

Environmental ideology in WALHI's ecological disaster press releases: An ecolinguistic analysis of Sumatra

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Citation: Ardhianti, M., Prawoto, E. C., & Risaldi, A. (2026). Environmental ideology in WALHI's ecological disaster press releases: An ecolinguistics analysis of Sumatra. *NOTION: Journal of Linguistics, Literature, and Culture*, 8(1), 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.12928/notion.v8i1.15665>

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: 2026-01-20

Accepted: 2026-05-11

Keywords:

Ecolinguistics

Ecological disaster

Environmental ideology

Transitivity system

WALHI

ABSTRACT

Ecolinguistics uncovers the environmental ideology. This study urges the WALHI's ecological disaster press releases through transitivity analysis. The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach grounded in ecolinguistics within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). The data consist of press releases on ecological disasters in Sumatra published by Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI). Data were collected through observation and documentation techniques. The collected data were analyzed in four stages: (1) clause segmentation and numbering; (2) identification and classification of process types; (3) identification of participant roles and circumstantial elements; and (4) interpretation of ideological patterns based on recurring configurations of processes and participants. The findings indicate that relational processes dominate the transitivity patterns, followed by material, existential, verbal, mental, and behavioral processes. The environmental ideologies identified in WALHI's ecological disaster press releases include: (1) environmental ideology: those in power are responsible for environmental destruction; (2) environmental ideology: rejection of power practices in elite regulations; (3) environmental ideology: justice in resisting systems of power; (4) environmental ideology: the government must be responsible for environmental damage; and (5) environmental ideology: transparent enforcement of legal policies.



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I. INTRODUCTION

Environmental issues in Indonesia have become a matter of national concern because of their significant implications for ecological sustainability and public safety. Ecological disasters such as floods and landslides on the island of Sumatra in recent years are not merely natural

phenomena; rather, they are closely associated with imbalances in human–environment relations resulting from resource exploitation, such as illegal logging and the conversion of forests into oil palm plantations (Suardi, 2025). Thus, ecological disasters should be understood not only as physical events but also as social constructions that are produced and contested through language, particularly in press releases, official statements, and media reports.

The debate between the government and civil society organizations, such as Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI), demonstrates that ecological disasters constitute a site of discursive struggle. The government tends to frame disasters as the result of natural factors, whereas WALHI emphasizes the role of policies and human activities as the primary causes. This divergence underscores the role of language in shaping representations of causality, responsibility, and solutions to ecological disasters. Therefore, analyzing how responsibility is linguistically constructed is crucial for understanding environmental ideology within such discourse.

This study adopts an ecolinguistic perspective that emphasizes the relationship between language and the environment, particularly through the concept of stories we live by, which posits that dominant narratives influence how humans treat the natural world (Stibbe, 2015). Ecolinguistics can be understood as a field that examines the relationship between language, humans, and the environment, with evolving emphases over time. Conceptualizes ecolinguistics as an interdisciplinary field focusing on how language represents the environment and shapes human understanding of nature, primarily through a descriptive approach (Halliday, 2001). Extend this perspective by viewing ecolinguistics as part of a dynamic system of interaction among language, cognition, society, and ecosystems, suggesting that language not only represents reality but also participates in its construction (Steffensen et al., 2014). Position ecolinguistics as a critical approach focusing on the analysis of ideology in environmental discourse, including how narratives or “stories we live by” shape human engagement with nature (Penz et al., 2022). Thus, ecolinguistics can be summarized as a field that not only describes the relationship between language and the environment but also critically analyzes the role of language in shaping ecological awareness, ideology, and practice. In Ecolinguistics, transitivity is understood as a tool for analyzing how language represents the relationship between humans and nature through grammatical choices within Systemic Functional Linguistics (Suparno et al., 2026; Zhang & He, 2020).

Methodologically, this study adopts the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) with a focus on the transitivity system (Halliday, 2014). Within this framework, grammatical choices such as process types, participants, and circumstances are understood as resources for representing actions, actors, and causal relations in texts. In the context of environmental activism such as WALHI, ecolinguistic analysis is conducted by examining how transitivity choices are used to construct representations of ecological disasters, particularly in revealing

agency, the attribution of responsibility, and cause effect relations between human activities and environmental degradation.

The analysis of ecological disasters through the transitivity system within Systemic Functional Linguistics is conducted by examining how choices of processes, participants, and circumstances represent agency, causality, and responsibility in discourse (Gong & Liu, 2018). These transitivity choices function not only grammatically but also ideologically, framing disasters either as natural phenomena or as consequences of human activities (Yasmin & Amin, 2024). Thus, transitivity analysis enables researchers to reveal how language constructs representations of vulnerability, power relations, and environmental ideology in ecological disaster discourse (Li & Liu, 2024). Through this approach, language is not viewed merely as a tool for conveying information, but as a social practice that plays a role in shaping and negotiating environmental ideology in public discourse.

