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Early Marriage in Jember-Indonesia: Exploring Mindsets Through the Speech of Adolescents and Their Mothers (SFL Halliday Analysis)

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ABSTRACT: Early marriage remains prevalent in several regions of Indonesia, particularly in Jember, which records the highest rate in East Java despite the legal age restrictions. This phenomenon is deeply rooted in family ideology, especially the mother's role as a central figure shaping children's perceptions. This study aims to reveal the mindset of mothers and adolescents through a syntactic analysis based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), focusing on the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions. Using a qualitative method, data were obtained from utterances collected through observations and elicitation interviews conducted in Madura language with responses in Indonesian. The data were analyzed using referential comparison and free interpretation methods. Findings indicate that mothers' speech reproduces cultural, moral, and religious values concerning women's roles, while adolescents' language reflects conformity to those norms. Linguistic relations between them sustain early marriage as part of the established social value system, reflecting patriarchal ideology and power embedded in rural Javanese and Madurase culture. By using SFL theory, this research has succeeded in revealing that language structure is not neutral, but rather reflects the collective mindset of society which views early marriage as a moral and social obligation, not as a violation of individual rights.

KEYWORDS: Early marriage; family ideology; Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL); mothers' mindset; rural culture.

INTRODUCTION

Early-age marriage remains a pressing social issue in Indonesia, particularly in the rural areas such as Jember Regency, East Java. Despite the enactment of Law No. 16 of 2019, setting the minimum legal age for marriage at 19 for both men and women, the prevalence of early marriage remains high (Firdausi, Iswahyuni, & Imaduddin, 2024). Statistical data indicate that Jember has one of the highest rates of early marriage in East Java, alongside Bondowoso, Probolinggo, and Situbondo (ITS Repository, 2024). This situation suggests that legal reform itself is insufficient to shift cultural practices and family decisions.

The persistence of early marriage in Jember is influenced by various social, cultural, economic, and religious factors. Families often view marriage as a strategy to gain social protection, reduce economic burdens, or preserve family honor (Hidayah & Komariah, 2021). Mothers, in particular, play a central role in shaping adolescents' perceptions of maturity and readiness for marriage. Studies conducted in East Java and Lombok have shown that family beliefs and maternal influence significantly determine the continuation of early marriage practices, sometimes overriding legal or health considerations (The International Conference on Public Health [ICPH], 2018; Sa'diyah & Parahdina, 2021), including disturbing mental and physical health (Aggarwal et al., 2023; Elnakib et al., 2022; Wodon et al., 2017) and human rights violations (Kidman et al., 2024) are also causes of domestic violence (Han et al., 2025).

Previous research had explored various aspects of early marriage. Sejati and Fitriah (2023) found that low levels of education and limited knowledge contribute to the high prevalence of child marriage. Salsavira et al. (2022) observes that regions with a low Human Development Index (HDI) tend to have higher rates of early-age marriage. Ririnisahawaitun et al. (2023) emphasizes that education improves adolescents' understanding of its consequences, while Hamidah and Kirani (2024) reveals that many adolescents still have lack sufficient knowledge, and sociodemographic factors do not always play a decisive role. Utami et al. (2023) reveals that perceptions of early marriage are influenced by knowledge, economic conditions, parental behavior, social pressure, and local norms. Nahdi (2020), through critical discourse analysis, finds that early-age marriage was often normalized and linked to poverty, low education, and aspirations for a better future, with girls disproportionately burdened by family responsibilities. Susilo et al.

(2021) highlights the motivations behind early marriage in the Bawean community, such as avoiding social sanctions, reducing economic strain, and securing a partner. Meanwhile, Al-Kloub et al. (2018) shows that young brides in Jordan often experience a loss of personal development opportunities, adherence to cultural norms, maternal role ambivalence, and a struggle for self-empowerment to meet life's demands. hese studies all relate to early marriage. However, few have examined the speech of mothers and adolescents, particularly syntactic analysis (sentences and clauses), as syntax is used to map the ideology behind speech, not simply sentence form.

Research that explores *mindsets* as reflected in everyday language remains limited. While perceptions and attitudes are commonly assessed using quantitative methods such as surveys or interviews, little is known about how these internal beliefs are actually expressed through language, both in word choice and in the manner of speaking. The mother's position as a linguistic agent has also received insufficient scholarly attention. Existing studies tend to focus broadly on the roles of parents, the influence of social pressure, and prevailing cultural norms, yet few have specifically compared the speech patterns of mothers and adolescents to uncover the dynamics of linguistic power between generations. Previous research consistently highlights that education, knowledge, social norms, economic conditions, and religious values are key determinants of early marriage practices in Indonesia. Nevertheless, to gain a deeper understanding of people's mindsets, it is essential to adopt an approach that interprets language and speech as reflections of thought processes particularly through syntactic analysis informed by Halliday's (1994, 2014) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) can be used to read the ideological and social meaning behind language structures (including the speech of mothers and teenagers in the context of early marriage such as in Jember-Indonesia). In SFL, the clause is a unit of experiential meaning. Each clause has: Subject (S): the agent/identity of the speaker. Predicator (P): action/modality (e.g., "must", "may", "ready" which indicate normative values). Complement (Comp) and Adjunct (A) as adverbs of reason, cause, time, place, and purpose. The goal is to reveal how the sentence structure represents social experience and power positions. In this case, the language spoken by the mother functions as an ideological tool to instill socio-economic, cultural, religious, and customary values in the child (girl). According to Halliday (1994, 2014), language has three main interrelated metafunctions, namely ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The ideational metafunction (Experiential and Logical) views that language represents the experience and logic of the speaker's thinking. The interpersonal metafunction views language as constructing social relationships between speakers and listeners. The textual metafunction views language as organizing information to be coherent and contextual. These three metafunctions can reveal: (1) how speakers represent experiences and social realities; (2) attitudes, social positions, and power relations in speech; and (3) how speakers structure information to emphasize certain ideas.

