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Cognitive, Emotional, And Communicative Dimensions of Efl Speaking Experiences: A Transitivity Analysis of Pre-Service Teachers' Reflective Narratives

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ABSTRACT

This study study how reflective narratives written by undergraduate EFL teacher candidates about learning to speak English can be analysed through the transitivity system of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). A descriptive qualitative case study design is specified for ten narratives and four supporting interviews from fifth-semester students of an English Education Study Program in Indonesia (2025–2026). Narratives are segmented into clauses and coded for process type, participant role, circumstance, and theme; a second coder re-codes a stratified 30% subset. In the illustrative corpus of 151 clauses, relational (24.5%), verbal (23.2%), and material (22.5%) processes were almost equally frequent, followed by mental (18.5%), behavioural (9.3%), and existential (2.0%) processes. Activities were construed mainly materially, cognition mentally, interaction verbally, and self-evaluation relationally, whereas emotion appeared more often as relational Attributes and behavioural responses than as mental processes. These figures illustrate the reporting procedure and must be re-established with authentic archived data before any empirical claim is made. The design suggests that analyses of learner affect should not rely on mental processes alone.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking is widely regarded as the most exposed of the four language skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Learners must formulate meaning in real time, in front of an audience, and usually with limited opportunities for rehearsal. Research on speaking pedagogy has therefore foregrounded communicative practice, collaborative tasks, and digital support [1], while studies of English-speaking anxiety have documented the affective demands of oral participation in higher education [2]. Performance-based assessments, however, capture what learners can do at a given moment; they say comparatively little about how learners themselves interpret the activities, relationships, and feelings that make up a speaking course. Students' retrospective accounts can

complement observable performance by documenting perceptions of difficulty, confidence, and classroom interaction.

Reflective narratives are a useful window onto these perceptions because each clause in a narrative does more than report an event: it also selects who acts, who feels, who speaks, and how a situation is evaluated. The present study examines how students *formulate* their experiences of learning to speak English in written reflections. It does not treat the narratives as direct measurements of speaking proficiency or of psychological states; rather, it treats them as linguistic representations produced in a particular educational setting.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) provides an explicit framework for such an analysis. SFL conceptualizes language as a social semiotic resource organized around three metafunctions. Within the ideational metafunction, the transitivity system explains how clauses construe experience as configurations of processes, participants, and circumstances. The framework distinguishes six process types: material (doing and happening), mental (perceiving, thinking, feeling, and wanting), relational (being and having), verbal (saying), behavioural (physiological and psychological behaving), and existential (existing). Each type is associated with characteristic participant roles, such as Actor and Goal, Senser and Phenomenon, Carrier and Attribute, Sayer and Verbiage, Behavior, and Existent, while circumstances add information about time, place, manner, cause, and accompaniment. Crucially, classification depends on the meaning of the clause in context and not merely on a list of verbs; the verb *feel*, for example, realizes a relational process in *I felt proud* but a mental process in *I feel [that] my confidence is growing*.

In reflections on speaking lessons, a single clause may construe an activity, an emotion, a self-evaluation, a conversational exchange, or a learning condition. The analytical question is how these representations are built lexicogrammatically. Answering this question shows which aspects of the speaking experience learners foreground, how they position themselves relative to lecturers and peers, and which experiences are construed as actions they perform versus states they are in.

Existing transitivity research in Indonesian EFL contexts has largely examined students' written products in school genres. Rosmayanti [4] and Sianipar et al. [5] analysed recount texts; Amalia and Emilia [6] examined university-level analytical expositions; Agustina and Suarnajaya [7], Oktoma, and Budi et al. [9] investigated narrative writing; and Meydayanti et al. [10] analysed a single learner's expository essay, reporting a process profile that differs from those commonly described for narratives. These studies show that process distributions are genre-sensitive, but they analyse texts written to display genre competence rather than texts in which learners reflect on their own learning. Two studies are closer to the present object. Munalim [11] used transitivity to profile reflection papers written by 28 teachers of English in a writing course and reported that the papers remained concentrated in material and relational processes, with cognitive and desiderative types prominent among mental processes. Triki et al. [12] analysed pronominal participants in 60 student reflective journals on virtual intercultural experience. Both confirm that transitivity can be applied to reflective writing, but neither takes speaking-learning experience as its object: [11] centres on the Phenomena of mental processes in teachers' papers, and [12] centres on pronouns in intercultural journals. In the sources reviewed here, none examines how prospective English teachers represent their own experiences of learning spoken English across all six process types.

