

Analysis of 'Laskar Pelangi' in English Version Based on Transitivity Theory

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the characterizations of Lintang in the English version of *Laskar Pelangi* novel (2009), *The Rainbow Troops*, based on Transitivity. As the unit of analysis, the data are 30 selected clauses, both uttered by Lintang himself or the narrator. The clauses are arranged chronologically based on the plot of the story consisting of phase 1 (opening), phase 2 (conflict & climax), and phase 3 (closing). This research employs qualitative descriptive design (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2007: 430). The approach for this research is narrative inquiry. According to Croker (Heigham & Croker, 2009: 16), among disciplines using narrative inquiry are anthropology, sociology, history, psychology and literature. The results show that based on transitivity theory, the characterizations of Lintang are represented and portrayed by the types of process and participant in every clause. Among his emerging characterizations are: *hyperactive, brave, never-gives-up kid, heroism, and willing to sacrifice for his family*.

Keywords: analysis, participant, process, transitivity

INTRODUCTION

Halliday (1985a: 5) holds that there are three meta-functions of language, namely ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning. This study is focused only on ideational meaning or clause as a representation. It means a representation of experience about the world where we live; and, by understanding this meta-function of language; we can understand what is going on around us. This reflective meaning is called *Transitivity* (Eggins, 2004: 206). Transitivity is a theory in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) developed by M.A.K Halliday (1985: 7).

Transitivity has ever been applied in many disciplines; one of them is literary work, such as text play, short story, novel, etc. Novel, for example, consists of many clauses which are

interesting to be analyzed. In Indonesia, one of the best-selling novels is *Laskar Pelangi* (2009) written by Andrea Hirata. It tells about ten *Belitong* poor students who study in a poor countryside school with very limited access and facilities but they have great determination to pursue their dreams to reach success in their life no matter what it takes.

Laskar Pelangi has previously been analyzed by some studies; namely, Marini (2010) who investigated this novel based on its stylistics; Liswahyuningsih (2011) analyzed it based on the translation aspect by comparing the pattern of V-V construction, as the predicate of a clause, both in Indonesia or English version of the novel. Hidayat (2014), in his journal article, conducted the research related to this novel. In this case, it analyzed

the semiotics of motivation meaning in the lyric of the novel's film soundtrack, *Laskar Pelangi* by Nidji, based on Saussure's theory of signifier and signified.

As we can see together that none of these studies analyzed the novel based on Transitivity. That is why; this research tries to explore the novel based on another aspect; namely, Halliday's Transitivity. To keep this study on track, then, the research question formulated is: *based on Transitivity aspect, how are the characterizations of Lintang represented in LaskarPelangi of English version? And in line with this question, this study aims to find out the characterizations of Lintang represented in Laskar Pelangi novel of English version translated by Angie Kilbane (2009).*

Halliday & Mathiessen (2004: 175) explained that there are three elements of Transitivity; namely, *Process, Participant* and *Circumstance*. For the sake of this study, *Circumstance* is not described in detail but it can be considered as additional information about where or when a process takes place. We only focus on *Process* and *Participant*. In Transitivity, there are six processes; which are: *Material, Mental, Behavioral, Verbal, Relational, and Existential*.

Material Process refers to the process of doing action which is done by a person or thing (Eggins, 2004: 215). It means that this process demands at least physical movement (*walk, run, etc.*). The participants of this process are *Actor* and *Goal*. In traditional grammar, *Actor* usually sits in the position of subject and *Goal* sits in the position of object.

Mental Process deals with the process of sensing or doing something done by our sense. Specifically speaking, it refers to the process of thinking and feeling. Based on this explanation, we see that people are not always doing something concrete. The participants of this process are *Senser* and

Phenomenon. *Senser* is the one who thinks or feels; *Phenomenon* is what is thought or felt.

Behavioral process is considered to be a half-way between *Material* and *Mental*. It means that it sometimes tends to *Material* but in some other part, it has got something to do with *Mental* (Lock, 1996: 16; Eggins, 2004: 233). Halliday & Matthiessen (2004: 248) hold that this process is related to participants' action and attitude done psychologically or physiologically (*dream, smile, etc.*). The main participant of this process is *Behaver*.

