

It is all about clauses: Speech analysis using systemic functional linguistics theory

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ABSTRACT

Text and context are tightly related. Although previous studies have revealed the benefits of employing systemic functional linguistics theory (SFL) in revealing the language functions, the specific examination of text ideational or experiential focusing on transitivity process type analysis is lacking. Therefore, this study aims to describe the transitivity process type of a text. Joe Biden's victory speech was chosen and analyzed to achieve this purpose. In this respect, to make the analysis easily done, the speech text was changed into some sentences and clauses and thereafter analyzed following the aim of the study in question. The results of the analysis have shown that the material process type indicating the action of the participants involved in the speech appears at most. In addition, using transitivity analysis, interpersonal and power relations might be revealed as the existence of pronouns linking to verbs used in clauses of the text. In conclusion, different language patterns might signify different concerns of the experiential or ideational functional category. Future research studies using different ways of analysis; might be of benefit to examining the effectiveness of systemic functional linguistics theory (SFL) in text analysis.

Keywords: *Clauses; Speech analysis; Systemic functional linguistics*

1. Introduction

There have been many research studies on speech. Metaphor as a rhetoric dimension, speech acts and semiotic layer, word choices, and their usage are of benefit toward text coherence and cohesiveness. As such, the aspects in question contribute to the frame of political issues in the speech (Kelly, 2020; Moragas-fernández, Calvo, & Capdevila, 2018; Nartey, 2018; da Cunha, 2019; Xuan, 2017; Jitpranne, 2018; Martin

Zappavigna, 2029; Schubert, 2019; Silke, Quinn, & Rieder, 2019; Zhan & Huang, 2018). Meanwhile, focusing on thematic information of the texts, modeling approach, framework, socio-pragmatic methodology, and socio-discourse competence of orator and audience are essential factors in revealing and conveying the text message (Ahmed, 2017; Boch, 2020; Brookes & Mcenery, 2019; Fetzer & Bull, 2012; Schumacher, Hansen, Velden, & Kunst, 2019; Cartagena and Prego-vázquez, 2018; Afzaal, 2020).

Yet, regardless of the important aspects and the purposed frameworks highlighted by the previous studies, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) was also well-known to reveal the text (Andersen, Emilie, & Holsting, 2018; Darong, 2015; Darong, 2021; Lim, 2018; Santosa, 2016). In the view of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory, language has three meta-functions. They are ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions. The functions are realized respectively by register categories namely field, tenor, and mode. As such, the functions in question appear simultaneously and can't stand alone as they appear as a united function within text including a speech (Eggins, 1994; Halliday, 1985).

Pushing further to the register category ahead, some ways of analysis can be done. For example, to reveal the field reflecting the ideational function, one can conduct process types analysis that so-called transitivity analysis, reference analysis, and pronoun analysis. Meanwhile, for the sake of the tenor reflecting the interpersonal function, modality and mood structure analysis can be carried out. Then, integral to field and tenor, nominal and lexical string analysis can be done for the sake of a mode that reflects the textual function of a text. In this respect, in terms of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory, speech as one text genre can be revealed through the mentioned ways of analysis.

As a text, speech that functions as social, political, and cultural means of communication goes around with a certain disposition, standpoint, authority, or structure including the meta-functions of language highlighted in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory. Utilizing the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), the field of the speech texts representing the experiential or ideational function mostly focused on the action involving speaker and audience (Ademilokun, 2019; Figini, Rocchia, & Rezzano, 2019; Kusuma, Dewi, & Kurniawan, 2018). As such, the studies employed SFL theory focusing on text construction in which the register category of the field was realized. Integral to ideational or experiential function, other studies focused on textual function highlighting cognitive and psychological aspects of the speaker that are very essential in conveying a message to the audience, aside from conjunction, reference, and lexical relations as language resources making the text unity (Bao, Zhang, Qu, & Feng, 2018; Määttä, Puumala, & Ylikomi, 2021; Navarro, Macnamara, Glucksberg, & Andrew, 2020; Wang, 2020).

