

# Transitivity Analysis of the English Version of Hikayat Deli

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**Keywords:** Hikayat Deli, Deli Malay, Narrative, Transitivity System.

**Abstract:** This article is aimed at exploring the transitivity system of “Hikayat Deli” as one of traditional narrative texts from Deli Malay. This text has been translated into bahasa Indonesia and English, and this article is particularly trying to finding out the uses of transitivity elements in the English version of “Hikayat Deli” text. A content analysis was used as the research method employing systemic functional linguistics as the approach. All of the clauses in the English version of “Hikayat Deli” text was taken as the data. The findings of this study were: (i) material, relational and verbal processes were the three most frequent types of processes used in the text, among which material process was the most dominant one; (ii) different parts of the text used certain types of processes dominantly; and (iii) circumstance of place was the type of circumstances most frequently used in the text. It is concluded that “Hikayat Deli” is a narrative text that entertains its readers through the action and noble characteristics of the characters realized in the frequent use of material and relational processes.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Language and culture are two terms influencing one another as the language people use culturally influences the way they live and behave, and the culture people have linguistically influenced the way they communicate (Rosa, 2013) and the way they see the world (Spindler & Spindler, 1990). One of the products of the language-culture combination is a text. A number of studies have been conducted to reveal typical characteristics of a text produced in different language to see whether a culture influences its generic structure or lexicogrammatical features. (Sofyan and Tarigan, 2018) argue that Indonesian news item texts were characterized by the frequent use of marked themes. Their findings are derived from the translation work done by student translators from English into bahasa Indonesia. As a comparison, English as the source language of the texts uses more unmarked themes than marked themes in its news item texts. Such characteristics obviously have something to do with the different culture between English and Indonesian. In addition, (Nurlela, 2017) found that the typical theme characteristics of Indonesian narrative text include the frequent use of marked theme clauses, the frequent use of process and circumstance as the clause theme elements, the

dominant use of multiple theme clauses, and the dominant use of constant continuous theme. Their findings also imply that there is a cultural influence leading to the formulation of typical characteristics of Indonesian narrative text.

The two studies mentioned above used a systemic functional linguistics (SFL) theory as the approach in analyzing the texts, focusing on textual metafunction analysis realized in theme and rheme. Textual metafunction is one the so-called three language metafunction – ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunction – in the SFL theory (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). By such notion, it is always possible to analyze the characteristics of text in a certain language from different language metafunction. This article studies the characteristics of the text from its ideational metafunction, whose meaning represents what the clause is about (clause as representation). The ideational meaning is realized in transitivity that “specifies the different types of processes that are recognized in the language and the structures by which they are expressed” (Halliday, 1985). He adds that transitivity system is realized by a configuration of process, participants involved and attendant circumstances.

Process refers to a semantic verb (doing, happening, feeling, sensing, saying, behaving, and

existing) and anything that it expresses like event, relation, physical, mental or emotional state (Halliday, 1976). When sorted in the semantic system of the clause, processes are classified into material, relational, mental, verbal, behavioral, and existential processes (Gerot and Wignell, 1994), (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). A material process is composed of the processes of 'doing' and 'happening'. It expresses the notion that some entity physically does something. It usually takes two participants: Actor and Goal. In addition to the two main participants, it may also use the third participant called either Recipient (the one that something is given to) or Client (the one that services are done for) in a material process). A relational process is a process of being (including having). It is divided into three types: identifying process that takes Token and Value as its participants, attributing process that takes Carrier and Attribute as its participants, and possessing process that takes Possessor and Possessed as its participants. A mental process is a process of sensing. This process includes cognitive, desiderative, perceptive, and emotive. It takes either one or two participants. The first participant is called Senser and the second participant is called Phenomenon. Verbal processes in clauses (or clauses of saying) are an important resource in various kinds of discourse. In a narrative, verbal clauses help to create dialogue passages (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). It generally takes two participants: Sayer and Verbiage. In addition, it may have another participant called Receiver (somebody or something that is addressed to). A behavioral process is a process of physiological and psychological behavior such as breathing, coughing, smiling, looking, listening and dreaming (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). It takes only one participant (first participant) called Behavior. Existential process is the representation that something exists or happens (Halliday, 1985). Like behavioral process, it takes only one participant; but unlike behavioral process, it takes only second participant called Existent. Based on the types and the number of the participants mentioned above, processes can be categorized as monovalent (binding one participant), bivalent (binding two participants) and trivalent (binding three participants). The other transitivity element, circumstance, can be divided into 7 broad categories. Circumstance answers such questions as 'when', 'where', 'why', 'how', etc. (Refnaldi and Rosa, 2016). Circumstances include a circumstance of time, place, manner, cause, accompaniment, matter, and role (Gerot and Wignell, 1994).