Verbal Process is related to the process of saying or talking about something. According to Halliday & Matthiessen (2004: 253), it refers to symbolic relationship in people's mind that is expressed through language by telling or saying. There are three participants of this process; namely, *Sayer, Receiver, and Verbiage*. *Sayer* is the one who does the saying; *Receiver* is the one to whom the uttered clauses are addressed. And *Verbiage* is the content of what is said.

Relational Process deals with the process of *being* that can be expressed in English clauses. Its basic structural is divided into *Attributive* and *Identifying process*, exemplified initially for the *intensive* sub-type (Eggins, 2004: 239). The participants of *Intensive Attributive* are *Carrier* and *Attribute*. The participants of *Intensive Identifying* are *Token* and *Value*.

Existential refers to the process of existence which is usually posed by there *was/is something*. The participant of this process is *Existent*.

METHOD

The design of this study employs descriptive qualitative which is in line with the characteristics of this study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2007: 430; Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003: 435). One of the reasons to choose this design

is that the study presents and analyzes the data through words not statistical number.

The subject of this research is Andrea Hirata's *Laskar Pelangi* novel (2009) in English version translated by Angie Kilbane (2009). The units of analysis are thirty clauses uttered by Lintang himself or by the narrator. According to Aristotle and Freytag (in Abrams & Harpham, 2009: 267), the clauses are arranged chronologically bases on the plot of the story; namely, phase 1 (*opening*), phase 2 (*conflict & climax*), and phase 3 (*closing*).

The process of data collection is done by reading the whole novel and determining Lintang's selected clauses to be the unit of analysis. These clauses, then, are analyzed by Halliday's Transitivity. The last but not least, for presenting the results, this study uses tables and description.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In line with the previous explanation, the followings are the thirty clauses about Lintang analyzed by Transitivity:

Phase 1 – Opening

There are eleven clauses in this phase and in clause 1 – 7, Lintang is described as a dirty, curly-red hair, and coastal boy that is energetic and full of enthusiasm.

1. *I knew all of the parents and children sitting in front of me—except for one small, dirty boy with curly, red hair, trying to wriggle free from his father's grasp* (Kilbane, 2009: 3).

<i>I</i>	<i>knew</i>	<i>all of the parents and children sitting in front of me - except for one small, dirty boy with curly, red hair, trying to wriggle free from his father's grasp</i>
Senser	Pr: mental	Phenomenon: act

2. *'Pak Cik, your son will share a desk with Lintang,' Bu Mus said to my father* (Kilbane, 2009: 9).

<i>'Pak Cik,</i>	<i>your son</i>	<i>will share</i>	<i>a desk</i>	<i>with Lintang</i>	<i>Bu Mus</i>	<i>said</i>	<i>to my father</i>
	Actor	Pr: material	Goal	Client	Sayer	Pr: verbal	Receiver

3. *Oh, so that is his name, Lintang...* (Kilbane, 2009: 10).

<i>Oh, so</i>	<i>that</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>his name, Lintang...</i>
	Token	Pr: intensive	Value

4. *Lintang squirmed around, struggling to break loose so he could enter the classroom* (Kilbane, 2009: 10).

<i>Lintang</i>	<i>squirmed around</i>	<i>struggling to break loose</i>	<i>so</i>	<i>he</i>	<i>could enter</i>	<i>the classroom</i>
Actor	Pr: material			Actor	Pr: material	Goal

5. *Lintang's family was from Tanjong Kelumpang, a village not far from the edge of the sea* (Kilbane, 2009: 11).

<i>Lintang's family</i>	<i>was</i>	<i>from Tanjong Kelumpang, a village not far from the edge of the sea</i>
Carrier	Pr: intensive	Value

6. *When I caught up to Lintang inside the classroom...* (Kilbane, 2009: 12).

<i>When</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>caught up</i>	<i>to Lintang</i>	<i>inside the classroom...</i>
	Actor	Pr: material	Range	Cir: location

7. *The overabundance of energy in his body spread over to mine, stinging me like an electric shock* (Kilbane, 2009: 12).

<i>The overabundance of energy</i>	<i>in his body</i>	<i>spread over</i>	<i>to mine, stinging me like an electric shock</i>
Actor	Cir: location	Pr: material	Range

In clause 8 – 10, Lintang is described as a *curious kid who likes to speak using Belitong dialect*:

8. *He talked without stopping, full of interest, in an amusing Belitong dialect, typical of those from remote areas* (Kilbane, 2009: 12).