The research gap therefore lies at the intersection of discourse, learning experience, and teacher education. Reflective accounts of speaking lessons written by undergraduate EFL teacher candidates have not been analysed with the same clause-level precision as recounts, narratives, and expositions. This study addresses that gap by integrating (i) the distribution of the six process types, (ii) participant positioning and discursive agency, and (iii) the thematic content construed by each process type, namely activities, cognition, emotion, self-evaluation, interaction, learning conditions, and emerging teacher identity. The contribution is contextual and analytical; it does not claim to identify new process types.

The distinguishing contribution is therefore the analytic design, not the site or the respondents. First, the unit of analysis is the clause across all six process types, rather than mental processes alone [11] or pronouns alone [12]. Second, process types are cross-tabulated with a seven-category thematic coding of the speaking experience, so that grammatical choice can be related to what is being construed. Third, participant roles are traced by holder (student-writer, lecturer, peer, other), which makes agency and relationships comparable. Fourth, borderline decisions are logged with their alternative readings, which makes the coding auditable.

Three research questions guide the study: (1) How are speaking-learning activities, cognitions, emotions, self-evaluations, and interactions represented through the six SFL process types in students' reflective narratives? (2) Which participant roles construct students' agency and their relationships with lecturers and peers? (3) How do these clause-level representations compare with the profiles reported in genre-focused transitivity studies? The comparison for the third question rests on three explicit bases: the rank order of process types, the distribution of participant roles, and the grammatical resource used to construe affect. Reference profiles are taken from the process-type percentages reported in [4]–[9], from the process profile in [10], and from the descriptions in [11] and [12]. Because those studies differ in genre, educational level, and coding conventions, the comparison is interpretive and not statistical.

As prospective English teachers, the participants interpret speaking experiences in ways that are relevant both to their identities as learners and to their future pedagogy. Recent work on digital speaking pedagogy [13], storytelling in speaking instruction [8], and foreign language anxiety [3] provides the pedagogical context for the study. The analysis is intended to complement speaking assessments with evidence of how students represent difficulty, practice, feedback, and communicative relationships.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive qualitative case study design informed by SFL transitivity analysis [3]. The case was bounded by programme, course, and time: fifth-semester students of the English Education Study Program at STKIP Al Maksum who had completed the speaking course sequence in the odd semester of the 2025–2026 academic year. Reflective narratives served as the primary data and semi-structured interviews as supporting data for source triangulation. Frequencies were calculated only to describe the distribution of linguistic choices in the corpus; they were not used for inferential statistical testing. The materials that document the case are listed under Data Availability and Supplementary Materials.

2.2 Participants and Context

The eligible population comprised 34 fifth-semester students. Ten students (seven female and three male, aged 20–22) were selected through maximum-variation purposive sampling based on their final speaking grades (high, middle, and low bands), so that the corpus would include learners with different levels of perceived success. Inclusion criteria were (a) completion of the Speaking I–III sequence, (b) submission of a reflective narrative, and (c) written informed consent. Participants were assigned codes S01–S10, and their narratives were labelled RN01–RN10. The speaking course combined pair dialogues, group discussions, storytelling, debates, product presentations, and lecturer feedback, delivered mainly face-to-face with some online meetings. Grade bands were formed by ranking the 34 final speaking grades and dividing them into terciles (high, middle, low), with students then selected from each tercile to maximise variation in perceived success. Ten narratives were judged adequate for a descriptive case because the aim is narrow (clause-level profiling of one genre), the sample is specific (one programme and one course sequence), the analysis is deductive within an established framework [3], and each narrative yields about 15 clauses, which together give the corpus sufficient information power. The sample does not support generalisation or inferential claims.

2.3 Instruments and Data Collection

At the end of the semester (5–9 January 2026), participants responded in English to the following prompt: “Write a reflection of about 100 words about your experience of learning to speak English this semester. You may describe the activities you did, the difficulties you faced, your interaction with lecturers and classmates, your feelings, and how you see your progress. There are no right or wrong answers, and this writing will not affect your grade.” The narratives were typed and submitted through the course learning management system after final grades had been released, so that participation could not influence assessment. The ten narratives total 920 words ($M = 92.0$ words; range 82–109).

