact produced.

Rifa	:	<i>“Mbak, aku ki meh tuku gamis nang shopee ning iki wis h-7 bada. Kira-kira nak pesen saiki isa tekan sadurunge bada ora ya?”</i>
		(“Mbak, I’m about to buy a dress on Shopee, but it’s already seven days before Eid. If I order now, do you think it can arrive before Eid?”)
Mbak Anita:		<i>“Lehmu tuku klambi seko daerah ngendi? Yen seko cerak-cerak kene kaya solo, klaten, utawa pekalongan ya nyandhak wong biasane mung rong dina tekan. Yen seko Jakarta, biasane telung dina ngasi patang dina pengiriman, ning lek bada kayane isa molor dadi seminggu.”</i>
		(“Where are you buying the clothes from? If it’s from nearby areas such as Solo, Klaten, or Pekalongan, it can arrive quickly because it usually takes only two days. If it’s from Jakarta, it typically takes three to four days for delivery, but during Eid it might be delayed up to a week.”)
Rifa	:	<i>“Woalah ngono Mbak.”</i>
		(“Oh, I see, Mbak.”)

It is identified that the Verbal Actor is Rifa, the Verbal Target is Mbak Anita, and the form of the Verbal Process is questioning *“Mbak, aku ki meh tuku gamis nang shopee ning iki wis h-7 bada. ...Kira-kira nak pesen saiki isa tekan sadurunge bada ora ya?”* (“Mbak, I’m about to buy a dress on Shopee, but it’s already seven days before Eid. If I order now, do you think it can arrive before Eid?”)

The Verbal Actor is Mbak Anita, the Verbal Target is Rifa, and the form of the Verbal Process is answering and explaining: "*Lehmu toko klambi seko daerah ngendi? Yen seko cerak-cerak kene kaya solo, klaten, utawa pekalongan ya nyandhak wong biasane mung rong dina tekan. Yen seko Jakarta, biasane telung dina ngasi patang dina pengiriman, ning lek bada kayane isa molor dadi seminggu.*" ("Where are you buying the clothes from? If it is from nearby areas such as Solo, Klaten, or Pekalongan, it can arrive because it usually takes only two days. If it is from Jakarta, it usually takes three to four days for delivery, but during Eid it might be delayed up to a week.")

Forms of Javanese Utterances with Verbal and Existential Processes

In describing time, speakers tend to employ event processes and existential processes. The utterance below expresses time by adding a specific event that is certain to occur, such as "ba'da Isya": "*Benjing malem Minggu Pahing tanggal sedasa, tabuh setengah wolu utawi ba'da Isya.*" ("Tomorrow night, Sunday Pahing, the tenth date, at half past seven or after the Isya prayer.") Identified Verbal Process: informing; Actor: kula; Verbal Target: awareness (*sampun ndhungkap sonten*).

Similarly, in the following utterance: "*Esuk jam wolunan, lak dalane wis rada sepi cah sekolah ro wong kerja wis dha mangkat.*" ("Around eight in the morning, the road is usually rather quiet because school children and workers have already left."). Existential Process: *wis rada sepi* Existent: *dalane*. The addition of an event likely to occur is evident in the situation described as "...*dalane wis rada sepi...*". In the utterance above, this is used within a futurate context indicating that the event has not yet occurred but is highly probable, thus serving as a temporal reference point.

In contrast to the two previous utterances, the following utterances do not emphasize events that may occur in the future but rather focus on events that are ongoing or have already occurred: "*Samenika sampun ndhungkap sonten, Mbah.*" ("It is already late afternoon, Mbah.") Identified Verbal Process: informing Actor: kula Target: time (*sampun ndhungkap sonten*) "*Wau enjing mriki bibar subuh, antarane jam eneman!*" ("Earlier this morning I came here after dawn, around six o'clock!") These two utterances emphasize Behavioral and Mental Processes, inviting the interlocutor to check the time and recall a mutually known event. The use of temporal expressions within the present time frame such as "wau enjing..." produces an effect on the interlocutor by referring to events that may have been experienced by both speaker and hearer.