<i>He</i>	<i>talked</i>	<i>without stopping, full of interest, in an amusing Belitong dialect, typical of those from remote areas</i>
Sayer	Pr: verbal	Cir: manner

9. *His eyes lit up as they glanced animatedly around the room* (Kilbane, 2009: 12).

<i>His eyes</i>	<i>lit up</i>	<i>as</i>	<i>they</i>	<i>glanced</i>	<i>animatedly</i>	<i>around the room</i>
Actor	Pr: material		Actor	Pr: material	Cir: Manner	Cir: Location

10. *He was like an artillery plant* (Kilbane, 2009: 12).

<i>He</i>	<i>was</i>	<i>like an artillery plant</i>
Carrier	Pr: intensive	Value

And in clause 11, Lintang is described as a potential kid, a cleverest one ever met by the narrator. Here is the clause:

11. *And as time went on, that impoverished coastal boy would outshine the dark nimbus cloud that had for so long overshadowed this school, as he evolved into the most brilliant person I've ever met in all the years of my life* (Kilbane, 2009: 16)

<i>And as time went on</i>		<i>that impoverished coastal boy</i>	<i>would outshine</i>	<i>the dark nimbus cloud that had for so long overshadowed this school</i>		
		Actor	Pr: material	Goal		
<i>as</i>	<i>he</i>	<i>evolved into</i>	<i>the most brilliant person</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>'ve ever met</i>	<i>In all the years of my life</i>
	Actor	Pr: material	Range	Actor	Pr: material	

The dominant process of Phase 1 is Material (2, 4, 7, 9, and 11) where Lintang serves as the Actor; followed by Relational (3, 5, and 10) where Lintang serves as the Carrier. The rests are Verbal (6 and 8) and Mental (1) where Lintang serves as Phenomenon.

Phase 2 – (Conflict)

There are thirteen clauses in this phase (12 – 24). Here, Lintang is described as a brave kid and dare to take what it takes; he never gives, energetic, and has great determination to study. Here are the clauses:

12. *Lintang was uncharacteristically late this morning* (Kilbane, 2009: 71).

<i>Lintang</i>	<i>was</i>	<i>uncharacteristically</i>	<i>late</i>	<i>this morning</i>
Carrier	Pr: intensive	Cir: manner	Attribute	Cir: time

13. *'I couldn't pass* (Kilbane, 2009: 71)

<i>I</i>	<i>couldn't pass</i>
Actor	Pr: material

14. *'In the middle of the road, blocking my way, lay a crocodile as big as a coconut tree'* (Kilbane, 2009: 71).

<i>In the middle of the road</i>	<i>blocking my way</i>	<i>lay</i>	<i>a crocodile</i>	<i>as big as a coconut tree</i>
Cir: location	Cir: manner	Pr: material	Actor	

15. *I rung the bell on my bike, clapped my hands and coughed loudly so he'd leave. He didn't budge. All I could do was stand there like a statue and talk to myself* (Kilbane, 2009: 71).

<i>I</i>	<i>rung</i>	<i>the bell</i>	<i>on my bike,</i>	<i>clapped</i>	<i>my hands</i>
Actor	Pr: material	Goal	Cir: location	Pr: material	Goal
<i>and</i>	<i>coughed</i>	<i>loudly</i>	<i>So</i>	<i>he</i>	<i>'d leave</i>
	Pr: behavioral	Cir: manner		Actor	Pr: material
<i>He</i>	<i>didn't budge.</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>could do</i>	<i>was</i>
Actor	Pr: material	Goal	Actor	Pr: material	Pr: intensive
<i>stand</i>	<i>there</i>	<i>like a statue</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>talk</i>	<i>to myself</i>
Pr: material	Cir: location	Goal		Pr: material	Range

16. *'Why didn't you just go home?'* *I asked* (Kilbane, 2009: 71).

<i>'Why</i>	<i>didn't</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>just</i>	<i>go</i>	<i>home?'</i>	<i>I asked</i>
		Actor	Pr: material	Cir: location	Sayer	Pr: verbal

17. *I was already more than half way here. I wasn't about to turn around just because of that stupid crocodile* (Kilbane, 2009: 71).