Four participants (S04, S06, S08, and S09) were subsequently interviewed (12–16 January 2026), each for 15–20 minutes. They were chosen because their narratives contained interpretations that required clarification, such as self-recording, prior schooling, rehearsal with a roommate, and anonymous feedback. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and segmented into turns (e.g., INT01/T05). The interview guide asked participants to elaborate on specific clauses of their own narrative rather than to evaluate the course in general. Each interview turn was linked to the clause it elaborates through a link table (clause ID ↔ turn ID), and interview quotations in Section 3 are reproduced exactly as transcribed.

2.4 Data Analysis

The unit of analysis was the clause. Analysis followed six stages adapted from transitivity analysis procedures [6], [12] and qualitative data analysis principles. First, the narratives were anonymized and frozen as a stable corpus. Second, each narrative was segmented into clauses; every ranking clause and every dependent, projected, or non-finite clause realizing its own process was recorded separately (e.g., *I want | to practise more next semester*). Third, each clause was assigned one primary process type according to a written coding manual. Fourth, the process lexeme, the primary participant and its holder (student-writer, students collectively, lecturer, peer, or other), other participants, circumstances, and a thematic category were recorded. Fifth, a second coder independently re-coded a stratified random 30% subset, and disagreements were adjudicated. Sixth, frequencies were calculated from the final coding sheet using the formula $\text{percentage} = 100 \times n(k) / N$, where $n(k)$ is the number of clauses of category k and N is the total number of clauses. Embedded (rankshifted) clauses that function inside a nominal group (e.g., the topic that I chose) were not coded separately, whereas projected and non-finite clauses that realize their own process were. For example, in RN02/C11–C12 the ranking clause I realised was coded as mental (cognitive) and the projected clause that my classmates also made mistakes was coded separately as material.

The coding manual specified decision rules for recurrent borderline items. *Feel/be + emotion adjective* (e.g., *I was nervous, I felt proud*) was coded as relational attributive, whereas *like, enjoy, hate, and worry* were coded as affective mental processes. *Feel* followed by a projected clause was coded as cognitive mental. Verbs naming acts of meaning exchange (*say, tell, ask, explain, discuss*) and the process-range construction *give feedback* were coded as verbal, whereas *present* with a product or topic as Goal was coded as material. Each borderline decision was entered in an ambiguity log with its alternative reading and a rationale. Fifteen clauses (9.9%) were flagged in this way (see Supplementary File, sheet Ambiguity_Log). Table 1 presents an extract of the coding sheet.

Table 1. Extract of the clause-level coding sheet (6 of 151 rows)

Clause ID	Verbatim clause	Process type	Participants [holder]	Circumstance	Border line
RN01/C 01	<i>In the first meeting of the Speaking class, I was very nervous</i>	Relational (attributive)	Carrier: I [S]; Attribute: very nervous	Time: in the first meeting of the Speaking class	No
RN01/C 11	<i>My partner corrected my pronunciation slowly,</i>	Verbal	Sayer: my partner [P]; Target: my pronunciation	Manner: slowly	Yes
RN04/C 09	<i>I recorded a two-minute monologue every night</i>	Material	Actor: I [S]; Goal: a two-minute monologue	Time: every night	No
RN04/C 12	<i>After one month I noticed</i>	Mental (perceptive)	Senser: I [S]	Time: after one month	No
RN05/C 08	<i>my classmates watched me carefully</i>	Behavioural	Behavior: my classmates [P]; Phenomenon: me	Manner: carefully	No
RN03/C 01	<i>There were thirty-two students in our Speaking class,</i>	Existential	Existent: thirty-two students [O]	Place: in our Speaking class	No

The full coding sheet (151 rows), the ambiguity log, the reliability calculation, and the interview links are specified as Supplementary Files S1–S7 (see Data Availability and Supplementary Materials). Holder codes: S = student-writer; L = lecturer; P = peer; O = other/abstract.