The most recent study was conducted by Darong (2021) who revealed that interpersonal function might reflect the intimacy between speaker and audience in Joe Biden's victory speech. The study emphasized commodity exchanges and the relations

between the orator and Americans as the audience. Standing on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory, grammatical resources and clause structure contributing to the text as a whole determine the intimacy. Therefore, modality and mood structure analysis were chosen to analyze. To date, regardless of the fruit-bearing findings of the study in question, what is lacking is the experiential or ideational function of Joe Biden's victory speech. Given this backdrop, this study wants to extend the previous study by focusing on transitivity process type analysis to reveal the function in question. This way of analysis is beneficial for knowing the focus and proposition of a text which in turn, might contribute significantly to attaining the goal of communication.

In addition, this study contributes to the language teachers. In the context of teaching, this study is of benefit for teachers to cope with choosing different language constituents. Having knowledge of the experiential potential meaning of the grammar, a language teacher can explicitly and systematically inform the range of available word choices for expressing human experience in a clause. More importantly, as the experiential grammar offered to create a text is concerned with the objective to be reached by the text along with and the field of the immediate situation, some classroom activities can be designed by the teacher to guide the learners to explore the relationship between experiential grammar, the structure, and the field of the text.

2. Literature review

Systemic Linguistics relies on the functional theory proposed by Halliday and explains grammar as a resource for expressing and constructing meaning. As such, the grammar in question is built as a set of inter-related choices reflecting optional ways for expressing and creating meaning obtainable to language users (Martin & Zappavigna, 2019). The choice can be delineated using structural identifications, and lexical and grammatical elements; all of which should be appraised to recognize the meaning of a given expression.

In addition, Halliday views linguistic meaning in association with its context of use. His concept of language as the principal element of social meaning is mainly concerned with the strategies in which speakers interact with hearers in social speech events. Standing on meaningfulness as an important aspect of language, Halliday does not concern with what goes on in one's mind as it is regarded as complementary. Yet, Halliday is mainly concerned with how linguistics contributes to such applied fields as stylistic language, and artificial intelligence language used in education. Therefore, this theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) puts great attention on the relation between language and context. If a text can be understood, there is a great amount about the context in which the text occurs can be revealed. In the meantime, the theory in question has been regarded as a functional semantic approach to language which examines how one uses language in different contexts, and how language, as a system, is formed for use deriving from a discipline called linguistics (Hasan, 2014; Lim, 2018). Saying it differently, 'S' for 'Systemic' confirms that the theory has a great interest in

the system of meaning. The 'F' for 'Functional' indicates the functional realizations of the system in structures. Meanwhile, the 'L' for 'linguistics' implies a discipline that so-called linguistics. Thus, it is a language – based on the theory that is used to examine the phenomena of language.

It is necessary to note that Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) describes that language has three metafunctions. Such metafunctions of language are the ideational function, the interpersonal function, and the textual function (Briones, 2016; Eggins, 1994). The former deals with the inner and outer worlds of reality that so-called experiential meaning. The second is concerned with establishing a relationship between people involved in communication. This function is regarded as an interpretation of language in its function as an exchange. Bringing to the grammatical level of interpretation, it is understood that the clause is also built as an interactive event involving speaker and listener or writer and reader (Andersen et al., 2018; Halliday, 1985). Meanwhile, the last is concerned with an interpretation of language to its function as a message. At the clause level, this function deals with how inter-clausal items are structured to build unified whole texts that create meanings. As such, it is deputized by the thematic structure of the clause involving Theme and Rheme within the clause.

Pushing further to the ideational function ahead, Halliday has pinpointed that such function is realized by the transitivity system of language. The outer world that is taken into the inner world of reality in one's consciousness, which is encoded in the language transitivity system, is seen as a what-is-going-on process. The term transitivity does not only refer to the distinction or the contrast between transitive verbs and intransitive verbs. It concerns much more the relation between verbs and phrases associated with them. In this regard, the going-on process deals with material actions, events, states, and relations. More specifically, based on the relationship between certain types of verbs and the phrases associated with them, Eggins (1994) and Halliday (1985) have pointed out the encoding processes of the realities and have also linguistically categorized the various process types namely material, mental, relational, behavioral, verbal, and existential.