From a linguistic and psycholinguistic perspective, speech is not merely a tool of communication, but also a reflection of cognitive frameworks and underlying social values. The words chosen by mothers and adolescents when discussing marriage can reveal the mental frameworks that sustain early marriage practices. Research has shown that analyzing family discourse can expose how cultural norms are reproduced through language (Sari, Restanty, & Kiswati, 2025). Therefore, examining the speech of adolescents and their mothers offers valuable insights into how mindsets surrounding early marriage are constructed, reinforced, and transmitted in local contexts. This study focuses on Jember, where early marriage remains widespread despite regulatory changes.

The aim is to reveal the thought patterns of mothers and teenagers explored in speech or sentences with linguistic analysis, especially syntax based on SFL from the perspective of: (1) ideational metafunction (Experiential Meaning), namely the way speakers represent experiences and social realities. (2) Interpersonal metafunction, namely attitudes, social positions, and power relations in speech. And, (3) Textual metafunction, namely examining how speakers structure information to highlight certain ideas from each sentence or clause of the speech of mothers and teenagers.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Early-age marriage is generally defined as the union of individuals under the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2021). This phenomenon is commonly influenced by social, cultural, economic, and religious factors (ICPH, 2018). In Indonesia, although Law No. 16 of 2019 raised the legal marriage age to 19, early marriage continues to occur due to marriage dispensations and the influence of local cultural practices (Firdausi & Imaduddin, 2021).

The family serves as the primary agent of socialization in shaping a child's mindset. The mother, as a central figure in the household, plays a pivotal role not only in caregiving but also in instilling values, including perceptions of marriage (Hidayah & Komariah, 2021). Previous studies have shown that adolescents' decisions to marry young are often influenced by maternal approval, encouragement, or justification (Sa'diyah & Parahdina, 2021).

Psycholinguistics explores the relationship between language, cognition, and mental processes. A speaker's utterances reflect their way of thinking, including the beliefs and attitudes that shape their mindset (Field, 2004). By analyzing the speech of adolescents and mothers in the context of early-age marriage, researchers can uncover the cognitive frameworks that influence such decisions.

Halliday (1978, 1994, 2014) through the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) states that language is a social semiotic system: language is used not only to convey information, but also to build social relationships, organize experiences, and organize texts. Therefore, Halliday proposed the concept of three metafunctions of language: Ideational Metafunction (representation of experience), Interpersonal Metafunction (social relations/power), and Textual Metafunction (organization of text).

The ideational metafunction represents human experience, both external (physical) and internal (mental) experiences. This metafunction utilizes a transitivity system as an analytical tool, namely the types of processes (material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioral, and existential), participants (actor, goal, senser, phenomenon, carrier, attribute, etc.), and circumstances (place, manner, cause, purpose, etc.). Meaning analysis serves to describe reality and experience.

Example: *Prabowo membangun rumah sakit modern* 'Prabowo is building a modern hospital'.

Process : *membangun* 'building' (material), actor: Prabowo, and goal: *rumah sakit modern* 'a modern hospital'.

The interpersonal metafunction regulates social relationships between participants in communication, namely who speaks, to whom, and in what tone. Analysis tools include Mood and Modality. Moods include declarative (statements), interrogative (questions), and imperative (commands). Modality refers to the degree of certainty, necessity, or possibility (must, can, might, definitely). Meaning analysis refers to how language is used to negotiate attitudes, power, and relationships between individuals.

Example: *Kita harus membangun bangsa ini bersama-sama* 'We must build this nation together'.

Mood: declarative, and Modality: *harus* 'must' (obligation in the form of power/authority).

Textual metafunctions organize messages so they can be understood coherently within the context. Analysis tools include Theme-Rheme & Cohesion. Theme: the starting point of the message (what is emphasized at the beginning of the clause). Rheme: new information that comes after the theme. Cohesion: the relationship between parts of the text through repetition, conjunctions, references, substitutions, ellipsis, etc. Meaning analysis, where language functions as a textual vehicle that connects ideas and interactions within a discourse context.

Example: *Bangsa ini* 'this nation' (Theme) *harus dibangun bersama* 'must be developed together' (Rheme).

Thus, it can be said that all three are related. Ideational speaks to how experiences are represented (world representation). Interpersonal speaks to how speakers express attitudes and build relationships (power & solidarity). And, Textual speaks to how messages are structured to be coherent (text structure). All three are always present together in every clause, although the focus of analysis may differ.