Previous studies have examined environmental ideology from various perspectives. demonstrate that ideological orientation influences attitudes toward environmental policies, although they employ quantitative approaches within political contexts (Armingeon & Bürgisser, 2021; Davidovic et al., 2020). Meanwhile, highlight the role of ideology in environmental education (Dinçel & Yıldız, 2025). In the domain of discourse analysis, Daar and Gunas (2025) explore ecological meaning in ritual lexicons, while investigate ideological constructions in political media discourse (Purwaningrum & Harmoko, 2023). However, these studies have not specifically examined how environmental ideology is constructed through grammatical structures in ecological disaster discourse in Indonesia.

Addressing this gap, the present study aims to uncover environmental ideology in WALHI's ecological disaster press releases through an analysis of the transitivity system. The novelty of this research lies in integrating an ecolinguistic perspective with transitivity analysis in SFL to examine press releases as a form of discursive practice. This approach demonstrates that environmental ideology is not only reflected in lexical choices but also embedded in configurations of processes and participants that shape representations of ecological responsibility.

Specifically, this study seeks to answer two research questions: (1) which process types are dominant in WALHI's ecological disaster press releases, and (2) what environmental ideologies are constructed through these transitivity choices. In doing so, this study contributes to the advancement of ecolinguistic research by emphasizing the role of grammatical structures as resources for constructing environmental ideology in ecological disaster discourse in Indonesia.

II. METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach grounded in ecolinguistics within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Adetomokun, 2012; Ali, 2019; Lei, 2022).

The corpus of this study consists of press releases on ecological disasters in Sumatra published by Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI). WALHI was selected based on its position as an environmental advocacy organization that consistently constructs ecological disasters as structural issues rather than merely natural phenomena, making it a relevant source for examining the representation of environmental ideology in public discourse. The ecolinguistic orientation of this study lies in examining how linguistic structures construct environmental meanings and ideological representations of ecological disasters.

The data were obtained from WALHI's official website (<https://www.walhi.or.id/>) using the keyword "Sumatra" in the press release search column, accessed on January 2, 2026. The search yielded 11 press releases specifically addressing ecological disasters in Sumatra. The 11 press releases were purposively selected based on two main criteria: (1) thematic relevance, namely press releases that explicitly discuss floods, landslides, and other ecological disasters associated with human activities; and (2) data saturation, indicated by the absence of substantial variation in transitivity patterns after repeated analysis. Thus, the 11 texts are considered representative for revealing linguistic patterns and ideological tendencies within the examined corpus.

Data were collected through observation and documentation techniques (Mahsun, 2017; Sudaryanto, 2015). Observation was conducted through systematic examination of press releases on the WALHI website, while documentation involved downloading, archiving, and organizing the texts into a structured corpus for analysis. To facilitate systematic analysis, the primary research instrument was a coding sheet based on the transitivity system in SFL. This instrument operationalizes three components of analysis: (1) process types (material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioral, and existential), (2) participant roles (e.g., Actor, Goal, Senser, Carrier, Sayer), and (3) circumstantial elements (e.g., cause, location, manner). The clause served as the unit of analysis. Each clause in the corpus was identified, numbered, and coded according to these categories. To ensure consistency, a coding manual containing operational definitions and examples was developed.

The data analysis procedure was conducted in four stages: (1) clause segmentation and numbering; (2) identification and classification of process types; (3) identification of participant roles and circumstantial elements; and (4) interpretation of ideological patterns based on recurring process-participant configurations. The analysis focuses on how transitivity choices represent agency, causality, and the attribution of responsibility in ecological disaster discourse. To enhance reliability, the coding process was carried out independently by two researchers with expertise in SFL analysis. Inter-coder agreement was calculated using percentage agreement and yielded an agreement rate of 89%. Discrepancies in the coding results were discussed until consensus was achieved based on the established guidelines. The validity of the study was strengthened through transparent analytical procedures, systematic documentation of coding activities, and iterative reviews of coding outcomes. By clearly

formulating data selection criteria, analytical procedures, and reliability testing, this study seeks to ensure accuracy, consistency, and traceability in the analytical process.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that the transitivity system in the WALHI press release corpus is realized through six process types: material, mental, relational, existential, verbal, and behavioral processes (Halliday, 2014; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The initial stage of analysis involved calculating the frequency of each process type. However, this quantitative distribution serves only as a starting point to identify patterns of transitivity choices and their discursive implications. The results reveal a clear dominance of relational processes over other process types, as illustrated in Figure 1.