In relation to transitivity theory elaborated above, this article seeks to find out whether such transitivity system is different in different language which is influenced by its culture. In a more specific way, this article explores the transitivity system used in the English version of "Hikayat Deli" text, which is originally written in Deli Malay language.

## 2 RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a content analysis to see the transitivity system used in the English version of "Hikayat Deli" text. The data of this study were the clauses of the English version of "Hikayat Deli" text. The text has been translated into bahasa Indonesia in 2017 by Nurlela, Gustianingsih and Sofyan whose translation model was published in 2018 (Nurlela, 2018).

## 3 DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Processes and Participants

Based on the data analysis, it was found that the six types of processes proposed by Halliday (1985) were used in the English version of "Hikayat Deli" text despite their different frequency. The types of processes used in the English version of "Hikayat Deli" text is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: The types and frequency of processes.

No.	Types of Processes	Frequency	
		Number	Percentage
1	Material	3,724	41.80%
2	Relational	2,641	29.64%
3	Verbal	1,175	13.19%
4	Mental	948	10.64%
5	Behavioral	316	3.55%
6	Existential	106	1.19%
	Total	8,910	100%

The results of the data analysis presented in Table 1 show that a material process is the type of process most frequently used in the English version of "Hikayat Deli" text. This finding is in line with Landa (2017) who found that material process is the type of process most frequently used in short stories (which also belong to narratives). Besides, the results of the data analysis also show that most of material processes are used in the complication; nevertheless, they are also used in the orientation

and resolution. In this text, material processes are found to have been in the form of monovalent (binding one participant), bivalent (binding two participants) and trivalent (binding three participants) as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Types of material processes in relation to valences.

No	Material Processes	Frequency	
		Number	Percentage
1	Monovalent	894	24.00%
2	Bivalent	2,346	63.00%
3	Trivalent	484	13.00%
	Total	3,724	100%

The results of the data analysis in Table 2 show that most of material processes used in the English version of "Hikayat Deli" text is bivalent (63%). The clause in (1) is one of the clauses containing a bivalent material process.

- (1) In a short period, both of finished their study.  
of time his sons

Circ: Extent: Time	Actor	Process: Material	Goal
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The clause in (1) is the example of the use of material process in the orientation of the text where the clause introduces the education level of the characters. The material process in this clause is bivalent since it binds two valences: both of his sons (as the Actor) and their study (as the Goal). Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, most of material processes are used in the complication, one of which is shown in (2).

- (2) Then Lebei Hitam caught him

Actor	Process: Material	Goal
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The clause in (2) contains a conflict between the characters indicating that it belongs to the complication of the text. The material process 'caught' binds two valences: Lebei Hitam (as the Actor) and him (as the Goal).

The second category of material processes frequently used in the "Hikayat Deli" text is monovalent (24%) whose examples are provided in (3) and (4).