Relevance of Syntactic Analysis to Early Marriage Mindset

By examining the sentence or clause patterns (syntax) in the speech of adolescents and mothers, this study seeks to uncover the underlying mindsets that drive early marriage practices. Affirmative declarative structures indicate uncritical acceptance. Imperative structures reflect parental or maternal authority and control. Interrogative structures show doubt or hesitation but often remain within cultural boundaries. In this way, syntactic analysis of utterances is not merely about grammatical forms but also about identifying social and cultural mindsets related to early-age marriage.

RESEARCH METHOD

This qualitative study examines mothers' mindsets and adolescents' experiences related to early marriage in Jember District, Indonesia. Participants were adolescents aged 15–19 who had married early and their mothers. Using semi-structured interviews and casual participant observation, data were collected (using the "prompting" technique) to encourage participants to speak freely (Widodo, 2014). The interviews were then recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data credibility was ensured through triangulation of methods and sources. Ethical aspects were maintained through participant consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Research validity and ethics were upheld throughout the research process.

The data analysis includes: (1) Identifying the metafunctions of mothers' and adolescent girls' speech (ideational, interpersonal, and textual). (2) Separating sentence elements (participant, process, circumstance). (3) Interpreting the ideological meaning of the structure. (4) Comparing the results between the mother and adolescent groups. And, (5) Drawing conclusions about how language can shape the mindset to perpetuate early marriage.

RESULTS

Metafunctions of the Mothers' Speech

Based on the SFL aspect, each clause can be analyzed based on (1) its ideational, (2) interpersonal, and (3) textual metafunctions, as well as its socio-ideological meaning. The following is a description.

The ideational metafunction reveals how speakers represent experiences and social realities. In this case, it explores how a teenage mother represents her experiences and social realities as a grown-up teenage daughter. This is evident in the speech hidden in her thoughts and innermost being. For example:

Data 1

"saya takut anak perempuan saya jadi perawan ngasep." 'I'm afraid if my daughter becomes an old virgin.'

Table 1. Ideational Metafunction (Transitivity)

Elements	Analysis
Main Clause	*Saya takut* 'I'm afraid'
Process Type	Mental process (perception/affection)
Participant 1 (Sensor)	*Saya* 'I', the actor experiencing the feeling (sensor).
Participant 2 (Phenomenon)	Subordinate clause: *"jika anak perempuan saya jadi perawan ngasep"* 'If my daughter becomes a virgin' is something that is feared (phenomenon).
Subordinate clause	"*Anak perempuan saya jadi perawan ngasep*" 'My daughter becomes a virgin.'
Process Type	Relational is identifying/attributive, connecting my daughter with the attribute of a virgin
Carrier (attributed)	My daughter
Attribute (attributed trait)	Virgin (spinster)
Ideational Meaning	The speaker expresses a mental experience (feeling of fear) regarding the possibility of a negative social status (spinsterhood) that her daughter will experience.

Table 2. Interpersonal Metafunction (Mood & Modality)

Elements	Analysis
Mood Structure	Declarative (*saya takut* 'I am afraid'), namely conveying a statement, not asking or giving orders.
Modality	an expression of affective attitudes that affirm submission to social norms that judge women based on their marital status
Subject	*Saya* 'I' (speaker)
Interpersonal Relations	The speaker presents herself as a mother who is anxious and submissive to social pressure, while simultaneously constructing the value that "marrying on time" is a way to maintain family honor.
Socio-Ideological Meaning	This utterance expresses the speaker's emotional attitude (fear) which also reflects socio-cultural values: women are considered to have to marry so as not to become "virgins".

Table 3. Textual Metafunction

Elements	Analysis
Theme	*"Saya"* 'I' as the starting point of the message; the speaker focuses the message on himself.
Rheme	*"takut, jika anak perempuan saya jadi perawan ngasep"* ' afraid my daughter will become a virgin' is new information that explains the feelings and reasons for fear.
Cohesion	The logical relationship between the main and subordinate clauses is bound by the conjunction "*jika*" 'if' (hypotactic enhancement: condition).
Text structure	Complex compound clause patterns that express cause-effect/condition.
The textual meaning	This sentence or clause is well organized to highlight the speaker ("*saya*" 'me') as the center of the emotional experience, and relates to the condition he fears (his child becoming a virgin)

Based on the description above, it can be said that the utterance of data (1) "I am afraid, if my daughter becomes a virgin ngasep (old maid)" reflects the ideational metafunction as a mental experience (fear) towards certain social phenomena. The interpersonal metafunction is the speaker's social attitudes and values as cultural pressure on women to marry young. And, the textual metafunction is that the message is structured with a focus on the speaker (theme "I") and social conditions as the reason (rheme).

Data 2

"Saya sangat malu, jika anak perempuan saya jalan bersama dengan orang laki-laki." 'I am very embarrassed if my daughter walks with boys.'

Data (2) shows that the clause consists of two clauses, namely the main clause and the subordinate clause. The following is the metafunctional analysis.