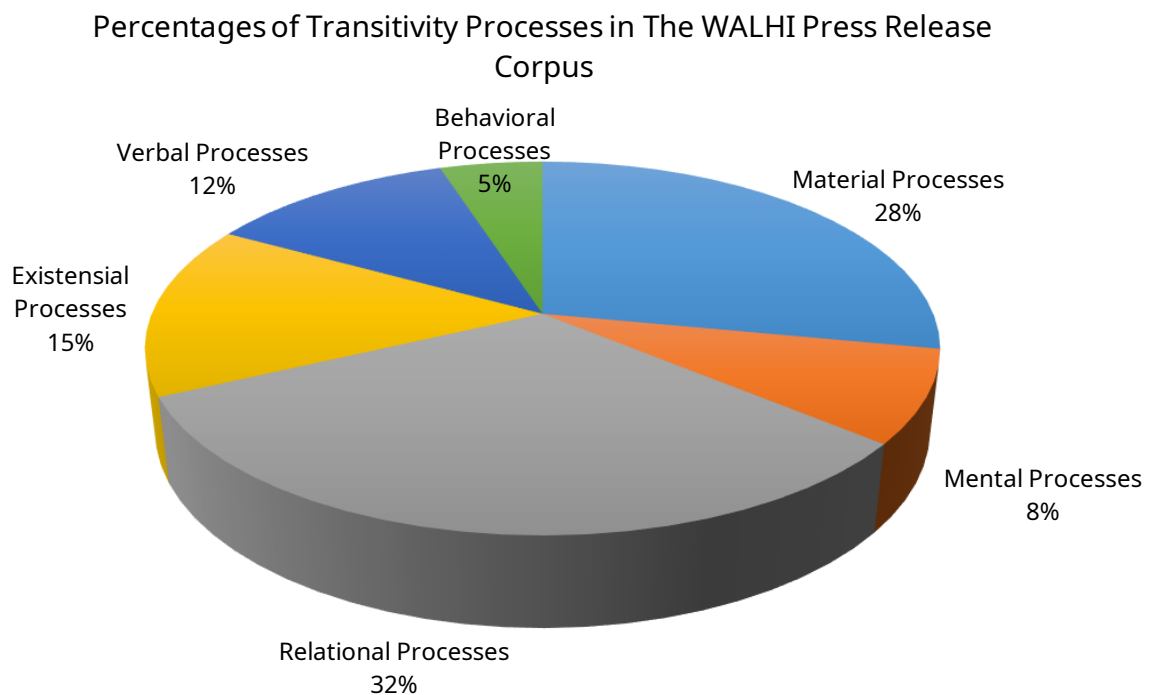


Figure 1. Frequency of processes

The distribution of process types demonstrates that relational processes are the most dominant (32%), followed by material (28%), existential (15%), verbal (12%), mental (8%), and behavioral processes (5%). This pattern suggests that the discourse is primarily oriented toward defining, classifying, and attributing meaning to ecological events rather than merely describing actions or expressing subjective experiences.

The dominance of relational processes indicates that WALHI's press releases construct ecological disasters as socially and politically situated phenomena. Through identifying and attributive relations, the texts define victims, institutional actors, and environmental conditions within a broader framework of power and responsibility. This reflects a discursive tendency to frame environmental issues as structural rather than purely natural.

Material processes, as the second most frequent type, emphasize concrete actions and ecological impacts, foregrounding environmental damage as the result of human intervention. This strengthens the representation of disasters as consequences of specific actions, such as exploitation, policy failure, and resource extraction. Existential processes highlight the presence of events, conditions, and empirical realities, contributing to the factual framing of ecological crises. Meanwhile, verbal processes function to construct institutional voice through statements, claims, and criticisms that reinforce argumentative positions within the discourse.

Mental processes appear less frequently and mainly serve an evaluative function, expressing judgment and concern rather than personal perception. Behavioral processes, although limited, represent expected institutional responses, particularly in relation to governmental responsibility. Overall, the distribution of transitivity choices reflects a consistent pattern in which ecological disasters are constructed as structural and political issues. This indicates a discursive orientation toward accountability, institutional critique, and environmental justice.

Material Processes

Material processes refer to processes of doing and happening that involve either human or non-human participants engaging in an activity, thereby involving other participants as well (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). All three categories of meaning contained in material clauses namely (1) actions, (2) events, and (3) behaviors are found in the discourse of ecological disasters in WALHI's press releases. This can be seen in Figure 2.