<i>I</i>	<i>was</i>	<i>more than half way</i>	<i>here</i>
Carrier	Pr: intensive	Attribute	Cir: location
<i>I</i>	<i>wasn't about to turn around</i>	<i>just because of that stupid crocodile</i>	
Actor	Pr: material	Cir: cause	

18. *I could only imagine what Lintang was thinking at that moment: the word absent isn't in my vocabulary, and today we study the history of Islam – one of the most interesting class. I want to debate the holy verses that foretold Byzantium's victory seven years before it happened* (Kilbane, 2009: 72).

<i>I</i>	<i>could only imagine</i>	<i>what</i>	<i>Lintang</i>	<i>was thinking</i>	<i>at that moment:</i>
Senser	Pr: mental	Goal	Senser	Pr: mental	Cir: time
<i>the word absent</i>	<i>isn't</i>	<i>in my vocabulary</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>today</i>	<i>we</i>
Carrier	Pr: Intensive	Attribute		Cir: time	Actor
<i>study</i>	<i>the history of Islam – one of the most interesting class</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>want to</i>	<i>debate</i>	
Pr: material	Goal	Senser	Pr: mental	Pr: material	
<i>the holy verses</i>	<i>that</i>	<i>foretold</i>	<i>Byzantium's victory</i>		
Goal		Pr: verbal	Verbiage		

<i>before</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>Happened</i>
Cir: time	Actor	Pr: material

19. *It's not an exaggeration to say that Lintang often risk his life for the sake of education* (Kilbane, 2009: 77).

<i>It</i>	<i>'s not</i>	<i>an exaggeration</i>	<i>to say</i>	<i>that</i>
Token	Pr: intensive	Value	Pr: verbal	
<i>Lintang</i>	<i>often</i>	<i>risk</i>	<i>his life</i>	<i>for the sake of education</i>
Actor	Cir: time	Pr: material	Goal	Range

20. *Nevertheless, he never missed a day of school* (Kilbane, 2009: 77).

<i>Nevertheless</i>	<i>he</i>	<i>never</i>	<i>missed</i>	<i>a day of school</i>
	Behaver	Cir: time	Pr: behavioral	Cir: extent

21. *He pedaled 80 kilometers roundtrip everyday* (Kilbane, 2009: 77).

<i>He</i>	<i>pedaled</i>	<i>80 kilometers roundtrip</i>	<i>everyday</i>
Carrier	Pr: material	Range	Cir: extent

22. *Thinking about his daily journey made me cringe* (Kilbane, 2009: 77).

<i>Thinking</i>	<i>about his daily journey</i>	<i>made</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>cringe</i>
Pr: mental	Phenomenon	Pr: causative	Goal	Pr: mental

23. *The distance wasn't the only difficulty he faced* (Kilbane, 2009: 77).

<i>The distance</i>	<i>wasn't</i>	<i>the only difficulty</i>	<i>he</i>	<i>faced</i>
Token	Pr: intensive	Value	Actor	Pr: material

24. *When faced with a road that had turned into a river, Lintang left his bicycle under a tree on higher ground, wrapped his shirt, pants and books in a plastic bag, bit the bag, plunged into the water, and swam toward school as fast as he could to avoid being attacked by a crocodile* (Kilbane, 2009: 77).

<i>When</i>	<i>faced</i>	<i>with a road</i>	<i>that</i>	<i>turned into</i>
Cir: time	Pr: material	Range		Pr: material
<i>a river,</i>	<i>Lintang</i>	<i>left</i>	<i>his bicycle</i>	<i>under a tree on higher ground</i>
Range	Actor	Pr: material	Goal	Cir: location
<i>wrapped</i>	<i>his shirt, pants and books</i>	<i>in a plastic bag</i>	<i>plunged</i>	<i>into the water</i>
Pr: material	Goal	Cir: location	Pr: material	Cir: location
<i>and swam</i>	<i>toward school</i>	<i>as fast as</i>	<i>he</i>	<i>could (do)</i>
Pr: material	Cir: location	Cir: time	Actor	Pr: material
<i>to avoid</i>	<i>being attacked</i>		<i>by the crocodile</i>	
Pr: material	Pr: material	Actor		

As we can see that the dominant process in this phase is **Material** (13, 14, 15, 16, 21, and 24) where Lintang serves as the Actor; followed by **Relational** (12, 17, 19, and 23) where Lintang serves as the Carrier. The next are **Mental** (18 and 22) where Lintang serves as the Senser; and

Behavioral (20) where Lintang serves as the *Behaver*.

