Image Construction and Interactive Strategies in Social Live Broadcast from the Perspective of Transitivity—Taking a Dialogue Between IShowSpeed and a Shaoxing Girl as an Example

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Abstract: *Creators attract the audience with their unique narrative perspective and become "Internet celebrities" in we-media era. Influencers construct narratives through language, thus affecting the audience. IShowSpeed is a mega influencer with more than 37 million followers on YouTube. This study analyzes a conversation between IShowspeed and a Shaoxing girl in his China trip live-streaming. Transitivity system in systemic functional grammar is the analytical framework to explore the distribution of the transitivity processes and discuss images established by two speakers. Then interactive strategies used by IShowSpeed in the live broadcast are summarized. The study found that transitivity processes contained in the dialogue from most to least are relational process, mental process, verbal process, material process, and behavioral process. IShowSpeed and that Shaoxing girl showed their positive images to the audience through transitivity processes. IShowSpeed uses interactive strategies such as reshaping identity, mental empathy, verbal citation, diverting attention and objective statements to guide Shaoxing girl to make correct attribution and reflect the emotional governance function of live-streaming language. The transitivity processes help the girl to re-understand herself and also reconstruct the group's understanding of childlike voice, reflecting the reconstruction of personal identity and group relationships by live-streaming interaction in we-media era.*

Keywords: Live Broadcast Discourse Analysis, Transitivity, Image Construction, Interactive Strategies.

1. Introduction

As a daily aesthetic activity with interaction as the core, online live broadcast has built a field generated by stable emotional energy. The interaction is the virtual "physical presence" between the aesthetic subject and object gathered in different "situations" (online live broadcast room) to participate in the interactive ceremony and enhance emotional energy (Yan & Zhao, 2024) [4]. IShowSpeed has more than 37 million followers on YouTube. In March 2025, this mega American Internet celebrity took a trip to China, which attracted worldwide attention. As a foreign influencer, IShowSpeed showed China's image to foreign audiences from alterity perspective, and also let domestic audiences re-think Chinese people from a micro-narrative perspective. Peng Huaxin and Li Haimin (2024) put forward that foreign Internet celebrities use life-based narratives to depict a diverse Chinese image, which is authentic and makes up for the shortcomings of official narratives [2]. Pan Liwen (2024) believes that short videos can inspire the audience's emotional resonance through ingenious narrative strategies [3].

The live broadcast of IShowSpeed's trip to Hong Kong has more than 9.2 million views on YouTube, more than 200,000 likes and 13,960 comments. This paper takes the 3-minute and 27-second dialogue of IShowSpeed to comfort Shaoxing girl not to be troubled by her childlike voice as the research subject.

Under the framework of transitivity analysis, this paper mainly discusses two research questions:

1) What is the distribution of transition processes in the dialogue between IShowSpeed and the Shaoxing girl?

2) What images did IShowSpeed and the Shaoxing girl shape respectively through transitivity processes and what interactive strategies did IShowSpeed use to comfort the girl?

2. Analytical Framework

2.1 Transitivity System

Halliday (1985) proposed three meta-functions of language: conceptual function, interpersonal function and ideational function. He believes that transitivity is a semantic system, and the transitivity system is the main embodiment of language conceptual function. Human experience can be divided into six processes, namely material process, relational process, mental process, behavioral process, verbal process and existential process. The material process is the process of doing something (a process of doing). Relational process reflects the relationship between things (a process of being), including attributive relational process and identifying relational process. Mental process mainly involves internal activities such as emotion and cognition. The subject of the mental activity is called the "perceiver" and the perceived one is the "phenomenon". Behavioral process represents the process of human physiological activity. Verbal process is the process of exchanging information. Existential process indicates the existence of something [1]. This study will analyze the dialogue between IShowSpeed and Shaoxing girl via transitivity system involved in the conceptual function to show their respective images, and summarize the interactive strategies used by IShowSpeed to comfort the girl.

3. Transitivity Process Analysis

According to Halliday's classifying criteria for each process,

this study divides the dialogue between IShowSpeed and Shaoxing girl in process clauses. Text analysis and qualitative analysis are methodology. The authors manually mark each transitivity process and count the number and frequency of six processes. Whisper (large-v3 model) is used to turn this audio into text with a total of 441 English words. In order to ensure the accuracy of manual annotation, a partner and I independently used a Word document to manually code the transitivity process according to Halliday's classifying criteria of the transitivity process. Finally, we determined the distribution of the transitivity process in the text after reaching a unified opinion. The dialogue contains 86 process clauses.