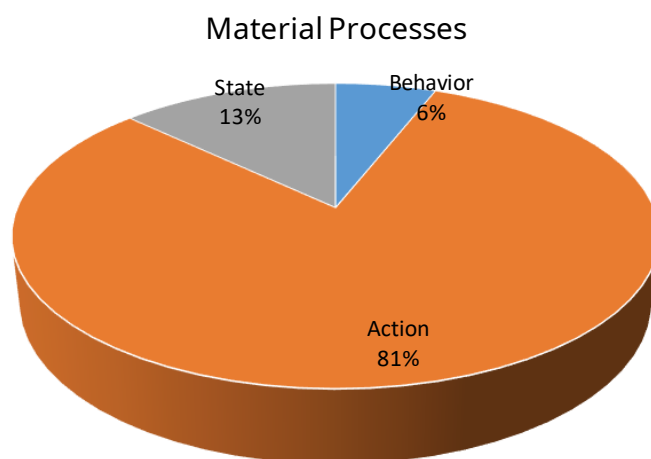


Figure 2. Frequency of material processes

The distribution shows that action-oriented material processes are the most prominent, indicating that the discourse emphasizes concrete ecological activities and their impacts. This suggests that environmental issues are primarily constructed through representations of actions and events rather than abstract descriptions. Material processes in the corpus are commonly realized through verbs such as reveal, trigger, damage, expand, and convert, which

foreground human intervention in ecological systems. Through the configuration of participants Actor, Goal, and Circumstance these processes construct responsibility and highlight the causal relationship between human activities and environmental damage.

Environmental Ideology I: Those in Power Are Responsible for Environmental Destruction

Ideology is a systematized set of concepts that serves as the foundation of opinions guiding direction and purpose for sustaining life. The concept of ideology is often debated because it questions the validity of the most fundamental ideas held by humans.

Table 1. Powers on responsibility for environmental disaster

Data	Actor	Material Process	Goal	Circumstance
1	National Strategic Projects (NSP)	systematically eliminate	the ecological functions of forests, wetlands, and water catchment areas	particularly in upstream watershed regions
2	Those	who obtain	The main profits	in the illegal business chain must also be held accountable
3	-	that paralyzed	Floods	at least 16 regencies in Aceh, delivering a strong message that nature is no longer able to withstand the burden of destruction imposed by humans
4	-	that struck	Floods and landslides	Aceh, North Sumatra, and West Sumatra on November 25–27, causing 442 deaths, 402 people missing, and 156,918 people to be displaced

In Data (1), PSN functions as the Actor, while eliminate realizes a material process that constructs environmental damage as a deliberate action. The Goal, ecological functions, is negatively evaluated, and the Circumstance specifies critical ecological zones. This configuration directly positions state-led development as responsible for ecological destruction.

In Data (2), the Actor refers to economic actors benefiting from an illegal system, while obtain represents a material process of action. The clause constructs profit as intentional acquisition linked to exploitation, and the Circumstance highlights systemic illegality. This reinforces the attribution of responsibility to economic elites.

The verb paralyzed, derived from the base form paralysis, lexically means weak, powerless, or unable to function or move. In this context, paralyzed signifies an action that renders systems nonfunctional and powerless. This verb is frequently used in contexts such as

ecological disaster, secondary impacts, and the social life of affected communities. Consequently, paralyzed carries a negative connotation, as it reflects actions that eliminate the function and capacity of social and ecological systems. The verb frames ecological disasters as structural ecological crises rather than isolated natural events.

The environmental ideology emerging from data (3) can be explained as follows. First, the absence of an explicit actor in the clause. Second, the ideological stance aligns with the discourse producer, particularly within the circumstantial elements. The discourse producer frames the event in Aceh not merely as a disaster but as a consequence of environmental destruction caused by the greed of political elites. Third, the choice of the verb paralyzed raises the question of who the real actors behind environmental destruction in Aceh are.

Several notes can be made regarding Data (4). First, the absence of an explicit actor highlights the goal, namely floods and landslides. Second, the verb struck is an active transitive verb describing strong and dynamic physical action. Third, the prominence of circumstantial elements emphasizes the environmental activist ideology opposing elite political power. Fourth, the clause functions as an informative linguistic expression reporting ecological disaster events. The analysis of Clauses (3) and (4) reveals a shared pattern: the absence of an explicit actor. The emphasis is placed on the goal and material process. This highlights those ecological disasters in Aceh are framed as consequences of human greed, resulting in human and material losses, thereby carrying specific ideological implications. The informative language employed generates a sense of disappointment and anger toward the government for failing to protect the ecological system in Aceh and Sumatra.

Mental Processes

Mental processes refer to processes of sensing that involve a conscious participant (Senser) and what is sensed (Phenomenon) (Sinar, 2012). In the WALHI press release corpus, mental processes are realized through perceptive, affective, and cognitive verbs, as illustrated in Figure 3.