Thematic categories were assigned inductively from the content of each clause and then stabilized into seven codes: speaking activity, cognition, emotion, self-evaluation, interaction, learning condition, and teacher identity. Process types and thematic categories were cross-tabulated to show which grammatical resources construe which aspect of experience. Each category was defined by the dominant experiential content of the clause: speaking activity (what was done in speaking tasks or practice), cognition (what was realised, known, or understood), emotion (feeling states and bodily signs of feeling), self-evaluation (judgments of own competence or performance), interaction (exchange with lecturers and peers), learning condition (class size, prior schooling, and other circumstances), and teacher identity (statements about the writer as a future teacher). A clause that could belong to more than one category was assigned to the one carried by its process and primary participant, and the alternative was recorded in the ambiguity log.

2.5 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was addressed through credibility, dependability, and confirmability procedures. For investigator triangulation, a second coder (an SFL lecturer not involved in teaching the participants) independently coded 44 clauses (29.1%) selected through stratified random sampling within each narrative. The coders agreed on 39 clauses (observed agreement = .886; chance agreement = .201), yielding Cohen's kappa of .858, which falls within the "almost perfect" band of conventional benchmarks. All five disagreements involved items already listed in the ambiguity log (*corrected*, *feel* + *projection*, *stand up*, *present*, and *give feedback*). After discussion with reference to the coding manual, the original codes were retained and the rules were clarified. Cohen's kappa was computed as $\kappa = (po - pe) / (1 - pe) = (.886 - .201) / (1 - .201) = .858$, and the Coder A $\times$ Coder B agreement matrix across the six process types is given in Supplementary File S5.

For source triangulation, interpretations of narrative clauses were compared with interview turns using traceable links (e.g., RN04/C08–C13 ↔ INT01/T05). Three interview excerpts confirmed the narrative-based interpretation, and one (INT04/T04) partly disconfirmed it, as reported in Section 3.6. For member checking, six participants were invited to review summaries of the interpretations of their narratives; five responded, four confirmed the interpretation, and one (S09) qualified it by adding a preference for individual feedback. An audit trail consisting of the anonymized narratives, segmentation decisions, coding versions, ambiguity log, adjudication notes, and calculation worksheets was retained. Member checking followed one procedure: each invited participant received a short summary of the interpretations of their own narrative and could confirm, correct, or qualify it, and each response was entered in a correction log (Supplementary File S6), including S09's qualification.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary, and written informed consent was obtained before data collection. Narratives were collected after grades had been finalized, all personal names were replaced with codes, and place names that could identify individuals were removed. Data are stored on a password-protected institutional drive and will be retained for five years. Signed consent forms are kept in an anonymised register (Supplementary File S7).

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Overall Distribution of Process Types

The results below derive from the simulated corpus described in Section 2; they find the reporting format and are not empirical findings. The ten narratives yielded 151 clauses ($M = 15.1$ per narrative; range 14–16). As Table 2 and Figure 1 show, the distribution was relatively balanced across the three major process types and verbal processes. Relational processes were the most frequent (37 clauses; 24.5%), followed closely by verbal (35; 23.2%) and material (34; 22.5%) processes. Mental processes accounted for 28 clauses (18.5%), behavioural processes for 14 (9.3%), and existential processes for 3 (2.0%). All counts in Tables 2–4 are generated from the coding sheet by pivot tables, so they can be recomputed from the source data (Supplementary File S3).

Table 2. Distribution of process types and subtypes (N = 151 clauses)

Process type	n	%	Subtypes (n)
Relational	37	24.5	attributive 30; identifying 5; possessive 2
Verbal	35	23.2	–
Material	34	22.5	–
Mental	28	18.5	cognitive 18; affective 5; desiderative 3; perceptive 2
Behavioural	14	9.3	–
Existential	3	2.0	–
Total	151	100.0	

Percentages are calculated against N = 151 and may not sum to exactly 100 because of rounding.