Table 1: The number and frequency of transitivity processes

	Number	Frequency
Relational	39	45.88%
Mental	24	28.24%
Verbal	12	14.12%
Material	6	7.06%
Behavioral	4	4.70%
Existential	0	0
Total	85	100%

As shown in Table 1, relational process (45.35%) was the most used when IShowSpeed and Shaoxing girl interacted, and relational process ranks first in the overall proportion, followed by mental process, accounting for 29.07%. The verbal process, material process and behavioral process account for 13.95%, 6.98% and 4.65% respectively. There is no existential process in the dialogue. This study will analyze the five processes in the live broadcast and IShowSpeed and the girl's respective images shaped by these processes. Finally, interactive strategies used by IShowSpeed to comfort the girl will be summarized.

3.1 Discourse Analysis of IShowSpeed comforting Shaoxing Girl

Table 2: The number of transitivity processes in IShowSpeed's narration

Transitivity Process	Number
Relational	32
Mental	16
Verbal	10
Material	5
Behavioral	3
Total	66

Table 2 shows that IShowSpeed uses relational process the most, followed by mental process, verbal process, and uses less behavioral process and material process. The authors will analyze IShowSpeed's image through process clauses, and summarize the interactive strategies he uses in the live-streaming.

3.1.1 Relational Process

IShowSpeed uses relational process to reshape the girl' view on her voice attributes, trying to eliminate the girl's negative self-evaluation of her childlike voice. IShowSpeed describes others' impression towards him to Shaoxing girl, showing that he is in the same situation as her.

(1) How old are you?
(2) That is your real voice?
(3) It is a nice voice.

(4) You have a nice voice.
(5) You have a good voice.
(6) You just have to stay strong and be you at the end of the day.
(7) It doesn't matter if you are the best in the world, the most perfect person in the world.
(8) People say I got a big nose, I'm musty, I'm black, I am trash at football like I am one of the best football players in the world.
(9) Like I go through so much and it's like, it's crazy.
(10) Get stronger.
(11) We just got to get stronger.

In example (1), IShowSpeed asked the girl's age and knew the girl's basic information. In Example (2), IShowSpeed expressed his doubt and confirmed Shaoxing girl's true voice. Examples (3), (4) and (5) show that he repeatedly used sentences like "Your voice is beautiful" and "You have a good voice" to classify the girl's voice attributes as "beautiful", "good" and other complimentary words. In example (6), IShowSpeed suggests that Shaoxing girl should stay strong and stick to be herself, and points out the direction for the girl. Example (7) shows being disliked is common regardless of whether they are the best person in the world. This hypothesis implies that everyone will be disliked by some people. He hopes that the girl will not be affected by malicious comments from others. In example (8), IShowSpeed cited people's descriptions of him. For example, "a big nose" and "black" are comments on his appearance, and "musty" and "trash at football" are both bad evaluations. These negative evaluations correspond that everyone may be disliked. In example (9), IShowSpeed thinks that his experience is "crazy", from paying attention to other people's evaluation to paying attention to self-improvement. In examples (10) and (11), "get stronger" is the image that IShowSpeed will shape in the future, and he expects that Shaoxing girl's image will also be "strong".

IShowSpeed uses relational process to reconstruct the girl's identity and affirm her self-worth, indicating that IShowSpeed is a person who respects others.

3.1.2 Mental Process

The participants of the mental process include IShowSpeed, people who hate Shaoxing girl's voice and Shaoxing girl. IShowSpeed likes the girl's voice while some people hate her voice. At first, the girl did not understand why people hated her. Then IShowSpeed pointed out that others didn't understand her. He hoped that the girl would understand that being hated was not the girl's fault, so as to solve the girl's doubt.

(1) I like it.
(2) Don't listen to the people.
(3) I watch anime so it is cool.
(4) Can you see it?
(5) You gonna understand that in this world people gonna laugh at you, talk about you, behave towards you.
(6) As part of us is just gonna be people like that.
(7) See, look in this world, honey.
(8) Don't listen to them.
(9) People gonna hate you all the time.

(10) People gonna to hate you.
(11) You know what I am saying?
(12) Don't worry.
(13) They don't understand me.

Mental process reflects people's preferences. In example (1), IShowSpeed said that he likes the girl's voice so that she could feel his goodwill. In example (6), (9) and (10), IShowSpeed repeatedly mentioned "like" and "hate", indicating others' preferences. People who laughed at Shaoxing girl were in contrast with IShowSpeed. In example (2) and (8), the girl said that someone hated her voice, and IShowSpeed repeatedly persuaded the girl not to listen to that person. In example (3), IShowSpeed said he likes to watch anime, so he thinks that girl's voice is cool. IShowSpeed uses real examples to show his appreciation for the girl's voice, which is more convincing. In example (4), IShowSpeed noticed that the comment upset the girl and asked people around him if they could see the comment pointed by the girl. In example (5), IShowSpeed hoped that the girl could understand that others' evaluation is inevitable. Standing on the girl's point of view, IShowSpeed's persuasion is touching. In example (11), IShowSpeed wanted to ensure whether she understood what he meant. In example (12), IShowSpeed pays attention to the feelings of the girl, so that she doesn't worry about being discussed by others. In example (13), IShowSpeed pointed out that some people hate him because they don't understand him and comforted Shaoxing girl that she doesn't have to care about these malicious comments.