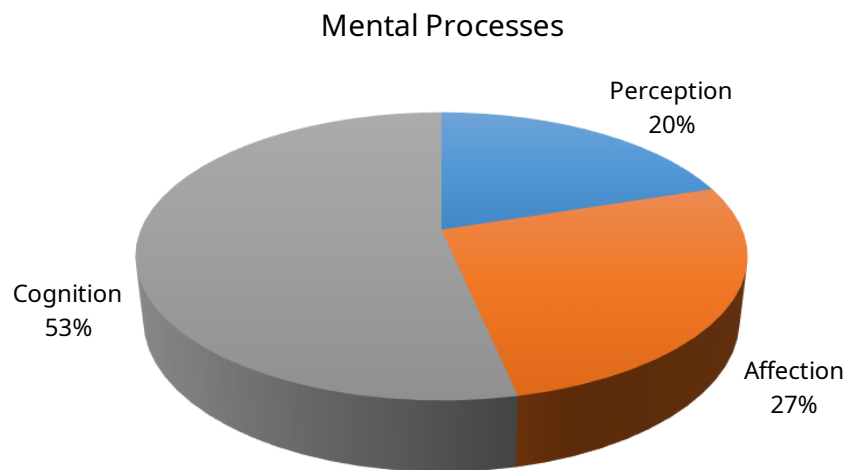


Figure 3. Frequency of Mental Processes

The data show that mental processes are expressed through verbs such as note, know, see (perception), hope, urge, regret (affection), and assess, state, explain (cognition). Their distribution indicates that mental processes function primarily as evaluative resources rather than as representations of personal experience. Through these processes, WALHI constructs institutional judgment, concern, and evaluation, positioning environmental issues within a critical interpretative framework.

Environmental Ideology II: Rejecting Power Practices in Elite Regulations

Based on the transitivity analysis of mental processes, the ideology of “rejecting power practices in elite regulations” can be identified. This ideology views power as often operating in subtle ways, for example by determining topics of discussion and fixing the discourse of ecological disaster press releases through elite regulations. This can be seen in Excerpt (5).

Table 2. Rejecting power practices

Data	Senser	Mental Process	Phenomenon
5	We	Urge	JBIC to halt the consideration of funding for the GAIA project, which failed to comply with the guidelines established by JBIC itself
6	WALHI Aceh	Assesses	that sand mining activities along riverbanks and near bridge structures clearly violate statutory regulations

In Data (5), we (WALHI) functions as the Senser, while urge realizes a mental process of affect that expresses institutional pressure. The Phenomenon refers to halting funding for a project constructed as non-compliant. This configuration builds a strong evaluative stance and

positions WALHI as an active critic of institutional practices, reinforcing resistance to regulatory power.

In Data (6), WALHI Aceh acts as the *Senser*, and assesses realizes a cognitive mental process. The Phenomenon is framed as a legal violation, strengthened by the adverb *clearly*, which intensifies evaluative certainty. This construction grounds the critique in legal discourse, reinforcing legitimacy while challenging regulatory practices associated with environmental harm.

Relational Processes

Relational processes, or processes of being, function to identify, classify, and attribute meaning to entities (Halliday, 1985; Halliday, 1994). In the WALHI press release corpus, relational processes are realized in three types intensive, possessive, and circumstantial as shown in Figure 4.

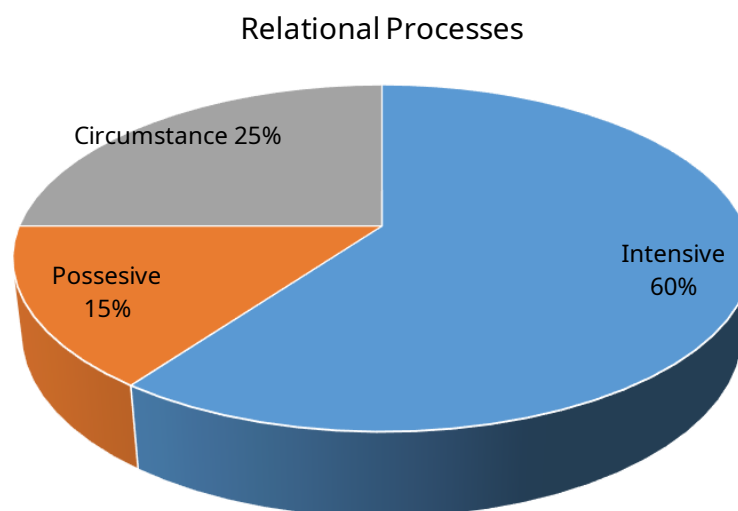


Figure 4. Frequency of relational processes

The analysis indicates that intensive relational processes are the most dominant, followed by circumstantial and possessive types. Intensive processes, realized through verbs such as *is*, *constitutes*, and *becomes*, are primarily used to define and classify ecological phenomena. This dominance suggests that the discourse is oriented toward constructing meaning and assigning responsibility rather than merely describing events.