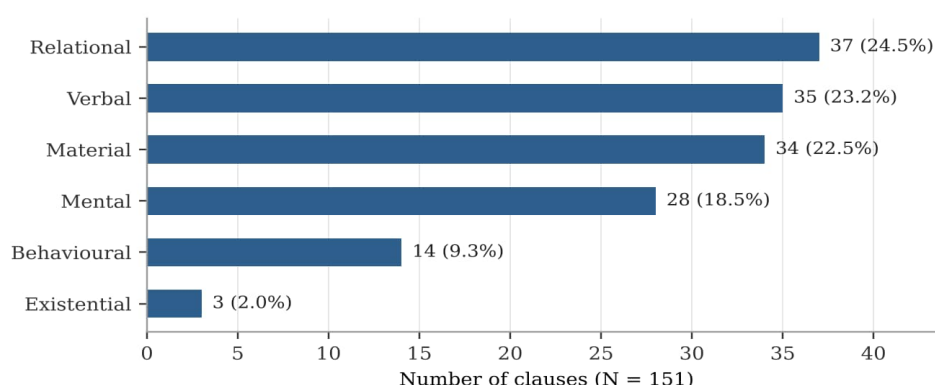


Figure 1. Distribution of transitivity process types in the reflective narratives

This profile differs from the dominance of material processes reported for recounts and narratives [4], [5], [7]–[9]. Recent research comparing EFL recount and report writing similarly finds that material and relational process preferences vary with the communicative purpose of the genre [14]. The difference is consistent with the purpose of the reflective genre: students were asked not only to report what happened but also to evaluate it, to describe feelings, and to recall interaction. Evaluating (relational), reporting talk (verbal), and sensing (mental) together account for 100 of 151 clauses (66.2%), whereas doing and happening (material) accounts for fewer than a quarter. The frequencies describe linguistic choices in a small corpus; they are not measures of how often students actually acted, felt, or spoke. A closer comparator is Munalim [11], who found that teachers' reflection papers stayed concentrated in material and relational processes while still using cognitive and desiderative mental types. The present profile shares the prominence of relational processes but gives verbal processes equal weight, which may reflect the interactional content of speaking courses; this reading needs to be tested with authentic data.

Table 3. Cross-tabulation of thematic categories and process types (n of clauses)

Theme	Mat.	Men.	Rel.	Verb.	Beh.	Exis.	Total
Speaking activity	23	–	–	11	2	–	36
Cognition	–	22	2	1	1	–	26
Interaction	3	–	–	17	6	–	26
Emotion	–	5	12	–	5	–	22
Self-evaluation	3	–	16	3	–	–	22
Learning condition	3	1	5	3	–	3	15
Teacher identity	2	–	2	–	–	–	4
Total	34	28	37	35	14	3	151

Table 3 shows that each thematic domain is construed predominantly by one process type, but not exclusively. Speaking activities were construed mainly by material clauses (23 of 36), cognition by mental clauses (22 of 26), interaction by verbal clauses (17 of 26), and self-evaluation by relational clauses (16 of 22). The emotion domain was the exception: only 5 of 22 emotion clauses were mental,

whereas 12 were relational and 5 behavioural. The following sections examine each process type with illustrative clauses from the corpus.

3.2 Relational Processes: Evaluating Competence, Emotion, and Identity

Relational processes were dominated by the attributive subtype (30 of 37), in which a Carrier is assigned an Attribute. The student-writer was the Carrier in 20 relational clauses, typically in self-evaluations of linguistic resources and performance:

Excerpt (1) RN04/C14: *I am not fluent yet*,

Table 4. Transitivity analysis of Excerpt (1): relational (attributive) clause

<i>I</i>	<i>am</i>	<i>not fluent yet</i>
Carrier	Pr: relational (attributive)	Attribute

Excerpt (2) RN07/C11: *that my argument was logical*

Table 5. Transitivity analysis of Excerpt (2): relational (attributive) clause

<i>(that) my argument</i>	<i>was</i>	<i>logical</i>
Carrier	Pr: relational (attributive)	Attribute

In RN07/C11 and C12, the Carrier is not the student as a person but a component of performance (*my argument*, *my delivery*). This metonymic distribution of evaluation allows the writer to separate a positive judgment of content (*logical*) from a negative judgment of delivery (*too fast*), a pattern that resembles the analytic language of assessment rubrics and lecturer feedback. Similar part-for-whole Carriers occur in *my English was bad* (RN02/C03), *my pauses were shorter* (RN04/C13), and *my grammar still has many errors* (RN10/C15).