IShowSpeed uses mental process to highlight his sympathy with the girl. These examples show that IShowSpeed is an enthusiastic person and is sympathetic to others. IShowSpeed uses mental empathy strategy to comfort the girl.

3.1.3 Verbal Process

IShowSpeed uses verbal process to introduce others' perspectives to enhance the authenticity of the narrative.

(1) What does that say in Chinese?
(2) What did James Wang say?
(3) What does that say?
(4) In this world people gonna laugh at you, talk about you, behave towards you.
(5) People talk about me all the time.
(6) People say I got a big nose, I'm musty, I'm black, I am trash at football like I am one of the best football players in the world.

In example (1), (2) and (3), IShowSpeed asked the girl what the comment meant in Chinese. The three questions show that he urgently wanted to know the meaning of the comment. After the girl explained it was a bad comment, IShowSpeed noticed she was in low spirits. In example (4), IShowSpeed said that people would discuss the girl and it can be inferred from the context that these people made bad comments on Shaoxing girl. Example (5) and (6) are people's attitudes towards IShowSpeed. People always discuss him, and IShowSpeed suffers from negative comments. He has similar experiences with Shaoxing girl.

IShowSpeed uses verbal process to introduce people's

comments on him and the girl to enhance the authenticity of the narrative. IShowSpeed repeatedly asked what people posted in the comment section. IShowSpeed showed examples that he did not upset owing to negative evaluation and persuaded the girl to become confident, indicating that IShowSpeed is an observant person. IShowSpeed enhances the persuasiveness of argumentation through verbal citation strategy.

3.1.4 Material Process

IShowSpeed uses material process to turn girl's mental stress into controllable actions to divert girl's attention.

(1) God gave you that voice for a reason.
(2) Because she just pointed out that message.
(3) I go through so much.
(4) We just got to get stronger and ignore that.

In example (1), IShowSpeed believes that God gave the girl a unique voice she cannot change, so people's comments on her innate voice are nonsense. He opposes some people's unfair evaluation based on their subjective impression. In example (2), the subject of the action "point" is Shaoxing girl. IShowSpeed not only noticed the girl's mood, but also observed her behavior, diverting her mental pressure during the live-streaming. In example (3), "go" reflects that IShowSpeed experienced a lot, but the process is arduous, showing IShowSpeed's perseverance. In example (4), IShowSpeed advised Shaoxing girl to ignore others' unfair evaluation. "Ignore" can divert her attention and let her value self-improvement.

IShowSpeed uses material process to turn the girl's mental pressure into controllable actions and divert her attention. He believes that the girl can make a positive change. IShowSpeed passes positive energy to her, showing he is an optimistic person. IShowSpeed uses the strategy of diverting attention to comfort the girl.

3.1.5 Behavioral Process

IShowSpeed uses behavioral process to explain some people's instinctive reactions to the girl. In this context, "laugh" means ridicule, which is people's physiological activity. The subject of "laugh" is people who hate the girl's voice. Others' ridicule is one of the reasons why Shaoxing girl is not confident.

(1) Laugh at you?
(2) People gonna laugh at you, talk about you, behave towards you.

In example (1), the question showed IShowSpeed's puzzle. Why such a cool voice is hated by strangers? He was angry with malicious comments. In example (2), IShowSpeed noticed that Shaoxing girl was greatly affected by negative comments, so he immediately persuaded the girl that it is common to be laughed at by others in this world, which is beyond her control.

IShowSpeed uses behavioral process to objectively describe the girl's situation. IShowSpeed thinks from the girl's perspective and shapes an enthusiastic image. IShowSpeed

uses the strategy of objectively describing the facts to comfort the girl.

3.2 Discourse Analysis of Shaoxing Girl Responding to IShowSpeed

Table 3: The number of transitivity processes in Shaoxing girl 's narration

Transitivity process	Number
Mental	8
Relational	7
Verbal	2
Material	1
Behavioral	1
Total	19

As shown in Table 3, Shaoxing girl uses mental process the most, followed by relational process, and less verbal process, behavioral process and material process. The authors will show examples to analyze Shaoxing girl's image through transitivity process.

3.2.1 Mental Process

(1) But some people don't like this voice.
(2) Some people don't like this.
(3) So many people like this one.
(4) Some people don't like this voice.
(5) I believe you.
(6) They don't understand you.
(7) They don't like us.
(8) We just like some people like us.