Possessive relational processes indicate relationships of ownership and control, particularly over land and resources, while circumstantial relational processes emphasize the existence and location of ecological events. Together, these patterns show that relational processes play a central role in framing environmental issues as socially constructed and politically situated.

Environmental Ideology III: Justice in Resisting Systems of Power

The discourse producer in the corpus employs identifying clauses by utilizing relational processes realized through *is* and *becomes*.

Table 3. Justice in resisting systems of power

Data	Identified	Relational Process	Identifier
7	Floods and landslides in Sumatra	are	concrete evidence that these conditions are not appropriate to be called ecological disasters but are more accurately described as a capitalogenic crisis
8	The emergency situation in Sumatra	must become	a loud siren for the Riau Provincial Government

In Data (7), *are* realizes an intensive relational process linking the Identified (floods and landslides) to the Identifier (concrete evidence). This construction redefines ecological events as a capitalogenic crisis, shifting interpretation from natural phenomena to structural problems. The relational process functions to reclassify reality, reinforcing a critical stance toward dominant narratives.

In Data (8), *must become* realizes an intensive relational process with strong modality. The Identifier *a loud siren* functions metaphorically to construct urgency and warning. This configuration foregrounds institutional responsibility and positions ecological crises as signals requiring immediate governmental response.

The clause structure follows the pattern identified + relational process + identifier and cannot be freely reversed. Thus, the order of the relational process chosen by the discourse producer carries a specific ideological meaning that foregrounds the identifying element *a loud siren*. The concept of *a loud siren* functions as an ideologically charged expression firmly upheld by the discourse producer in ecological disaster press releases. Clause (9) realizes an attributive relational process, with the emergency situation in Sumatra as the carrier and *a loud siren* as the attribute. The attribute *a loud siren* is reinforced by the modality of obligation expressed through *must*, which strengthens the normative demand directed at the Riau Provincial Government. Consequently, this clause contains an ideology of ecological justice in resisting systems of power, emphasizing institutional responsibility for ecological disasters in Sumatra.

Behavioral Processes

Behavioral processes occupy an intermediate position between material and mental processes, representing observable actions that reflect cognitive or affective states (Halliday & Mathiessen, 2014). In the WALHI press release corpus, these processes are realized through verbs such as emphasize, state, and add, which indicate institutional responses to ecological issues.

Environmental Ideology IV: The Government Must Be Responsible for Environmental Damage

Behavioral processes in this corpus function to represent expected institutional conduct, particularly in relation to governmental responsibility. Rather than merely expressing abstract norms, these processes foreground concrete actions and responses to ecological crises.

Table 4. Government's responsibility

Data	Behavior	Behavioral Process	Target
9	The central government	to prioritize	citizens' safety without being hindered by bureaucratic procedures

In Data (9), the central government functions as the Behavior, while prioritize reflects the expected responsive behavior. Although the clause may grammatically resemble a verbal construction, its core meaning emphasizes action namely, immediate intervention and protection of citizens. The phrase without being hindered by bureaucratic procedures introduces a critical stance toward administrative inefficiency, contrasting responsive action with institutional delay. This configuration constructs governmental responsibility as active and action-oriented rather than merely declarative.

Verbal Processes

Verbal processes refer to activities realized through verbs related to requests and offers, whether of services or entities (Santoso, 2008). In the corpus of WALHI press releases, verbal processes are realized through items such as clearly, state, convey, and speak.

Environmental Ideology V: Sharing the People's Suffering

The environmental ideology constructed in this narrative does not stop at structural criticism but moves toward an empathetic stance namely, siding with the people as the primary victims of ecological disasters. The representation of society in WALHI's discourse tends to portray communities as subjects directly affected by extractives practices, corporate licensing, and weak state supervision. Thus, ecological disasters in Sumatra are understood not as natural destiny, but as products of unequal power relations among the state, corporations, and local communities.