Relational clauses also carried much of the emotional content. Twelve emotion clauses were realized relationally, such as *I was very nervous* (RN01/C01), *I was afraid* (RN06/C07), *I felt disappointed* (RN10/C08), and *I felt proud of myself* (RN05/C10). Construing emotions as Attributes presents them as states the writer is *in* rather than as reactions directed at a Phenomenon. Identifying clauses (5) were used to define the speaking skill or the course itself, as in *Speaking is the most difficult skill for me* (RN04/C01) and *feedback is the most important part of Speaking class* (RN09/C01). Two attributive clauses projected an emerging teacher identity, such as *a teacher must be brave* (RN03/C15) and *feedback should be specific and kind* (RN09/C14). In both, the Carrier is generic (*a teacher*, *feedback*), and the evaluation is framed as a norm for future practice.

3.3 Verbal Processes: Constructing Classroom Interaction

Verbal processes were the second most frequent type (35 clauses) and were the main resource for construing interaction (17 of 26 interaction clauses). The Sayer role was distributed among the student-writer (14 clauses), the lecturer (11), peers (4), students collectively (3), and other sources (3). Lecturers were construed primarily as Sayers: 11 of the 16 clauses with a lecturer as the primary participant were verbal, typically involving asking, telling, explaining, suggesting, or giving feedback.

Excerpt (3) RN01/C03: *When the lecturer asked me*

Table 6. Transitivity analysis of Excerpt (3): verbal clause

<i>(When) the lecturer</i>	<i>asked</i>	<i>me</i>
Sayer	Pr: verbal	Receiver

Excerpt (4) RN07/C09: *Our lecturer gave feedback after the debate.*

Table 7. Transitivity analysis of Excerpt (4): verbal clause

<i>Our lecturer</i>	<i>gave</i>	<i>feedback</i>	<i>after the debate</i>
Sayer	Pr: verbal	Verbiage (process range)	Circ: time

The student-writer as Sayer frequently appeared in clauses that measure speaking output, often with circumstances of extent or manner: *I answered in three or four sentences* (RN03/C08), *I speak very slowly* (RN04/C06), *I answered without notes* (RN10/C11), and *I spoke for three minutes* (RN10/C13). These circumstances function as self-assessment criteria, namely length, speed, and independence from notes, embedded in the experiential structure of the clause. Peers appeared as Sayers when they gave corrective or evaluative feedback, as in *my partner corrected my pronunciation slowly* (RN01/C11) and *one friend wrote [that I always said “eee” before answering]* (RN09/C08–C09). The latter example illustrates the coding rule that *write* is verbal when it projects a reported clause, but material when it creates an object (*our lecturer always wrote our common mistakes on the whiteboard*, RN09/C02).

3.4 Material Processes: Representing Speaking-Related Actions

Material processes (34 clauses) construed the concrete activities of the course and of independent practice. The student-writer was the Actor in 20 material clauses and students collectively in 6. Many of these clauses represent self-initiated practice outside the classroom, accompanied by circumstances of time and place that show regularity:

Excerpt (5) RN04/C09: *I recorded a two-minute monologue every night*

Table 8. Transitivity analysis of Excerpt (5): material clause

<i>I</i>	<i>recorded</i>	<i>a two-minute monologue</i>	<i>every night</i>
Actor	Pr: material	Goal	Circ: time

Excerpt (6) RN10/C05: *In the group we sent voice notes about our daily activities.*

Table 9. Transitivity analysis of Excerpt (6): material clause

<i>In the group</i>	<i>we</i>	<i>sent</i>	<i>voice notes</i>	<i>about our daily activities</i>
Circ: place	Actor	Pr: material	Goal	Circ: matter

Other examples include *I practised in my boarding house with my roommate* (RN08/C08), *copied the expressions in my notebook* (RN06/C10), and *I will practise with a timer* (RN07/C14). Lecturers were Actors in four material clauses, mostly organizing the learning environment (*the lecturer divided us into small groups*, RN02/C04; *the lecturer used English all the time*, RN06/C05). Material clauses therefore construe the student as an agent of practice and the lecturer as an organizer of conditions. The frequent use of circumstances of time (30 of 96 circumstance elements) and place (18) further anchors this agency in routines such as *every night*, *every Thursday*, and *every Friday*. This is consistent with the emphasis on structured practice in socio-constructivist and digital speaking pedagogy [1], [13].