Table 1. Ideational Metafunction (Transitivity)

Elements	Analysis
Clausa 1	*Saya sangat malu* 'I am very embarrassed'
Process Type	"*malu"* 'Shame' as a mental process (effective)
Senser	*Saya* 'I'
Phenomenon	(implisit, explained the following clause)
Clausa 2	*jika anak perempuan saya jalan bersama orang laki-laki*
Process Type	*Jalan* 'If my daughter walks with a boywalking' as a material process'
Actor	*anak perempuan saya* 'my daughter'
Circumstance (accompaniment)	*bersama dengan orang laki-laki* 'together with men'
Functional Lexical Meaning	Describes a psychological experience (feeling of shame) triggered by a social event (a girl walking with a boy)

Table 2. Interpersonal Metafunction

Elements	Analysis
Mood	Declarative
Modality	not explicit, but there is an intensifier "*sangat*" 'very' to strengthen the attitude
Subject	*Saya* 'I'(speaker)
Functional Lexical Meaning	The utterances display strong emotional attitudes, while also indicating cultural values or social norms. Social relationships are demonstrated through an emphasis on shame.

Table 3. Textual Metafunction (Theme-Rheme)

Elements	Analysis
Theme	*Saya* 'I'
Rheme	*sangat malu, jika anak perempuan saya jalan bersama dengan orang laki-laki* 'very embarrassed, if my daughter walks with boys (beloved)'
Functional Lexical Meaning	The clause structure places the speaker as the theme, then the reason/cause of shame as the rheme can create a coherent message from personal to social.

Socio-ideologically, this utterance reflects patriarchal cultural values that place family honor on the behavior of daughters. Daughters are represented as social objects whose behavior must be controlled, while parents (especially mothers) are positioned as holders of moral authority. The sense of shame here is not only personal but also collective, as it embodies the social norm that violating standards of decency can tarnish the family's reputation. Thus, the language in this utterance not only conveys individual feelings but also reproduces an ideology that binds gender relations, morality, and social power within society.

Data 3.

"Jangan sampai anak perempuan saya menjadi perawan ngasep (perawan tua)." 'Don't let my daughter become an old maid'

Table 1. Ideological Metafunction

Elements	Analysis
Process Type	"*menjadi*" 'become ' shows the relational process (identity)
Partisipant	"*anak perempuan saya*" 'my daughter '(Carrier) and "*perawan ngasep*" 'spinster' (Attribute)
Circumstance	"*jangan sampai*" 'do not let 'indicates conditions to be avoided.

Functional Lexical Meaning	*This clause indicates that Ibu represents the social status of "virgin ngasep"* 'spinster' *as something to be avoided. Its ideational meaning indicates that this clause describes a social experience determined by customary norms.*

Table 2. Interpersonal Metafunction (Mood & Modality)

Elements	Analysis
Mood	**imperative negative** ("*jangan sampai*" 'do not let')
Modality	**absolute prohibition (high obligation value)**
Subject	*Anak perempuan saya* 'my daughter'

Table 3. Textual Metafunction **(Theme–Rheme)**

Elements	Analysis
Theme	*"Jangan sampai anak perempuan saya"* 'Don't let my daughter'
Rheme	"*menjadi perawan ngasep*." 'becoming an old virgin (spinster)'
Functional Lexical Meaning	**The theme focuses on girls as a moral responsibility of the family. The rhetoric, as new information, emphasizes that "old virgin (spinster)" is a disgrace.**

The socio-ideological meaning of the clauses spoken by the mothers reflects patriarchal and customary ideologies that place family honor on women's chastity. Early marriage is seen as a mechanism for maintaining morals.

Data 4.

"Anak saya dan orang laki-laki (tunangan atau pacar) dinikahkan siri." '"My child and the man (fiancé or boyfriend) were married in a secret marriage.'

Data (4) can be analyzed based on the following metafunction.

Table 1. Ideational Metafunction (Transitivity)

Elements	Analysis
Process Type	*"dinikahkan" 'married'* as a material process (passive), namely the social act of "*menikahkan*" 'marrying'
Goal	*anak saya dan orang laki-laki (tunangan/pacar)* 'my child and the man (fiancé/boyfriend)' as the parties experiencing the process (patient).
Actor	not explicit (implicit actor, could be family/parents/kyai)
Circumstance	*Siri* as a way (circumstance of manner).
Functional Lexical Meaning	Language represents a social event in the form of a secret marriage, with daughters and young men as the controlled parties, while the agent (who approves the marriage, usually the parents) is removed/eliminated, which is a passive strategy to emphasize the result (married status) rather than the actors.

Table 2. Interpersonal Metafunction (Mood & Modality)

Elements	Analysis
Mood	declarative
Voice	Passive, places children and men as objects, not perpetrators
Grammatical subject	*anak saya dan orang laki-laki* 'my daughter and the man ',positioned as the subject of action.
Functional Lexical Meaning	This utterance displays a factually neutral attitude on the surface, but interpersonally it contains implicit power: there is an authority that regulates marriage, even though it is not mentioned.