Phase 2 – (Climax)

There are five clauses in this phase and here Lintang is described as a smart student who dares to do the right thing no matter what it takes. The followings are the clauses:

25. *There we were, in a rowdy oval room in an art deco style building* (Kilbane, 2009: 297).

There	we	were	in a rowdy oval room in an art deco style building
	Existent	Pr: existential	Cir: location

26. *Once again, we were in a situation where our reputation was on the line: The Academic Challenge* (Kilbane, 2009: 297).

Once again	we	were	in a situation
	Carrier	Pr: existential	Cir: location
where	our reputation	was	on the line: The Academic Challenge
	Carrier	Pr: intensive	Attribute/Cir: location

27. *He went beyond too far! He had deliberately provoked Lintang, and this time, Lintang was hooked* (Kilbane, 2009: 314).

He	went	beyond too far!	
Actor	Pr: material	Cir: manner	
He	He had deliberately provoked	Lintang	and this time
Actor	Pr: material	Goal	Cir: time
Lintang	was hooked		
Goal	Pr: material		

28. *'The substance is that Newton clearly succeeded in pointing out the errors in the color theories of Descartes, Aristotle, and even the more contemporary Robert Hooke! Those three people thought that color has discrete spectrums. Through concave optic lenses, which later gave birth to the ring's theorem, Newton proved that colors lie along a continuous spectrum and that spectrum is not produced by glass characteristics, but by light's fundamental characteristics!'* (Kilbane, 2009: 316).

'The substance	is	that	Newton	clearly	succeeded
Carrier	Pr: intensive		Actor	Cir: manner	Pr: material
Newton	proved	that	color	lies	along a continuous spectrum
And	that spectrum	is not produced	by glass characteristics		
	Goal	Pr: material	Actor		
<i>but by light's fundamental characteristics!'</i>					
Actor					

29. *Lintang wasn't yet satisfied, "Newton said, unless you, sir, would like to question a 500-year-old proven scientific manuscript, that the density of transparent particles determines which particle they reflect. That's the relation between the thickness of the layer of air and optics according to the color rings theorem. All of this can only be observed through optics. How can you say, sir, that these matters are not interrelated?"* (Kilbane, 2009: 316 – 317).

Lintang	wasn't	yet	satisfied,
Carrier	Pr: intensive		Attribute
Newton	said,	unless	you, sir
		would like	to question
			a 500-year-old proven scientific manuscript
Sayer	Pr: verbal		Senser
		Pr: mental	Pr: verbal
That	the density of transparent particles	determines	which Particle
			they reflect
Senser	Pr: mental		Carrier
			Pr: material
that	's	the relation	between the thickness of the layer or air and optics according to the color rings theorem
Token	Pr: intensive	Value	Cir: location
all of this		can only be observed	through optics
Phenomenon		Pr: mental	Cir: location
How can	you	say	sir, that these matters are not interrelated?'
	Sayer	Pr: verbal	Carrier
			Pr: intensive
			Attribute

The dominant process in this phase is **Verbal** (28 and 29) where Lintang serves as the Sayer. The next is **Relational** (26) where Lintang and friends serve as the Carrier, followed by **Material** (27) and **Existential** (25) where Lintang and friends serve as the Existent.

Phase 3 – Closing

There is only one clause in this phase describing Lintang as a clever student who can defeat his opponent through his own argument and the following is the clause:

30. Drs. Zulfikar slumped weakly, his face pallid. Lintang had knocked him out (Kilbane, 2009: 317).

Drs. Zulfikar	slumped	weakly,	his face	pallid.
Behaver	Pr: behavior	Cir: manner	Behaver	Pr: behavior
Lintang	had knocked		Him	out
Actor	Pr: material		Goal	

As we can see together that this clause uses **Material** process where Lintang serves as the Actor.

CONCLUSION

Based on 30 clauses analyzed by Transitivity, the dominant process is **Material** (13 clauses); followed by **Relational** (8 clauses), **Verbal** (4 clauses), **Mental** (3 clauses), **Existential** (1 clause), and **Behavior** (1 clause). Through these processes, we can find out how Lintang's traits look like. And to our understanding that good strong description of a character by attaching

multi-characterization attributes is one of some other factors that has made this novel commercially success in Indonesia.

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