- (3) Our ship sank in the sea on the way to China

Actor	Process: Material	Circ: Loc: Place	Circ: Extent: Place
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- (4) In the next hulubalang came to the Palace morning and ministers

Circ: Loc.: Time	Actor	Process: Material	Circ: Loc.: Place
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As shown by the clauses in (3) and (4), monovalent material processes are generally used in this text to show the transition from a conflict to

other conflicts usually accompanied by circumstances of extent and location. The material process 'sank' in (3) binds only one participant (the first participant), i.e. Our ship (Actor); meanwhile, other clause elements are composed of circumstance of location of place (in the sea) and circumstance of extent of place (on the way to China). This clause signals the beginning of the complication when one of the King's sons left the Deli Kingdom to go to China for study. Furthermore, the material process 'came' in (4) also binds only one participant (the first participant), i.e. hulubalang and ministers (Actor). Like clause in (3), clause in (4) also uses two types of circumstances, i.e. circumstance of location of time (In the next morning) and circumstance of location of place (to the Palace).

Although the material processes in (3) and (4) bind only the first participants, the results of the data analysis found that the material processes also bind the second participant as shown in (5).

- (5) but some of them were killed

Goal	Process: Material
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The material process 'are killed' in (5) binds only one participant, but instead of binding the first participant, it binds the second participant (some of them) serving as the Goal. The analysis shows that the participant 'one of them' is not the one who did the action of killing, but it is the goal or the target of the killing action. Therefore, the only participant in (5) is categorized as the Goal.

In addition to monovalent and bivalent, some material processes used in the "Hikayat Deli" text are trivalent (13%) whose example is provided in (6).

- (6) and its colonies always pay tribute to them

Actor	Process: Material	Goal	Recipient
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As shown in (6), the material process 'pay' binds three types of participants. In addition to the first participant serving as the Actor (its colonies) and the second participant serving as the Goal (tribute), this clause has the third participant called 'Recipient' represented by 'to them'. It is called recipient because it receives the goal of the action made by the actor.

The second most frequent type of process used in the "Hikayat Deli" text is a relational process. This finding is in line with (Oktoma, 2017) who found that a relational process is the second most frequent type of process used in English narrative texts written by Indonesian students. However, her findings show a big gap between the uses of the two processes: material processes (62.53%) and relational processes (15.1%). The difference is caused by the general idea of the texts. The "Hikayat

Deli” text, in addition to telling the actions done by the characters, frequently introduces the good characteristics of the King of Deli: how he behaves to his family members, how he treats his people, how he appreciates people, and how he keeps the security of his people. Therefore, the “Hikayat Deli” text tries to show a good exemplary of a king that used to be known as egotistical, authoritarian, rude, despotic, etc.

Table 3: The distribution of relational processes.

No.	Types of Relational Processes	Frequency	
		Number	Percentage
1	Attributing	1,994	75.50%
2	Possessing	418	15.83%
3	Identifying	229	8.67%
	Total	2,641	100%

Relational processes are commonly used in the “Hikayat Deli” text to introduce the characters, particularly in the orientation. Among the so-called three types of relational processes – identifying, attributing and possessing – attributing processes are most dominantly used as displayed in Table 3. The clauses in (7) and (8) are the examples of the use of attributing processes in introducing the characters.

(7) The King was fair, wise and generous.

Carrier	Process: Attributing	Attribute
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(8) so he became famous in other countries.

Carrier	Process: Attributing	Attribute
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The clause in (7) is used to introduce the characteristics of the king, i.e. fair, wise and generous. These characteristics are the Attribute of the Carrier ‘The King’ bound by the attributing process ‘was’. Even though identifying processes also involve the *be* verb, ‘was’ in (7) functions as an attributing process since both of the participants it binds are irreversible. Therefore, the clause in (8) is not acceptable.

(9) \*Fair, wise and generous were the king  
 The clause in (9) was not acceptable because the Carrier was not the clause element that needs to be given any Attribute, but it should serve as the Attribute given to the Carrier of the clause. In addition, the characteristics represented by the words ‘fair’, ‘wise’ and ‘generous’ cannot be used to identify the king because: (i) not all kings are fair, wise and generous; and (ii) other persons who are fair, wise and generous should not always be kings. This means that those characteristics are only used

as the attribute given to the carrier bounded by the attributing process ‘was’.