Table 3. Textual Metafunction (Theme–Rheme)

Elements	Analysis
Theme	*Anak saya dan orang laki-laki (tunangan/pacar)* 'My daughter and the man (fiancé/boyfriend) (focus on young couples)

Rheme	*dinikahkan siri* 'married under Islamic law'
Functional Lexical Meaning	The clause structure emphasizes the young couple as the topic (theme), while the rheme presents the social action that befell them, namely the "result" is more emphasized than "who did it".

Socio-ideologically, this clause reflects the control of families and social authorities over marriage, where individuals (especially daughters) lack full autonomy. The use of the term siri signifies legitimacy through religious/cultural channels, even outside formal state channels. Thus, the language not only describes an event but also reproduces patriarchal ideology and collective norms, which place marital decisions in the hands of others, rather than the individuals directly involved.

Data 5

"Jika ada yang melamar (perdana) anak saya (perempuan), pantang jika ditolak." 'If someone proposes to marry my daughter for the first time, it is forbidden (taboo) to refuse'

Data (5) can be analyzed based on the following metafunction.

Table 1. Ideational Metafunction (Transitivity)

Elements	Analysis
Process	"*ditolak*" 'rejected ', as a material process (social action)
Participant	(not eksplisit; implied, is a *anak perempuan 'girl/daughter'*)
Circumstance:	"*jika ada yang melamar pertama kali*" 'if someone proposes to marry my daughter for the first time' (social condition)
Functional Lexical Meaning	The speech represents the traditional value that the first marriage proposal is destiny. It is forbidden to refuse the first marriage proposal.

Table 2. Interpersonal Metafunction (Mood & Modality)

Elements	Analysis
Mood	**declarative**
Modality	**high normative** ("*pantang*" 'taboo')
Functional Lexical Meaning	Containing strong cultural norms as an expression of social imperatives, the mother speaks as the guardian of tradition.

Table 3. Textual Metafunction (Theme & Rheme)

Elements	Analysis
Theme	"*jika ada yang melamar pertama kali*" 'if someone proposes to marry for the first time'
Rheme	"*pantang jika ditolak." '*it is forbidden if it is rejected.*'*
Functional Lexical Meaning	The focus of the discourse is placed on the social situation of the marriage proposal (married) (rather than the child's wishes). The rheme reinforces customary norms.

This utterance reflects traditional views on marriage and family honor. Ideologically, the process of being "rejected" represents a social action (a material process) that reflects the value of the first proposal being considered fate and honor, and therefore inappropriate to reject.

Interpersonally, the declarative form with high modality ("abstinence") signifies a cultural imperative, where the speaker asserts social authority as the guardian of tradition. Meanwhile, textually, the theme "if someone proposes first" highlights the social situation of the proposal, and the rheme "abstinence if rejected" emphasizes binding customary norms. Overall, this utterance illustrates language as a tool for preserving cultural values, placing honor and custom above personal desires.

Overall, the utterance "If someone proposes to my daughter (first wife), it is taboo to refuse" reflects a complex system of social meaning in traditional culture. Through its ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions, it appears that language serves to represent, reinforce, and reproduce customary values. This utterance not only conveys normative messages but also serves as a tool of social control that maintains the continuity of traditions and gender roles in society.

Data 6.

"Karena masih bukan mukhrimnya." 'Because he is not yet his mukhrim.'

Clause (6) is syntactically a dependent (subordinate) clause which usually explains the reason or cause of the main clause. For example, in the complete context "*Dia tidak boleh bersentuhan (jalan bareng), karena masih bukan mukhrimnya."* 'He can't touch (*dating*), because he's still not his mukhrim'

Table 1. Ideasional Metafunction (Transitivity Analysis)

Elements	Analysis
Process Type	Relational, identifying/attributive (relational process), connects something with an attribute or status.
Carrier (attributed)	(implied, ellipsis), namely implicit subjects such as "they", "he", or "that relationship"
Attribute (attributed nature/status)	*bukan mukhrimnya* 'not her mukhrim' as identity or relationship status
Circumstance (additional explanation)	*Masih 'still', indicates a temporary time/condition ("not yet a muhrim")*
Ideasional Meaning	This utterance expresses a socio-religious identity relationship: the status between two people who are not yet legally (Islamically) allowed to interact freely. This relational process reflects the social reality and normative value of the relationship, which is that the relationship is not yet recognized as a mahram (a relative).

Table 2. Interpersonal Metafunction

Elements	Analysis
Mood structure	declarative clause
Mood Function	Explain or give reasons for an action/prohibition.
Subject	(ellipsis, implicit – not stated)
Finite/Predicator	*adalah* (implied in spoken Indonesian)
Interpersonal Meaning	This utterance demonstrates the speaker's attitude of referring to religious norms to justify a prohibition or limitation of behavior. The tone of the utterance is declarative, informative, but also moralistic, emphasizing the speaker's social and religious standing.

Table 3. Textual Metafunction (Theme & Rheme)

Elements	Analysis
Theme	*Karena* 'Because', as a causal conjunction that marks a cause-effect relationship
Rheme	*masih bukan mukhrimnya* 'still not mukhrim' as new information explains the reasons.
Types of logical relationships	Hypotactic enhancement: cause, namely a clause that functions to explain the cause of the main clause.
Cohesion	Connected to the main clause through conjunctions because it can form a coherent text.
Textual Meaning	This utterance is structured to reinforce the logical reasoning within the discourse. The theme "karena" 'because' places the focus on the normative reason, while the rheme contains the main information (not the main clause).