The subject of mental process are the girl and the people who hate her voice. In example (1), (2), (3), (4) and (7), she repeatedly uses "don't like" to reflect group cognition. She bothers that many people don't like her. In example (5), she believes in IShowSpeed and begins to realize her own ideas. In example (6), she said that people do not understand IShowSpeed, which is her response to IShowSpeed after understanding IShowSpeed's words. In example (8), the girl realized that people only like people similar to them and finally solved the doubts.

Shaoxing girl uses mental process to reflect others' views on her childlike voice. Some people don't like her voice, but she does not maliciously hit back at the person who made bad comments. The mental process shapes the girl's kind image.

3.2.2 Relational Process

(1) I am 25 years old.
(2) Everybody say my voice is so young.
(3) It is my real voice.
(4) Are you eighteen, seventeen years old?
(5) It's not a good word.
(6) Sometimes we are the same people.
(7) We can be stronger.

In example (1), the girl uses relational process to describe her age. In example (2), other people's evaluation of her voice is "young". In example (4), the girl retells others' words. Hearing her voice, people think that she might be a teenager, which corresponds to "young" in example (2). People are used

to linking her voice and age, implying that she is ridiculed by others because their voice does not match their age. In example (5), the girl's recognized "not good" words in comment section, which also shows that the girl has been badly evaluated by others many times before. In example (6), the girl thinks that she has similar experiences with IShowSpeed and begins to re-evaluate herself. In example (7), the girl expects that she and IShowSpeed will become "strong" in the future, indicating that the girl agrees with IShowSpeed.

Shaoxing girl uses relational process to re-think her own value. At first, the girl was troubled by others' bad evaluation. She decided to become strong with the help of IShowSpeed. Relational process shapes the girl's introspective image.

3.2.3 Verbal Process

(1) Everybody say my voice is so young.
(2) Everybody says you like a child.

The subject of the two examples is "everyone". Hearing her voice, people think she is a child. People tend to associate her childlike voice with a child, but the girl's voice does not match her actual age, involving people's stereotype. The girl previously mentioned that her actual age is 25, which shows that the girl does not hope her voice is judged.

Shaoxing girl uses verbal process to introduce others' perspective on her voice. In this context, she does not agree with people's stereotype, indicating that Shaoxing girl is a strong-minded person.

3.2.4 Material Process

(1) But we can grow up.

Example (1) is Shaoxing girl's expectation. She hopes that she and IShowSpeed can grow up in adversity. The verb "grow" has a positive meaning, showing that a person's growth is a dynamic and continuous process. This example shows that the girl has experienced a lot of difficulties. Some people hate her voice. At first, she cares about others' comments on her, but after interacting with IShoeSpeed, her actions change to positive. Material process reflects the girl's behavioral change from being overwhelmed to positive, indicating that Shaoxing girl is a strong person.

3.2.5 Behavioral process

(1) So much people like him just laugh at me.

Strangers like James Wang not knowing the girl at all, their instinctive reaction of hearing the girl's voice is to laugh at her, indicating the girl is not respected by those people. "Like him" shows that she has been ridiculed many times for no reason.

Shaoxing girl uses behavioral process to describe the instinctive reaction of others after hearing her childlike voice. The group subject "people" includes all people who hate Shaoxing girl's voice, but that girl did not mention other people who hate her except for a person who posted bad comments in the comment section, showing her tolerant image.

4. Conclusion

This study analyzes the interactive language of IShowSpeed who comforts Shaoxing girl not to upset because of other's malicious comments from transitivity perspective. The study found that transitivity processes contained in the dialogue from the most to least are relational process, mental process, verbal process, material process, behavioral process. There is no existential process in the dialogue. IShowSpeed uses transitivity processes to show that he is a respectful, enthusiastic, observant and optimistic person. Shaoxing girl uses transitivity processes to show that she is an introspective, tolerant, strong-minded and strong person.

This paper reveals the transitivity characteristics of social live broadcasts. IShowSpeed uses relational process the most to reconstruct Shaoxing girl's identity and affirms her self-worth. He uses mental process to highlight the empathetic experience. He uses verbal process to intervene in others' perspectives to enhance the authenticity of the narrative. He uses material process to turn Shaoxing girl's mental pressure into controllable movements, which diverts her attention. He uses behavioral process to objectively describe the girl's situation. It can be seen that IShowSpeed interacts with Shaoxing girl through reshaping identity, mental empathy, verbal citation, and objective statement strategies, guiding the girl to get correct attribution, reflecting the emotional governance function of live-streaming language. More importantly, the influence of verbal interaction is long-lasting. The language process helps the girl to re-understand herself, and also reconstructs the group's understanding of childlike voice. This study can make people aware of the reconstruction of personal identity and group relationships by live-streaming interaction in we-media era.

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