Table 5. People's suffering

Data	Sayer	Verbal Process	Verbiage (content)
10	The Head of the National Executive Campaign Division of WALHI	Said	that President Prabowo seems to have no heart or empathy for the suffering of the people in Aceh, West Sumatra, and North Sumatra, as well as all Indonesians who have long been victims of development and economic growth
11	Presiden Prabowo	Apologized	to the public because the electricity network had not yet been restored

The Head of the National Executive Campaign Division of WALHI Said that President Prabowo seems to have no heart or empathy for the suffering of the people in Aceh, West Sumatra, and North Sumatra, as well as all Indonesians who have long been victims of development and economic growth. In Data (10), said realizes a verbal process, with WALHI's representative as the Sayer and the evaluative statement as the Verbiage. The explicit presence of the Sayer signals institutional authority, while the phrase no heart or empathy constructs a strong moral critique. This configuration creates a contrast between political leadership and affected communities, positioning the discourse as aligned with public suffering and critical of development practices.

In Data (11), apologized functions as a verbal process that constructs communicative responsibility. The President is explicitly positioned as the Sayer, and the Verbiage reflects acknowledgment of a public service failure. The causal element (because the electricity network had not yet been restored) reinforces accountability by linking the statement to a concrete issue. Unlike material processes that emphasize action, this verbal process highlights symbolic responsibility through public communication.

Existential Processes

Existential processes occupy an intermediate position between material and relational processes. The concept of existential processes emphasizes the existence of an entity, realized through verbs associated with the presence or occurrence of something. In the corpus of WALHI press releases, existential processes are realized through verbs such as occur, exist/there is, emerge, be heard, be found, and be recorded.

Environmental Ideology VI: Transparent Enforcement of Legal Policies

In various press releases concerning floods, forest and land fires, and agrarian conflicts in Sumatra, WALHI stresses that the recurrence of ecological events is closely linked to the lack of evaluation, supervision, and sanctions imposed on corporations and responsible officials.

Table 6. Enforcement of legal policies

Data	Existential Process	Existent (Entity)
12	there is	a Minister who is not serious about conducting evaluation and law enforcement
	there is	a Minister who has not taken any action whatsoever
	there is	an indication of a lack of seriousness in ensuring that similar events do not recur

Data (12) reads: "If there is a Minister who is not serious about conducting evaluation and law enforcement, and there is even a Minister who has not taken any action whatsoever, it means there is an indication of a lack of seriousness in ensuring that similar events do not recur." The verb *ada* ("there is/there are") in the Indonesian dictionary means 'to be present; to exist; to be available' and, from the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics, belongs to the category of existential processes, namely processes that express the existence of something. In this clause, the verb *there is* appears repeatedly and functions to mark the existence of particular phenomena namely, the presence of ministers who are not serious and the existence of indications of such lack of seriousness in addressing the issue. This structure places "existence" as the main focus, rather than emphasizing concrete actions or specific personal identities.

As an interdisciplinary field that studies language, humans, and the environment, ecolinguistics has attracted increasing attention from linguists engaged in environmental research. In this study, ecolinguistics is grounded in Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), particularly functional grammar as a practical method for discourse analysis. One of the linguistic tools employed in this analysis is grammar, specifically the transitivity system as a resource for representing experience and constructing meaning. The selection of process types, participants, and circumstances enables speakers or writers to construct reality in particular ways, so that meaning is not only descriptive but also interpretative and contextual (Munalim, 2017; Schleppegrell, 2009). Therefore, this research reveals environmental ideology in the data corpus through grammar, particularly the transitivity system.

Alzahrani (2022) argues that lexical and grammatical choices, particularly in verbal clause constructions, play a crucial role in shaping semantic interpretation and conveying implicit evaluative meanings, which can contribute to the construction of ideological positions in discourse. Among grammatical choices, the selection of transitivity is particularly prominent in the corpus. In SFL, the transitivity system is widely used to analyze both isolated clauses and

clauses in context (Bartley, 2018). Halliday and Hasan (1985), Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), and Halliday (2001) further systematize transitivity as part of the experiential metafunction within functional grammar.

From an ecolinguistic perspective, transitivity is not merely a communication tool but a social-semiotic system that shapes how humans interpret relationships between humans, nature, and power (Halliday, 2001; Stibbe, 2015). Transitivity represents speakers' experiences of both the external world and internal consciousness through six process types: material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioral, and existential processes. Fairclough (1985, 2001, 2003) explains that choices of processes and participants carry ideological significance because they determine how actions, responsibility, and social relations are represented in discourse.

Based on the analysis, six main findings emerge regarding transitivity choices in WALHI's ecological disaster press releases. First, discourse producers tend to use relational processes most frequently. In the WALHI corpus, relational clauses function to identify and attribute responsibility. In critical linguistics, this structure follows the pattern Identified + Relational Process + Identifier, which may also be reversed without changing ideological meaning. Ayomi (2018) argues that relational processes function to construct definitions and assign responsibility. In this study, the ideology embedded in relational processes reflects environmental justice and resistance to unequal power relations, as illustrated in excerpts (7) and (8).