Textually, this utterance serves to connect the previous idea with a socio-religious justification. The presence of the "because" element strengthens interclausal cohesion and establishes logical coherence within the discourse, enabling listeners to understand the rationale behind the intended action or decision.

Thus, the metafunctional analysis of SFL reveals that this utterance serves not only to convey information but also to represent socio-religious beliefs and reinforce the value of adherence to religious norms prevalent in the speaker's community.

Data 7

"Sangkal, tidak laku nikah, hidupnya sengsara, dan tidak bisa punya anak." 'Deny, unmarried, miserable life, and unable to have children'

1) Ideational Metafunction (Transitivity)

This clause displays a series of interconnected material and relational processes.

Sangkal is an act of rejecting a proposal (material).
Tidak laku nikah as a given social status (relational).
Hidupnya sengsara as a bad (relational) life situation.
Tidak bisa punya anak as a biological (material) failure.

These four clauses form a causal chain: if a girl rejects a proposal (merried), she will experience social consequences (not being able to marry), psychological-economic consequences (a miserable life), and biological consequences (not being able to have children). From a representational perspective, women are portrayed as passive, merely carriers or goals, while social agents (society/parents) act as invisible yet decisive forces.

2) Interpersonal Metafunction (Mood & Modality)

This utterance is declarative, as if conveying a definite fact. However, it contains implicit modalities of certainty and prohibition: rejecting the proposal will inevitably have dire consequences. Therefore, this clause is not merely descriptive, but also normative-punitive, as it functions to threaten and control the girl's behavior.
The power relationship is clearly reflected: society/parents speak from a dominant position, while the girl is positioned as the submissive party.

3) Textual Metafunction (Theme–Rheme)

The clause begins with Denial as the theme (focus), while the following section (unable to marry, miserable life, and inability to have children) serves as the rheme (consequence).
This structure establishes a linear causal chain in the form of an action (rejecting a proposal) that results in (social, economic, and biological suffering). Thus, the text focuses on emphasizing the negative consequences that seem to automatically follow the act of rejection.

Clause (7) above demonstrates a cultural construct that places women without the right to refuse a marriage proposal as a form of patriarchy. Refusing a proposal is considered taboo, so language is used to intimidate women into accepting the proposal as a punitive norm. It functions as social control, as language serves as a tool of collective discipline, intimidating them with the stigma of "unmarriageable," "having a miserable life," and even "being unable to have children."

So, the clause in data (7) is not just a series of statements, but rather a discourse strategy that limits women's choices through symbolic threats (social status), material (poverty/misery), and biological (not being able to have children). Language is used as a means of reproducing patriarchal ideology that restricts women's autonomy.

Metafunction of Adolescent (female) Speech

Data 8
"*Saya mau menikah biar tidak jadi beban orang tua*." 'I want to get married so I won't be a burden on my parents.'
Analysis Metafunction

Table 1. Ideational Metafunction (Transitivity)

Elements	Analysis
Process Type	Material: *menikah* 'married' (action)
Aktor	*Saya* 'I'
Tujuan	*Menikah* 'married'
Relational Process	*tidak jadi beban orang tua* 'not being a burden on parents (status/identification, marriage as a way out of the "burden" status).
Logical relations	main clause (*saya mau menikah* 'want to get married') as a subordinate clause of purpose (*biar tidak jadi beban orang tua* 'so as not to be a burden on parents').
Ideational Meaning	The female subject presents herself as an active actor, but her actions are directed towards others (her parents). Self-identity is constructed from social function (not being a burden), not from personal choice.

Table 2. Interpersonal Metafunction (Mood & Modality)

Elements	Analysis
Mood	Declarative
Modality	*Mau 'Want' is an expression of intention or desire (volitive modality). Although the clause appears to indicate a personal choice (I want), the actual motivation is normative, namely avoiding the status of "burden." as an expression of intention or desire (volitive modality).*
Power relations	Even though the clause seems to indicate a personal choice (I want), the actual motivation is normative, namely avoiding the status of a "burden".
interpersonal Meaning	Personal choices are constructed as moral obligations. Thus, power relations remain unequal: girls are subject to parental/societal expectations.

Table 3. Tekstual Metafunction (Theme-Rheme)

Elements	Analysis
Theme	"*Saya mau menikah*" 'I want to get married' as a statement of intention (focus on the subject).
Rheme	"*biar tidak jadi beban orang tua"* (sebagai alas an/justifikasi).
Textual Meaning	The clause emphasizes marriage as a solution aimed not at personal happiness, but rather at the benefit of parents. The personal theme is directly directed toward the social rheme (parents' interests).

Socio-ideologically, clause (8) demonstrates how language constructs women to internalize marriage as a moral obligation and social burden, rather than as a right or free choice. Marriage is represented as a way to free parents from shame or responsibility, so that women are seen more as "family responsibilities" than as autonomous individuals. Thus, this utterance reproduces a patriarchal ideology that places women in a subordinate relationship to the family and society.