In addition to the *be* verb, attributing processes can also be represented by the process of becoming. The attributing process ‘became’ in (8) describes the entity (Carrier) by giving its Attribute, so ‘he’ is described as becoming ‘a famous person in other countries’. This contains the meaning that although he becomes one of the famous persons in other countries, he is not the only famous person in other countries.

The clauses in (7) and (8) indicate that the “Hikayat Deli” text prefers to introduce the story’s characters by providing the description (Attribute) of the characters (Carrier). This means that Hikayat Deli tries to specify its characters by describing them rather than by identifying them as someone or something.

Furthermore, identifying processes, despite their less frequent use, are also used in the orientation part of the story. The clause in (10) is one of the examples of how an identifying process is used in the text.

(10) This text was the story of royal descent of Deli Kingdom.

Token	Process: Identifying	Value
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The clause in (10) is used to introduce what the text is about, i.e. the story of royal descent of Deli Kingdom (serving as the Value of the process ‘was’). In this clause, the Token is equated with the description contained in the value. Unlike attributing process whose grammatical subject is always the Carrier, the position of the Value can be either before the process or after the process; in other words, the changes or shifts of the participants’ positions do not change the participants’ roles. Therefore, the clauses in (11a) and (11b) are both acceptable.

- (11) a. This text was the story of royal descent of Deli Kingdom.  
 b. The story of royal descent of Deli Kingdom was this text.

The clauses in (11a) and (11b) show that the ‘this text’ is equated with ‘the story of royal descent of Deli Kingdom’.

An identifying process is also used in clause (12) where the Token is identified as the Value. This means that ‘The King’ is equated with its description ‘the descent from Sultan Iskandar Zulkarnain’.

(12) The King was the descent from Sultan Iskandar Zulkarnain.

Token	Process: Identifying	Value
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The difference between attributing and identifying processes in the “Hikayat Deli” text can be illustrated as “providing either additional information or necessary information”. Attributing processes provide necessary information which is not known before, while identifying processes provide additional information which is or might have been known.

In addition to attributing and identifying processes, the “Hikayat Deli” text also uses possessing processes in the orientation one of which can be seen in (13).

(13) 

The King	had	two sons
Possessor	Process: Possessing	Possessed

The clause in (13) is used to introduce some information related to the King’s family. The use of the possessing process in this clause shows the number of children (sons) the King has. Therefore, the nominal group ‘The King’ is labeled Possessor for possessing an entity, and ‘two sons’ is labeled Possessed for the entity being possessed.

The interesting finding of this study is that verbal process belongs to the three most frequent processes used in the “Hikayat Deli” text, in addition to material and verbal processes. Most of studies found that the three most frequent types of processes used in narrative texts are material, mental and relational (cf. Patpong, 2006; Williyen & Bumela, 2016). Patpong (2006), for example, found that Thai narrative texts can be characterized by the frequent use of material, mental and relational processes.

The frequent use of verbal processes in the English version of “Hikayat Deli” text is due to a large number of dialogues among the characters. Typically, a dialogue is initialized by an introductory clause containing verbal process. The mental processes used in the text include ‘said’, ‘told’, ‘ordered’, ‘asked’ and ‘explained’. The clauses in (14) to (16) are the examples of verbal processes used in the text.

(14) 

Then	their parent	said
	Sayer	Process: Verbal

(15) 

Then	Muhammad Dalik	asked	the man
	Sayer	Process: Verbal	Receiver

(16) 

The King	asked	the right time of leaving	to the hulubalang and ministers
Sayer	Process: Verbal	Verbiage	Receiver