Second, discourse producers show a strong tendency to employ material processes representing concrete actions. These processes construct ideology by positioning institutional actors as responsible for environmental destruction, as shown in excerpts (1), (2), (3), and (4). Third, existential processes emphasize the existence of ecological crises, realized through structures indicating presence or occurrence. These processes support the ideology of transparent legal enforcement and recognition of ecological reality, as shown in excerpts (12). Fourth, verbal processes are used to convey institutional statements, criticism, and advocacy. These processes construct ideology by expressing solidarity with affected communities and reinforcing WALHI's institutional stance, as illustrated in excerpts (11) and (12).

Fifth, mental processes represent evaluation, awareness, and judgment. These processes construct ideology by expressing critical awareness and rejection of environmentally harmful policies, as illustrated in excerpts (6) and (7). Unlike previous studies that found mental processes dominant, in this corpus mental processes function primarily as evaluative support rather than the central representational strategy. Sixth, behavioral processes occur less frequently and represent institutional responses or expected actions. These processes construct ideology emphasizing that government institutions must be responsible for environmental damage, as illustrated in excerpt (10).

Differences in transitivity choices reflect differences in worldview and ideological positioning. Some discourse emphasizes action, while others emphasize classification or

evaluation. Transitivity analysis reveals how linguistic choices influence perception and ideological interpretation by foregrounding particular actors, actions, and relationships (Chen, 2018). Environmental ideology can be understood as a system of values and beliefs shaping how ecological crises and human environment relations are interpreted through language. Ecolinguistics functions as a critical tool for exposing how discourse legitimizes or challenges environmental exploitation (Javed et al., 2025). Language choices and discourse strategies reflect particular ideological positions (Purwaningrum & Harmoko, 2023). Haig (2001), Nor et al. (2026), and Ponton (2024) emphasize that language functions as an arena of ideological struggle. Within this context, WALHI's press releases operate as a counter-discourse that challenges dominant narratives and reconstructs ecological disasters as structural and political issues rather than purely natural phenomena.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the overall analysis, this study demonstrates that the transitivity system in WALHI press releases functions not only to represent ecological events but also to construct a counter-hegemonic environmental discourse. The dominance of relational processes, followed by material processes and other process types, indicates that ecological disasters are framed as structural and political issues rather than merely natural phenomena. Thus, transitivity serves as both a linguistic and ideological resource that shapes representations of responsibility and ecological reality in public discourse.

Theoretically, these findings reinforce ecolinguistic studies by showing that grammatical structures particularly transitivity patterns play a central role in constructing environmental ideology. This study also extends the application of Systemic Functional Linguistics by emphasizing that transitivity analysis is not only relevant for linguistic description but also for uncovering ideological dimensions in environmental discourse. Moreover, the study reveals that contestation between the government and civil society occurs not only at the level of discourse content but also at the grammatical level through the representation of agency and causality.

Practically, the findings provide implications for the production of public discourse, particularly for advocacy institutions, media organizations, and policymakers in constructing more accurate and responsible narratives concerning ecological disasters. Understanding how language frames responsibility may help promote more critical, transparent, and sustainability-oriented public communication. However, this study has several limitations. First, the limited dataset of only 11 WALHI press releases means that the findings cannot yet be broadly generalized. Second, the analysis focuses on a single discourse source (WALHI), without including comparisons with government or mainstream media discourse. Third, the approach remains qualitative and has not yet fully utilized the potential of corpus-based quantitative analysis.

Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the data corpus by incorporating multiple discourse sources, such as government statements, mass media, and other organizations, in order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of environmental ideology construction. Integrating ecolinguistic approaches with corpus-based methods may also provide more in-depth and systematic analysis of emerging linguistic patterns. In addition, further studies could examine the relationship between linguistic structures and their impact on public perception, thereby strengthening both the theoretical and practical contributions of this research.

DECLARATION

Author contribution: Mimas Ardhianti, as the first author, led and was responsible for the overall research project concerning environmental ideology in WALHI's ecological disaster press releases in Sumatra. Eko Cahyo Prawoto contributed to the development of the theoretical framework for environmental discourse analysis. Antok Risaldi contributed to the development of the ecolinguistic analytical perspective and the interpretation of ecological narratives within the press releases. Through collaborative discussions among the authors, it was found that the ecolinguistic analysis of environmental discourse contains various ecological expressions and ideological meanings that require further contextual explanation from the authors. All authors participated in revising the manuscript and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Funding statement: This research did not receive any specific.

Conflict of interest: The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this manuscript.

Additional information: No additional information is available for this paper.

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