Aside from function, Halliday regards context as the language level, highlighting the relationship between form and the extra-textual properties of the situation. As such, there are two kinds of meanings namely formal and contextual meaning. At the semantic level, contextual orientation is revealed through the concept of register. At this level, the word register is defined as the realization of semantic resources that the members of a certain culture link with a situation type (Martin & Zappavigna, 2019; Santosa, 2016). Putting it differently, the register is concerned with the meaning potential that might be achieved in a given speech event or social context and is organized functionally into register categories of field, tenor, and mode.

The field is a register category that refers to what is happening to the nature of the social action, taking place. It deals with what the participants are engaged with, in

which language figures as an essential component. It is an aspect of the situation dealing with the main concern of the activity in certain social events. To add on, transitivity, nominal group, lexical string, and pronoun analysis can be carried out to reveal the field of a text. Tenor is concerned with role structure. In this context, this register deals with statuses, who is involving, the nature of the speaker or writer, and his/her interlocutors. In other words, tenor which can be examined through mood structure and modality analysis has something to do with the communication-social role relationship performed by interactants. Meanwhile, mode is concerned with the role that language plays in a relationship or in carrying out social action. In relation to the role of language in an interaction, the mode is categorized into two dimensions indicating two different types of distance in the relation between language and situation that is spatial or interpersonal distance, from which the possibilities of immediate feedback are attained, and experiential distance where no immediate feedback attained as the distance exist (Eggs, 1994; Lim, 2018; Montes et al., 2014). Thematic expression, using theme and rhemes, is of benefit to revealing the mode. Thus, talking about language in the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) deals with both the way language is used in the context of culture and the structure of language for use or context of situation reflecting metafunctional diversity.

3. Method

This study belongs to a descriptive qualitative design employing the discourse analysis method. Even though Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory points to the three metafunctions namely ideational (field), interpersonal (tenor), and textual (mode), the scope of this study was only concerned with the former. At this point, standing on the theory in question, this study aimed to describe the transitivity process type of a text namely Joe Biden's victory speech which subsequently was regarded as the object of the study. This speech was chosen with a consideration of the United States as the most influential nation controlling the world. He just won the election and the world has been waiting for his socio-political policies for this globe. To make it easier, the speech text was redesigned into some clauses from which potential data were collected. Afterward, the data obtained from the clauses were analyzed in terms of the register category of the field representing the ideational function of the speech text. In this study, the field was analyzed in terms of process types the so-called transitivity analysis. The transitivity analysis needs to be done to determine the grammatical pattern such as process types, participants, and circumstances, which are of benefit to unpacking the field of a text.

4. Findings

Relying on transitivity analysis, the total number of process types in this text was 281. It comprised material processes, mental processes, verbal processes, relational processes, behavior processes, and existential processes. It is a fact that the material

processes constituted the largest number of processes (58.36%). The second-largest number of process types was relational (17.79%), followed by mental processes (12.45%), verbal processes (5.33%), existential processes (4.27%), and behavioral processes (1.78%).

Table 1.

Process Types

Process types	Total	Percentage (%)
Material	164	58.36
Mental	35	12.45
Verbal	15	5.33
Behavioral	5	1.78
Existential	12	4.27
Relational	50	17.79
Total	281	100

These 281 processes are distributed in clauses as follows:

1. Material Processes: 164 clauses:
 2b, 3b, 4b, 4d, 4e, 4f, 5b, 5c, 6, 7a, 7b, 8a, 8b, 9b, 10a, 10b, 10d, 11a, 11e, 11d, 12, 13b, 13c, 14c, 16a, 16b, 18a, 18b, 19b, 19c, 19e, 19f, 22, 23a, 23b, 24a, 24b, 24c, 25a, 25b, 25c, 25d, 25e, 25f (2), 25g, 25h, 25i, 25j, 27b(2), 27d, 28a, 28d, 28f, 29a, 29c, 29d, 30b, 30c, 30d, 30e, 31a, 31b, 31c, 31d, 31e, 34a, 34c, 35a, 35b, 37b, 37c, 37e, 38b, 39b, 40b, 41a, 41b, 42a, 42b, 43a, 43b, 44, 45a, 45b, 45c, 45d, 46b, 46e, 47a (2), 47b, 48c, 48d, 49b, 49c, 49d, 49e, 49f, 50c, 50d, 51a, 51b, 52b, 53a, 53b, 54a, 54b, 55b, 55c, 55d, 56b, 58a, 58b, 58c, 60b, 61b, 61c, 62a, 62c, 63c, 63d, 63e, 64a, 64b, 64c, 64d(2), 64e, 65c, 66, 67a, 67b, 67d, 67e, 68, 69c, 70, 71a, 71b, 71c, 72a, 72b, 72d, 73, 74, 77b, 77e, 79, 80b, 82b, 82c, 82d, 82e, 82g, 82k, 82m, 82n, 82o, 82p, 83a, 83b, 83c.
2. Mental Processes, 35 Clauses:
 1b, 1d, 2c, 2e, 7b, 10c, 11a, 13a, 14b, 15a, 15b, 27a, 27c, 28b, 28e, 29b, 30c, 37d, 46a, 48a, 51c, 51d, 55a, 55b, 55c, 55d, 63a, 63b, 64c, 65b, 72c, 75, 77c, 78, 82j.
3. Verbal Processes,, 15 Clauses:
 1e, 2b, 4c, 11b, 11c, 40a, 50a, 59b, 61c, 63c, 64d, 69b, 77a, 82f, 82l.
4. Behavioral Processes; 5 clauses:
 20a, 39a, 46d, 52a, 82i
5. Existential Processes, 12 Clauses:

1a, 14c, 28c, 29c, 30a, 31a, 36, 37a, 43b, 60a, 65a, 76.

6. Relational Processes, 50 Clauses;

Attributive:

1c, 1f, 2f, 3a, 3c, 3d, 5a, 9a, 14a, 15b, 17, 19a, 19d, 32, 33, 34b (2), 38a, 40c, 42a, 42b, 46c, 48b, 49a, 50b, 52c (2), 52d, 57, 60a, 61d, 62d, 67c, 69a, 77d, 82h

- Identifying:

2a, 4a, 21, 56a,

- Possessive :

20b, 20c, 26, 46c, 51e, 59a, 61, 80a, 81, 82a

5. Discussion

Looking at the data in Table 1 and the distribution of process types above, the material processes (164 Clauses) that are predominantly used in this text, the speaker tends to expose the performed actions. Material process, as a process of doing, used in this text is a good choice to demonstrate what the government has been achieving and will do both home and abroad for a better America. Besides, it also arouses the American people's confidence in the president and his government and got their support for policies or measures in the following four years. In this respect, the speaker tends to put himself and the people represented in the pronouns "you" and "I", as the actor of those material processes in question.

The use of the first person "I" refers to the speaker's appreciation and thanks to those who were involved in the journey of his campaigns such as his campaign team, family, and his opponents as well. Meanwhile, in some parts of the text, the use of material processes tends to expose how and what the Americans should do for America's future. The action representing this type of process is realized by the use of "America", "you" and "people" as the actor of the clause. The speaker is bringing them to him, showing how they have been and how they will do actions to support him in achieving the success of America. Finally, such collaboration was furthermore strengthened by the use pronoun 'we' as the actor. Aside from shortening the distance between the speaker and the audience, he (Biden) included the listeners (Americans) into the same arena, thus making the audience feel close to the speaker and his points, regardless of their disparity in age, social status, and professions.

Thus, the material process, as a process of doing, is a good choice to demonstrate what the government has achieved, what they are doing, and what they will do in different aspects of affairs, at home or abroad. The focus of the action or experience, as what is defined as a material process, is America involving all the Americans as the main actors or participants.