All of the clauses in (14) to (16) contain verbal processes, but those processes are different in term of their valences. The verbal process ‘said’ in (14) only binds one participant which is the Sayer (their parent). This means that the process does not specify

its Receiver (the third participant) and its Verbiage (the second participant). Therefore, it belongs to a monovalent process. This is used when the text has already given the information about the characters involved in such context of dialogue. Meanwhile, the verbal process ‘asked’ in (15) has specified its Receiver (the man). As the process binds two participants, Muhammad Dalik (the Sayer) and the man (the Receiver), it belongs to a bivalent verbal process. The example of verbal process binding three participants (trivalent) can be seen in the clause in (16). The verbal process ‘asked’ binds three participant: (i) the first participant (the Sayer) represented by ‘The King’; (ii) the second participant (the Verbiage) represented by ‘the right time of leaving’, which is the entity being asked; and (iii) the third participant (the Receiver) represented by ‘to the hulubalang and ministers’, to whom the entity of the question is asked verbally.

Furthermore, the results of the data analysis also found that different parts of the English version of “Hikayat Deli” text prefer to use certain type of process more dominantly as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Types of processes and generic structure.

No	Types of Processes	Most frequently used in		
		Orientat ion	Complic ation	Resoluti on
1	Material		✓	
2	Relation al	✓		
3	Verbal		✓	
4	Mental		✓	
5	Behavio ral		✓	
6	Existent ial		✓	

The results of the data analysis show that material processes are most frequently used in the complication of the text. This is logical since the complication is the part of the text that tells the events shared in the text. Telling the events, undeniably, means telling a number of physical actions performed by the characters. Nevertheless, it does not mean they are never used in other parts of the text. They are obviously used in all of parts of the text, but their frequency is much smaller than the one in the orientation. Like material processes, the other types of processes – verbal, mental, behavioral and existential – are most frequently used in the complication. Unlike other types of processes, relational processes are most frequently used in the orientation part where the settings and the characters

of the text are introduced. Introducing time, place and characters implies states of being and possessing, the properties of relational processes. Meanwhile, there are no obvious differences in the frequency of types of processes used in the resolution. All of types of processes are used in the resolution as they contain part of the orientation and complication.

### 3.1 Circumstances

The other transitivity element of clauses is circumstance. It also plays an important role in the English version of “Hikayat Deli” text and its frequency are even larger than process. As shown in Table 1, the text uses 8,910 processes, but the number of circumstances is larger. The results of the data analysis find 9,818 circumstances used in the text which are distributed in seven different types of circumstances. This implies that some processes are accompanied by more than one circumstance. The frequency and the distribution of circumstances used in the English version of “Hikayat Deli” text can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5: Frequency and distribution of circumstances.

No	Types of Circumstances	Frequency	
		Number	Percentage
1	Place	3,914	39.87%
2	Time	3,257	33.17%
3	Role	968	9.86%
4	Accompaniment	523	5.33%
5	Manner	510	5.19%
6	Matter	497	5.06%
7	Role	149	1.52%
	Total	9,818	100%

The results of data analysis presented in Table 5 show that circumstance of place (39.87%) and circumstance of time (33.17%) dominate the types of circumstances used in the text. This finding shows that place and time are the two most important elements of clauses in narrative texts. This implies that narrative texts should be able to inform the readers about where and where the story took place; without such clear information, narrative texts would not be interesting to the readers which finally would deny the social function of narrative as a text created to entertain its readers (Gerot and Wignell, 1994). Circumstances of place and time are not only useful in the orientation part of the text, but they also play the same important role in the complication of the text.

Meanwhile, the other types of circumstances – role (9.86%), accompaniment (5.33%), manner (5.19%), matter (5.06%) and role (1.52%) are much less frequently used in the text.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research findings, it is concluded that (i) “Hikayat Deli” is a narrative text that entertains its readers through the action and noble characteristics of the characters realized in the frequent use of material and relational processes; (ii) there is a tendency of different frequency of appearance of certain types of processes in different parts of the text (orientation and complication); and (iii) circumstances of place and time determine the quality of narrative texts. It is suggested to other researchers to do the similar research in different types of texts, if possible, in other different languages, to reveal the typical characters of texts in terms of their transitivity system in different genre and in different languages.

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