3.5 Mental Processes: Representing Cognition and Emotion

Mental processes (28 clauses) were dominated by the cognitive subtype (18), followed by affective (5), desiderative (3), and perceptive (2) subtypes. Every mental clause had the student-writer

as *Senser* (28 of 28); no lecturer or peer was represented as thinking or feeling. The writers thus claimed exclusive access to inner experience, while others were represented through what they said or did. Cognitive clauses often marked a turning point in the narrative through verbs of realization:

Excerpt (7) RN02/C11: *I realised*

Table 10. Transitivity analysis of Excerpt (7): mental (cognitive) clause

<i>I</i>	<i>realised</i>	<i>[that my classmates also made mistakes]</i>
Senser	Pr: mental (cognitive)	projected clause → RN02/C12

Excerpt (8) RN04/C12: *After one month I noticed*

Table 11. Transitivity analysis of Excerpt (8): mental (perceptive) clause

<i>After one month</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>noticed</i>	<i>[that my pauses were shorter]</i>
Circ: time	Senser	Pr: mental (perceptive)	projected clause → RN04/C13

Clauses such as *I realised*, *I noticed*, *Now I understand*, and *I did not realise this habit before* project a new understanding about speaking, such as the fact that peers also make mistakes or that pauses become shorter with practice. Negated cognitive clauses (*I did not know many words*, RN01/C02; *I could not find the right words*, RN07/C06) construe lexical retrieval as the main difficulty. Affective clauses were few but evaluatively strong (*I hated my own voice*, RN04/C11; *Now I enjoy group discussion*, RN02/C13). Desiderative clauses (*I want*, *I hope*) projected future action, such as practising more, using storytelling with future students, and receiving more small-group practice.

The relatively low share of affective mental processes should not be interpreted as an absence of emotional content. As noted above, emotions were construed more often relationally (12 clauses) and behaviourally (5 clauses) than mentally (5 clauses). An analysis that counted only mental processes would therefore underestimate the emotional dimension of these reflections. This finding has a methodological implication for studies of language anxiety [2], [3]: affect in learner texts is distributed across process types and must be traced through Attributes and bodily behaviour as well as through mental verbs.

3.6 Behavioural and Existential Processes: Bodily Responses and Learning Conditions

Behavioural processes (14 clauses) construed bodily and attentional responses. Five of them construed emotional responses. Four of these represented anxiety physiologically: *my hands were shaking* (RN01/C05), *my heart beat very fast* (RN03/C07), *I stopped for almost ten seconds* (RN07/C07), and *I still sweated a lot* (RN08/C11). The fifth, *I laughed with them* (RN02/C08), construed relief within peer interaction. Peers were Behavers in four clauses, in which they are construed as an audience that watches, looks, claps, or laughs.

Excerpt (9) RN05/C08: *my classmates watched me carefully*

Table 12. Transitivity analysis of Excerpt (9): behavioural clause

<i>my classmates</i>	<i>watched</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>carefully</i>
Behavior	Pr: behavioural	Phenomenon	Circ: manner

In RN08/C14 (*because nobody laughed at me*), a negated behavioural clause is the reason given for happiness, which suggests that the perceived reaction of the audience is central to how these students evaluate a speaking event. Behavioural clauses also construed self-monitoring, as in *listened to it again*

(RN04/C10) and *Now I pay attention to fillers* (RN09/C11). Interview data supported this interpretation. S04 explained: “*When I record my voice, I can hear my mistakes by myself. In class I cannot hear them because I am too nervous*” (INT01/T05).

Existential processes were rare (3 clauses), but all three construed learning conditions: class size (*There were thirty-two students in our Speaking class*, RN03/C01), the absence of support in prior schooling (*There was no English club at my senior high school*, RN06/C02), and gaps in peer practice (*there were long silences in the group*, RN10/C06). Their low frequency reflects the personal focus of the prompt, but their content signals that students attribute some limitations to structural conditions rather than to personal deficits. The interview with S06 extended this interpretation: “*In my school the English teacher always used Bahasa Indonesia. So in the first month here, I just nodded even when I did not understand*” (INT02/T03). One interview partly disconfirmed a narrative interpretation. S09 confirmed her preference for anonymous whiteboard feedback but added, “*sometimes I want personal feedback too*” (INT04/T04), which qualifies the uniformly positive evaluation in RN09.