Discussion

The findings show that spoken Javanese utterances construct experience mainly through internal states, interpersonal sensitivity, and socially oriented responses rather than through direct physical action. From 134 utterances, the analysis identified six process types: mental processes (63 clauses), behavioral processes (38 clauses), material processes (17 clauses), relational processes (13 clauses), verbal processes (9 clauses), and existential processes (6 clauses). Because one utterance may contain more than one clause, the total number of processes exceeds the number of utterances. This distribution indicates that the dominant experiential orientation in the data is not action-centered but consciousness-centered and relation-centered. In SFL, the clause functions as a representation of experience, and transitivity enables speakers to construe reality through processes, participants, and circumstances (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Thompson, 2013). Therefore, the dominance of mental and behavioral processes suggests that spoken Javanese encodes experience through thinking, wanting, feeling, perceiving, responding, and behaving within socially meaningful interaction.

The prominence of mental processes confirms the SFL view that language is a resource for representing inner and outer experience (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Eggins, 2004). In the data, desiderative, cognitive, and perceptive processes appear across

functions such as requesting, expressing opinions, giving approval, showing doubt, remembering, advising, and considering possibilities. This finding suggests that Javanese speakers frequently formulate utterances through subjective stance and epistemic positioning. Rather than presenting statements as direct assertions, speakers often encode what they think, want, feel, know, doubt, or perceive. This supports Bartley's (2018) explanation that mental processes represent sensing and consciousness, while also extending it into the sociocultural domain of spoken Javanese. The high frequency of desiderative and cognitive meanings indicates that speakers use mental processes to negotiate intention and social alignment. Thus, mental processes do not merely represent psychological experience; they also function as polite and indirect resources for managing interpersonal relations.

This result becomes clearer when compared with studies of transitivity in other discourse types. Heidari (2014), for example, found that persuasive discourse tends to rely strongly on material processes because persuasion often emphasizes action, change, and concrete outcomes. Likewise, studies of political speeches and institutional texts show that material, relational, or verbal processes may become prominent because such texts construct authority, policy, legal status, or public action (Supadmi et al., 2020; Setia et al., 2021; Fitri et al., 2021). The present findings differ from those patterns. Instead of foregrounding actors who perform actions or institutions that define rules, spoken Javanese foregrounds speakers who evaluate, consider, desire, and perceive. This contrast indicates that process dominance is shaped by register, mode, and cultural context. It confirms Eggins' (2004) and Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) argument that field, tenor, and mode influence grammatical realization. Everyday spoken interaction in Javanese is less concerned with institutional action and more concerned with maintaining relational balance, interpreting situations carefully, and expressing intention without excessive directness.

The strong presence of behavioral processes further supports this interpretation. Behavioral processes, as Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) explain, occupy a borderline area between mental and material processes because they represent physiological or psychological behavior that is socially observable. In this study, behavioral processes occur frequently in utterances expressing agreement, disagreement, advice, clarification, response, and opinion. Their frequency indicates that speakers often encode experience through socially recognizable behavior rather than materially transformative action. This finding is consistent with Brown's (2015) discussion of politeness as a social mechanism and Gumperz's (1982) view that discourse strategies reflect social relationships and contextual expectations. In Javanese interaction, speakers are expected to attend to status, age, familiarity, and social distance through the unggah-ungguh system. Behavioral processes become important because they allow speakers to display responsiveness, hesitation, approval, disagreement, or concern without direct confrontation. The findings extend sociolinguistic discussions of Javanese politeness by showing how such values are realized not only through speech levels such as ngoko and krama, but also through transitivity choices.

The relatively low frequency of material processes also deserves attention. Material processes appeared in only 17 clauses, far fewer than mental and behavioral processes. This pattern suggests that the interactional data are not primarily organized around doing, making, or causing changes in the external world. Instead, material processes appear mainly when speakers refer to concrete activities such as buying, coming, leaving, offering, or requesting help. This finding partially contrasts with studies in persuasive or public discourse where material processes are dominant because speakers seek to construct agency and action (Heidari, 2014; Tuckyta et al., 2020). However, this contrast reveals the influence of communicative genre. The data consist of everyday spoken utterances in

family, community, educational, and workplace settings. In these contexts, speakers often prioritize relational appropriateness over explicit action. Thus, the low frequency of material processes reinforces the idea that experiential representation in spoken Javanese is connected with social caution, indirectness, and interpersonal negotiation.