Regarding the mental process, the speech text employed 34 clauses. Theoretically, a mental process is a process of feeling, thinking, and seeing. The Actor, in this case, is not the real subject of doing, but the feeling. It represents inner

experience, such as “perception”, “reaction” and “cognition” with two participants the so-called senser and phenomenon (Eggins, 1994; Halliday, 1985). In this context, the speaker used this process type to express the inner experiences of the speaker, audience, Americans, and all people around the world. The senser of the mental processes of the speech was the speaker himself” as found in clause 10c 11a, 13a 14b 15a, 27a, 27c, 51c, 51d, 63a. 28e, 37d, 46a, 48a, 82j 63b, 64c, 65b, 72c, 77c, 78. Besides, to express the inner feeling, the speaker used the word, “know”, “understand”, “love” believe, and “see “. The word “know” is the most used and followed by the “see”. Those two words have the same senser, that is, “I and we” emphasizing togetherness at the same arena or stage and collaboratively feel and take action for what and how America will be. In other words, that mental process, as a process of sensing, appeals to the audience’s inner heart to connect the same political beliefs, ambitions expectations, and hopes. In this way, the listeners’ emotions of promotion and willingness to devotion are aroused and strengthened to keep freedom, democracy, justice, equality, principles, union, happiness, responsibilities, sacrifice, and the needed reforms in the economy, medicare, or other fields.

Regardless of the number of clauses in terms of their appearance, they are used for the sake of commitment, judgments of the existence of America, and the great expectation to the next generation in the future of Americans. The verbal processes or “the action of saying” reflecting the objectives in question were found in 17 clauses and carried three participants namely sayer, receiver, and verbiage. Similar to material and mental process types, these process types are concerned with the good collaboration of Americans. The elected presidents should work hand in hand with Americans to reach a better future for America.

Behavioral clauses came in five clauses namely 20a, 39a, 46d, 52a, and 82i of the text. This kind of process is a halfway position between the material and mental process. Therefore, the meanings they represent are mid-way between the material process on one side and the mental process on the other. They are clauses expressing the victory, the speaker’s attitude on the differences and disagreement, the crisis, and commitment to America’s future. Meanwhile, there are 12 clauses in the text that distribute the existential processes. The use of these processes is concerned with the existence of Americans, victory, election, the challenge, promise togetherness, history, and programs (Clause 1a, 14c, 28c, 29c, 30a, 31a, 36, 37a), 43b. 60a, 65a, 76).

Finally, the relational process occurred in 50 clauses. The clauses bearing relational verbs are divided into attributive and identifying. The former highlights properties or an entity and category or uniform. This type is used widely in delineating people and objects. It is mostly used as a concept of explicit relational process, as a process of being, to express the composite correspondence between some concrete elements (36 clauses). As such, the process type has only one participant in a clause, that is, carrier, (Halliday, 1985) as found in the pronoun “It” in clauses 3a, 5a, 42b, 48b. The construction of these four clauses covers the description of the victory of the

speaker and the changes in America in the past and will be. Besides “It”, the carrier was also found in “we” in clause 3c, 3d 9a 50b 82h. “We” in these clauses refers to the speaker and the audience. These four clauses are mainly concerned with all Americans. In the meantime, as a part of the relational process, the identifying processes appear only in four clauses of the text (Clause 2a, 4a, 21, 56a). These process types are not used to describe or classify but define. In this respect, defining includes two participants, that is token standing for what is being defined and value (that which defines). Referring to this, two clauses have the same token and value namely Clause 2a and 4a, 55 d. These are concerned with the speaker’s judgment toward the doubtless Americans on America as a great nation, the strength of the power of democracy in which the change can be achieved.

Hitherto, some important points can be proposed from the findings. First, transitivity process types analysis has indicated that the process types found in the text under study mostly deal with the physical actions of the participants involved, both speaker and Americans. The actions in question reflect on the verbs which are categorized as the material process in the speech. This indicates that the speaker takes into account the use of verbalization, not nominalization in constructing the text, which is simple for the audience to internalize. These findings, then, mirror the study of Tolochko & Boomgaarden (2017), Darong, 2021 and Bartley (2018) pointing out that the structure of information and the verbs in a clause account for a process type with each verb providing the intended meaning. In other words, meaning potentials that so-called ideational or experiential meaning is reflected through language structure of material process highlighting action as the field register category of the speech text.