3.7 Participant Roles and Students’ Discursive Agency

Table 4 summarizes the primary participant roles by holder. The student-writer occupied the primary participant role in 91 of 151 clauses (60.3%). Within these clauses, the student was most often a Senser (28), followed by Actor (20), Carrier (20), Sayer (14), and Behaver (9).

Table 13. Primary participant roles by holder (n of clauses)

Holder	Actor	Senser	Carrier	Token	Sayer	Behaver	Existent	Total
Student-writer	20	28	20	–	14	9	–	91 (60.3%)
Students (collective)	6	–	3	–	3	–	–	12 (7.9%)
Lecturer/examiner	4	–	–	–	11	1	–	16 (10.6%)
Peer	3	–	–	–	4	4	–	11 (7.3%)
Other/abstract	1	–	9	5	3	–	3	21 (13.9%)
Total	34	28	32	5	35	14	3	151 (100%)

The primary participant is the first nuclear participant of each clause (Actor, Senser, Carrier/Token, Sayer, Behaver, or Existent). Carrier includes Carrier/Possessor; Token includes identifying relational clauses.

Three patterns emerge. First, the student is the most frequent participant and the only Senser in the corpus, so the reflections construe learning as a personally experienced process. Second, agency is distributed across doing (Actor), saying (Sayer), and being (Carrier). Students represent themselves not only as people who feel anxious but also as people who practise, record, prepare, answer, and evaluate. A recent transitivity analysis of EFL learners’ recount texts likewise shows how process types and participant positioning can reveal students’ discursive agency [15]. Third, lecturers appear mainly as Sayers (11 of 16) who ask, tell, explain, and give feedback, while peers are divided among Sayer (4), Behaver (4), and Actor (3) roles. Peers are therefore construed both as collaborators who help and correct and as an audience whose reactions are monitored. Abstract or inanimate participants (21 clauses), such as *speaking*, *feedback*, *the class*, and *this project*, typically serve as Carriers or Tokens in evaluative clauses. This pattern shows that students also evaluate the course and the skill, not only themselves.

The comparison rests on the three bases stated in the Introduction: the rank order of process types, the distribution of participant roles, and the grammatical resource used to construe affect. In relation to

the third research question, the corpus shows a profile that is closer to evaluative and interactive discourse than to the action-centred recounts and narratives analysed in genre-focused studies [4]–[9]. For teacher education, the analysis suggests three uses of reflective writing. Lecturers can read relational and behavioural clauses as signals of affective load, verbal clauses as evidence of how feedback is experienced, and desiderative clauses as students' own proposals for course design (e.g., *more practice in small groups*, RN08/C16). These interpretations remain bounded by the small, purposively selected sample and by the short length of the narratives.

4. CONCLUSION

This study findd how undergraduate EFL teacher candidates' reflective narratives can be analysed through the transitivity system, using an illustrative corpus of 151 clauses. In that corpus, relational (24.5%), verbal (23.2%), and material (22.5%) processes were almost equally frequent, followed by mental (18.5%), behavioural (9.3%), and existential (2.0%) processes. Each thematic domain showed a preferred grammatical resource, while emotion was construed mainly through relational Attributes and behavioural processes. These patterns illustrate the kind of evidence the design can produce. Because the corpus, interview excerpts, and agreement statistics in this version are simulated, they are not empirical findings and must be re-established from authentic archived data, with a verified agreement matrix, before any claim is made.

The analytical contribution is a clause-level design that treats all six process types, participant holders, and thematic categories together, rather than mental processes [11] or pronouns [12] alone. If replicated with authentic data, transitivity-informed reading of student reflections could help speaking lecturers examine affective load, perceived feedback, and students' proposals for practice; this implication remains conditional on that replication. Future research should use authentic and longer narratives, a larger and multi-institutional sample, a longitudinal design, and independent measures of speaking performance.

AI USAGE STATEMENT

An AI assistant was used to draft and edit the text of this teaching version and to generate an illustrative corpus, interview excerpts, coding sheet, and reliability figures. These materials are simulated: they are not records of an empirical study, and the numerical results, quotations, and agreement statistics reported here must not be cited as findings. For an authentic submission, all data must come from the authors' archived research, this statement must describe the AI use actually made, and the simulated materials must be removed.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest regarding the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

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