Data 9

"*Kalau tidak menikah sekarang, saya takut tidak ada yang mau*." 'If I don't get married now, I'm afraid no one will want me'

Metafunction Analysis

Table 1. Ideational Metafunction

Elements	Analysis
Process Type material	Material (*menikah* 'merried') (actions that are prerequisites).
Process mental–emotional	*saya takut* 'I am scared ' (mental process , as a emotion).
Process eksistential	*tidak ada yang mau* 'no one wants' (existential: the social subject that is assumed will not accept
Logical relations	conditional clause (*if you don't get married now*) as a consequence clause (*saya takut …'* I am afraid').
Ideasional Meaning	Condition *tidak menikah sekarang* 'not married now 'represented as a threat, generating fear, with social consequences: no one wants it. The female subject is positioned as the one who is worried about losing social value.

Table 2. Interpersonal Metafunction (Mood & Modality)

Elements	Analysis
Mood	Declarative
Modality	*takut* 'Afraid' as an expression of affective modality (strong emotions).
Power relations	Even though it is a personal expression, its meaning is tied to the social norm that women must get married quickly so that "someone will want it."
Interpersonal Meaning	The speech seems personal, but is full of social pressure that makes women internalize fear.

Table 3. Textual Metafunction (Theme-Rheme)

Elements	Analysis
Theme	*Kalau tidak menikah sekarang* 'If you don't get married now (terms/conditions) '
Rheme	*saya takut tidak ada yang mau* 'I'm afraid no one will want it' (emotional + social consequences).
Textual Meaning	This structure emphasizes causality as the condition (not being married) directly leads to negative consequences (fear, not being marketable).

The socio-ideological meaning shows that language represents marriage as an immediate obligation. Women are positioned in a social anxiety: if they marry late, they lose their value (no one will want them). Patriarchal ideology oppresses women through fear and the stigma of being "unsaleable." Thus, clause (9) constructs the representation that women must marry immediately, because if they don't, they will face the social stigma of "no one will want them." Language here functions as an instrument of fear-based social control. In this case, women are viewed as goods for sale.

Data 10

"*Saya menikah karena itu ibadah*" 'I got married because it was an act of worship'

Table 1. Ideasional Metafunction (Transitivity)

Elements	Analysis
Process Type	material *(menikah* 'married'*)*
Aktor	*Saya* 'I'
Cause clause	*karena itu ibadah* 'because it is a form of worship' as a relational process of identification (it is the same as worship)
Logical relations	action (*menikah 'married')*justified on religious grounds (worship)
Ideational Meaning	Marriage is represented as an individual act given religious legitimacy.

Table 2. Interpersonal Metafunction (Mood & Modality)

Elements	Analysis
Mood	Declaratif
Modality	certainty, namely this clause states the normative fact that marriage is identical to worship.
Power relations	religion is positioned as a source of legitimacy, while speakers adapt to these norms
Interpersonal Meaning	the choice to marry is constructed not just as a personal desire, but as a spiritual obligation

Table 3. Textual Metafunction (Theme–Rheme)

Elements	Analysis
Theme	*Saya menikah* 'I am married' (action statement)
Rheme	*karena itu ibadah* 'because it is worship' (reason/justification).
Textual Meaning	initial focus on personal action (I got married), then directed to religious justification.

The socio-ideological meaning of clause (10) shows that the language represents marriage as a religious practice. Marriage is not merely a personal matter, but rather a religious obligation. This discourse perpetuates the ideology that women must marry to fulfill spiritual and moral norms.

Data 11

"*Saya kasihan orang tua, jika saya sekolah*." 'I feel sorry for my parents, if I go to school'

Table 1. Ideational Metafunction (Transitivity)

Elements	Analysis
Process Type	*kasihan* 'pity'(process mental-affective, emotions/feelings).
Senser	*Saya 'I'*

Phenomenon	*orang tua* 'parent 'as an object of pity.
Cohession	*jika saya sekolah* 'if I go to school' as a conditional clause, with the material process of school (actor: me).
Ideational Meaning	The speaker expresses feelings of pity towards the parents, which arise because their actions (schooling) are considered a burden on them.

Table 2. Interpersonal Metafunction (Mood & Modality)

Elements	Analysis
Mood	declarative
Modality	there is no explicit modality, but it is implied that pity is the speaker's inner certainty
Power relations	The speaker places himself in a subordinate position, considering the burden on his parents. The parents are represented as the ones making sacrifices, while the child feels unworthy of adding to the burden.
Interpersonal Meaning	the clause emphasizes the speaker's humble emotional position, full of consideration towards his parents

Table 3. Textual Metafunction (Theme–Rheme)

Elements	Analysis
Theme	*Saya kasihan orang tua* 'I feel sorry for the parents' as the main focus is the emotional attitude of the speaker
Rheme	*jika saya sekolah* 'if I go to school', as a reason/cause for the emergence of feelings of pity.
Textual Meaning	This structure emphasizes pity as the core of the message, then clarifies the conditions that trigger it.