Relational, verbal, and existential processes appeared less frequently, but they still contribute important meanings. Relational processes help speakers attribute qualities, identify conditions, or describe relationships between participants and situations. Their limited frequency suggests that speakers did not primarily construct discourse through classification or definition. Verbal processes are significant in question-answer exchanges, explanations, and message transmission. Although conversation naturally involves speaking, verbal processes are counted only when the clause itself represents saying, asking, informing, or explaining; this explains why they are not numerically dominant. Existential processes appear mainly in expressions of time, condition, and situational presence. These findings support the idea that existential clauses are useful for situating experience, but they are not the main resource for interpersonal negotiation in the data.

The findings confirm the central claim of SFL that grammar is a system of meaning rather than a neutral formal structure (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Banks, 2002; Webster, 2019). They also support Duranti's (1997), Jiang's (2000), and Risager's (2006) view that language and culture are mutually connected. The dominance of mental and behavioral processes shows that spoken Javanese reflects a cultural orientation toward careful consideration, relational awareness, and harmony maintenance. The study also extends previous research on Javanese discourse. Sukesti and Wijana (2013) examined spoken Banyumas Javanese through theme-rheme organization, showing that spoken Javanese meaning is shaped by communicative context. The present study complements that work by demonstrating that experiential meaning is also shaped by process selection. Therefore, this research contributes to SFL studies by showing that transitivity analysis is useful not only for English, political speeches, legal texts, or written discourse, but also for regional spoken languages. It reveals how Javanese speakers represent experience through culturally grounded patterns of thought, attitude, and social response.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the application of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) through transitivity system analysis is effectively used to uncover representations of experiences, attitudes, and social relations in Javanese speech. Based on the analysis of 134 speeches, six types of processes were found, namely Mental Processes (63 data), Behavioral Processes (38 data), Material/Action Processes (17 data), Relational Processes (13 data), Verbal Processes (9 data), and Existential Processes (6 data). These findings answer research questions about the types of processes that emerge, the distribution of process dominance, and how transitivity choices represent experiences and social relations in Javanese speech.

The dominance of Mental Processes shows that Javanese communication in this research data is more built through the expression of considerations, perceptions, desires, judgments, and inner awareness than direct physical actions. Meanwhile, the emergence of Behavioral Processes as the second dominant type of process shows that Javanese language interactions tend to represent social responses, interpersonal sensitivity, and negotiation of relationships between speech participants. These findings indicate that the construction of meaning in Javanese speech is not only action-oriented, but also on the management of social relations and communication harmony. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of SFL studies, especially in the analysis of regional languages and oral speech, which are still relatively limited to be studied using the transitivity approach. This research also shows that the transitivity system can be used to

connect grammatical structures with cultural values, politeness, social hierarchy, and interpersonal sensitivity in Javanese society.

Thus, transitivity is not only understood as a linguistic category, but also as a means of representation of experience and negotiation of social meaning. Practically, the results of this research can be used in learning Javanese language based on communicative functions. Javanese language teaching can not only focus on the structure and level of speech, but also on how the choice of processes in speech reflects the speaker's attitudes, social relationships, and cultural context. This approach can help students understand the use of Javanese in a more contextual and communicative way in daily life. This study still has limitations because the data only come from specific communication themes and involve a limited number of participants in a specific social context. Therefore, further research needs to expand the variety of data, interaction context, social background of speakers, and integrate interpersonal and textual metafunction analysis in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the construction of meaning in Javanese speech. Thus, this research is expected to be a foundation for the development of functional linguistic studies.

DECLARE THE USE OF AI TOOLS

The author declares that artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in a limited capacity during the preparation of this manuscript. The use of AI was restricted to language refinement, grammar correction, sentence organization, and improving the overall clarity and readability of the academic writing. AI was employed solely as a supporting tool to assist the writing process and not as a substitute for the author's scholarly work. The author confirms that AI tools were not used for data collection, data processing, data analysis, interpretation of findings, or the development of research conclusions. All aspects related to the research design, analytical procedures, interpretation, citation management, and academic arguments were conducted independently by the author. Therefore, the author takes full responsibility for the originality, validity, and academic integrity of this manuscript.

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