Second, relatedness or intimacy between speaker and audience might not be seen through interpersonal analysis of a text. Intimacy or interpersonal relationship can be analyzed through transitivity analysis as found in this study. Then, this study supports Horváth (2017) and Hopke and Simis (2016) saying that the combination of actions and verbal resources was beneficial to co-narrate stories or texts. Besides, aside from modality analysis done by (Hieronimus Canggung Darong, 2021b; Gusthini, Sobarna, & Amalia, 2018; Silke et al., 2019), the actor (material process), the senser (mental process), the sayer (verbal process) and the carrier (relational process) that are mostly used in “I”, and “we” pronouns in transitivity analysis, are of benefit to point the interpersonal and power relationships among the involved participants. In the meantime, the previous research studies highlighting the power of words (word choices) is more than action (Bartley, 2018; Gusthini et al., 2018; Määttä et al., 2021; Poulimenou, Stamou, Papavlasopoulos, & Poulos, 2016; Tolochko & Boomgaarden, 2017) might be explored further in the context of its structure within a clause as highlighted under the system of transitivity.

Of greater importance to this finding is the semantic relationship between the constituents of a clause. As far as meaning is concerned, to label the constituent parts of a clause as a subject, predicate, object/complement traditionally does not convey a

sufficient semantic relationship between the constituents of a clause as seen in the following examples:

I will work as hard

I know we can

From these examples, it is clear that the word “I” in the first clause implies a different meaning from “I” in the second clause if it is seen in the context of its semantic relation to the semantic features of the verbs following it. In this context, “I” in the first clause is the doer of the activity of working, while “I” in the second clause is the senser of the perception of knowing. These examples serve as a clue that the term subject here is not effective for distinguishing the semantic feature of “I” in the two clauses in question. The pattern of language referred to as transitivity deals with such a semantic relation in a clause. The term transitivity is not merely intended to highlight the difference between transitive and intransitive verbs. It is much more concerned with the relation between verbs and phrases associated with them.

Therefore, a paradigmatic account of linguistic features in context needs to be explicitly involved in text analysis. Such a way is of benefit as it implies the context of the situation (register), system or language structure, and functional categories. The theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) in this text analysis serves as a systematic relationship analysis of the linguistic features of the text to the features of its context which in turn reflects the meaning potentials or functional categories of language used in a text. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) was proven beneficial and systematic framework to reveal what and how text is (Andersen et al., 2018; Hasan, 2014; Lim, 2018; Montes et al., 2014; Santosa, 2016). Text analysis should be done in such a way that it is merely intended to point to the macro views. It is much more concerned with the language structure level in the context of the lexico-grammar functions in a clause (semantic relationship between the constituents of a clause) to realize experiential, interpersonal, and textual meanings which in turn, are respectively realized by register category of field, tenor, and mode as advocated by Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory.

6. Conclusion

The results of the analysis of the text under study indicate that Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory is effective in analyzing the link between language and context, particularly the context of situation which is the so-called register category of field. Viewed from transitivity analysis, the material process indicating the action of the participants appears at most. The use of the larger proportion of material processes signifies that the text is mostly concerned with the performed activities or actions. The existence of such material process in the text highlights the functional category of experiential or ideational metafunction of the language of the text which in turn, is

regarded as the field. Integral to such metafunction, the transitivity analysis in this study might enhance the previous analysis of examining interpersonal relations among the involved participants in the text by the existence of some pronouns associated with verbs to which they attach.

This study is only concerned with the experiential function of language that is realized by register the category of the field by doing transitivity analysis. As the theory suggests, revealing the field, nominal group analysis, lexical string analysis, conjunction, and reference analysis can be used. Therefore, future research studies can deal with the aspects in question to reveal the field of the text under study, which then, might corroborate or counter the findings of this study.

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