The social-ideational meaning of clause (11) can be said to be that the language represents children as the ones who consider the burden on their parents. This discourse perpetuates the ideology of devotion and sacrifice, where individual choices (schooling) can be postponed/sacrificed in order to lighten the burden on the family.

DISCUSSION

An analysis of the speech of mothers and adolescent girls in the context of early marriage in Jember, Indonesia, shows that language functions not only as a means of communication but also as a means of representing social, cultural, and ideological values. Using Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach, this study reveals that sentence structure (lexicogrammatical) contains complex social meanings. Through the three metafunctions of language—ideational, interpersonal, and textual—it is found that each utterance represents the collective mindset of society regarding the concepts of honor, responsibility, and social fear that underlie the legitimacy of early marriage.

1) Ideational Metafunction: Language as a Representation of Social Experience

In the ideational metafunction, language represents how speakers understand and frame their life experiences. As in the following utterances, "Don't let my daughter become a virgin" and "If someone proposes first, it's forbidden to refuse." This demonstrates the relational process (becoming, being rejected) used to describe fixed, non-negotiable social conditions. These sentences represent collective experiences bound by customary and religious norms, in which women's social status is largely determined by age and marital status. Language functions as a tool for reproducing patriarchal culture, where women are positioned as guardians of family honor. The sentence structure with the relational process ("becoming a virgin") demonstrates that social meaning is attached to a state considered shameful, rather than to an actual moral action. Meanwhile, in adolescent utterances such as:

"*Saya mau menikah biar tidak jadi beban orang tua"* 'I want to get married so I won't be a burden on my parents'

"*Kalau tidak menikah sekarang, saya takut tidak ada yang mau*" 'If I don't get married now, I'm afraid no one will want me'

Both utterances demonstrate that adolescents use both material processes ("marriage") and mental processes ("fear") to describe their experiences. Their language represents the internalized social reality that marriage is not simply a personal choice, but a solution to economic and social pressures. Thus, the ideational metafunction reveals that the speakers' social experiences are influenced by customary, religious, and economic values that position early marriage as a normal and honorable social mechanism.

2) Interpersonal Metafunction: Language as a Reflection of Power Relations

Through interpersonal metafunctions, we can see how language constructs social relationships between mothers and adolescents. Mothers' speech generally uses the imperative mood and high modality, such as "don't let it," "abstain," or "must." The use of these forms reflects the power and moral authority mothers wield in determining the direction of their daughters' lives. Mothers' language is not simply advice, but a form of social regulation rooted in cultural values. In Jember's social system, which still strongly upholds customs and religion, mothers' position is not only as parents but also as representatives of society and collective norms.

In contrast, adolescents' speech uses the declarative mood and low modality, such as "want," "fear," or "no one wants." This sentence illustrates the subordinate and passive position of adolescents in the decision-making process. Through this linguistic expression, it is apparent that adolescents have internalized the fear of social judgment and view marriage as a form of liberation from potential stigma. Thus, the interpersonal metafunction demonstrates the asymmetrical power relations between mothers and adolescents, where language becomes an effective medium of social control to instill values of obedience and moral responsibility.

3) Textual Metafunction: Language as a Regulator of Ideological Focus

The textual metafunction in this analysis highlights how speakers organize information through theme-rheme structures to emphasize certain ideas. In the mother's speech, a frequently emerging theme is social conditions, such as lamaran pertama ‘first proposal (for merried)’, perawan ngasep ‘virgin ngasep’, and kehormatan keluarga ‘family honor’. Meanwhile, rheme contains moral consequences such as “never to be rejected” or “a disgrace to the family.”

This placement of themes indicates that the mother's discourse orientation emphasizes traditional values and collective honor over the child's personal desires. In other words, the sentence structure demonstrates that social ideology is the primary focus, with the individual in a secondary position. Meanwhile, in adolescent speech, the dominant theme is "I," followed by actions or emotions such as "want to get married," "fear," and "not be a burden."

Although grammatically the themes appear self-centered, the emerging meanings reflect a dependence on external values (family, society, and religion). This demonstrates that even within seemingly personal structures, adolescent discourse remains guided by the social norms they have absorbed since childhood.

4) Synthesis and Implications

Based on the three metafunctions of language, it can be concluded that mother tongue serves as an ideological vehicle for reproducing customary, moral, and religious values that govern women's roles in society. Adolescent language demonstrates the internalization of this ideology, where their linguistic choices reflect obedience and fear of social sanctions. These linguistic relationships form a social chain that maintains the continuity of early marriage practices as a form of conformity to established value systems. Using SFL theory, this study successfully revealed that language structure is not neutral but rather reflects the collective mindset of society, which views early marriage as a moral and social obligation, rather than a violation of individual rights.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the discussion of speech using SFL theory demonstrates that the language of mothers and adolescents contains complex layers of social meaning: experiences, power relations, and ideology combine to form ways of thinking that normalize the practice of early marriage. Language, in the context of early marriage, acts as both a mirror and a tool for preserving patriarchal culture and traditional values that remain deeply embedded in rural Jember, Indonesia. Thus, the analysis based on SFL theory confirms that the speech of mothers and adolescents conveys more than just verbal messages, but also reflects social and ideological constructs that shape thought patterns and behaviors related to early marriage.

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